Notes on Internship/Industrial Attachment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIP

The word internship is often tossed around as an option for students to gain experience. But what exactly is an internship and how does it differ from other work experience? An internship program is designed to provide students engaged in a field experience with an opportunity to share their insights, to explore the links between students’ academic preparation and their field work and to assist participants in developing and carrying out the major research project which will serve to culminate their internship experience. In 1985, only 2% of college graduates participated in some type of internship. By 2000, that figure had increased to 75%. Similarly, research by Experience in March 2004 indicated the number of graduating students who had at least three internships doubled from 2003.

The job market is going back to the days and ways of the old blacksmith profession: if you want to be the master, you first must do your time as the apprentice. The point is that a college degree just does not cut it anymore in the 21st century.

Employers are demanding more and rank internships the second most important quality in a candidate behind communication skills, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The more internships, the more it will help you better prepare for the demands of a global workplace. You have to bring something else to the table to stay competitive. This is especially critical if your GPA is below a 3.0. You don’t want to find yourself in the interview waiting area sitting next to a person from a more elite school than yours with a 3.9 GPA and four internships and is also a leader of several campus organizations.

Multiple internships can enable "disadvantaged" students (i.e. low GPAs) to catch up and compete with peers after graduation. Internships may lead to letters of recommendation from the employer, and you may even earn academic credit and earn money simultaneously. By participating in an internship you will increase the likelihood of receiving a full-time job offer from the employer. Often, starting salary offers are higher for students with internship experience than to those without experience. Internship experience can decrease the transition time from college to career (2.5 months) than those with none (6.3 months). In addition, it increases the likelihood that you will be working within your field of study, both in your first few jobs following graduation and your future positions.

Individuals that complete internships report a higher satisfaction level with their jobs, compared to those with no internship experience. Several internships will help you to better crystallize your job interests and abilities from contact with professionals, and it will also improve your career decision-making. It provides the possibility to try out a new industry, employer or job. You will also feel an increased sense of responsibility personally and professionally. In terms of
networking, you will have increased business contacts and better knowledge of the job market. A couple of internships will serve as a bridge between the theory of what you learn in the classroom and the world of practice. They may even motivate you for increased learning, such as pursuit of graduate study.

The key to staying competitive is summarized by my simple formula: E + E + E = E. It represents Education (GPA) plus Experience (Internships) and Extra-curricular activities equals Employment. Your Education and Experience are capitalized in the equation because they are the most important. However, your extracurricular activities make you well rounded and help you to develop transferable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and communication skills.

Start early to build and strengthen your resume. It’s not unheard of to begin as early as freshmen year with volunteer experience. In the Junior and Senior years, you should plan to have an internship each semester for a total of four by the time of commencement. If this is not possible, plan on having one during the summer. Even a part-time internship with as little as 5 to 10 hours per week will build your resume. Contact your campus career center or a private career counselor to help you with this process. By deciding to have more internships on your resume than your friends have, you will be making a huge investment in the future.

1.1 Internship

An internship is a system of on-the-job training for white-collar and professional careers. Internships for professional careers are similar to apprenticeships for trade and vocational jobs. Although interns are typically college or university students, they can also be high school students or post-graduate adults. On occasion, they are middle school or even elementary students. In some countries, internships for school children are called work experience. Internships may be paid or unpaid, and are usually understood to be temporary positions.

Generally, an internship consists of an exchange of services for experience between the student and an organization. Students can also use an internship to determine if they have an interest in a particular career, create a network of contacts, or gain school credit. Some interns find permanent, paid employment with the organizations with which they interned. This can be a significant benefit to the employer as experienced interns often need little or no training when they begin regular employment. Unlike a trainee program, however, employment at the completion of an internship is not guaranteed.

Internships exist in a wide variety of industries and settings. An internship may be paid, unpaid or partially paid. Paid internships are common in professional fields including medicine, architecture, science, engineering, law, business (especially accounting and finance), technology, and advertising. Non-profit charities and think tanks often have unpaid, volunteer positions.
Internships may be part-time or full-time. A typical internship lasts 6–12 weeks, but can be shorter or longer, depending on the organization involved. The act of job shadowing may also constitute interning.

1.1.1 Types of Internship

**Work experience internship:** Most often this will be in the second or third year of the school period. The placement can be from 2 months to one full school year. During this period, the student is expected to use the things he/she has learned in school and put them into practice. This way the student gains work experience in their field of study. The gained experience will be helpful to finish the final year of study.

**Research internship (graduation) or dissertation internship:** This is mostly done by students who are in their final year. With this kind of internship a student does research for a particular company. The company can have something that they feel like they need to improve, or the student can choose a topic within the company themselves. The results of the research study will be put in a report and often will have to be presented. Due to strict labor laws, European internships are mostly unpaid [citation needed], although they are still popular among non-Europeans in order to gain international exposure on one’s résumé and for foreign language improvement.

Another type of internship growing in popularity is the virtual internship, in which the intern works remotely, and is not physically present at the job location. It provides the capacity to attain the same results without the conventional means of being physically present at a job. Usually the internship is conducted via virtual means, such as phone, email, and web communication. Virtual interns generally have the opportunity to work at their own pace.

The practice of a mid-career person taking an internship (see Returnship) is relatively new to the U.S. but becoming more common due to the current economic crisis.

Some companies now find and place students in mostly unpaid internships for a fee. These companies charge to assist with a search, promising to refund their fees if no internship is found. These programs vary, but they claim to provide internship placements at reputable companies, provide controlled housing in a new city, mentorship and support throughout the summer, networking, weekend activities in some programs, and sometimes academic credit.

Another form of paying for internships is through charity auctions. A company with an internship will select a charity who will obtain an internship position funded by the auction. In some cases, companies have created internships simply to help a charity.
Some claim that fee-based programs and charity auctions restrict internship opportunities to students in wealthier families. These companies respond that "the average student comes from the middle class, and their parents "dig deep" to pay for it." Some companies specifically fund scholarships and grants for low-income applicants.

