

FINDING AN INTERNSHIP GUIDE

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In addition to traditional classroom learning, a student may choose to participate in an experiential education component or arrange for a learning experience in a practical setting. These opportunities may be in the form of internships, externships, or volunteer experiences. Internships are typically work or service experiences involving students who have already attained academic preparation related to a professional field. The length of this experience is much longer than an externship and usually carries more responsibility than a volunteer position.

What is an Internship?

An internship is an experience where a student takes on a responsible role within an organization. The student learns through observation and reflection of what occurred during the experience. An internship allows a student to apply theory and skills in a job situation and is a solid educational learning experience. Internships are a way to:

- Gain practical experience
- Solidify career choices
- Increase your knowledge and skills
- Obtain additional academic credit
- Test classroom theories in the "real world"
- Take control of what you learn
- Obtain on-the-job training
- Contribute to an organization or company
- Do something in an off-campus setting
- Earn money (possibly)
- Increase your community involvement
- Network and make contacts

Internships Can Give You a Competitive Edge

As mentioned above, there are several reasons to secure an internship. With today's competitive job market, employers are looking for candidates who have prior work experience. For full-time college students, obtaining this "prior work experience" is often extremely difficult. An internship most often qualifies as this needed work experience. An internship can increase your qualifications and make your candidacy stand out from the larger applicant pool. Remember that internships allow an intern to learn more about the business world, government sector or non-profit sector. An internship emphasizes learning on the job rather than earning, and provides a chance to see how you like your chosen field. An intern learns more about the value of teamwork and develops strong interpersonal skills. Lastly, an intern has an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge and develop practical skills. From a job search perspective, seeking and securing an internship will improve your job search skills as you will have already experienced the ups and downs of a search.

Is an Internship for You?

Internship experiences are not for everyone. Because internships are learning experiences where skills and knowledge are applied and further developed, it is critical that a student be academically, intellectually and socially ready to embark on such a hands-on experience. Students should consider the following areas **prior** to exploring internship opportunities.

- Level of maturity

- Type and quality of academic work completed (upper level courses, research methods, etc.)
- Length and depth of experience - i.e. full-time, part-time, field experience & practicum
- Demonstrated skills such as research, analysis, communication, ability to work independently
- Best time for the internship to occur in relationship to graduation and academic requirements
- Level of energy and commitment willing to put forth during the internship

Is an internship for you? If the answer is "yes", then carefully consider the type of internship experience you want and begin to discuss the issue with faculty at UW-Green Bay and the staff in Career Services.

Types of Internships

There are various types of internships that exist, which include academic, paid and unpaid/volunteer internships. The organization, location, and how many interns they employ may factor into the type of internship an organization offers. Remember the key to an internship is the learning experience, not necessarily the type of compensation you will receive in return. Please give careful consideration to the type of internship you pursue as well as to the time of year you wish to secure the experience.

Paid internships allow you to gain experience with different types of compensation received. Internships may be fully paid (a lump sum for the entire semester such as a stipend) or paid hourly. A small stipend may be available for commuting and/or living expenses. The summer is an optimal time for organizations to offer paid internships. The organization will most likely state in the internship description if it is paid or unpaid.

Non-paid/volunteer internships provide you with similar responsibilities as paid internships, but may be limited in the total number of hours the experience will last. If other opportunities are not possible, do not initially discount an internship just because it is non-paid/volunteer. Having a non-paid internship could convey to a potential employer that you possess a certain level of commitment and/or dedication to the field, plus you will have had related experience. If money is an issue, you can compensate for a non-paid internship by working part-time.

Academic internships allow a student to receive academic credit for the work accomplished in the internship. Academic internships are supervised by a faculty member and are approved by individual academic units. The coordination of internships for academic credit resides with the various academic departments, and in some disciplines, a practical component is a required element of the curriculum. An internship involves faculty - student interaction in the establishment of internship requirements, faculty assessment of achievement and possible work-site visits by the student's intern coordinator.

Most academic units at UW-Green Bay will only sponsor their majors for internships. The types of experiences and the amount of credit earned varies from department to

department. Full-time undergraduate internships are for 9-12 credit hours and part-time internships are for 3-6 credit hours. To earn credit for your internship, additional work (research paper, project, journal, evaluations) is often required for you to complete. This academic component of the internship is pre-arranged with your faculty and on-site supervisors. Refer to the college catalogue for your major regarding the course numbers and descriptions pertaining to internships. To review a list of internship coordinators by major – refer to the **Department Internship Contacts** link on the Career Services' website.

In order to complete an internship for academic credit, students must officially enroll for internship credit. You can find the Internship Form on the Registrar's website under **Forms & Petitions**. The form will need to be completed, then signed by your supervising faculty member and internship site supervisor prior to submitting to the Registrar's Office to receive credit.

The Role of Career Services

Securing an internship requires effort and hard work. Career Services is available to assist students in obtaining paid and nonpaid/volunteer internships and to answer questions and make referrals regarding internships for academic credit. Our staff can assist in identifying possible sites and in preparation of application materials: writing a resume, developing a letter of application and sharpening interviewing skills. Career Services sponsors a Job and Internship Fair twice each year – once in early Fall and again in early Spring semester. These events are great opportunities to meet with organizations and ask questions about internships.

You Would Like to Obtain an Internship - What Next?

First, you should decide on your level of commitment to an internship and whether you would like to receive academic credit for the experience. Your level of commitment will determine the length of time you are willing to serve as an intern per week and the ideas you can generate about what you would like to accomplish during the internship.

Pursuing an Internship for Academic Credit

Make an appointment to speak with the Academic Internship Coordinator for the unit where your major is located. Coordinators for each department are listed on the Career Services' website in "Find a Job/Internship" > "Department Internship Contacts."

Develop an intern goal statement. Answer these questions.

1. What is it you want to do?
2. What are the skills you would like to use and the interests you would like to incorporate?
3. What type of employer would you like to work for as an intern? Identify the type of organization, i.e. large corporation, school, non-profit organization, etc.

Consider the opportunities available before your meeting. Review the current internships that are posted and available in Handshake. Some academic units list internships on their academic unit website.

Be honest with the coordinator. She/he will need information contained in the goal statement including the courses you have taken. The more information you share with the internship coordinator, the more productive your first meeting will be.

Review the application procedure with the coordinator. Be clear on your role and what the coordinator will do for you.

Prepare a resume and a possible letter of application at the direction of the coordinator. Have staff in Career Services review the resume and letter of application you developed. Continue/pursue the process as advised.

Identifying Your Own Internship Sites

Review the list of internships in Handshake. Consider the time of year, geographic location, and weekly time commitment desired.

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3. What type of employer would you like to work for as an intern? Identify the type of organization, i.e. large corporation, school, non-profit organization, etc.

Based on geographic location and field, develop a list of prospective employers. Review directories, employer/organization websites, telephone books, Chamber of Commerce listings and other publications.

Write a resume and letter of application. View the various resources Career Services has available to assist you with writing an effective resume and cover letter. Have staff in Career Services review both your resume and letter of application.

You can begin by contacting organizations by email or phone to see if any internship is available. Be ready to follow-up in response to interest in your intern candidacy by sending your resume and a follow-up letter. Wait for 5-7 business days before performing any follow-up calls. It is important for you to follow-up your letters. Remember that you have initiated the correspondence. If you wait for the organization(s) to respond to you, you might miss out on several opportunities.