

# How and Why to get an Internship



SKILLS



MENTORING



KNOWLEDGE



TRAINING



PRACTICE



OPPORTUNITY

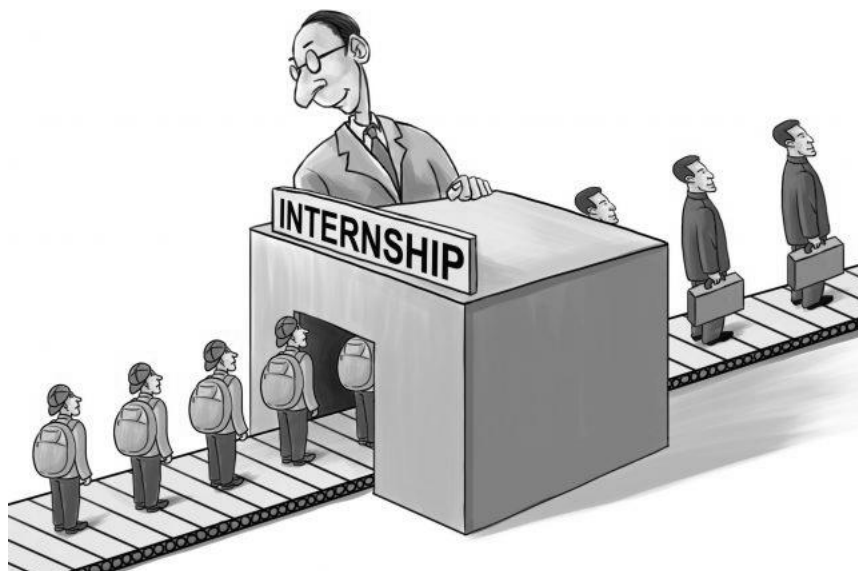
Provided by Capital University Career Development  
Blackmore Library, Second Floor, (614) 236-6606  
**WEB:** [www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment](http://www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment)  
**EMAIL:** [CareerDevelopment@capital.edu](mailto:CareerDevelopment@capital.edu)

Capital  
University

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

<b>What is an internship?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How will you benefit from an internship?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>When should you plan to do an internship?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Internship timeline</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Early stages of internship exploration</b>	
The “Two out of Three” rule to selecting an internship	<b>7</b>
Identifying a valuable internship experience	<b>8</b>
Paid? Unpaid? Credit?	<b>9</b>
<b>Finding and applying for internships</b>	
Where should you look for an internship?	<b>10</b>
The application process	<b>11</b>
<b>Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills</b>	
Congratulations! You got the internship! Now what?	<b>12</b>
Professional Skills: Business Etiquette 101	<b>13-15</b>



# What is an internship?

Internships are pre-entry-level professional work experiences related to your major and/or to your career interests. They are temporary positions, generally lasting for at least one semester or summer.

The primary purpose of an internship is to gain experience while learning. It's a chance to apply what you have been studying in the classroom in a real work setting.

Internships come in many different formats. They might be paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time, during the academic year, or during the summer. You may receive academic credit for your time and effort, or you may choose not to. All internships will teach you *something* about your future career path, even if that "something" is that you don't want to continue in that particular field.

An internship allows you to "test drive" a career while gaining valuable work experience, making you more competitive in the post-graduation job market. Through these experiences, you can clarify your career interests, develop professional skills, and strengthen your self-confidence. Internships enhance classroom learning and provide you with references and contacts in your chosen career field.