Critics of internships also decry the practice of requiring certain college credits to be obtained only through unpaid internships. Depending on the cost of the school, this is often seen as an unethical practice, as it requires students to exchange paid-for and often limited tuition credits in order to work an uncompensated job. Even if the school does not require credit for an internship, companies offering the internship often pressure colleges to give college credit so interns cannot complain that they receive nothing for their efforts.

**1.1.2 Internships by Region**

Internship laws and practices vary widely from country to country, and region to region.

**Asia and Australia**

**Australia:** Internships in Australia are often referred to as "work experience" when undertaken by high school students and "industry experience" when undertaken by university students. Some degree programs such as engineering require a minimum amount of industry experience (usually 12 weeks) to attain professional accreditation with industry bodies such as Engineers Australia.

Unpaid internships are legal and allowed for under the Fair Work Act 2009. There are a number of criteria used to determine if the engagement forms a legitimate internship, including:

- benefit to the individual
- commercial gain for the company
- period of placement, and/or
- relationship to a course of study.

**India:** Internship opportunities in India are career specific, college students often choose internships based on their major at University. Students often see it as a way to develop their capabilities by practically applying the academic elements of their degree and as an opportunity to learn about the work environment.

**Malaysia:** Some courses offered in public universities of Malaysia require the student to attend an industrial training program for a minimum ten weeks. This includes, for example, engineering and architecture. However, this period can vary from ten weeks to as long as six months.
New Zealand: In New Zealand, there are a number of colleges where students can undertake an internship whilst studying. Students studying adventure tourism or hospitality management must complete an internship in order to complete their course studies. Most of these internships are paid by the employer.

Europe

Denmark: Work without pay is inappropriate in Denmark. One way it can be done is as part of a work-trial where a person is tested by the authorities in conjunction with putting the individual back into the workplace. It is also common within most Danish universities to place students in "free work" jobs. The company is then compensated and the intern receives welfare during this period. This normally lasts about three months. The Danish Trade Unions monitor this type of work very closely so the hiring of an intern does not result in the loss of a paid job.

France: At French universities, internships, known as “stages”, are common. They occur during the third or fourth year of studies. The duration of French internships varies from 2 to 6 months. As of 1 January 2012, French labor law requires that all internships of 2 months or longer include minimum pay of 436.05 € per month. In France, it is also becoming more popular to perform internships after studies are completed.

Internships in France are also popular for international students. The primary reason international students intern in France is to learn to speak French fluently. French companies greatly appreciate employees who speak multiple languages and thus international opportunities are available.

Germany: As in most other countries, most students take their internship (German: "Praktikum") between the fourth or fifth semester of their degree at a university of applied sciences. In some fields of study it is common to write the final thesis in a company as part of an internship. Some degrees don’t require practical training in order to graduate.

Another type of internship has emerged in recent years is the post-graduation internship. The purpose of a post-graduation internship is to equip the student with knowledge and tools to be successful in their future position. These post-graduation internships should last between six and ten months.

Italy: Since the Italian University System entered the Bologna process, an internship experience (commonly referred to by the English term stage) has been made compulsory for almost all those who are studying for a bachelors or a master’s degree (especially in technical, economic or scientific faculties). The goal of this process is to reduce the gap between companies’ demands and the often very theoretical learning offered by Italian universities. However, since the internship is usually completed at university as well and since only few companies who employ student inters
rarely offer proper training, these internships are generally not considered real work experience. Almost all students therefore have to do a second or a third internship after they have completed their studies, hoping to receive appropriate professional training and possibly getting employed afterward in the same company or in another company in a close or related business.

Italian internships can last up to 6 months and can be extended for further 6 months. The total period can be up to 12 months. Internships in Italy can be both paid and unpaid. Students internships, especially the ones not involved with the development of a thesis are usually not paid. Almost all the graduate internships are paid, but the remuneration is usually extremely low, around 600 euros gross per month (that is about 1/4 of the gross monthly remuneration of an hired young graduate employee) and without benefits other than lunch and a few paid days for sickness/vacation. This poses a big problem for graduates, considering as well that some companies use graduate interns just to save money, making them work for 6 to 12 months without giving them a decent remuneration, without offering them proper training/formation, and without hiring them after the internship even if they showed to be productive, fast-learning and trustworthy. In other words, a significant percentage of Italian graduates, after one or even two years from the end of their studies (in some cases even masters studies), are still searching for a real job, that can offer stability and a decent remuneration. This, together with the long time necessary to graduate in Italy, is part of the reason why graduate Italians leave the family home very late, usually in their early 30s.

In order to get an internship, graduates have to go to interviews, which might be held in cities far from the ones in which graduates have been studying.

**Netherlands:** In the Netherlands it is also common to perform internships during college which, just like in Belgium and France, is called a stage. Most student internships last between 3 and 9 months. Companies are not obligated to pay the student, so sometimes small companies won't pay anything. The normal internship compensation rate in the Netherlands is around €300 per month, depending on education level and company generosity.

**Spain:** At Spanish universities, internship during the education period are uncommon. "Real" work experience for students begins only when they are done with their study. Some Spanish companies are getting more used to having student internships—mostly these are international students from other European countries. Often, students want to learn Spanish. Placement organizations may be needed as Spanish companies are harder to contact directly. The normal stage compensation rate in Spain is around 500€/month. Retribution is regulated in many universities starting from 6€/hr. Given these rates, Spanish employers who do hire interns often may be taking advantage of unpaid internships in order to get free labor.

**United Kingdom:** In Great Britain, internships are often referred to as 'sandwich placements'. They are valid work experience and are performed as part of a degree program. University staff
give students access, and students apply direct to employers. Some students opt not to go on a
sandwich placement however apply for internships during summer in between years at
University. Some universities hold fairs and exhibitions to encourage students to consider the
option and to enable students to meet potential employers. In the modern labor market, graduates
with internship work experience are deemed more desirable to employers. Research has
demonstrated they attain higher level degree classifications than those graduates without such
experience.

