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Internship Overview

This *Internship Guide* is designed to give you all the information you need to understand the nature of internships and to find the internship that’s right for you.

**What is an internship?**

An internship is a learning experience that occurs **outside** the classroom and enables you to develop skills related to your academic or career interest.

If your schedule allows, plan on doing more than one internship. You will get a chance to try different work environments and responsibilities, which can give you a better understanding of the type of work that will be right for you. Internship experiences can be listed on your resume. These experiences will help you stand out when you’re looking for a job after graduation.

**Why should I complete an internship?**

- Develop work-related skills and gain practical experience.
- Make finding employment easier after graduation because you’ll be an *experienced* candidate!
- Begin growing your network of seasoned industry professionals.
- Learn about work sectors: private, non-profit, and government.
- Learn about trends and best practices in your field of interest.
- Lead you to explore potential career fields, learn about different work environments, or spark interest in other occupations.
- Expose you to the latest technologies and advances in your chosen field.
- Internship supervisors can serve as professional references and write letters of recommendation for graduate school applications.

**Do I get academic credit for an internship?**

Many academic departments **require** and give credit to students in their majors to complete an internship. Some departments will grant academic credit even if an internship is not required. Talk to your academic department or advisor to find out about receiving credit (the office of Career Services and Employer Relations cannot grant academic credit of any kind).

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We strongly encourage all students to complete at least one internship, regardless of whether academic credit is granted.
Do employers care about internships?

Many employers recognize the value internships bring to the student and to their company. According to the 2010 Experiential Education Survey, 2012 Internship and Co-op Survey and the Student Survey Class of 2012, which were conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), employers say:

- 63% of paid interns received at least one job offer upon graduation compared to 36% who had no internship experience.
- Over 75% of employers prefer candidates with relevant work experience.
- 82% consider their own internship programs as the most effective method of recruiting new college graduates for full-time, permanent positions.
- On average, employers find nearly 92% of their new college hires from their own internship program.
- Career Fairs were ranked as the most effective activity for hiring interns, while on-campus recruiting efforts also were very effective in finding candidates.

First Things First

Career Planning

Step 1: Assess your interests, your values, and your strengths (skills) by using Focus-2.

Focus-2: This is a self-paced career guidance tool that assists students and alumni in making decisions related to major and/or career choices through self-assessments and occupational exploration. You will have the opportunity to explore your interests, skills, leisure activities, values, and personality. The Access ID is: rams

Step 2: Use this information to target professional settings you would like to investigate for internship opportunities.

Step 3: Research those industries and careers you’ve identified. If you’re not sure what to do with this research, the staff at Career Services and Employer Relations can help you get started.

My Ideal Internship

You should not start looking for an internship before you have sat down and answered the following questions:

- Why am I looking for an internship? Is it for work experience, academic credit, a paycheck, or a different reason?

- What type of organization/work environment am I looking for?

- Are there any geographical constraints, or am I willing to travel for the perfect position?
• Are there any on-campus internship opportunities that interest me?

• If the internship is unpaid, can I still afford to take the position? Can I find a way to afford it?

Before you Apply For an Internship

Internships usually require some type of formal application process. This could mean a resume, cover letter, personal interview, and occasionally, an essay, transcript, or letter(s) of recommendation. Be aware of application procedures and deadlines. Some deadlines can be months before the internship actually starts. This is especially true with government and highly competitive Internships.

Have you completed the following items which will be necessary for your internship search:

☐ Created a RamTrack account
☐ Created a resume
☐ Practiced your 30 second self-marketing pitch which is sometimes called an elevator pitch (answers the question: “Tell me about yourself...”)
☐ Practiced answers to behavioral interview questions
☐ Asked three individuals for permission to serve as professional references
☐ Obtained appropriate interview outfit
☐ Narrowed down the list of types of work, companies, and work environment of interest to you

Great! You’re ready to start applying to internships!

Internship Search Strategies

Several search strategies should be used to find an internship. Networking, informational interviews, Ramtrack, attending events, and conducting a targeting search are all methods that should be used simultaneously to help uncover internship opportunities. Each of these strategies will be described in detail below

Networking

The top three reasons to network:

1) Learn more about different career options (please choose one of the following):
   • I know exactly what I want to do for a career
   • I have some idea what I want to do for a career
   • I have no idea what I want to do for a career
2) Uncover the hidden job market:
- 50-80% of all jobs are unadvertised—this may or may not be the case however, a lot of positions do go unadvertised or are not advertised widely (source: National Association of Colleges and Employers).
- It is easier to interview and ultimately hire a potential employee through a referral/internal employer connection—automatic built-in trust.

3) Build Professional, Mutually Beneficial Relationships
- Networking is a two way street. How can you help other people and how can other people help you?
- Professional Relationships are intended to be long-term, lasting your entire career.

How to network

Who do you know? Make a list of your: family, friends, professors, roommates, classmates, neighbors. How can each of these people assist you? What advice can they give you? What do they do in their careers? Who do they know that can assist you? Virtually can give you advice and knows someone else who will do the same.

Ask for Advice not for Help! Everyone is willing to give you some advice. Not everyone is willing to help you. When you ask for help, the person being asked is put on the defensive. The implication is that you’re going to take up a lot time. When you ask for advice, the person being asked is put in the position of immediately being the expert in their field (and if they know more than you at the moment, they are the expert).

Informational Interviews

While the goal of interviewing is to obtain a job offer, the goal of informational interviewing is to gather information about a career field that you can use in making career decisions. Informational interviewing can also put you in touch with possible job leads. Informational interviews can be conducted in person, by phone, or by e-mail.

• Begin with people you know in the career fields which interest you. Check with your parents, friends’ parents, faculty, and school staff to find people to interview.

• If you don’t know anyone in your targeted field, identify contacts through newspapers, telephone books, professional associations, directories, and online resources.

• If you identify a company but don’t have the name of a contact, call and ask to speak with a person in the department in which you are interested. Explain politely why you are calling (for information, not employment) and ask if you can be directed to the appropriate person.

• An alternative is to send a letter or email ahead of time stating your interest in arranging an informational interview and that you will be calling to discuss the possibility of scheduling a meeting or phone appointment. (20-30 minutes is typical). Please refer to the example on the subsequent page.

• Be prepared! Review what you want to learn from your contact and have questions prepared ahead of time. A list of suggested interview questions is on the next page.
FOLLOW-UP!

• Ask the person with whom you are speaking to refer you to others who would be good sources of information.

• Carefully evaluate the advice you receive. Keep in mind that you are getting one individual’s opinions, which may or may not be representative of the particular career field, organization, and/or employer. Talk with as many people in the field as you can.

• Immediately following the interview, send a thank you note to the person you interviewed. These are contacts that may be useful in your job search so you should use every effort to cultivate them.

Sample Informational Interview Questions

1. What do you do in a typical work day?
2. What are your major responsibilities?
3. How many hours do you work during an average week?
4. What kinds of problems/decisions do you deal with?
5. What is the most challenging about your job?
6. What do you like most/least about your job?
7. How did you enter this field?
8. How did you reach your current position?
9. What do you find most rewarding in your work?
10. If you could change your job in any way, what would that change be?
11. What sorts of changes/trends are occurring in your field?
12. Is there a logical career path in your field/organization? Can you describe it?
13. What are the major qualifications for success in this field?
14. How does this job fit into the organization/department?
15. How long have you had this job/been with this organization?
16. How has the company changed over the past 5-10 years?
17. Would you recommend your field to others? If so, what skills, education, and experience are required?
18. What are typical entry-level jobs in your field?
19. Could someone with a liberal arts background obtain a position in this field? What additional courses or work experience would you recommend?
20. What social obligations outside of the normal work week go along with your job?
21. If you were hiring someone today for an entry-level position in this field, what would be the critical factors influencing your choice of one candidate over another?
22. How do candidates typically learn about openings in your field?
23. What degrees, licenses, or other credentials are required for entry and advancement in this work?
24. What interests, values, and personality characteristics are important for effectiveness and satisfaction in your field?
25. Can you suggest any other people I could talk to who also work in this field or in related fields?
RamTrack

Ramtrack is a no cost job posting board where students can find and apply to internship positions. Follow the steps below to create your account today:

1. Create your own student account
   - Your Framingham State email will be your Username
   - Your Password can be anything you will remember
2. Complete your student profile
3. Start searching based on position type, industry, specific employer, job category (internship, full-time, part-time, etc.)
4. Consider uploading your resume
5. Search for upcoming career events

Targeted Search

1) Begin by writing down the names of 15-20 companies where you would like to intern. Research these companies by visiting their websites to gain information on their mission statement, vision statement, geographic location(s), size, products and/or services, employee benefits, job postings, etc.

2) Now ask members of your network if they can introduce you with someone at any of these companies. Each time you speak with a new networking contact your goal will be to uncover a link to an individual working in one of these organizations.

3) Once connected to an individual working at one of your target companies, you become a “less risky” candidate in the eyes of the employer because you are “known” to the company. Additionally, you may hear of internship opportunities before the general public through information from your network contact.

How do I know if this is the right internship for me?

What skills are you looking to learn? Larger companies might offer you their name recognition, but smaller companies will usually offer more experience because they have less people to do all the work. Consider what will get you further in your quest for a job, and target the employers that offer the best fit.

During the interview, ask questions that will help you decide if the internship seems like a good opportunity. You may want to consider these sample questions:

- What kind of supervision will I have? How often will I meet with my supervisor to review my work?
- What responsibilities and duties will I have? What tasks and projects will I be involved in?
• What are you (the employer) looking for in an intern? What would you like to see me to contribute to your organization?

• I am very interested in working on/gaining experience with ______. Will I have the opportunity to do that here?

• Will I be assigned to one department, or will I work in various departments?

• What has been your experience with past interns? What made them successful?

• Do you offer job opportunities to your interns? If so, what entry-level positions are available?

International Internships

If you are considering completing an internship for academic credit, why not complete it while studying abroad? Information on program choices, destinations, financial aid, transfer credit, and more is provided during Study Abroad Information Sessions. Plan to attend one of these hour long sessions, which are offered multiple times throughout the fall semester. Need more assistance? Contact the Office International Education per the details below:

Director: Jane Decatur
E-mail: jdecatur@framingham.edu
Phone: (508) 626-4585
Office Location: McCarthy Center 518

The office is open from 8:00 am-4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday. Please email or call to make an appointment. The office is open year round, so feel free to make an appointment during college vacation periods.

Explore the following programs to participate in an internship while studying abroad:

• AIFS Internships Abroad
• Arcadia University, The College of Global Studies
• Academic Studies Abroad
• CAPA International Education
• CIEE
• CIS Abroad
• Education Abroad Network
• GlobaLinks Learning Networks
• Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University
• ISA
• IES Abroad