



Internship 101:

Your path to a career

BU School of Management
Feld Career Center
Student Centered • Career Focused • Market Driven

Internship 101

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Why do an Internship?

- *An internship helps you narrow down career choices*, solidify career goals, learn more about a specific company where you might want to work, or gain insight into a specific industry or career field.
- *An internship is a way to “get your foot in the door”* of an industry or a specific company. It provides you with the opportunity to make an impression that might lead to a full-time job offer, job referrals, mentors or professional contacts.
- *Finally, an internship can clearly enhance your marketability.* It develops and builds on your professional skills, it demonstrates you are familiar with the industry, its environment and expectations and reinforces your interest in the field.

What kinds of Internships are out there?

There are internship possibilities available in most fields and industries, although you may have to petition to create your own program. Generally, large and small companies will offer different learning environments within the field.

Big Companies

- Established programs
- Set tasks & goals
- Defined teams
- Defined mentoring systems

Small Companies

- Known holes to fill
- Various tasks
- Only 1 or 2 interns
- Define your own goals

Preparing for an Internship Search

(For more information, please refer to the Career Guide)

Write down your goals

Make a plan

Know your craft (contribution)

Take a risk

Know your weaknesses

Use “I don’t know what I want to do with my life” to your advantage

- 1. Start early!**
- 2. Get your resume approved.**
3. Even if you do not know exactly what you want to do, have some thoughts and ideas ready. Use the library databases (speak to a reference librarian at Pardee for tips) to **find “target companies”** that may be similar to the type of company you would want to work for. Ask yourself-What do I enjoy? What do I like to do? What type of role might encompass these things?
4. Be able to talk about what past experience you have and how it is relevant to this role/position/company. How do these experiences translate to the new role (even if it is a stretch!)? **Market yourself.**
5. **Talk with SMG seniors** who had internships last summer who can advise you about how they found their internship.
6. **Network** with your family, faculty, friends, fellow students, former supervisors, co-workers, neighbors -- anyone you know – to learn more about a company or industry. Let them know what kind of information or advice you seek and ask for referrals to additional contacts.
7. **Create your own internship proposal.** Get into the habit of reading business and industry publications. You might uncover an article about an organization trying to solve a problem that their current staff does not have time to handle. If the key contact’s name is not readily available, find out who manages that area from your network, call the company and ask for the person’s name, or send a cover letter and resume to that department head proposing to volunteer your time. You would be surprised how favorably employers might respond to having a talented business student work for relatively little or no cost!
8. **Get the most out of your relationship with the FCC.** Get to know us before you need us on a tight deadline. The more we know about you and what you want, the easier it is for us to help you.
9. **Attend informational and networking events** related to your interests, including career fairs. **Send thank-yous.**
10. Practice makes perfect. **Come into the FCC for mock interviews** (bring a job description with you for the kind of role you want, and bring your resume).
11. **Know the timeline for applications.** Most internships for the summer recruit during the spring semester. However, a few management training programs, finance and accounting firms will be recruiting during the fall.
12. **Apply**—through networking contacts, company websites, MiTRAC, etc. Use a wide variety of methods.
- 13. Follow up!**

Whether you are going into marketing, finance, accounting, operations, or a role that encompasses all or none of these disciplines, your career planning will include some key elements:

1. **SELF ASSESSMENT:** Who are you? What are your preferences in terms of working with ideas or things, people or alone, structured or unstructured days? What are your values, interests, skills and personality?
2. **EXPLORATION:** What options are out there? How well do you ‘fit’ with the options? What additional skills might you need to gain? Brainstorm, gain new ideas, and focus your job search through research, informational interviewing, and carefully thinking through how options ‘fit’ with the results of your self assessment and future goals.
3. **JOB/INTERNSHIP SEARCH:** Create an action plan and track your progress.
 - a. **Network:** Make connections with people in the field you wish to enter. Join professional associations and/or clubs, conduct informational interviews, attend FCC events and workshops.
 - b. **Gain experience:** Based on your research, what clubs, volunteer experiences, internships or jobs will help you gain the basic skills you need?
 - c. **Search:** Prepare your marketing materials- resume, cover letters, portfolio- and apply to positions of interest to you through your network, MiTRAC, company or industry websites, newspapers, etc.
 - d. **Follow up:** Send thank you notes. Keep in touch with networking contacts; keep a list of positions applied to and follow up when appropriate.

