

INTERNSHIPS 101

What is an internship?

An internship is a period of work experience offered by an employer to give you as a student exposure to the working environment in the occupation or industry that you are considering for a career. Internships can be as short as a week or as long as 12 months.

The biggest difference between a job and an internship is that interns are led and mentored by an expert. It's typically expected that an intern requires up to 20% of the employer's time and that what the intern brings to the employer makes that investment worthwhile – and may even lead to a permanent job offer.

Why should I try to get an internship?

The National Association of Colleges and Employers states:

Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

Internships allow you to:

- Test career choices early and confirm (or disaffirm) career interests and professional goals
- Gain professional confidence by learning about personal strengths and weaknesses
- Apply your classroom knowledge and skills in a work setting
- Develop teamwork, communication, and leadership skills
- Establish and maintain a network of professional contacts
- Gain a competitive edge in the job-market and possibly gain a full-time job

What kind of internship should I apply for?

Both you and the employer will be putting substantial time into the internship, so be thoughtful and intentional when trying to find the right one. Focus your search. Ask yourself:

- What type of employer interests you? (large corporation, non-profit, start-up, etc.)
- What industry(ies) are you interested in?
- What career do you want to pursue, longer-term?
- What are the skills and interests you would like to develop/incorporate?
- How far are you willing to commute?
- Are you willing to explore both paid and unpaid internship opportunities?



How do I find an internship?

You find internships the same way you find jobs: by researching and networking.

- PEOPLE: Your professors (ACTG: Bruce Maule) may send out emails or post opportunities on Canvas pages, or you may know alumni who work in certain industries.
- POSTINGS: Career Services posts internship opportunities:
 - on the bulletin boards near the Counseling front desk
 - on our online job board, [College Central Network](#) (search “internship” as your job type).
- PROFESSIONAL EVENTS: Career, internship and volunteer fairs held throughout the year, both on-campus and off-campus, and online/virtually.
 - Check CSM Career Services’ Facebook and LinkedIn pages as well as CSM’s event calendar for announcements about fairs.
- PROSPECTING: Research and contact companies or organizations in which you are interested directly (website, email, LinkedIn)

You usually apply and interview for internships the same way you apply and interview for jobs. Remember that the employer will be investing a fair amount of time in training you during this learning experience, so you need to make a good impression on them and prove what you can bring to their company/ organization if they accept you as an intern (and possible future employee).

Will I be paid as an intern?

Some internships are paid and some are unpaid. Generally, non-profit and educational organizations will offer unpaid internships while for-profit businesses tend to offer paid internships. It’s important to remember that an internship is a learning experience, not only a means of making money, so judge each opportunity by how much you can learn as opposed to how much you can earn.

Can I get school credit for my internships?

- Unless you are in a major/program that **requires** an internship, or need the units in your schedule for other reasons (e.g., must be a full-time student), you are not required to enroll in a Cooperative Education course, or COOP. But if you need and want school credit for your internship, that is an option for you.
- You do need to pay for the COOP credit(s) in which you enroll.
- Some departments, like DGME, have their own internship class (DGME 250). Otherwise, you will need to enroll in a COOP class at either Canada or Skyline (CSM does not currently offer the COOP class). There is a substantial amount of paperwork and perhaps an assignment or two you will need to complete as part of the COOP.

What do I need to know if I am offered an internship?

- Start and end dates; location of internship (esp. if company has multiple locations)
- Dress code/etiquette expectations
- If you are enrolled in COOP (or a related class), know what assignments are due when.
- Let CSM Career Services know if you have received an internship offer and are accepting it! We love to hear about your successes and hope you can share your experience with others.