



## **GETTING INTERNSHIPS & RELATED EXPERIENCE**

You are just as qualified as the next person, but there IS one thing you don't have: experience. And the catch is: you need experience to get experience. Employers want good minds and talent, but they also want people with an idea of exactly what they're getting into in the workplace. That's why employers hire graduates who have gained experience through internships, volunteer experiences, and related summer and part-time jobs.

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## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

### Gain an Internship

“Internships allow students to experience firsthand, the pressures and rewards of the workplace, while under the supervision of faculty and selected workplace supervisors.”

~Karen Blomain, Professor,  
English Department, Kutztown University

“Internships offer invaluable, real-world experience to students. When we hire a candidate with internship experience it makes the transition in to our environment easier since they have already gained some exposure in a business environment.”

~Jenn Radogna, HR Recruiting Manager  
Enterprise Rent-A-Car



Kutztown University students have discovered that whether it is a means to enhance their academic resume, gain professional experience, or open the door for that first job, internships are the key ingredient to success!

## FAST FACTS ABOUT INTERNSHIPS

### What is an internship?

An internship is a carefully monitored work or volunteer experience with intentional learning goals; it reflects actively on what you are learning throughout the experience. It is temporary work that gives you on-the-job training and practical experience. Internships can last one semester, or can be longer/shorter. Some are paid positions while others allow you to earn academic credit. You can intern in almost any area of study in almost any part of the country, or even abroad. Internships can get your foot in the door for your first full-time, permanent position. Employers use internships to gain a first in-depth look at prospective employees.

### Why is an internship important & what are the benefits?

- Experiential learning is the single most effective way to obtain employment after graduation.
- You get the opportunity to learn new skills and apply the things you learned in the classroom in “real life situations.”
- It is a way to explore career options, likes and dislikes, with little time or monetary investment.
- You can earn academic credit, and for some internships you may even be paid!
- You can network and develop professional contacts in your field of study.
- You can increase your self-confidence and professionalism.
- You can learn more about a chosen field and gain industry knowledge.
- Accumulate evidence of your abilities—your resume will look good!
- You won’t need a lot of training and hand-holding if hired.
- Find out before graduation what you’d like to do after graduation.

## What types of Internships Exist?

- Paid Internships
- For-Credit Internships
- Volunteer Experiences
- Summer, Fall, and Spring Internships
- Part-time Related Work Experience

## What is the best time to do an Internship?

The ideal time to do an internship is during the 2nd semester of your sophomore year or during your junior year. This gives you the option of doing another internship when you are a senior. However, it is *NEVER too late to do an internship!* Many college graduates opt to gain a post-baccalaureate internship—an internship conducted *after* graduation.

## When are internships offered?

Internships are offered throughout the year (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Many students prefer to do summer internships because they have more time to devote to the experience; however, students also complete semester-long internship programs.

## Are all internships unpaid?

No! While many organizations believe that the experience gained through the internship is compensation enough, other organizations offer competitive wages and professional development opportunities for their interns. There are three types of internships:

- **Academic Internships** - These are internships that allow you to gain academic credit for your experience. Students interested in receiving academic credit for their internship must meet with their faculty advisor to establish the specific criterion that must be met.
- **Paid Internships** - A paid internship will offer you monetary compensation for your work as an intern. Students completing a paid internship will receive compensation in the form of a stipend (usually a lump sum paid out over the course of the internship) or an hourly rate. Be aware that there are alternative forms of compensation such as reimbursement for travel, housing and/or other living expenses.
- **Unpaid Internships** - Unpaid internships are no different from any other internship except there is no monetary compensation. Your willingness to take on an unpaid internships show your excitement and commitment to the field.

## Do I need a career goal in mind before I pursue an internship?

No! While it is helpful to gain experience in a field that you want pursue a career in, it is not necessary. In fact, internships are a way to explore what exactly it is that you want to pursue as a career. Internships are a valuable, hands-on way to test those areas that you are considering as a future career. If you would like help learning about what opportunities would fit your goals, the CDC has plenty of resources to assist you!

## How can I prepare a resume & cover letter?

Resumes and cover letters are an essential part of the internship process. Without a solid resume and cover letter how are you going to market yourself? The Career Development Center Library has many resources to assist you in writing your resume and cover letter.

## **What should I have prepared?**

- Resume/Cover Letter
- A professional reference list. (Former and present employers, members of faculty, staff and administration, or advisors and coaches. No family members or friends.).
- Interviewing skills – practice and think ahead. Review the *Interviewing Successfully Guidebook*, which can be found on the CDC website or in the Career Library.

## **What will I do in an internship?**

Each internship experience will differ because each organization has different needs and opportunities. Internships are designed to give practical, hands-on experience to the intern and may include the following: opportunities for research, customer contact, management of databases, attending meetings with supervisor and/or staff and project management.