Career planning does not end when you start applying for positions. Continue to assess your ‘fit’ with positions throughout the application and interview process and beyond. Career planning is a life-long process.

Imagining Your Dream Internship

THIS EXERCISE WILL GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN AN INTERNSHIP. IMAGINE THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE THE KIND OF JOB OR INTERNSHIP THAT WOULD BE YOUR "DREAM"; ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Culture/Organizational Structure

For what kind of industry do you work? What kind of environment/corporate culture does your industry/company have? Are you working for an older, established organization, or a smaller company with the potential for great things? What kinds of products or services do you provide? Are you self-employed? What kind of people do you work with? What are your coworkers doing, saying, or even wearing? Do they socialize outside the office, or keep things purely professional?

Working Style

Do you have a schedule for your day? Will you follow it? Are you spending a lot of time meeting with people? Are you on the phone? Will your day progress as planned, or will you be busy putting out fires? How many projects will you be involved in at once? What is your work schedule? Are you in your own office, or that of a client? Does your job include traveling?

Responsibilities/Supervision

What kind of responsibilities do you have? What keeps you motivated to work hard? Are you making a contribution to your community? Providing leadership? Learning new skills and constantly adding to your knowledge base? Do you thrive when you receive regular feedback from your boss, or are you self-motivated? Do you prefer to work alone or to collaborate with others?

Internship Search Websites

HELP IS ONLY A MOUSE-CLICK AWAY. Try these sites for useful information.

Self Assessment and Job Search Advice

www.quintcareers.com
www.jobhuntersbible.com
www.rileyguide.com
www.jobstar.org
www.careervoyages.gov
www.collegegrad.com
www.jobweb.com
www.collegejournal.com
www.doleta.gov/jobseekers
www.asktheheadhunter.com
www.masscis.intocareers.org
www.nolljobs.com (under Interview Information)

Research/Networking

Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco
Vault (access through MiTRAC, under Quick Links)
BU Career Advisory Network: www.bu.edu/alumni or through Studentlink, 'Work' tab
www.wetfeet.com
Pardee Library Resources:
www.bu.edu/library/management
www.linkedin.com
www.ryze.com
www.ziggs.com
www.hoovers.com
www.corporateinformation.com
www.superpages.com (contact companies directly!)
www.guidestar.org
Database of professional associations:
www.asaecenter.org/Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm
www.doostang.com
www.accoona.com

Salary info

www.salary.com
www.acinet.org
www.salaryexpert.com
www.payscale.com
www.jobstar.org

Internship Listings

MiTRAC: <https://business-bu-csm.symplicity.com/students>
Student Employment:
'Work' tab on Studentlink
BU Office of Career Services:
www.bu.edu/careers
www.simplyhired.com
www.idealists.org
www.job-hunt.org
www.indeed.com
www.monster.com
www.careerbuilder.com
www.hotjobs.com
www.craigslist.org
www.bostonworks.com (local)
www.jobcentral.com
www.truecareers.com
www.InternshipPrograms.com
www.summerjobs.com
www.internjobs.com
www.usinterns.com
www.rsinternships.com
www.aipt.org
www.hireculture.org
www.jobweb.com
www.internweb.com
www.jobs.internet.com
www.dice.com
www.cie.uci.edu/iop/internsh.html
(great international internship listing from UC Irvine's website)
Vault internship database (access through MiTRAC)

Internship Reviews

www.internshipreviews.org
www.youintern.com
www.internshipratings.com

Book to read: The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels by Michael Watkins (Harvard Business School Press, 2003).

US Internship Search Tips for International Students

- **Start early.** You need to conduct an organized, well-informed job search. This means knowing what you want to do and having a plan to get it. It is also wise to have alternative ideas in mind.
- **Meet with a Foreign Student Advisor.** You can get information about your eligibility for employment and updates on the latest INS regulations at the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) located at 19 Deerfield Street. Their telephone number is 617-353-3565 and e-mail is isso@bu.edu.
- **Know the visa laws.** Nothing else you do to look for a job matters if you do not have the proper authorization to work in the US. You must know about and be able to explain how you can work in the US to potential employers.
- **Do research on company hiring processes/policies.** Talk to Human Resources representatives as well as current employees (including SMG and GSM alumni) *before* you apply to a company to learn about their general hiring procedures. However, **do not start out your research by asking HR representatives (including at career fairs or information sessions) “Do you hire international students?”** It is important that you show that you are genuinely interested in and able to do the job. Starting with that question makes employers think you only care about getting sponsored.
- **Demonstrate that you have superior skills.** You must be able to convince an employer that you offer special abilities as compared to domestic students. Looking for an entry-level job in the US is a competitive process; this is *especially* true for foreign nationals so be prepared to highlight your skills.
- **Use your status as an asset.** In the growing global economy, knowing a different language or culture can be attractive to certain types of employers. Part of your market strategy might consist of targeting US companies that hope to do business in your home country or vice versa.
- **Know how you can contribute.** US organizations want to know what you have to offer — *not who you are or what you want*. By focusing on your achievements and abilities, you can become a more attractive candidate to an employer. Remember, you need to provide an answer to the employer’s basic question: “Why should I hire you?”
- **Be aware of cultural differences** between US business environments and work environments in your home country. Take advantage of the informational interview process to learn about cultural differences and common expectations within US businesses.
- **Refine your interview style.** Cultural differences often surface during interviews. Try to be aware of cues that the interviewer is looking for, such as maintaining eye contact, and integrate these mannerisms into your interview style. Do a mock interview at the Career Center to assist you in polishing your interview technique.
- **Understand the job search process.** Rejection by a potential employer is *not* a reflection of your worth as an individual. US employers are looking for a match in terms of skills, personality type, and interests between their organization and a prospective employee.
- **Be assertive.** The US culture emphasizes competition, especially within business environments. A "passive" approach to your job search efforts, such as asking employers to contact you, will not prove very successful. Be sure you know the difference, however, between assertive and overly-aggressive behavior.
- **Keep motivated.** The job search process can be discouraging. Stay in touch with the Career Center staff. Develop a flexible plan and try to keep your options for employment open. Also consider home country employment possibilities as a “back-up strategy.”

Tips for Completing Your Internship

ON THE JOB DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Timeline

First few days:

- Shut up and listen – don't be a maverick from day one.
- Ask intelligent questions.
- Learn about how things work and put together a plan for what you'll be doing this summer – have milestones.
- Be a self-starter, but ask to give status updates to your supervisor and get recommendations periodically (e.g. every 1 or 2 weeks).
- Have some things to do for the first few days (professional reading material) for when you have downtime.

Middle:

- Make sure you can hit milestones along the way – don't cram at the end.
- Your boss DOES want to know what you are doing, even if he/she says otherwise.
- Advertise that you are hitting milestones to increase your visibility.

End:

- Think and ask about how to maintain a relationship with the firm and the people you are interested in.

