

Guide to Finding the Right Internship

Before you can even start thinking about finding an internship, you need to spend time reflecting on your goals to help obtain an internship in your field of study.

Step 1— Identify your internship goals.

What do you want to get out of your internship? Work experience? Credit hours? Sample work for your resume or portfolio? Line up a future job? Make a list. Answer the following questions:

- *What are your specific career interests?*

An internship is a great way to help you define your career goals. For example, if you're majoring in technology, but have an eye on a political career, you might consider an internship with a local or state politician. Or, an internship can help further refine your career goals. For example, if you're a science major but not sure whether you want to go into research or teaching, you should consider getting internships in both areas to help you decide which is best for you.

- *Why do you want an internship – and what do you hope to gain from it?*

There are multiple reasons for obtaining an internship, such as learning new skills, gaining networking connections, adding work experience to your resume, and as an entry point that you hope leads to a full-time position with the employer when you graduate.

Step 2 – Make a list of the type or organizations or companies you want to intern with.

- *What type of organization are you interested in?*

Organizations come in all sizes and shapes, from Fortune 500 companies to not-for-profit organizations. Issues to consider include size, ownership, corporate culture, location, etc.

- *What industry would be best for your needs?*

Even when you know exactly what you want to do, you can still be uncertain about the type of industry that best suits you. For example, if you are a natural-born salesperson, you really have the option of working in any industry, but engineering is quite different from selling insurance.

Step 3 – Do you only want an internship where you get paid or are you also interested in non-paid or for course credit?

- *Where do you want to have your internship?*

If your internship is during the regular semester, you obviously need an internship close to your college campus, but during the summer months you may wish to have an internship near home so you can save on expenses or in a location where you hope to land a full-time position when you graduate. If it is further from home, you may want to experience a place in which you have never lived before.

- *Will you consider both paid and nonpaid internships?*

It would be great if all internships paid, but in reality a large number do not, especially in certain industries. So, you need to decide whether you can afford to not get paid during your internship. In addition, while it is not always the case, paid internships tend to be more professional because the employer wants to get its money worth from you.

- *Do you want college credit for the internship?*

Many colleges offer at least some college credit for internships. The plus side (besides earning the credits) is that there is usually an internship program with an established list of employers and internships available to you. The down side is that there may be more restrictions on the type and amount of work you can do based on the program guidelines.

STEMPLOY can assist you in the following tasks.

- ✓ Writing a Cover Letter
- ✓ Writing a Resume

Step 4 – Write a cover letter.

- *What is a cover letter?*

Also known as a letter of introduction, letter of application, transmittal letter, or broadcast letter, it's a letter that no smart job-seeker should send his or her resume without. Few employers seriously consider a resume that is not accompanied by a cover letter; thus, a dynamically written cover letter needs to be part of your job-search strategy.

- *Why is a cover letter so important?*

A resume is useless to an employer if he or she doesn't know what kind of work you want to do. A cover letter tells the employer the type of position you're seeking and exactly how you are qualified for that position.

- *What type of cover letter are you writing?*

There are basically three types of letter which are Invited, Uninvited, or Referral.

A cover letter highlights the aspects of your experience that are most useful to the potential employer, and you can earn points for knowing what those aspects are. If the letter is following an internship announcement, Invited, then you can respond by mentioning skills relevant to the job posted. Employers get hundreds of resumes, especially when they advertise a choice position. Employers are also very busy. Often the person screening resumes skims each for only a few seconds. Your cover letter can call attention to the skills, talents, and experience the employer is looking for

Step 5 – Write your resume.

- *What are the basic sections of your resume?*

First, you need to include your name and contact information at the top of the resume. Include an objective or career goal, professional profile or background relevant to the position offered, Education, Professional Experience, and 3 references if requested. See the sample resume.

Step 6 – Practice Interview Questions.

You will need to practice answering typical job interview questions. Use the following common questions as a guide.

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. What specific goals, including those related to your occupation, have you established for your life?
3. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
4. Please describe the ideal job for you following graduation.
5. What influenced you to choose this career?
6. At what point did you choose this career?
7. What specific goals have you established for your career?
8. What will it take to attain your goals, and what steps have you taken toward attaining them?
9. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
10. How do you determine or evaluate success? Give me an example of one of your successful accomplishments.
11. Do you have the qualifications and personal characteristics necessary for success in your chosen career?
12. What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?
13. If you could do so, how would you plan your college career differently?
14. Are you more energized by working with data or by collaborating with other individuals?
15. How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
16. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
17. Given the investment our company will make in hiring and training you, can you give us a reason to hire you?
18. Would you describe yourself as goal-driven?
19. Describe what you've accomplished toward reaching a recent goal for yourself.
20. What short-term goals and objectives have you established for yourself?

21. Can you describe your long-range goals and objectives?
22. What do you expect to be doing in five years?
23. What do you see yourself doing in ten years?
24. How would you evaluate your ability to deal with conflict?
25. Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor or instructor? How did you resolve the conflict?
26. Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?
27. Would you say that you can easily deal with high-pressure situations?
28. What quality or attribute do you feel will most contribute to your career success?
29. What personal weakness has caused you the greatest difficulty in school or on the job?
30. What were your reasons for selecting your college or university?
31. If you could change or improve anything about your college, what would it be?
32. How will the academic program and coursework you've taken benefit your career?
33. Which college classes or subjects did you like best? Why?
34. Are you the type of student for whom conducting independent research has been a positive experience?
35. Describe the type of professor that has created the most beneficial learning experience for you.
36. Do you think that your grades are a indication of your academic achievement?
37. What plans do you have for continued study? An advanced degree?
38. Before you can make a productive contribution to the company, what degree of training do you feel you will require?
39. Describe the characteristics of a successful manager.
40. Why did you decide to seek a position in this field?