



Internship FAQs for Students

What is an internship?

Different people have different ideas of what an internship should be. But colleges and employers who are serious about the value of internships tend to follow this basic definition, which was established by The National Association of Colleges and Employers:

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. 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.

This is how CSM defines an internship, and we suggest that you do the same. Simply put, an internship is a hands-on learning experience where the intern is performing tasks at work which they are also learning about in school. A good way to find out if an internship is going to be this kind of experience is to ask the employer these two questions:

1. Who will be training and supervising me?

If they don't know the answer or if they expect you to work on your own most of the time, I would be cautious. Because internships are supposed to be learning experiences, you should be carefully guided by someone who is a professional or expert in the field.

2. What will my job duties be?

The answer to this question should align with the things you are currently studying in school. Be wary of internships that have duties which sound too similar to something you could be doing at your current job. The point of an internship (for current students) is to give you experience doing the kind of work you will be doing once you finish your education.

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. Its greatest value is the learning experience, 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?

If you need and want school credit for your internship, that is an option for you. You will need to enroll in Skyline's Cooperative Education class at the following address:

<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/cooped/index.php>. This is an open enrollment class, so you can join any time. If you have any questions or need help, contact Steven Cooney at (650) 738-7009 or cooney@smccd.edu.

Do I have to enroll in Cooperative Education? Not if you don't want to. Mostly, people enroll if they need to meet certain units to be eligible for financial aid, VA benefits, Social Security benefits or insurance benefits.

How do I get an internship?

You find internships the same way you find jobs: researching and networking. Your FIRST stop should be to CSM's Career Services, located in building 10, third floor in the counseling department. Ask for Autumn Newman or email her at newmana@smccd.edu. CSM may have an internship opportunity perfect for you and you will know that it's a valuable opportunity because CSM has screened it for you already! If there is not a good internship opportunity for you through CSM, search our online job board (College Central Network). You can use this site to view and apply for national internships (internship central) or for local internships approved by CSM Career Services using a general search with "internship" selected in your search criteria.

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 impress them and prove what you can bring to their company/ organization if they accept you as an intern. But don't worry, CSM Career Services can help you prepare your resume and prepare for the interview. Visit us and use the free resources on our website, including College Central Network (which offers an easy 3-step resume builder) and Perfect Interview (which gives you practice and feedback on your interviewing skills).

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

1. Congratulations, getting an internship is not easy and will help you stand out to future schools and employers!
2. If you heard about the internship through CSM, please let us know you are accepting the internship.
3. Treat the company/ organization as your employer. Treat your supervisor/ trainer/ mentor as your boss. Treat the other people around you as coworkers. Always show respect and an eagerness to learn. Ask questions and ask for help. Be courteous and formal in all your communications and interactions (think, rethink, and proofread before you hit send or

speak). Impress them and one day they may write you a recommendation or interview you for a career.

4. If you are an unpaid intern, you will not be covered by their insurance in the event of a work injury or accident and will be required to sign a waiver of liability to agree not to hold them responsible if you are hurt during the internship. Signing such a document means, for example, if you fall and break your ankle at the internship, they won't pay for your medical expenses and you agree not to sue them for this.
5. If CSM is not helping you through the internship process, there should be regular communication between you and the company/ organization about your learning objectives and duties/ responsibilities as an intern. You should also be evaluated regularly to receive formal feedback of how well you are doing. It is OK to ask for these things.