## **Can I do more than one internship?**

Absolutely!! Completing multiple internships allows you to explore and understand your field and future career goals. Additionally, it will make you more attractive to future employers because you will have more experience to offer them.

## **What's in it for the employer?**

- A recruiting strategy for employers
- Employers hone in on academic major and internship experience above all other characteristics on a resume (according to Michigan State University's Recruiting Trends)
- Approximately 85% of interns receive a job offer from the parent company.

## **Where do I Identify/Look for Internships?**

- Directories in the Career Development Center
- Positions posted in the Career Development Center
- Websites (e.g. [www.collegecentral.com](http://www.collegecentral.com))
- Internship Fairs (each fall & spring semester in the MSU MPR)
- Job Fairs (many employers there also have internships to offer)
- Previous/present employers and/or faculty
- Local seasonal employers (e.g. Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Consult a phone book/yellow pages
- Alumni contacts/database

## What resources are available at the CDC to help me?

- **Internship Postings** - Placed in binders the Career Library and categorized by Colleges/Majors. Also, check out a listing of current internship opportunities posted on a bulletin board outside the office.
- **Websites** - All internships received are posted on the web at [www.collegecentral.com/kutztown](http://www.collegecentral.com/kutztown). You may also explore the internship links listed on the CDC homepage at <http://careers.kutztown.edu>.
- **Directories** – The CDC has a host of internship directories in the career library to help students identify possible sites to intern (e.g. “Directory of Arts Internships”).
- **Counseling Appointments/Workshops** - Meet with a career counselor in the CDC to discuss your plans and what you have discovered so far. Our professional staff can discuss all aspects of the internship/career process. Each semester we offer a series of workshops about various career/internship topics. Give us a call, send us an email, or check out our website to take advantage of these.



## SERIOUS STUFF

To get the most out of an internship or summer job, you must take it as seriously as a "real" job. Speak, act, and dress in a way that says you are professional. The employer will be evaluating you and your work. But also realize that it is a learning experience – you are not expected to know everything beforehand!

### **Be aware of...**

- Organization requirements
- KU requirements
- Application deadlines
- Application materials requested

### **Keep in mind that employers look for:**

- Enthusiasm
- Professionalism
- Responsibility
- Communication skills (written and oral)
- Drive and desire
- Good GPA (at least 3.00)

### **Remember...**

Even an internship or related job that is not in the career field you ultimately decide on can still be a very positive experience. It lets you know what you were not cut out to be while you still have time to do something about it. Making such a discovery will be far less emotionally and financially expensive before you finish a degree, so begin to gain experience *now*.



## IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3



### 1. Take a Look at Yourself

- Personal Interests: What do you enjoy doing?
- Academic Interests: What do you most want to learn?
- Career Goals: Where do you see yourself in 1 year? 5 years?
- Work Values: What rewards do you seek? Causes do you advocate?
- Skills & Abilities: What do you have to offer?
- What personal criteria do you have for an internship?
  - Geographic location
  - Monetary compensation
  - Duration
  - Academic credit

### 2. Gather Information & Make Contact

#### Resources

- Internship directories & guidebooks
- Bulletin boards
- Academic department/advisor
- Career Development Center library
- Fellow students/previous interns
- Professional associations
- Community agencies
- Public officials
- Internet resources
- Your own network

#### Narrow It Down

- Develop a manageable list (10-15 items) and prioritize it.
- Review organizations in light of your goals and objectives from step 1.
- Do you meet the organization's requirements? Does the organization meet the university requirements for credit?
- Be mindful of application deadlines

#### Contact Them!

- Telephone Scripts
  - (If you have a contact name) "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Is \_\_\_\_\_ still the person in your office who handles the student intern program?"
  - (If you don't have a contact name) "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. May I please speak with the person who coordinates your internships?"
  - Be prepared. The intern coordinator may want to interview you on the phone during this first conversation. Be ready to describe briefly who you are, your goals, and why you're interested in the organization.
  - "Hello, (Name of person). My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a Junior/Senior at Kutztown University majoring in \_\_\_\_\_. I am interested in (Area of interest) and understand that (Name of organization) provides internships in this field."
- Send your credentials
  - Cover Letter
  - Resume
  - References/Rec Letters
  - Writing samples
  - Transcripts
  - Other materials (application forms)

### 3. Your Final Decision

- Helping you decide
  - Which organization fits your personal interests/needs the best?
  - Are your abilities suited to the organization?
  - How well does the project/assignment relate to your career and academic goals?
  - Do the co-workers and supervisor appear to be enthusiastic and supportive toward interns?
  - Does the general work atmosphere (employee morale, dress) appeal to you?
  - How much responsibility will you have?
  - Will the internship offer valuable experience?
- Accepting and rejecting offers
  - Show appreciation – either way.
  - Confirm start and end dates, intern supervisor, academic credit requirements, and other important details, in writing.
- Explore Academic Credit Options
  - See your advisor or department.
  - Get acquainted with the faculty sponsor who will oversee your credit arrangement.
  - Find out what documentation/requirements you need to make the credit arrangements.



