

How To Acquire An Internship

This handout is designed to help you find an internship in your area(s) of interest. It highlights the various resources available to you as you search for a great internship. If you do not find an internship that suits your interests, you may want to explore the possibility of creating your own internship. The step-by-step process is the same, whether you're looking for an already-established internship program or looking to design an internship of your own.

STEP 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

Clarify your interests and objectives for doing an internship.

- What do you hope to gain from the experience?
- What type(s) of work do you want to do?
- Where do you want to work (geographical location)?
- What type of organization would you like to work for (non-profit, high-tech, government, educational, environmental – small or large)?

What are your requirements regarding compensation (academic credit, monetary)?

- What major/career field might you want to pursue?

Identify your abilities (writing, research, analytical skills, etc.), academic preparation, previous work and volunteer experiences, hobbies and extracurricular activities.

- If this is an internship to gain your first pre-professional experience, you might want to include things like volunteer experience, motivation, creativity, quick learner, hard worker, etc. This is what you have to offer the employer.

Think about your personality and values.

- Are you more comfortable working with a lot of other people or would you prefer to work alone?
- Would you prefer to work with details, having specific deadlines, or would you feel more comfortable in an open-minded structure working with abstractions and ideas?
- What is going to make your internship a meaningful experience? Making connections with people in your field of interest, working on creative projects, developing leadership skills, making money, etc.?

If you would like assistance with further self-assessment, counselors at the Career Exploration Center are available for appointments Monday through Friday.

STEP 2: WHERE TO FIND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

Internship opportunities and information can be found via the Internet, the CEC, college career services offices, and through networking.

Internet Resources

Access UT

www.accessUT.utexas.edu/students/

The University of Texas has a centralized internship database system which contains multiple local, state, national, and international internships in a variety of fields. You can conduct searches based on career field, location, name of company, part- or full-time, and keyword.

Eureka

www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/index.php

If you're looking to enhance your experience as a researcher, Eureka can connect you to opportunities to work with a faculty mentor, apply your academic courses to hands-on experiences, and sharpen your problem-solving skills.

Texas Exes Career Network

www.texasexes.org/careernet

The Career Network is a great service available through the Texas Exes to help connect alumni with current UT students to share career-related information. To learn about internships, it is important to know that alumni are not going to get you internships, but they could inform you about what and where internships are typically found in their field.

Career Exploration Center Resources

CEC Library Resources

Various internship publications and employee directories are available in the Career Exploration Center library. These directories profile employers in different locations and career fields.

CEC Faculty Contacts Program

There are more than 100 faculty members who are eager to serve as a link in your major and career exploration. They can provide you with information about majors and their relationship to various careers. Ask for the Faculty Contacts Program at the CEC front desk.

College Career Services Office

www.utexas.edu/employment/students.html

Each college has a career services office that also offers internship resources for their student population. For more information please contact your college career services office directly.

Networking into Internships

Participants in the following programs may have knowledge and/or connections about potential internships in their fields. Also, if you are searching for an internship in another city, these contacts may be especially helpful.

Personal Contacts

Colleagues, friends, employers, professors, and organizations can serve as your personal contacts. Write or call these individuals, and let them know what kind of internship you are seeking. They may provide you with contacts in that field.

Faculty Contacts - see information above, under Career Exploration Center Resources

Texas Exes Career Network - see information above, under Internet Resources

STEP 3: THE RESUME AND COVER LETTER CAMPAIGN

To apply for any internship, you usually need to have a resume—and a quality resume is the best and most effective way to make a positive first impression.

- Prepare a resume and cover letter using the CEC’s handout “Resume Writing, Cover Letters and Follow-up Letters”, and by referencing the resume writing books and resume samples binder located in the CEC library.
- Make an appointment with your career services office to have your resume or cover letter reviewed. (Please note that the CEC does not provide resume reviews for internships or jobs).
- Send resume and cover letter to contacts.
- Follow up with a phone call to re-emphasize your interest and answer any questions an employer may have. This is also a good time to try to set up an appointment for an interview. If the organization is out of the area, you may offer to do a phone interview.

STEP 4: THE INTERVIEW

Prepare for the interview.

- Review the Career Exploration Center’s resources for interviewing strategies. See the handout “Understanding the Interview Process” for more details.
- Review information (website, annual reports, business journals, etc.) on the prospective organization. See the Career Exploration Center’s handout “Sources and Questions in Researching Employers” for more information on how to do this.

Follow-up procedures.

- Send a thank you letter after the interview.
- Respond to all offers, even those you do not plan to accept.
- Share your experience with a CEC staff counselor. We appreciate hearing about your experiences and this feedback enables us to better serve students in the future.

For additional information, assistance, or support, feel free to make an appointment with one of our career counselors.