The purpose of these placements is varied. Some university students see it as a way to develop
their employability by utilizing the academic elements of their degree in a practical setting.
International students may also seek to get understanding about how work is conducted in the
English-speaking world and to experience cultural diversity. Organizations such as the Trades
Union Congress and Intern Aware have been lobbying for a change in British internships to make
interns aware of their employment law rights, especially in relation to whether they are entitled to
minimum wage and paid holidays.

**North America**

**Canada:** In Canada, high school, college, and university student placements are typically referred
to as "Co-ops" (co-operative education) programs. University co-op programs are often highly
competitive; students must apply to and compete for admission, as enrollment is limited.
Partnering employers will post placement opportunities through the university. These positions
typically span a four month term taking place either during summer break or during the school
year.

While some internships are unpaid (particularly in media, advertising, PR, and communications),
many Canadian organizations do offer paid internships. Not all internships are entry-level
positions; organizations may also offer internships for mid-level professionals. For example, in the
province of Ontario, paid internships are available for immigrants who have extensive experience
in other countries but lack relevant Canadian experience.

The nature and scope of unpaid internships in Canada is difficult to estimate. This is in part
because there are no written regulations defining internships directly. Minimum wage for labour
is covered by Employment Standards legislation and is governed at the provincial level. In Ontario,
a 6-point test is applied to determine if an employee-employer relationship exists. The test is
similar to that used in the United States by the Department of Labor.

**United States:** Many internships in the United States are career specific. Students often choose
internships based on their major at the university/college level. It is not uncommon for former
interns to acquire full-time employment at an organization once they have enough necessary
experience. The challenging job market has made it essential for college students to gain real world experience prior to graduation. In the US, company internships are at the center of NIGMS funded biotechnology training programs for science PhD students. One example is the Biotechnology Training Program - University of Virginia.

Not all internships are paid. Many internships that are unpaid involve receiving college credit, especially if an internship is correlated with a specific class. The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division allows an employer not to pay a trainee if all of the following are true:

The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to what would be given in a vocational school or academic educational instruction;

The training is for the benefit of the trainees;

The trainees do not displace regular employees, but work under their close observation;

The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees, and on occasion the employer’s operations may actually be impeded;

The trainees are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period; and

The employer and the trainees understand that the trainees are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

An exception is allowed for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. An exception is also allowed for work performed for a state or local government agency.

Some states have their own laws on the subject. Laws in the state of California, for example, require an employer to pay its interns working in California unless the intern receives college credit for the labor.

**South America**

**Brazil:** Internships in Brazil are known as estágios (lit. "stages") and internship workers are known as estagiários. They are regulated by the Lei do Estágio ("Law of Internship"). This law demands that companies pay a monthly income, although some internships are unpaid. It also requires that companies provide Personal Injury Service. The Lei do Estágio further stipulates a 30-hour limit of hours worked per week, which is normally divided into six hours per day from Monday to Friday. Estagiários have the right to 30 days of paid holiday for each year worked.
Why do an internship

Now more than ever, employers are highly selective about whom they hire. Virtually all hiring managers prefer to hire graduates who bring real-world experience to their organization. In very real terms, a degree alone may just not be enough to land your dream job. Internships do more than just look good on your resume.

You can test-drive the career path that interests you most. You can build a network of professional and personal contacts; develop the skills employers are seeking; and build confidence, motivation and professional work habits you need to excel. Ultimately, an internship can get your foot in the door with major companies or influential organizations. More employers each year hire their interns as full-time employees after graduation.

1.2 Why get Summer Internship

Internship programs have taken a lot of heat, particularly in the last year or so. Some for good reason—not every internship is legal according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, especially opportunities where for-profit companies expect candidates to work full-time for no pay.

With nearly three-quarters of students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities taking on at least one internship during their school career, it’s no wonder people are worried about internship programs taking advantage of young professionals. However, as long as the company abides by the laws surrounding internship programs, those opportunities should not be written off.

And just because some companies are taking advantage of interns does not mean that all internship programs are bad. Quite the contrary, actually. The benefits of internships for college students (and even recent graduates) include—but are certainly not limited to—the following:

Learn more about your field or industry. Along with job shadows and informational interviews, internships are one of the best ways to truly learn about your field from a real-world perspective. While the classroom certainly teaches students important information, there’s something different about implementing those teachings with a real client or customer.

Apply knowledge learned in the classroom. Again, there’s a big difference between learning about strategies and tactics and actually applying them. Interning for an organization helps students learn how their classroom knowledge applies to real situations and reinforces concepts taught in classes.

Gain valuable work experience. In most fields, no longer can a college graduate land an entry-level job with merely a bachelor’s degree and no prior work experience. Internships help students get
this real-world experience while still in school. Internship programs are a great way to generate more work samples for your professional portfolio and give you real accomplishment stories for your resume and online profiles.

Decide if this is the right path for you. Working for a company in your industry can give you valuable insight into whether or not the industry is the right choice for you, potentially avoiding the costs of obtaining a degree in a field you're not interested in. It's best to know as early as possible, and an internship can help you do that.

Develop and build upon skills. Learning new skills in an internship can help you in future employment opportunities and might give you a leg up on your competition in future application processes.

Get a foot in the door at a company. Internship experiences provide a valuable opportunity to share your skills with a prospective employer long before the hiring process for an entry-level job occurs. This can be a great benefit when, in the future, an opening does occur—if you've impressed them, you'll probably be on the list of top candidates for the job. Also, according to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), new graduates who took part in an internship program are more likely to have received a job offer than those who didn’t have an internship experience.

Gain valuable networking contacts. Another benefit to completing an internship is the contacts you make. Networking is often one of the best ways to land a new job and a primary way to learn about unadvertised job opportunities.