### **NEED/WANT ACADEMIC CREDIT?**

Each department/major may have different requirements and paperwork for credit-bearing internships. Please check with department chairperson/advisor for specific internship requirements.

## **ADVICE FOR THE INTERN**

### **Exhibit a Can-Do Attitude**

- Attitude speaks loud and clear and makes a lasting impression, so make sure yours is one of your greatest assets.
- Take on any task assigned – no matter how small – with enthusiasm.
- Take the initiative to acquire new skills and ask for things to do. Make the most of your time there!
- Accept criticism graciously and maintain a sense of humor.
- Ask to attend meetings and events that interest you.
- Ask to shadow different people and talk with them about their work experiences (if time permits).

### **Set Realistic Goals & Expectations**

- Work with your supervisor to set up your learning agenda. It should target specific skills and competencies you wish to acquire. After all, the learning agenda is what distinguishes a short-term job from an internship.
- Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress.
- Read everything you can get your hands on; talk with people in different departments as well as clients and vendors to become informed on all elements of the business.
- Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance.

### **Learn the Unwritten Rules**

- Being the “new kid” is like being a freshman all over again...you will need to adapt, observe, learn, and process a large volume of information. Be patient; don't expect too much too soon.
- Buy into the mission & vision of your work place.
- Get to know your co-workers early. Office customs may not always match the formal rules...so ask questions and pay attention to how people interact with each other. Watch closely how things get done.
- Be sensitive to others...don't gossip, don't complain, and avoid internal politics.
- Be aware of people's differences (cultural, work style, management style, etc.)
- Also be receptive to the dress of your co-workers and supervisors...and tailor accordingly.

### **Take Your Position and Assignments Seriously**

- Build a reputation for being reliable and dependable.
- Be diligent and accurate in your work.
- You may encounter a great deal of ambiguity, so seek direction when in doubt. Your supervisor knows there will be an initial learning curve and will make allowances for mistakes. Learn from your errors and move on to your next task.

### **Meet Deadlines**

- Always assume the responsibility to ask when an assignment is due. This will help you understand your supervisor's priorities and to manage your time accordingly.
- Be willing to accept additional work responsibilities as the position continues.
- Be prepared to work late or overtime when necessary...give 110%. Your willingness to go the extra mile, especially during “crunch time,” will help you pave the way to assuming greater responsibilities.
- Alert your boss in advance if you will be unable to meet expectations. This shows respect and professional maturity.

## **Communicate Respectfully**

- Find out the proper way to address supervisors and co-workers, including customers. Remember their names!
- Maintain a pleasant and respectful demeanor with every person, regardless of his or her rank.
- Assume everyone else knows more than you do, but don't be afraid to present useful ideas that may save time, money, or solve problems.
- Make sure, however, that your style doesn't come across as cocky. Employers value assertiveness, not aggressiveness.

## **Be a Team Player**

- Learn how to follow the chain of command. Don't go over or around your supervisor to get noticed, to get ahead, or to complain. Establish and maintain good business relationships with everyone.
- Learn how your assignment fits into the grand scheme of things. In today's work environment, success is often defined by your ability to get along with and interact with others. You're a winner only if your team wins.

## **Get a Mentor**

- Identify at least one individual to serve as your mentor or professional guardian. It should be someone who is willing to take a personal interest in your career development and success.
- Once you know your way around, begin to network wisely and get "plugged in" by associating with seasoned employees who may share their knowledge, perspectives, and insights.
- Get noticed, because many people will have a role in determining your future.

## **Remember...**

- As an Intern & KU student, you represent the University, your academic department, the faculty, and other students. Be sure you represent us well.
- Learn all you can, develop your skills, develop your network, and have fun learning!

## SAMPLE INTERNSHIP INQUIRY LETTER & RESUME

November 10, 20XX

Ms. Beverly Long  
Director, Human Resources  
Taxes 'R Fun Accounting Firm  
2121 Vermont Avenue  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Long:

I am currently a junior accounting major at Kutztown University in Kutztown, PA, and am writing to apply for an internship next summer with Taxes 'R Fun Accounting.