Top 10 Suggestions

1. This is an audition for a full-time position – present yourself as someone seeking full time.
 - You never want to be anything but pleasant to work with.
2. An internship is a resume builder and a way to develop interview material.
 - Get a project that is tight and results oriented.
 - Take ownership of the project.
3. Get to know people – past interns, etc. Be very specific when you ask them for information.
 - Find people to have lunch with and get to know personally (probably more toward the end of your internship).
 - Ask your manager, “Who should I get to know?”
4. Understand your boss and how he/she likes to communicate.
 - Does he/she like e-mail or communicating in person? Is she more visual? Does she like to get information and then think about it?
5. Early wins: How can you make your boss look good...milestones and tasks. Think of early wins that you can market (but not too much).
 - When you know that you will be meeting senior people, be prepared to give a quick summary of what you have been working on and what your hypothesis is about how to solve a problem you've been dealing with (if applicable).

6. Increase your visibility!
 - Ask to attend a big meeting.
 - Sometimes WHO is in the room is more important than the topic.
 - Be conscious of whether or not you should speak. Were you doing work on the topic? If in doubt, check with your supervisor ahead of time.
 - Go above and beyond the responsibility of the job (if you think it adds value and is something you can be known for. Be careful – make sure it will NOT change their opinion of you in undesirable ways – ex. If you are in marketing, don't be doing hard core IT work).
7. Evaluate your progress.
 - Have those “check in” meetings. Ask “What have I been doing well?” “What should I be doing differently?” Be open to feedback!
 - After that, set goals. What will you work on next? What do you need from your boss to make it happen?
8. Journal your accomplishments and update your resume along the way.
9. Have some kind of exit interview(s) and say thank you, wrap up, look for seeds to plant for future opportunities. If the company does not have a formal process, write up a summary of what you have worked on and get their feedback. You may want to ask if they can provide you with an introduction to someone you want to meet or a group you want to learn about.
10. Ask for a reference. It does not need to be written. Ask your boss “Would you be comfortable being called as a reference?”
 - A written reference is less powerful than if a company you are applying to can call your former manager.

After the Internship

- Evaluate:
 - What did you learn?
 - What did you do?
 - How did you do it?
 - What did people around you do?
 - How close to a ‘real’ employee were you?
 - Be able to communicate how you have changed due to this internship.
- Request an "exit interview" with your supervisor to review your project, results, work-style, etc. Ask for very detailed feedback. Even if you didn't meet their expectations, it's important for you to learn why so you can avoid this in future positions.
- As soon as possible after the internship, write to your primary internship supervisor as well as to anyone at the internship site who worked closely with you or who was particularly supportive. Thank them for helping to make your internship experience a valuable one and tell them what you learned or let them know how the internship helped you in your career development. (Even if you hated the experience and have no intention of pursuing that field as a career, you still need to write at least a brief, polite thank-you note.)

- You might also write to any key, top-level people in the organization with whom you may have interacted briefly, even if you didn't work closely with them, letting them know how your experience was and how you contributed to the organization. They could be valuable contacts in the future.
- Update your resume as soon as possible while your summer internship is still fresh in your mind.
- Add these contacts to your networking database and continue to send periodic updates throughout the year. (Holiday cards, for example, are a great way to stay on someone's radar screen without seeming intrusive or overbearing.)

Internship Search Checklist

“Top 10” Should Have Been Done’s:

- Resume approved by a Feld Career Center Counselor and uploaded onto MiTRAC
- Practiced interviewing with Feld Career Center Counselor
- Researched target companies to focus your career search
- Identified list of target companies that interest you
- Conducted informational interviews
- Identified at least 3 references and asked their permission to give their names to perspective employers
- Made some personal decisions about geographic location desires
- Developed a network list
- Gone on several interviews, both practice and real
- Developed a cover letter template

To Do’s:

- Attend appropriate Fall and Spring information sessions, events and career expos and ask questions (not “Do you hire international students?”)
- Check MiTRAC daily to see new internship postings, application deadlines, and upcoming events
- Network, network, network
- Develop a follow-up system to timely follow-up on the connections you have made
- Make a priority list of companies you want to work for
- Interview, interview, interview
- Write thank you letters to everyone you speak with
- Develop a strategy to evaluate offers

What Still Needs to Be Done:

This is your personal list to fill in.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____