Obtain references for future job opportunities. Your internship supervisor has had a chance to see your skills in action at the company and is an ideal reference for future job opportunities. Other individuals you work closely with at your internship can also serve as references or provide recommendation letters for your job search.

Learn about the world of work. Although you’ve probably had a job before or during college, you probably don’t know what the day-to-day experience of working in your field will be like until your first internship experience. When you choose to intern at a company, you’ll experience first-hand what it’s like to work in an office, interact with supervisors and co-workers, and handle customers or clients.

Meet peers with similar interests. Internship programs can introduce you to other students and recent graduates in your field or who share your interests—which certainly can't hurt your career or your social life.
1.3 Benefits of Doing an Internship

Finding work can be a real challenge, especially if you don't have any experience. Yet to get experience you must first find a job. It’s a nasty catch that can be difficult to get around but an internship is a good way to do it.

Internships provide work experience opportunities to university students, recent graduates and people considering career changes. Employers are willing to hire interns with little or no experience, especially if the intern is willing to accept little or no monetary compensation. However, the benefits of doing an internship go far beyond your pay.

**Gain Valuable Work Experience**

An internship provides the opportunity to gain hands on work experience that you just can't get in the classroom. First time job seekers and career changers aren’t usually desirable candidates, but companies are willing to train them as interns and give them the experience they would need to get a job.

**Have an Edge in the Job Market**

Employers are usually more concerned with your work experience than your qualifications and internships are often the only way to get the work experience you need to secure a job, so they’re a vital part of your resume. Many employers prefer or require applicants who have done an internship or relevant work experience and in many of the more competitive job markets it is essential to set you apart from the others.

**Transition into a Job**

Employers see interns as prospective employees and many finish their internships and continue working with the company full time. Internships are the number one way for employers to find new staff in the US. Think of it as a really long interview, after which you’ve proved that you are a capable and hardworking employee. Just as you’re giving the industry and the company a trial run, they’re doing the same for you.

**Decide if this is the Right Career for You**

If you’re not sure if this is the right career for you, doing an internship is a great way to try it out. Internships are generally short-term, so you can test your future career without committing and find out if it is a career that will satisfy you.
Networking Opportunities

Internships are a great way to meet people in your field. Even if you have experience, knowing people never hurts. An internship allows you to meet people who might help you land a job later on and give you the contacts in the industry you’re trying to break into. Plus, references from people in the industry will really add weight to your application.

Apply Classroom Knowledge

An internship can be seen as the pinnacle of your undergraduate education and give you the chance to use the skills you’ve learned in the classroom in a real-world setting. It’s a chance to prove the worth of your qualifications and to show that you can perform in the role you’ve been given.

Gain Confidence

Getting experience is a great way to build your confidence. What’s more, if you have an impressive resume, you will be more confident in your chances of securing a job. After you’ve done an internship, if an interviewer asks if you know how to do something, you won’t say “um, yes, I think I would be able to do that” but can say “absolutely” and supplement your assertion with examples.
2.0 SEARCHING FOR INTERNSHIP

2.1 Introduction

Before the semester begins, reflect on your interests and needs. Consider your passion. What type of experience gets you excited? What matches your long term career goals? If you are certain about your ideal internship (unlike most students), apply early. For federal internships that may require a security clearance, begin your search months before the semester. Many students choose to start applying to internships 3 to 6 weeks before the semester begins.

Email your cover letter and resume applying to most internship. In some cases, internship sites request interns to apply via an online form/application. Let potential employers know that you are in American University’s Washington Semester and Extended Studies Programs, interested in interning at their organization, and would like to arrange an interview during the first week of your semester.

Internship sites often receive a huge volume of applicants; expect a response not more than a week or two after you apply. Note that internship sites frequently do not reply to emails from applicants who may not be considered. You can follow up your inquiry with an e-mail or telephone call when you arrive in Washington, DC. Check to be sure that the person you emailed is still in position. Take the initiative to selectively “cold call” organizations that excite you the most. The internship search requires significant effort and research. Managing that process proves to be an important lesson.

2.2 Top Three Strategies for Finding an Internship

Networking

Networking has been statistically proven to be one of the most effective job search strategies, so why not use it to find an internship? Networking means letting everyone you know, including: family, friends, faculty, previous employers and teachers, social networking sites such as Facebook, that you are looking for an internship. Visit your Career Services Office at your college to tap into their resources and suggestions on successful networking techniques. Increase your network by contacting professionals currently working in your field of interest, such as alumni at your college. Schedule informational interviews with your network to gather information and discuss your interests in finding an internship.
Discover Internship Listings on Internship Databases or Company Websites

Visit your Career Services Office to find out more about what they have to offer. CSO's maintain a number of databases for finding internships and can provide passwords for sites they subscribe to. Many companies include internships on the career or employment sections of their website. Check out the career or employment section of an employers’ website to see if they do offer internships and what types of internships they offer. Many large corporations offer a variety of internships in areas, such as: finance, marketing, advertising, accounting, public relations, journalism, human resources, etc. Select a number of different internships and be sure to follow the application instructions precisely. Keep applying to internships of interest as you find them until you have received a definite internship offer. Students will often think that once they have applied to two or three internships they can sit back and wait until they receive an offer. The truth is that many internships are very competitive and until you hear back from an employer – don’t assume that you will be accepted. Be proactive by continuing to apply to new internships as you find them.

Prospecting for Internships

Identify organizations of interest and contact them by prospecting to see if they hire interns or would consider hiring an intern to assist with important projects or carry out the day to day operations of the business. Check the newspaper classifieds, the local Chamber of Commerce, or look through the local phone book to identify businesses of interest. Conduct online searches to identify potential employers. Check online job search engines to discover employers in the field and contact to see if they have internship opportunities.

