

## Finding the Right Internship

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** What is an internship?

**A:** An internship should be considered a career related learning experience. The main goal of an internship is to give you exposure to a field of interest allowing you to begin developing professional experience and contacts in that field. Please keep in mind that you will be expected to perform your best and contribute to the organization that you join. Many companies recruit and hire from their pool of interns so take this experience seriously.

There are several different types of internships: paid or unpaid, for credit or not for credit, full-time or part-time, summer or semester. These are a few details to take into consideration while searching for internships. They also vary in length, but are typically 8-10 weeks long. Some internships may be up to a year long, but these are usually for new graduates.

**Q:** Why should I do an internship?

**A:** Internships are a great way to try out a career field with minimal commitment. You will also gain professional experience and a competitive edge when you begin applying for jobs and graduate school. Internships look great on a résumé! Looking for an internship is much like looking for a job. It is good practice and will increase your savvy in the job search process before graduation. You will also begin to build a network of professional contacts within an organization and/or industry that will be helpful when looking for a job in the future. Internships are also a great opportunity to make a connection between your Liberal Arts education and the real world. You will begin to see the connections between the types of skills you are developing in school and how they can be applied in the real world.

### Helpful Hints

- ▶ *The earlier you begin looking, the MORE opportunities you will uncover and the FEWER deadlines you will miss.*
- ▶ *There may be less competition for semester internships than summer because summer is more convenient for most college students.*
- ▶ *Set your expectations for an internship and plan your search to find the best match for you!*

**Q:** **How can I tell a good internship from a bad one?**

**A:** There really is no good or bad internship. There is, however, an internship that is good for you. By setting your expectations of what you want out of this experience, you will be able to seek out that right opportunity for yourself. First, you must determine the industry or field you would like experience in. If you aren't sure, try our [Do What You Are](#) personality test to generate some ideas. And remember, finding out that you don't like a certain career field is just as valuable as realizing that you like it!

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**Q:** **What do I do after my internship is over?**

**A:** Once you complete your internship, take time to reflect on the experience. Think about what you liked, and what you didn't like about the experience. Knowing that you don't want to do a certain job is just as valuable as knowing what you do want to do! Remember to add the experience to your résumé. Be sure to keep in touch with your mentor and professional contacts that you've made during your internship. These people can be valuable contacts and resources for you to use in the future for career advice, or even when you begin looking for a job.

## How Do I Get Started?

- ▶ **Decide on things like:** *What industry? What geographic location? Do I need to get paid? What skills do I want to develop? Do I want a summer or school year internship?*
- ▶ **Collect your tools and prepare.** *Prepare your resume, cover letter, recommendations, references, etc.*
- ▶ **Utilize your resources.** *Tulane is part of a consortium with other universities all over the country that post their internship opportunities online in our [UCAN](#) database. There are thousands of opportunities available to you through this database. Be sure to take a look at the professional organizations' websites in the industry that you are considering. (Check out the [What Can I Do...](#) pages to find links to these organizations.) There are often internship postings available on these sites as well.*
- ▶ **Do your homework.** *Find out the specifics on the opportunities*
- ▶ **Participate in on-campus events,** *information sessions, and career fairs*
- ▶ **Network, Network, Network!** *Check with your professors or within the academic department to find internships. Ask your family, friends, friends of your family, your friends' family, and on, and on. The more people you talk to, the more opportunities you may uncover.*