## How is an internship different from a part-time job or community service?

Type	Duration	Payment	Mentorship	Duties
Internship	Definite time period, usually one semester or summer	Sometimes	Yes – someone is assigned to you to help you learn	Meaningful duties or projects related to your major
Community Service (volunteering)	Indefinite time period or a one-time project	Never	Not usually; depending on your supervisor, you might be mentored	For the benefit of the organization without regard to your major
Part-time Job	Indefinite	Always	Maybe, depending on your supervisor	Typically day-to-day work to support the employer, usually without regard to your major or interests

# How Will You Benefit from an Internship?

## YOU WILL...

- learn more about a specific industry/field to see if it's right for you
- have an opportunity to get to know yourself better – your likes and dislikes
- gain practical experience while also applying classroom knowledge
- increase your marketability to be competitive in the full-time job market upon graduation
- become more familiar with specific work functions and learn career-related skills and behaviors
- develop a relationship with professionals and cultivate a network of contacts in your field

## **DECIDE WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE YOU WANT AND WHAT YOU WANT TO LEARN:**

The best way to end up with a great internship experience is to consciously *decide* what kind of experience will give you the most information about the direction you want to take your career- and will also look good on your resume.

Say you're an accounting major, but you haven't decided on whether to apply for one of the "big 4" firms or work in a smaller company. An internship will give you a chance to sample the different company cultures and help you decide which is right for you.

Or, maybe you are interested in both Marketing *and* Public Relations, but you aren't sure which one suits you better. Spend the summer or semester in one of those fields or a combination of Marketing/PR departments in a non-profit organization, and you'll most likely be able to make an informed decision by the time the internship is over.

# When Should You Plan to do an Internship?

## WHEN IN YOUR COLLEGE CAREER?

Participating in an internship early in your college career will offer you the option of having several internships before you graduate. **Career Development recommends that you have at least two internships** - your first internship in your junior year (or the summer before) and a second internship at least one semester prior to graduation.

Although some students choose to start earlier, your junior year is often the most desirable timeframe for gaining practical, hands-on experience in one of your interest areas. At this level of your education you have typically completed some upper level courses and have acquired skills that you can offer to an employer. If you discover during your first internship that you have other interests, there is still time for another internship.

## WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS BEST?

Internships are available all year (fall, spring, and summer). During the school year, part-time work schedules are usually flexible and negotiated with your supervisor upon acceptance of the internship. Some summer internships are full-time, giving you an almost "real work world" experience. Depending on the type of internship or your area of study, the employer may require a minimum or maximum number of hours. The best time for you is when you can fit an internship into your schedule without it affecting your class and study time.



# Internship Timeline



There are no hard rules about how long it takes to get an internship. Some very competitive internships select students up to a year in advance; but it's also possible to land a great internship in just a few weeks.

If you know where you want to intern, the best strategy is to call and ask when you should apply.

## **Early stages of internship exploration (see pages 7-9):**

- Start thinking about what you'd like to learn during an internship.
- Make an appointment with Career Development to talk about options and resources.
- Begin talking with your professors about being references for you and about possible internships they may know about.

## **Finding and applying for internships (see pages 10-11):**

- Narrow choices and begin sending your résumé and cover letters.
- Talk with your advisor if you're interested in getting academic credit; find out what you need to do.
- Make an appointment with Career Development for a mock interview to polish your interview skills.

## **Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills (pages 12-15):**

- Communicate your acceptance, and ask other employers to remove you from their applicant lists.
- Learn how to interact with co-workers, when to use your cell phone, and how to write professional emails.

## Early stages of internship exploration

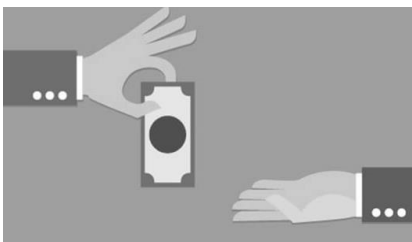
# The "Two Out of Three" Rule

Choosing your internship will usually come down to the one that meets **at least two out of three** criteria that are most important to you:

1. **Relevance/Desirability** – The experience offered is what you want to gain, for an employer that you highly value.
2. **Compensation** – Depending on your financial need, whether or not the internship is paid could be a deal-breaker for you.
3. **Proximity** – Must be geographically located in an area that is convenient or desirable to you.