2.3 How to Know if an Internship is Legit

The Internet is an amazing resource especially when it comes to finding internships and jobs. There are so many opportunities available that all you have to do is identify programs or look for internships in a particular field or industry. You may be seeking an internship in finance, art, marketing, economics, government, law, or any other topic that’s of interest; but the questions is, how do you know if an internship is legit? Internet scams run rampant and it’s important to be skeptical.

Internships can be of great value when it comes to gaining experience and getting hired. Since most companies seek candidates with previous relevant experience in the field, internships are crucial for seniors who are seeking their first real time job after graduation. It doesn’t matter if the internship is paid or if you are receiving credit to complete the experience, the only thing an employer focuses on is what type of knowledge and skills you gained when interning for the company.
I find students to be either skeptical or totally trusting when it comes to finding an internship that will help them meet their goals. If an internship sounds too good to be true, you will want to do a little more digging. Speaking to people within the organizations or students who have previously done an internship, will help you clarify the picture. On the other hand, there may be things about the internship that causes concern and then it's equally important to do more research to see if the internship will be a real learning experience.

One thing to be aware of are internships that appear to be totally sales positions that are paid strictly by commission. The problem is that you don't know enough about the company or the product to understand if a commission is really feasible. If an employer lists very open qualifications and does not inquire about your interests or experience, it's highly likely that you will find yourself in a cold-calling position or one that provides exposure to only general administrative duties.

Internships that are questionable are usually ones you will want to avoid. Bad neighborhoods or internships in a person's home are never a good idea. If an employer doesn't ask you to complete an application or ask for a resume, it's also not a good idea. If you get a bad vibe when it comes to the internship listing, the requirements, or the people it is usually a good idea to forfeit the opportunity and begin looking for another.

There are scams all over the Internet. Due diligence is required whenever making major decisions based on what it says on the Internet. Researching a company is one thing you can do to make sure a company is legitimate. Doing research on Google is another way to learn more about a company. Entering the name of a company plus scam is a way to see if there have been any reports about this company being illegitimate. Checking out the Better Business Bureau will also help to identify companies where there have been legitimate complaints.

If an employer asks for you to pay money to learn more about the program or to do an actual internship for them, be sure to run as fast as you can. Legitimate companies put their information out there and don’t require money to learn more about the program before you even know what the program is about. You can also ask the company to provide you with a list of references. References from people they've done business with will provide a basic foundation on identifying if an employer is legit. Of course there are some programs that do require money which includes most of the programs abroad; in these cases I recommend due diligence in conducting research to know up front exactly what the program includes.

Never apply for an internship if money is required up front. Of course there are internship programs where paying money may be legit. When money is involved it is even more crucial that research be conducted before getting too far in the process. Don't be afraid to ask the company for
references or contact information for interns who have previously worked for the company. Doing the research up front can save a whole lot of stress in the end.

2.4 Don't Let Misinformation Hold You Back in Finding the Right Internship

*Internship Myth:*

The best internship is one that pays the most.

*Internship Fact:*

Getting paid to do an internship may be a consideration but there are many other factors that should be considered prior to accepting an internship.

*Internship Myth:*

Since hiring is down due to the economy, I should accept the first internship I am offered.

*Internship Fact:*

In order for an internship to be valuable it’s important to identify your goals for doing the internship. Oftentimes internships can turn into full-time jobs and if the company or job is not of long-term interest, you may have been wasting your time not getting the right experience for the job you hope to do.

*Internship Myth:*

I should always seek out well-established internships with big name employers.

*Internship Fact:*

Although completing an internship with a well-know firm can have its advantages in some industries, many small organizations provide top notch internship programs that may provide a broader range of responsibilities.

Since many employers use their internship program as a training ground to hire it’s next round of employees, it’s important to assess each opportunity to be able to fully compare the positive and negatives of each experience.

*Internship Myth:*

Employers seek only hire interns to make coffee, file, and answer the phone.

*Internship Fact:***
There are many employers out there who provide valuable opportunities for students to gain the relevant knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in a career field of their choosing.

Internship Myth:

Employers will not hire me if I do not possess all of the skills I will need to become successful on the job.

Internship Fact:

Internships offer learning experiences that provide students with the knowledge and skills they will need to get hired in the field. As long as the student possesses transferable skills, such as: interpersonal, communication, organization, computer, leadership, and team-building, employers will often jump to hire them as an intern.

Internship Myth:

I need to make money over the summer so I can’t afford to do an internship.

Internship Fact:

Not all internships are full time. Many students will combine a part-time internship with a part-time job in order to get the experience while making money at the same time.

Internship Myth:

I live in a small town and there are no local internships available.

Internship Fact:

Nothing could be further from the truth. There are 3 basic ways to find an internship:

- Networking
- Check out online databases and local newspapers
- Prospecting

Networking: Networking with everyone you know from family to friends, previous employers, faculty, etc., in addition to checking out The Career Development Center at your college to see if they have an active alumni / parent network for you to tap into can help you build a strong professional network.

Checking out online databases: There are a wealth of internship opportunities listed online. The Career Development Center at your college should be able to help you find resources that will help you get an internship.
Prospecting: By checking out the local newspaper, Chamber of Commerce, or organizations of interest online you can identify companies of interest and then call them to see if they are interested in hiring a college student for an internship or summer job. Some of the best internships can be found by prospecting. Once you know what you want, you can search companies that offer specific job opportunities and start out by doing an internship.
3.0 MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNSHIP

From your interview to your exit, actively listen and reflect what you hear. Be inquisitive; ask questions for clarification. Keep your supervisor informed about your progress and activities. Seek feedback and receive it in a gracious, professional manner.

*Initiate*

Don’t wait for assignments during a lull. See what needs attention and offer to help.

*Respect*

From the executives on down, show respect for all of your colleagues and value each person’s contributions.

*Reflect*

Take the time to think about what you’re learning - not just about the organization, industry, or projects, but about yourself.

*Thank*

Appreciate the opportunities and support that you receive throughout your internship and always send a farewell message to your colleagues, not just your supervisor, extending your gratitude for the experience. In turn, your supervisor may show thanks to you by offering a letter of recommendation for you to share with future employers.