During my studies at Kutztown University, where I maintain a 3.2 GPA, I have gained hands-on experience with tax preparation as well as the daily operations of an accounting firm. As an active member of the Accounting Club, where I currently am treasurer, I participated for two years in the "TaxTime" program in which accounting students help senior citizens prepare their tax returns. This not only gave me experience but has also helped solidify my career interest. Your internship offers me an opportunity to strengthen my current work history by giving me more focused experience in the field of accounting. I am excited to work for you as I feel this would give me an advantage over other students when I seek full-time employment.

Please review my enclosed resume. I will contact you within two weeks to schedule a time for us to discuss this opportunity. I look forward to learning more about the summer internship program at Taxes 'R Fun Accounting. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Peter Richmond  
123 Smart Street  
Kutztown, PA 19530  
610.683.XXXX  
prich###@live.kutztown.edu

Enc.

**MARIA GONZALEZ**  
456 Smart Street  
Kutztown, PA 19530  
610.683.XXXX  
Mgonz123@live.kutztown.edu

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## OBJECTIVE

Summer internship in professional writing.

## EDUCATION

B.A. Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Kutztown, PA May 20xx  
Major: English/Professional Writing, Minor: Public Relations  
Overall GPA: 3.2

## RELATED COURSES

Business Writing	English Media
Journalism I	Advanced Composition
Advertising Theory	Writing for the Workplace
Copy & Line Editing	Magazine Writing

## EXPERIENCE

The Keystone, University Student Newspaper, Kutztown, PA Fall 20xx- Present  
**Writer/Associate Editor**  
Write and edit articles, computer layout, paste-up, and assist in supervision of 24-page, bi-weekly newspaper.

Theater-by-the-Bay, Shoretown, NJ Summers 20xx, 20xx  
**Administrative Assistant**  
Assisted in all aspects of office administration for a small summer stock theatre. Wrote press releases, promotional copy, handled mailing lists, and developed computer skills.

ResNet, Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx  
**Computer Lab Assistant**  
Oversaw student use of computer systems, provided assistance to students and their questions, and logged usage reports.

## HONORS & ACTIVITIES

Dean's List	Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx, Fall 20xx
Short Story, "Don't Look," published in Graduate Literary Review	Spring 20xx
Meals-On-Wheels Volunteer	Fall 20xx
Intramural Soccer, All semesters	

## REFERENCES

Available Upon Request

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

Whether you're aiming for a paid or an unpaid internship, it's important to ask your prospective employer *intelligent questions*- these *show you are enthusiastic and motivated*. They also help you make the decision of where you want to interview. Listed below are questions you may want to ask:

- What are the principal duties of this internship?
- What are the principal duties of those departments?
- Are there any special programs provided for interns?
- Will I work with more than one department or division of the company?
- Will I work for more than one supervisor?
- What skills will I develop through the internship (i.e.: writing or analytical skills)?
- What outcomes do you expect my work to produce? (In other words, will what I do become part of a written report or oral presentation? Will I be required to leave the office to speak to anyone?)
- How much interaction will I have with other interns? Are there special programs for interns to meet one another?
- Will there be opportunities to shadow employees?
- Will I have any interaction with top management or supervisory personnel besides my own supervisor(s)? Would the interaction be spontaneous, or at planned events?
- Is this a paid or an unpaid internship? Additionally, especially if it's an unpaid internship, will any of my expenses be paid?
- How will my performance be evaluated (on paper, orally, or both)?
- How would you describe the work climate here?
- What are your expectations for an intern?
- What is the dress code?
- Do you consider an internship to be a recruiting tool?

You can't say, "Are you going to hire me?", because nobody knows that before seeing how you perform. But you can say, "Do you consider your internship a recruiting tool?" The answer to this question may suggest how many interns eventually are hired for full-time jobs or give you other clues to possible opportunities within a company or agency.

# **MARKET YOUR EXPERIENCE!!**

## **What to Do When Your Internship Ends**

- Ask your supervisor to serve as a reference and write a recommendation letter for you.
- Write a thank you letter to your site supervisor and faculty advisor (if you receive credit).
- Maintain your network!!
- Let the Career Development Center know about your experience (you could be the next Internship Spotlight!!).
- Offer to assist the organization in marketing the internship to other students.
- Assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you have developed at your internship.
- Write or update your resume based upon your experiences and projects.
- Make a list of what you liked and disliked about your position and use this list to explore future internship and job opportunities.
- Redefine your career goals based upon your experience and clarify how your internship relates to these goals.
- Reflect upon the work environment, organizational structure, location, atmosphere – what will you look for in the future?
- Reflect upon your values and attitudes about work and how they correlate with those of the organization.
- Think about how specific experiences at your internship will be excellent examples to offer employers during the interviewing process.



**Congratulations on your accomplishment!**

**Now you can move forward in your career path with greater confidence!**