### EXAMPLES:

Internship	Compensation	Proximity	Relevance/Desirability	Take it?
Bluejackets Marketing Internship	Unpaid for 40 hours/week: You may have to get a paid job, too.	Close to home	Opportunity to get your foot in the door to your highly-desired field of sports marketing – priceless!	YES!
Exterior Portfolio, Inc. Accounting Intern	Paid	Not close to home – you'll be away from your friends!	A great chance to get real experience and build your resume	YES!
Smithsonian Research Internship	Unpaid	Washington DC – expensive to find housing	As a history major, this is exactly what you need	Maybe: if you can support yourself in DC
Event Planning internship at your uncle's manufacturing company	Paid big bucks	Close to home	You're an accounting major and plan on becoming a CPA.	NO – thanks, but do you need an accounting intern?



## ***Early stages of internship exploration***

# **Identifying a valuable internship experience**

The following list of ideal criteria is used by Career Development when helping employers start an internship program. These same criteria will help you evaluate whether or not an employer is offering you a quality experience.

- **The internship must offer relevant experience in the student's chosen field.** Students may perform some routine or clerical duties, but their responsibilities must be largely career-related. For example, if an accounting office has a position that involves nothing more than answering the phone, making copies, filing and running errands, it does not qualify as an internship. But if students are also provided projects that involve accounting, reconciling, financial reporting or processing-related paperwork, then it becomes a learning experience related to their fields, and would qualify as an internship.
- **There are clear beginning and end dates.** Internships are usually one semester with the option of continuing for additional semesters.
- **There should be a clear internship position description** structured in ways that simulate an actual job which includes substantial level of responsibility, with duties, supervision, requirements and benefits clearly stated and agreed upon.
- **Someone must act as a mentor to the student.** In other words, students are not just "handed a list of things to do." Students must interact on a regular basis with someone who has experience in their intended field. This interaction should include instruction, guidance, and advice. In addition, if the student receives academic credit, some academic departments may have specific learning objectives or other criteria that must be met.
- **Interns should be encouraged to contribute to projects,** ask questions, absorb information, and provide feedback as part of their learning experience. (Even if "regular" employees are not encouraged to do this in the organization).
- **The organization should have a clear written agreement** with the intern about expectations, responsibilities, evaluation, resources, learning goals, supervision, and work schedule. A copy should be provided to the intern.

## **If the position does not include most of the above criteria, it might just be a part-time job!**

*(That's okay, if they are offering you a position with wages, and you will learn something about your career path from the job.)*



**Early stages of internship exploration**

**Paid? Unpaid? Credit? No Credit?**

Money is usually a good thing, as is academic credit. But an internship in any of the quadrants on the right can be a good fit for you.

		ACADEMICS	
		CREDIT	NO CREDIT
C O M P E N S A T I O N	P A I D	The best of both worlds to be paid and receive credit	If you don't need the credit to graduate, just being paid for your work is a good thing
	U N P A I D	If you need the credit, you might be willing to forego being compensated	It is sometimes necessary to take an unpaid/no credit internship to gain the experience

**Regardless of whether your internship is paid or unpaid (volunteer) the awarding of credit is up to you and your department. If you come across an employer who is *requiring* you to sign up for credit, please contact the Career Development office for assistance.**

**CREDIT OPTIONS**

It is possible to earn academic credit for almost any internship; however, credit policies vary by department. Some departments such as Accounting have formal internship programs that require applications and have GPA requirements. Other majors only require you to add the appropriate course to your schedule and get a faculty member to serve as your advisor. Where academic credit is earned, you will probably need to complete independent study assignments or attend meetings as specified by the academic area granting the credit. Some programs may require you to do a short presentation on the responsibilities of your internship and what you learned. Contact your advisor for more information specific to your department.

Credit is contingent upon successful completion of the work experience and the academic assignments. You register and pay tuition for these credit hours in the same manner that you do for classroom learning experiences. Career Development will help you prepare for the application process and help you find an internship; your academic department will advise you about credit policies and refer you to the faculty member in charge of internships for your department.

**DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF AN UNPAID INTERNSHIP**

**Experience is experience.** An unpaid internship will be listed as "Relevant Experience" on your future resumes right along with paid experience. In some fields such as non-profit administration, marketing, or the arts, finding a paid internship can be challenging. Consider the benefits of an internship, including greater employability after graduation, before you rule out an unpaid internship. Often unpaid internships require fewer hours, which can be flexibly scheduled between classes and give you time to work at a part-time job for money.

## *Finding and applying for internships*

# So where should you look for an internship?

If you are willing to relocate, you could accept an internship anywhere in the world. Internships are available in government, private businesses, non-profit agencies, and even on campus – any place where people are employed. Your internship could be in Columbus or as far away as Europe or Australia -- the choice is yours!

### **HERE ARE THE TOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO FINDING AN INTERNSHIP:**

- 1. Handshake:** This is Capital's own job/internship website. The majority of the postings are in central Ohio. If you've never logged in before, please contact Career Development for help.
- 2. Make an appointment with Career Development.** We keep an **Internship Database** (places that other students have held internships) on our website at **[www.capital.edu/jobs-internships/](http://www.capital.edu/jobs-internships/)** for you to explore as well as personal advice on where to look, depending on your major and interests.
- 3. Attend a career fair:** Visit <https://www.capital.edu/student-life/career-development/career-fairs/> for information on upcoming career fairs.
- 4. Networking:** Ask your friends, family, family friends – essentially anyone you know – for advice and ideas on how to get into your field of choice. Try using social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn to advertise that you're available for an internship. Find more information on networking in our 'Networking: How to get your Foot in the Door' booklet at [www.capital.edu/media/30312ahn/how-to-get-your-foot-in-the-door.pdf](http://www.capital.edu/media/30312ahn/how-to-get-your-foot-in-the-door.pdf).
- 5. Faculty Connections:** Ask your major faculty members if they have connections to employers in their field. Some academic departments (like communication and marketing) have a specific faculty member who coordinates internships.
- 6. Other websites:** If you're not limited to the central Ohio area, then there are a variety of websites you can explore for postings and ideas:

**General:** **[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)**. Search by keywords and zip codes

**State of Ohio Internships:** **<http://careers.ohio.gov/>** Search in Categories for Internships.

**Washington D.C.:** The Washington Center: **[www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu)** and The Fund for American Studies: **[www.dcinternships.org](http://www.dcinternships.org)** are two to try.

**Federal Internships:** **[www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads](http://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads)**

**Nonprofit/Public Service/Human Service Internships:** Try Idealist: **[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)** and the AmeriCorps program, which often has part time summer positions: **[www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)**

## ***Finding and applying for internships***

# **The Application Process**

In most cases, you'll find application directions in the internship posting. You might need to apply directly to the company via email, through a website, or very rarely, US mail.

1. Follow directions.
2. Apply as soon as possible. Don't wait for the deadline.
3. Make sure your resume has no mistakes.
4. Always include a cover letter, even if not required.
5. Follow up between 1-2 weeks to make sure your application was received.
6. Prepare for your interview.

## **RESUME AND COVER LETTER ASSISTANCE**

For help with your resume, the best place to start is with our "How to Write a Resume" booklet, available in Career Development or on our website. The Career Development staff, including Peer Career Advisors, are available to review your resume and offer suggestions on how to make it even better. You can schedule an appointment on Handshake, or email [careerdevelopment@capital.edu](mailto:careerdevelopment@capital.edu).

Yes, EVERY application needs a cover letter. Cover letters serve to introduce you to the employer and tell them why you're qualified for the position. If you've never written one before, stop by Career Development to pick up our "How to Write a Cover Letter" booklet, or download it from our website.

## **INTERVIEWING MADE EASIER**

Yes, we have an Interviewing booklet too! The Career Development staff will also help you prepare for your interview with a "Mock Interview" in which you can practice answering questions and allow us to evaluate your technique and offer suggestions to improve your performance. Schedule an appointment on Handshake!