At every stage, the internship experience presents an opportunity to teach you new skills and insights about yourself as well as the real world. You may spend the first few weeks getting acquainted with your co-workers and familiarizing yourself with office protocol. During the introductory phase, you may encounter limited opportunity for creative input. As time passes however, the nature of assignments may change and the level of responsibility may increase.

Ask for more assignments and contribute your ideas. Find mentors and make sure your colleagues see you as the “go-to” intern. As you adjust to the office, realize that many interns (and many staff members) perform a certain amount of clerical work. Program standards require that clerical duties are limited to a maximum of 40% of your work. You internship is what you make it.
3.1 How does an internship build a career

In Washington, D.C., you have unparalleled access to internships. These opportunities enable you to enrich your education with high-impact experiences and to apply classroom lessons in professional settings. SPExS internships polish your job search skills and professional abilities.

Fifty percent of the time, interns report that their professional experiences affirm their career aspirations. However, learning what you dislike in a position, organization, or field is equally valuable. So too is developing new skills, expanding your list of achievements, and building relationships with professionals.

The more internship experience you have, the more qualified you will find yourself for future internships and jobs. Therefore, your SPExS internship will help you explore a wide variety of opportunities and launch you into your future career.

SPExS internship supervisors offer students challenging assignments as well as valuable industry and organizational insights. If you excel in your position, you can expect to walk away with tangible work samples, positive recommendations, and polished interpersonal skills. Perhaps you may even receive a job offer at the conclusion of your internship, as some our SPExS alumni have.

3.2 Doing an Internship Can Be the First Step in Getting an Entry Level Job

Internships provide a way to gain relevant experience in the field to be able to put on a resume along with making valuable networking connections that could prove helpful when looking for a job. Reflecting back on an internship is one of the key components of gaining the most value out of the overall experience.

Internships offer valuable work experience, a chance to get some excellent references, and potentially even a full-time job offer.

Internships teach students more about the career field they are hoping to one day enter and offer them hands-on experience and exposure to the field.

The value of an internship includes learning the valuable skills it takes to be successful on the job. Internships also help assess different work environments that help identify jobs you want to do as well as those you don't.
3.3 How to Turn an Internship into a Job

Participating in professional associations provides students with an excellent opportunity to meet people currently working in the field. This also provides information on what professional journals people in the field are reading as well as any entry-level job openings that may be currently available in other organizations.

Express Your Interest in Working for the Company

By expressing an interest in the company, you will be letting the company know that you consider the organization a place that you would like to work. Even though there may not be any current positions available, by letting your supervisor know that you would be interested in working for the company, you will be more likely to be contacted once a position opens up.

Networking is about relationship building. Once you develop a strong networking group, you will develop a better sense of what it takes to be successful and learn how to create a network that can assist you in accomplishing your career goals. Having a mentor that you respect will help to make the internship experience much less stressful.

The mentor will also provide you with someone to learn from and a place to get your questions answered. Seek out a professional mentor that you trust and don’t be afraid to ask him/her questions and suggestions on ways you can improve your performance and increase your current level of knowledge and skills. You can ask what it takes to move up in the field, both in the organization and in the specific industry. Once you establish a strong network and gain experience in your field, you too will have the opportunity to assist new professionals who are interested in breaking into the field.

The professional relationships you develop during your internship experience will also be part of your professional network of people who can attest to your knowledge and ability to do a good job. Your future relationships with your network must be nurtured and continued long after your internship has ended in order to keep it alive and well.

Express your Appreciation

Once you complete your internship, a short thank you is always appreciated and will leave a favorable impression with the employer. If you are returning to college, be sure to stay in touch with your supervisor and colleagues and take the time to inquire about potential job openings they anticipate in the future.

The Top 10 Tips for Interns offers additional strategies on how to make your internship a success and change it into a potential full time job offer.
3.4 How to Make the Transition to Your First Job after College Graduation

You’ve spent approximately the last seventeen years sitting in a classroom absorbing bits of knowledge. Every now and then you were tested to see how well you remembered that information. Occasionally, you had to write a research paper; sometimes quite an extensive one. You were given the assignment back in September. The paper wasn’t due until December.

Flash to the Present

Suddenly you are out of the safe haven of the classroom, where you were tested on schedule, and deadlines were months away. You are thrust into the harsh reality of your first job. Deadlines are “tomorrow, at the latest.” There are no formal exams, but don’t ever forget -- you are being tested; everyday. The results come, not in report cards, but in performance reviews. Always remember to do your best; you are being watched. Why is your employer watching you? You may think it’s a money thing. That is, of course, true; but it isn’t the only reason. Your performance in the classroom impacted you alone, not your college, or even your professor. In contrast, your performance at work impacts the organization as a whole, your bosses, and even your co-workers. You are one spoke in the wheel that makes the organization run. If that spoke is broken, your employer will just go out and replace it. Enough said.

Some Tips to Help You Succeed

- Always arrive at work on time, if not a little early. Stick to your lunch hour... and if you are particularly busy, eat at your desk or come back early.
- Dress appropriately. Look around you to see how others are dressed; especially those who are further along on your career path. For example, if you work in an advertising agency and aspire to be an account executive, don’t dress like the art director, whose job allows a more casual style.
- LISTEN--LISTEN--LISTEN...and OBSERVE. The best piece of advice I received from an employer was to listen and observe before jumping in to suggest changes.
- Stay away from office gossip. That is not to say don’t pay attention to what you hear through the grapevine. That can be helpful. However don’t contribute to it.
- Mind your manners. Don’t forget what you learned as a child. Please and Thank you should still be the magic words. Always knock before you enter. Although barging into your friend’s dorm room may have been okay with him, barging into your supervisor’s office is not okay.
- Answer the telephone politely, even if the call is internal.
- Find a mentor. Look for someone on your career path who is willing to take you under her wing. Your own supervisor may not be a good idea, but someone else under his supervision may work well.
➢ Don’t pretend to know things you don’t. However, do your homework. Learn what you need to know.

