

Internship Guide



What is an Internship?

An internship is usually a temporary arrangement in which you can gain professional experience in a particular field or job function under the guidance of an employer. It can be paid or unpaid, during the semester or summer, and can range anywhere from a few weeks to a year. With internships, students gain the benefits of work experience while also playing an important role in the functioning of organizations in the real world.



Why Complete an Internship?

- Internship experience is consistently ranked among the top criteria sought by employers
- Build your résumé and explore career options
- Develop skills and make contacts in your field of interest
- Apply your academic background to “real world” problems and issues
- Employers often hire their interns as full-time employees
- If required by your academic department

Internship Source Resources

Network

- **Connect on campus:** Review each semester's networking events by checking out the OCE website. Visit Handshake for additional upcoming career fairs and networking events to connect with employers looking to hire you.
- **Connect with your academic department:** Some majors at Arcadia require an internship prior to graduation. These majors include business, international peace and conflict resolution, English, and theater. Other majors highly suggest internships. Your faculty may be helpful in giving you names of contacts at organizations who typically recruit interns within your major.
- **Follow the path of previous Arcadia interns:** You can view profiles of fellow students who've made their profiles viewable in Handshake. This is a great way to discover where peers have interned. Additionally, you can see a full listing of internship employers by major at www.arcadia.edu/outcomes
- **Learn from alumni:** Alumni can give you a better sense of the work in your fields of interest. They may also suggest types of experiences you might look for, and give you pointers on the best organizations to contact. You can also view alumni profiles by industry and organization at <https://www.linkedin.com/alumni>

Internship Databases

- **Handshake:** Handshake is OCE's online career hub list internships from employers who are seeking to hire Arcadia students. You can also find out about career events and employers visiting campus. Login to Handshake through MyArcadia and select the Handshake icon or visit: arcadia.joinhandshake.com.
- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a great tool for internship seekers. Users create a profile, based upon their resume and use that profile to build meaningful networking connections. LinkedIn also lists many internships. <https://www.linkedin.com>
- **Internships.com:** Internships.com is the world's largest internship marketplace bringing students, employers and higher education institutions together in one centralized location: www.internships.com

- **USAJobs:** The federal government has many internships across all fields and majors. A great place to start exploring federal internships is at <http://www.usajobs.gov/> by searching under the categories of Student Career Experience, Student Temporary Employment and Summer.
- **International Internships** are also available in conjunction with study abroad through Arcadia. Arcadia offers internships in Sydney, London, Athens, Dublin, Rome and Edinburgh Internship. For more information visit <https://www.arcadia.edu/global/long-term-study-abroad> or contact the Office of Study Away.
- **Vault Internship Database** and **Guide to Top Internships** programs: Create your free account at www.arcadia.edu/vault.
- **Idealist** connects prospective employers with new graduates in fields such as public administration, international affairs, education, social work, nonprofit management, global and public health. www.idealist.org.

Virtual Internships

Virtual internships are done entirely by email, online chat, or phone. These types of internships offer great flexibility and are easier to fit into a busy college schedule. It is helpful to use keywords like “remote” or “virtual” when searching for opportunities.

Initiate Contact

If there is a specific employer that you are interested in working with, check the organization’s website, Handshake profile, and LinkedIn presence to see if they have an internship advertised. If you do not see an advertisement for internships with them, consider initiating contact with an alum who works there or with a human resources professional. Introduce yourself and tell them what value you will bring to their organization.

Applying for Internships

- Summer internship application deadlines commonly occur between November and March. Employers typically hire fall interns during the preceding summer and hire spring interns during the preceding fall. Don’t wait until the last minute to apply for internships! For competitive internships, employers often start recruiting summer interns early in the fall.
- Assess the opportunities you’ve identified. Find out the specifics of the internship to see if it’s right for you. Consider time commitment, required qualifications, location, training, and compensation.
- Apply to a range of internships. There is no exact number of internships that you need to apply for, but most students apply to at least 8-10 organizations. In determining the number of internships to apply for, try to assess how competitive the internship program might be. Some organizations give preference to juniors and seniors seeking internships, so first year students and sophomores may need to apply to more organizations.
- Begin gathering application materials. Make sure you have all the components the employer is requesting (essays, recommendations, résumés, cover letters, transcripts, writing samples, etc.). Get your résumé and cover letters critiqued with OCE and schedule a practice interview. Pick up or download our Résumé Writing, Cover Letter, and Interviewing career guides. If asking former teachers or Arcadia faculty to write letters of recommendation for you, ask them at least 30 days before you need the letter.
- Contact the employer outside of submitting your application. Let them know just how interested you are. Be sure to follow up your inquiries, submissions and interviews with adequate thank you notes.

Creating Your Own Internship

While thousands of internships are listed online databases, perhaps you’re not seeing what you want. Don’t let this stop you! Taking a proactive approach to the internship search can lead you to positions that are not widely

advertised. In general, employers welcome applicants who demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and a willingness to work. Follow these steps to create your own internship.