Remember – the employer is looking for a student who will be a benefit *to* and benefit *from* the internship. Doing your homework about the company and about your own needs will help you convince the employer that this is a good fit for you.

**After your interview, make sure you sent a thank you email or note within 24 hours.** You can find samples in the "How to Interview" booklet on the Career Development website.



***Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills***

# **Congratulations!**

## **You got the internship! Now what?**

1. **Send an email** expressing thanks, accepting the position and stating what you understand as the starting date and ending date, wage (if any), schedule or number of hours per week or understanding that you will arrange your schedule at a later time. Include any other details about the position arrangements.
2. **If you applied for other positions**, it's a matter of courtesy to send a quick note letting the other employers know that you have accepted another position, and to thank them for their consideration. (Don't burn your bridges – you might want an internship or job there in the future!)
3. **If you're planning to get credit** for the internship, contact your department faculty member in charge of internships to make arrangements.
4. **Prepare for the PROFESSIONAL SKILLS you'll need at your internship.** See details on the next three pages.

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you so much for the opportunity to intern at [Organization Name]!

I am pleased to accept the [Internship Title] position at the pay rate of [\$ /hour] and look forward to starting on [start date].

Please let me know if you need further information or have additional paperwork for me to complete.

Again, thank you for this opportunity. I am excited to join the team!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Email Signature]

## ***Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills***

# **PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: Business Etiquette 101**

***“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”***

The impression you make on your internship supervisor can make the difference between a recommendation (or job offer), and a difficult start to your new career.

Also remember that you are representing Capital University. Employers will generalize your behavior to all Capital students, fair or not.

Here are some general guidelines to take into your new semi-professional life:

1. **Honor commitments.** Whether you're paid or not, stick to the agreed-upon schedule. Show up early so that you can start work on time, work the entire agreed-upon amount of time daily, weekly and for the entire internship. If you need to make changes to your schedule, discuss it with your supervisor well in advance and agree (and stick) to the new schedule.
2. **Keep your supervisor informed.** Notify your internship supervisor as far in advance as possible in cases of emergency absence from work. It is never acceptable to be absent without notifying your employer in advance.
3. **Take it seriously.** Do your best possible work in completing all assignments. Ask for clarification if you don't understand what you've been asked to do.
4. **Dress appropriately.** Be well-groomed and appropriately dressed *by your employer's standards*. Look around and see what other employees are wearing, or simply ask what to wear. This might mean having to purchase a few pieces of professional clothing, borrowing from your roommate, or carrying an extra set of clothes in your car if you're going to your internship from class or another job.
5. **Demonstrate good manners.** Be tactful, friendly, courteous, and respectful to everyone (see next two pages on cell phone and email use).
6. **Be conversationally careful.** Avoiding inappropriate topics may not help you make a good impression at work but it will keep you from making a bad one. Subjects that do not make for good workplace conversation include politics, religion, health problems, gossip, and other personal issues.
7. **Ask for help.** Consult the internship supervisor right away when confronted with problems you cannot satisfactorily solve by yourself.

Successfully completing an internship will be one of the best moves you will make on the road to career success!

## ***Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills***

# **PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: Cell Phone Work Rules**

*Adapted from About.com*

When you're on your own time, the choice to spend time on your cell phone is entirely yours. When it comes to using your cell phone at work, however, you have to be mindful of your co-workers and your supervisor, not to mention your own ability to get your job done. Some employers want you to use your phone during work, but in the absence of clear guidelines, here are some rules you should follow.

### **1. Turn Your Cell Phone Sound Off**

If you have your cell phone at work, it shouldn't ring at all. Set it to Do Not Disturb. In addition, your attention should be 100% on your work, not on your private life. Some employers will want you to use your phone for work, and in these cases, your phone should be a tool, not a distraction.

### **2. Use Your Cell Phone Only for Important Calls/Texts**

Unless you are instructed otherwise by your employer, you should only use your phone during breaks or for emergencies. It is not appropriate to take up your employer's time to make arrangements to meet someone after work.