➢ Don’t be afraid to ask questions. If you are assigned a project and are not sure how it should be completed, ask. It’s better to ask before the project is due, than to have it delayed because it was done incorrectly.

➢ Always stick to deadlines. Bosses usually want projects completed on time. If there is any flexibility, she will let you know.

➢ Finally, pay close attention to corporate culture. Learn how things work within your company. Are relationships formal or friendly? Does everyone arrive early and stay late? Are lunch hours short or non-existent?
4.0 CHALLENGES IN INTERNSHIPS

4.1 Introduction

As with any experience, you may find yourself faced with obstacles in your internship that you hadn't anticipated. When going into any new situation, we usually assume that everything will run smoothly and that the overall experience will offer what we hoped for; in this case, an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. Unfortunately, you may find yourself faced with challenges that you don't feel able to handle.

The two important things to remember is to always maintain your professionalism and always work to find ways that are mutually beneficial to both you and the employer that will help solve the problems you are facing. Below are some tips on how to face some of the challenges that you may find cropping up over the course of your internship.

The internship is not what you expected.

One thing that might make your internship go more smoothly is to map out your expectations with your supervisor beforehand. Once you've done this, you can always go back and reiterate your expectations. If you didn't come to an agreement during the course of your interview, you may want to have a discussion with your supervisor as soon as possible to see if you can come to a mutual agreement on what you will be expected to do.

Communicating your discontent will give your supervisor an opportunity to make some changes whenever possible. Always keep your communications on a positive note by letting your supervisor know that you are interested in learning and doing more to help with the running of the overall organization. Employers respect employees (and interns) who show initiative and are able to communicate their needs and expectations clearly using positive communications that serves to meet both their needs.

If you find yourself in conflict with your immediate supervisor, what should you do

Here again communicating your needs and expectations honestly can often defuse a stressful situation. Supervisors generally want their interns to have a positive experience and usually enjoy mentoring them throughout the internship experience. Differences of opinion are a fact of life and learning how to deal with personality differences is a great lesson that can be used throughout your internship and your future career. Again being mindful of your supervisor’s goals and expectations, you will often be able to work things out for the better. If you deal with problems constructively and not ignore them, you will have a much better chance of solving them.
You find yourself bored with not much to do

This is an easy one. Ask your supervisor for additional work to do. If he/she does not have any work for you, ask if you can contact other departments to see if they have work that you can help with. If these tactics fail, use your time wisely by reading journals in the field, scheduling informational interviews with co-workers, and offering your knowledge and talents to devise new and better ways to do things within the department.

You find the office politics difficult to handle

As an intern or new employee it is recommended that you stay away from office politics as much as possible. You want to promote yourself as a professional and engaging in backstabbing and negative communication will not serve you well in meeting your personal and professional goals.

As a new professional, learning how to handle these types of difficulties is an excellent learning experience in itself. Developing open, honest communications can often diffuse many situations that occur in the workplace. By demonstrating your maturity to handle these and other situations that often occur on the job, you will be providing the employer with a positive impression of your interpersonal, problem-solving, and communications skills and your ability to deal with anything that may come along.

4.2 Are You Unhappy in Your Current Internship

If you are experiencing problems with your internship and it’s not what you expected, it’s important to figure out what the problem is and see if you can come up with a positive solution.

Since an internship is usually a short term experience, is there a way that you can transform your view of the experience by changing your perspective? There are many people who hate their jobs but do them because they have to. Since internships generally last only 10 – 12 weeks, perhaps the learning experience would make it worth staying, rather than quitting early, given that you’ll be able to gain some relevant work experience in your field of interest and hopefully get a positive reference you can use when you apply for future jobs.

What can I do if I find my supervisor difficult to work for?

It may help to first identify the problem. Do you find that your supervisor is authoritative or insensitive or is it more of a personality problem? For example, suppose you are finding it difficult working with a certain supervisor because you feel that he/she is always making suggestions leaving you little room to do your own thing and no chance to use your own creativity. Is it a possibility that you can think of the situation more in a way that the supervisor is taking an interest in you and really wants to help you learn all that you can while working as an intern? Of
course there are managers that can make your life difficult and no matter what way you look at it, it’s going to be a challenge. I’m not talking about these situations but more in terms of the supervisor who may not know that he/she tends to micromanage and rather than being a mentor whose primary responsibility is to help train you by offering support and guidance, tends to give assignments with an expectation that there’s only one way to complete the work which unfortunately reduces the amount of learning that takes place on the job since, as an intern, you are more concerned about what the supervisor wants rather than ways that you can complete the job to the best of your ability.

*Here are some recommendations on what you can do if you are unhappy in your current internship:*

Speak with your supervisor to discuss any difficulties you are having. Perhaps your supervisor can provide insight and offer you suggestions or he/she may even suggest putting you on a different assignment.

Before you make a move, take a step back and try to look at the situation objectively and try asking yourself these questions:

"Why am I so dissatisfied with this internship?"

"Is the internship different than what I expected?"

"Is my supervisor unreasonable and difficult to work for?"

"Is the job so boring that I can’t stand going to work each day?"

“Does this internship go against my personal values and beliefs?”

“Is there something I can do that will make this internship a more positive experience?”

Once you have identified the problem, it will be much easier to come up with a solution.

If you find that there is no way that you can stay and complete your internship, be sure to provide your employer with a formal resignation letter and two weeks' notice. You will want to exit gracefully and avoid any unnecessary bad feelings between you and the employer.

By behaving professionally you will maintain the respect of your supervisor and will feel more confident in your ability to handle uncomfortable situations in the future. By acting professionally you will be able to use your supervisor as a reference in the future and also be able to include the internship as a learning experience when updating your current resume.
4.3 The Negative Effects of a Tough Economy on College Students

According to a recent survey completed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), it is expected that internship hiring will be cut by 21% this year. The good news is that 92.6% of survey respondents still planned on hiring students for internships or co-ops and that many employers even planned on increasing undergraduate-level internship salaries by 4.9 percent.

How Tough Economy Affects College Students

With the current state of the economy everyone is looking for ways to increase income and reduce expenses. The economic crunch is also having an effect on today's college students as they begin looking for summer internships and jobs. Since companies are much less likely to offer paid internships when they have just laid off a percentage of their workforce, students must learn to be flexible and find some creative ways to meet their goals.

I hear a great deal of concern from students who are looking for summer internships and jobs. Although their primary goal may be to find something that will help meet their personal and college expenses, most students are cognizant of the fact that it's also extremely important for them to get some relevant work experience that can be included on their resume.

Internships in a Down Economy

As they begin looking for summer internships and jobs, today's college students must face the fact that employers will be hiring less people this year. Companies who have just laid off ten employees may be somewhat hesitant to bring in a paid intern to replace them. Although the thought of considering an unpaid summer internship seems unrealistic or unattractive to many students, it's important to consider the long-term consequences of having no job at all (not going to work for free) or even a job that pays minimum wage (for the sake of making some money), in lieu of doing an unpaid internship.

Summer Employment Options for College Students

The truth is that each individual must evaluate their personal situation when searching for summer internships and jobs. Since gaining relevant experience in a particular field can be crucial to getting hired, students should consider all options when making a decision. Since many internships offer part-time hours, students can find creative ways that may meet both their needs quite nicely.

One option for students is to do an unpaid internship and a summer job. By doing both a job and an internship, students will have an opportunity to gain some relevant knowledge and skills by working in the field while also making the money they need to meet their financial goals. Although
volunteer experiences don’t provide a salary, employers usually are impressed when they see volunteer experiences listed on a resume.

Volunteering shows employers that the candidate possesses a certain level of maturity, commitment, as well as the positive values they value when hiring new employees. Both unpaid internships and volunteer experiences are excellent ways students can document their value to employers once they are in the process of looking for a job.

Another option is to find opportunities that are funded through grants and/or scholarships. Although it may be somewhat late to find these opportunities for this year, planning ahead and researching resources may help put students ahead of the game come next summer. These opportunities provide learning experiences for students who can’t afford not working for the summer but who are also concerned about not having any relevant experience to put on their resume.

Summer camp jobs, tutoring, and private school teaching are also ways to make money while honing some professional skills. Even if teaching is not your goal, the transferable skills (communication, interpersonal, leadership, teaching, advising, organization) you will learn by doing these positions can have a positive impact on any resume. Many of these positions offer housing and food in addition to a salary. One thing students should keep in mind is that even if their overall GPA is a 3.98, it may still be very difficult to find a full-time job if they don’t possess the relevant work experience they need to meet the employer’s requirements.
5.0 COMPLETING AN INTERNSHIP

5.1 Introduction

If you've recently graduated from college and have not yet been able to find a job, you may want to consider doing an internship. Internships can provide relevant experience to place on your resume while you are waiting for the right job to come along. Many employers who are not hiring for fulltime employees, still hire interns to help them get the work done.

Getting an internship after graduation can provide an opportunity to gain new skills and make yourself more marketable. It’s considered better to be working in the field even if it is as an intern, than it is to be seeking employment or doing some mundane work just to get a paycheck. Although there are many paid internships, it may still be worth your while even if you have to accept an internship that is unpaid. Perhaps you can work at a local restaurant to help you pay the bills while you’re gaining additional skills at an internship that will better qualify you for the job.

You can search for internships by using several of the many internship databases that are available. You can also check out the job sites and enter the word “intern”. In a down economy when many employers are not hiring full-time employees, they still will look for interns to help fill the gap they are experiencing in the workforce. Networking with family, friends, faculty, alumni from your college, as well as acquaintances, is another valuable strategy when looking to find an internship.

5.2 Why Students Should Consider Doing One or More Internships

Internships provide a link between academic learning and professional employment. Since many employers list previous internships as a requirement for their new hires, many applicants are already behind the eight ball if they have not done some type of internship experience during their time in college. It is recommended that students try out several different internships to be able to get a sense of what it’s like working in a particular career field. This experience allows students to see what it’s like actually working in the field and a chance to evaluate the types of jobs that match their personal interests and personality.

Developing Essential Knowledge & Skills Increases Chances of Getting Hired

The opportunity to meet people currently working in the field, gaining valuable references, as well as getting exposure to the working environment, are three good reasons for students to consider doing one or more internships during college. Since many employers use their internship programs to train and select new hires for the organization, it’s crucial that interns do their best to prove to the employer that they have what it takes to be successful in the job. Internships are a
way for students to build on their knowledge and skills while increasing their chances of getting hired for full-time positions that open up in the future.

**Gaining Exposure to a Career Field Increases Likelihood of Retention**

Not only are employers looking for individuals with relevant experience in the field, they are also looking for people who have had exposure to the field and the company and who really understand what it’s like working at that particular job. Employers understand that individuals who have not had any exposure to the field, may find that it wasn’t exactly what they expected and may decide to leave after receiving several months of training. Since training is costly for employers, they usually try to avoid these situations whenever possible.

**Doing an Unpaid Internships versus Getting a Job**

Students often ask if they should consider doing an unpaid internship or if they would be better off finding a job and make some money. The answer to this question is, it depends. If you are able to do an unpaid internship without any undue hardship, the experience will provide valuable work experience at the least and at the most may end up leading to a full-time job. Students who think that they cannot afford to do an unpaid internship, might try combining it with a part-time job to sustain themselves over the course of the internship. Even though an internship is unpaid, it could provide invaluable experience that paves the way to a full-time job. If you are working in a field that offers paid internships, then you may be able to have the best of both worlds.