

Finding the Perfect Internship

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is a student planned and directed learning experience that provides opportunities to integrate academic, professional, and personal skill development. Students select sites where they contribute and interact with individuals in a real-world work environment. Internships may be paid or unpaid. Although many internships pay a salary or a stipend, there are many quality internships that do not pay, especially in the not-for-profit area. Evaluate internships on the experience you may gain as opposed to the money you may earn.

LET THE INTERNSHIP SEARCH BEGIN

A successful internship will provide a student with the opportunity to build on academic knowledge, advance professional skills, establish personal goals and explore occupational ideas. Begin your search at least two months before you hope to start your internship by meeting with a career counselor and reviewing your resume, cover letter and goals. Questions you will want to be able to respond to include: What kind of internship experience are you seeking? What skills do you hope to develop or enhance? How will the internship integrate academic knowledge? What are the ideal characteristics for the internship site? Will you be able to set and establish personal development goals? You will want to be able to articulate your responses to these questions; then, follow these steps:

- 1) Visit the Career Center website regularly: go.lclark.edu/career_center. The Career Center offers current, local, national, and international internships searchable by area of interest through Handshake: <https://app.joinhandshake.com>. New listings are posted daily.
- 2) Contact prospective internship sites directly. Internships, like many jobs, are not always posted. For ideas about who to contact, look at the following directories located in the Career Center:
 - Master Lists: A guide to Northwest Media, Marketing and Creative Services
 - The Business Journal: Book of Lists
 - Internships with America's Top Companies
 - The Big Green Internship Book (Internships and Summer Jobs for the Environment)
 - Internships in International Affairs
 - Yale Daily News Guide to Internships
 - The Princeton Review: The Internship Bible
 - Directory of Internships in Youth Development

Additionally, Watzek Library has resources, including:

- The Human Internship Book
- The Media Internship Book
- The History Internship Book
- National Directory of Arts Internships

- 3) Develop a personal network. Networking is about building relationships and is a simple and powerful way to search for an internship. You will find in your networking that people are eager to provide assistance – especially to sincere, motivated college students.
- 4) Request assistance from faculty. They may know of alumni or others who work in the industry you are interested in. Networking with faculty contacts is an excellent way of finding and creating your own internship.
- 5) Research organizations so that you know as much as you can about them before you inquire about internship opportunities.
- 6) Remember that an internship is NOT “free labor” for the organization. An internship should be a learning opportunity for you and an opportunity for the organization to complete valuable projects and possibly recruit a quality employee.

10 STEPS TO INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

1. Establish goals and brainstorm internship site possibilities by visiting our website go.lclark.edu/career_center and logging into Handshake, our job and internship database
2. Update your resume and cover letter and make an appointment (for review) with a career counselor.
3. Discuss internship plans with your faculty advisor or another member of the faculty to include integration of academics into the internship experience.
4. Evaluate your interviewing skills. For many students this is a first professional-level job search.
5. Use the interviewing handout in the Career Center to prepare; schedule a mock interview with a career counselor; and practice, practice, practice.
6. Accept an internship offer that will challenge your academic, professional and personal skill development.
7. Obtain a job description from your site supervisor and use this as a guide as your experience develops.
8. Meet with your site supervisor at a midpoint of the internship experience to discuss expectations, performance, and feedback. Make adjustments.
9. Secure a letter of reference from your site supervisor for your portfolio.
10. Update your resume by integrating the internship experience.
11. Congratulate yourself!