### **3. Let Your Calls Go to Voice Mail**

If you are at work and in doubt about whether an incoming call is urgent, let voice mail pick it up. It will take much less time to check your messages than it will to answer the call and then tell the caller you can't talk. Tell your friends/family to leave a message!

### **4. Find a Private Place to use your Cell Phone**

While it's okay to use your cell phone at work for private communication during breaks, find somewhere else to talk or text, where your conversation won't be distracting, even if what you're discussing isn't personal.

### **5. Don't Bring Your Cell Phone into the Restroom ... Ever**

This rule should apply to using your cell phone at work or anywhere. You never know who's in there with you, and the person on the other end of the line will hear bathroom sounds.

### **6. During Meetings, put your phone out of sight, and set it to Do Not Disturb**

Even if you have your cell phone set to vibrate, if you receive a call or text you will be tempted to see who it's from. This can be a signal to your boss that your mind isn't on your job. Most communication can wait until your meeting is over or until a break.

## Accepting an internship and polishing your professional skills

# PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: Tips for Professional Email

Adapted from About.com

When communicating with someone about a work-related matter, it is always important to be **professional**. Here's a refresher:

- **Wait to Fill in the "TO" Email Address:** Never fill in the 'TO' email address until you are completely through proofing your email and are sure that it is exactly the way that you want it. This will keep you from accidentally sending an email prematurely. For example, people have accidentally clicked on the send icon, when they really meant to click on the attachment icon.
- **Mind Your Manners:** Think of the basic rules you learned growing up, like saying "please" and "thank you." Only address someone by first name if they imply it's okay to do so. Also don't assume their pronoun based on their first name.

A good solution is to simply ask up front how they would like to be addressed!

- **Watch Your Tone:** It is very difficult to express tone (mood or emotion) in writing. You want to come across as respectful, friendly, and approachable. You don't want to sound curt or demanding.
- **Be Concise and Professional:** Get to the point of your email as quickly as possible, but don't leave out important details that will help your recipient answer your query. Avoid abbreviations (like btw) and using emojis. Don't use a cute or suggestive email address for business communications.
- **Use Correct Spelling and Proper Grammar:** Use spell check every time (but don't trust it to fix all your mistakes). While you can write in a conversational tone (contractions are okay), pay attention to basic rules of grammar.
- **Your Email "signature":** In general, stick to your name, major, your year in college, and any leadership roles that are relevant to the people you are emailing. For example, political and religious involvement is usually avoided in a signature.

The image shows an email draft interface with several callout boxes pointing to specific parts of the email. The callouts provide the following advice:

- To:** Fill this out last! Proof your email first and make sure you've included all attachments and necessary information.
- Body:** Mind your manners: use "please" and "thank you."
- Body:** Be concise: Get to the point of your email as quickly as possible without leaving out important details.
- Signature:** Your email signature: In general, utilize your name, major, graduation year and any leadership roles relevant to the people you are emailing.

The email draft content includes:

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Updated Employer Fair Document

Hi Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ (use their first name if this is how you would typically address them)

Thank you so much for collaborating with me on the employer fair.

I compiled our notes from the meeting yesterday and have made edits to the attached document accordingly.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to your feedback!

Best,

[Your Name]  
[Your Email Signature]

# WHAT IF YOU DON'T FIND AN INTERNSHIP?

## **Don't be discouraged. Don't give up.**

- Make an appointment with Career Development to identify reasons for your difficulty and let us help you work on those issues.
- Contact any employer who did not select you to learn why. Gently ask (never in a demanding or upset tone) what you can do to offset their reasons for rejection.
- If you found that you were late in applying for consideration this year, plan earlier to apply again next year.
- Look for other avenues to gain experience – part-time jobs, volunteer work, research, etc. We will help you.

**Career Development**  
Blackmore Library, Second Floor  
614-236-6606  
CareerDevelopment@capital.edu  
[www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment](http://www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment)