



Internships

What is an internship?

An internship is a paid or unpaid short-term work experience that relates to your field of interest. Through internships you can gain insight into specific careers, and better understand how a career matches your various interests. Your internship can be as unique as you are. When selecting an internship experience remember that first priority is your experience and the education it will provide you about the career field you are considering, while assisting you in making important career decisions. While some internships are paid, the salary is never as important as the learning experience. Many students take part in unpaid internships and certainly receive as many or more benefits to their overall development.

Where will I find an internship?

Internships provide practical experience in a professional environment. Practical experiences apply the content from your coursework to relevant issues in the workplace. Many employers seek to hire new college graduates who already have on-the-job training.

Why are internships important?

Keep an open mind, and be creative during the internship search. Your most intense focus should be on the skills you will obtain in the internship. These efforts will ultimately contribute to a very positive experience. Browse the Resource Center at The Career Center for books to help you determine which companies offer jobs in your major. Also, discuss your interests with a Career Counselor who will help determine strategies to search for your ideal internship.

Consider the variety of endless opportunities, and the many types of potential sponsors. For example, investigate both profit and non-profit organizations. Also, consider looking through volunteer organizations. Check out the Office of Volunteer Programs at www.union.illinois.edu/ovp. Also, consider service organizations. The Career Center Resource Center maintains a binder with a plethora of beneficial volunteer programs.

When do I participate in an internship?

Many students obtain internships during the summer months between academic school years. Other students find internships that take place during the academic semester or year. Your academic advisor or career counselor can help you determine how to balance your internship with your course of study, and whether or not you should take a semester off from school to complete an internship.