Research

Identify the interests and needs of the organization of your choice. Visit the organization's website and look at their mission statement. Investigate the organization's major work and familiarize yourself with some of their greater achievements. If there is not an employment ad from the organization available for you to look at, try to find some indication of what the employer expects from their employees. Consider how you are able to meet their goals and needs. Also, identify the person who would be most effective for you to contact.

Introduce Yourself

Communicate your ability to meet the needs of the organization. Let employers know exactly why you'll make an excellent intern! This can be accomplished by sending a résumé along with a cover letter expressing your interest in the organization and their work, indicating what you can bring to the organization. Be clear about your willingness to work with whatever opportunity they make available to you.

Follow Up

Follow up your résumé submission with a phone call or e-mail. Make sure the employer has received your materials, and has given it consideration or processed it in some way. Calling is also a good way to ensure that employers remember your name, and for you to convey some of your passion and interest in a more direct fashion. Remember that all forms of contact with an organization can affect your chances of getting an internship opportunity with them. So, be sure to observe rules of etiquette, and leave a positive impression with whomever you speak. Be persistent, but not overbearing!

Make Use of Connections

Consider the connections you have through personal, school, and previous employment networks. Discuss your goals with professors and other contacts. You never know who might have a connection with a potential employer. People you know and work with, especially in your career field of interest, might have some suggestions for how you can further your chances with the organization of your choice, or find some alternative opportunities.

Create a LinkedIn Account

LinkedIn is an online professional networking site. Creating an account allows you to connect with professionals working in your field. You can also research internships, part-time and full-time positions. Developing your LinkedIn summary is a good way to manage what potential employers learn about you from the internet. Visit www.Linkedin.com to create your profile.

Funding Your Internship

Begin considering ways to fund your summer experience as early as possible. For instance, if you are pursuing an opportunity in a location where you do not have housing, your expected costs of housing, food, and transportation should be addressed well before the experience begins. While some internships are paid, many do not have the resources available to fund your experience. Internships in the fields of business and finance, technology support, and the sciences generally do provide compensation, although internships in the arts and with non-profit organizations typically do not. In such cases, try to find out whether a partial form of compensation can be provided, like a weekly transportation or lunch stipend. Your employer also might be able to guide you in locating other potential funding resources. Some students who partake in unpaid internships combine their internship with paid part-time jobs and work a reduced schedule at their internship to offset expenses.

Making the Most of Your Internship

Goals and Expectations

It is helpful to begin your internship with a clear set of goals and expectations in mind. Ideally, you should aim for a good understanding about what you can expect from the experience before you accept the position. On your first day it is a great idea to connect with your supervisor to clarify mutual goals and expectations.

Background Knowledge

Before beginning your internship, have a strong sense of your organization's mission and how it works. Take the time to perform any additional background research on the organization and its industry. The more knowledge you possess going into the experience, the more quickly you will be able to acclimate to the environment and begin contributing to the company's mission.

Professionalism

Make a point of demonstrating standards of professionalism throughout your internship experience. Confirm the appropriate workplace attire, and be consistent with punctuality and meeting your deadlines. This not only ensures your effectiveness as an intern, but also demonstrates your commitment and dedication to the experience as well as your reliability as a valuable member of the organization.

Attitude

Maintaining a positive attitude is key to a successful internship experience. Be enthusiastic and do your best on every task you are assigned, even if at first it seems rather mundane. Demonstrating a cheerful and energetic attitude toward all of your work will prove impressive to your supervisors and potentially lead to more challenging tasks. Simply observing and soaking up your organization's environment is, in and of itself, an incredibly effective way to learn. Ask your supervisor if you might sit in on a few inter-departmental meetings and seek out opportunities to observe various members of your organization.

Initiative

Another way to facilitate an enriching experience is to be a proactive intern. There may be times when your supervisor does not have anything pressing for you to do. In such cases, offer to contribute more to a previous assignment or suggest another project you think might benefit the organization. On especially slow work days, tactfully check with other co-workers around your department to see if you can lend a hand.

Network

Introduce yourself and be friendly with new co-workers. Invite your supervisor and fellow interns and staff members to join you for lunch periodically. Ask questions about their specialty areas, interests, motivations for entering the field, and how they started out. You might indeed find a mentor willing to share experiences, perspectives, or offer career advice.

Flexibility

Recognize that it takes time to adjust to every new environment, so give yourself time to get oriented to the pace and rhythm of your workplace and colleagues. Remember to keep an open mind during the course of your internship, and to try to take something positive from every experience. In the case that your internship proves more challenging than you anticipated, or you encounter difficulties in communicating with your supervisor, feel free to contact OCE with any questions or concerns.

Complete

On your last day be sure to thank your supervisor and co-workers. Also, ask for their business cards and connect with them on LinkedIn. Follow up immediately in the next few days with a thank-you e-mail or a hand-written card in the mail. Stay in touch afterwards to maintain networking connections and good rapport for possible references and letters of recommendation. Remember, many organizations hire permanent employees from their intern pool.