

INTERNSHIP BEST PRACTICES



What is an internship?

An internship is different from a job or a volunteer opportunity. An internship includes the opportunity to learn and develop knowledge about a specific career path you may be considering. An internship might involve job shadowing opportunities and weekly feedback from a designated internship manager.

ATTEND AN INTERNSHIP Q&A VIA ENGAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNSHIPS AND GENERAL BEST PRACTICES FOR APPLYING TO ONE.

Questions to ask if you want to do an internship:

Do you want to complete an internship?

Do you plan to complete an internship for course credit?

If no - learn about how to search for internships & decide when you want to complete an internship.

If no - talk to your faculty advisor to find out what the process is for taking an internship course.

If yes - register for an internship orientation in JobCat or email careers@wcu.edu.

Make sure you find an internship. Need help? Make an appointment with the CCPD online via MyWCU.

If yes - are you part of these majors:

**Art
Graphic Design
Biology
Business
Administration & Law
Computer Information Systems
Engineering
Electrical Engineering
English
Entrepreneurship
Finance
Engineering Technology
Hospitality & Tourism
Interior Design
International Studies
Management
Parks & Recreation
Political Science
Sales & Marketing
Spanish**



Should I do an internship for class credit?



There's the potential that you could get class credit for completing an internship. Some majors even require that you take an internship course. Decide if that's something you want to do and reach out to your faculty advisor to find out if that's an option for you.

If you are part of the list of majors below, ***make sure you attend an internship orientation the semester before your internship.*** Register for one in JobCat by going to Events, clicking on Workshops and picking a time that works for you.

- Art
- Graphic Design
- Biology
- Business Administration & Law
- Computer Information Systems
- Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- English
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- Engineering Technology
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Interior Design
- International Studies
- Management
- Parks & Recreation
- Political Science
- Sales & Marketing
- Spanish

How do I find an internship?



Here are a few ideas to search for internships. Make sure you are searching for internships ***six months to a year*** in advance. Have your cover letter and resume ready to apply to internships.

Online searches: Use sites like JobCat (for Catamounts!), Indeed.com, LinkedIn, Idealist, InternMatch, and other industry specific websites to look online. These are just a few examples of sites. Set job alerts or sign up for emails if the site allows it.

Network: Let your family, friends, and professors know you are looking for internships. See if they have any suggestions about people you could connect with.

Cold Contacts: This might sound scary, but reach out to local organizations that you are interested in. Make a list and call or email these organizations to see if they plan to hire an intern.

College Internship Checklist

Freshmen Year

- Visit the career center
- Go over your resume and career plan
- Join a club / get involved in the campus community
- Get to know your support systems on campus (career center, counseling center, advising, etc.)

Sophomore Year

- Attend a career fair
- Network with potential employers through campus events
- Update your information in JobCat
- Determine if you want to do an internship for class credit
- Start searching for companies you want to intern with

Junior Year

- Determine what field, industry and location you would like to intern
- Perfect your resume, cover letter and interviewing skills
- Search for internships through networking and online applications
- ***You may complete an internship this year, senior year or both! Some students even complete one Freshmen/Sophomore year.***

Senior Year

- Update your resume (every year!)
- Complete your first or second internship
- Use your internship network to start looking for jobs
- Make sure you have a professional mentor
- Determine if you can get a job at your internship site after you graduate (this happens!)

Make the Most of Your Internship



Set realistic goals and expectations: Make sure you can work the amount of time you've agreed each week. Compare your syllabus to your work schedule to see if any coursework or big exams overlap with your internship.

Maintain a "can do" attitude: Show interest in learning new things about the company or taking on additional projects, if time permits. Some activities may be more fun than others, so make sure to keep a positive demeanor regardless. Show up on time each day. Communicate with your boss in advance if anything comes up.

Understand the unwritten rules: What is the appropriate attire if it's not clearly stated? How do colleagues interact? Error on the side of caution early on, dressing modestly and avoiding certain taboo topics or language at work.

Find a mentor: This could be your boss or someone you work closely with. Find someone that you can go to with questions, someone who takes a personal interest in your career development.



Reach out if you need help searching for an internship. We are here to help!

Make an appointment:

- **MyWCU**
- **Call us at 828-227-7133**
- **Email us at careerservices@wcu.edu**

**Western
Carolina**
UNIVERSITY

Center for Career and
Professional Development