



# INTERNSHIPS

An internship is a hands-on, short-term, supervised work experience conducted in a professional setting that is designed to increase a student’s knowledge of a specific career field. More than a part-time job or volunteer experience, an internship is focused on learning objectives related to increasing student knowledge, training to develop skills, and quality supervision to guide the intern. The following are all benefits of completing a well-structured internship:

- Gain work experience
- Build a network of professionals in your field
- Explore career areas of interest
- Learn valuable job search skills
- Develop skills required to succeed in a professional workplace
- May lead to employment opportunities

## HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

### 1. CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Avoid going straight to the job postings. Instead take a moment to truly consider what you want to get out of your internship experience. An internship is, after all, only as valuable as the time, thought and effort you put into your experience. The following are some questions to consider:

#### Goals-

- Do I want to explore an unknown career field?
- Do I want to gain experience within my chosen career field?
- What skills would I like to develop?
- What type of experience would benefit me in my future job search?
- What types of projects would I like to work on?

#### Logistics-

- Can I accept an internship anywhere or do I need to look locally?
- Can I accept an unpaid internship?
- When would be a good time for me to do an internship?
- Does my major require that I complete an internship?
- What is the process to receive academic credit?

### 2. RESEARCH AND NETWORK TO FIND A POSITION

By answering the questions above you should now be able to narrow your internship search. The process of finding an internship is very similar to the process of finding a full-time position. You will want to begin by researching organizations that interest you, looking through online internship postings, and networking with alumni and individuals working in your field. Utilize the Internship Portal found on the IUSPH Career Services website to see where past students have interned. See the Networking Handout for information on how to connect with alumni and professionals. Also, be sure to check the Job Portal (located on our website) for internship postings.

If you are not finding the type of experience you are looking for, you may want to consider approaching an organization about creating your own internship. These internships are far less likely to be paid. However, creating your own internship experience can be extremely rewarding. You will want to approach smaller established organizations with your resume and several ideas on how you can benefit their organization. Larger organizations typically have formal internship programs that are already in place, while smaller organizations tend to offer more flexibility when it comes to the creation of new internship experiences. When you approach any organization, you will want to provide them with the Career Services Employer Internship Guide. This guide will provide the employer with an understanding of what the School expects of a quality internship experience.

**An internship is NOT:**  
 A vague, undefined experience  
 An unguided/unsupervised experience

**An internship IS:**  
 A learning experience  
 A chance to apply your skills and knowledge

### 3. EVALUATE THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

It is imperative that you take time to evaluate the internships that you are considering. The projects you work on and tasks you complete during your internship are far more important than simply having the word “intern” on your resume. You want to be sure the internship experiences you are considering will offer you those critical opportunities. Additionally, you want to be sure the internship opportunity you are considering was developed from an educational perspective. Use the following questions to help you assess a potential internship opportunity. If you are unable to find the answers to these questions, ask the internship providers directly. If you have concerns about an internship opportunity after reviewing these questions, schedule an appointment with your career advisor to discuss the internship.

- Will you be given the opportunity to apply your classroom knowledge to this new professional environment?
- Does the internship have a defined beginning and end?
- Will you receive quality training by a supervisor who possesses expertise related to your responsibilities as an intern?
- Have you seen a position description that explains duties, projects, and expectations of the internship experience?
- Will your supervisor be available to provide you with regular/consistent feedback on your performance?
- Will the experience you gain in the internship be relevant to your career path?
- Will there be opportunities to network with others at the organization?
- Is the internship paid or unpaid and will you be receiving credit for your experience?
- How many other interns will be at the organization at the same time as you?
- What is the culture of the organization's workplace? What is the workplace setting/condition(s)?
- Have any previous interns received offers for full-time positions after completing this internship?

#### 4. ACCEPT AN INTERNSHIP (AND APPLY FOR CREDIT)

After you have applied and interviewed for a few internship positions, you will want to consider your options and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each offer. Upon accepting an internship, be sure to withdraw your application from other organizations. If you plan to obtain credit for your internship experience, you should schedule an appointment with your internship coordinator to fill out the necessary forms.

#### 5. TREAT YOUR INTERNSHIP AS A JOB INTERVIEW

Either before you begin your internship or right at the start, be sure to sit down with your supervisor to discuss your internship goals and areas of interest. You will not always be able to tailor your experience, but showing initiative and ownership of your experience demonstrates professionalism and a level of dedication to the position that your supervisor will likely appreciate. During your internship, conduct yourself as if you were a full-time employee. Often employers hire past interns as full-time employees so you want to make the best impression. Acting in a professional manner includes: arriving on time, following the dress code, completing your work within all deadlines, and staying on task. Even if the organization does not have a position open, a positive reference from your internship supervisor will be key in your future job search.

### HELPFUL HANDOUTS FOR THE INTERNSHIP SEARCH

The following handouts can be found on the Career Services website or at the Career Services office:

**Resume Writing Handout**

**LinkedIn Handout**

**Interviewing Handout**

**Cover Letter Handout**

**Networking Handout**

**References Handout**

**Professional Attire Handout**

**Funding for International Internships Handout**

### INTERNSHIP CONCERNS

IUSPH Career Services is not able to fully vet all of the internship positions posted through the Job Portal. Therefore, we strongly encourage students to carefully research and consider internship opportunities before accepting an offer. We hope our student interns use good judgment in the workplace, and that they communicate their internship expectations directly to their internship supervisors. Students are encouraged to address any concerns they have with their supervisors first, and involve IUSPH Career Services when necessary. If a student finds themselves in an unfavorable situation in their internship, IUSPH Career Services staff members are always willing to meet with and provide guidance to the student.

