



Finding a Quality Internship

Elements to look for and avoid

Nowadays there are many websites where internships and jobs are posted. When looking at opportunities, you may wonder, "How do I know if this will be a good learning experience? Will it be worth my time? What skills will I gain? What will I be doing every day in this role? Will I have any special projects? Will I be able to achieve my learning goals?" The Career Center wants you to have a quality internship experience! This handout lists what to look for when evaluating an internship opportunity, and what interests and values. While you are the one applying to and interviewing for opportunities, it is beneficial to you and your goals as much as it benefits the employer.

What is a quality internship?

An internship is a form of experiential learning where students apply classroom theories to practical, real world settings under the guidance of an experienced supervisor. By completing an internship, students gain professional skills, assess strengths, explore career interests and develop employer connections. Typically, these are temporary experiences that range from 8-15 weeks in length.

Key elements of a quality internship:

- x The experience has a defined duration, and a position description with desired qualifications (see below).
- x There are clearly defined learning objectives and duties outlined by the employer prior to the intern beginning the internship.
- x There is supervision by a professional with expertise and background in the field of the internship.
- x There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- x There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals (e.g., computers, desk, training materials).
- x The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.

Many of these elements will be clearly indicated within the position description, but not always. Sometimes you will come across internship position descriptions that are short, vague, and do not provide many details about the role. If you are uncertain about whether to apply, reach out to the contact on the posting with specific questions to get

Alternatively, you can apply and then if offered an interview, come prepared with questions about the specifics of the role. Doing your research and preparing questions demonstrates your initiative, your interest in the position, and that you are taking the process—and your learning—seriously.

Internship compensation

Internships within for-profit organizations should meet minimum wage laws based in the state in which the



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Importance of the internship supervisor

Internship success and satisfaction is closely linked to the quality of supervision and collegial environment of the organization. You want to have a supervisor who is a clear communicator, involved and invested in your development, and focused on your training and growth as a professional. When you interview with your potential supervisor, ask them about their style of supervision, how they provide feedback, and what types of checks you would have if offered the internship.

What to do if you have found a suspicious job or internship posting:

- x Reach out to the Career Center if you have any questions