

## Internship Search

### PART ONE: Mentor Preparation

For recent college graduates who are entering the workforce, a major factor that determines their competitiveness is previous work experience, as you might expect. This implies that students should be seeking out opportunities *during college* that directly relate to their future career interests, so when graduation comes, they have that experience on their resume. Knowing this, most college career services push students to land jobs or internships during the summer after their junior year of college – but of course, those opportunities also inherently require students to enter with some degree of relevant experience already. The chain reaction results in college students needing to think about career-oriented internships as early as first semester of freshman year!

The timeline can vary somewhat depending on the student's major – education fields are generally more forgiving than legal internships, for example – and the opportunities that they take during or after freshman year are usually not expected to be as closely related to their ultimate career field as any internships during junior or senior year. Overall, the unsaid expectation is that students will seek out increasingly more specific and rigorous opportunities to build their knowledge, skills, and resume. If your mentee is the first in their family to attend college or progress through this approach to a career, they may not know that this is the expectation unless someone (you!) explicitly tells them! Ultimately, it is imperative that your mentee start researching internships early, and start their search in a smart way.

This activity is designed to take about 30 minutes and is fairly student-driven. Your role is to reflect on your mentee's findings and help them explore their next steps. Specifically, you can help your mentee reflect upon the kinds of jobs that might be a good fit for them using these questions:

1. What skills do you have?
2. What classes have you enjoyed the most?
3. What kind of work environment do you love, and do you hate?
4. What careers are you interested in?

As with any aspect of career preparation, you and your mentee should revisit this conversation as often as necessary and make sure to follow up on any action items.

### PART TWO: Pair Activity

When you open up a new tab in your browser to start a search for open positions, you should already have an idea in your head of what you're looking for. Sure, an exciting job that you'd never before considered might pop up in the search results, but you're much more likely to be successful in your job search if you have a plan. Really, what you're trying to do in that new tab is to find a job that is *the best fit for you*.



If you aren't sure yet what to focus on or what your best fit is, start there! In a conversation with your mentor, take 5 minutes to brainstorm your answers to these questions:

1. What skills do I have?
2. What classes have I enjoyed the most?
3. What kind of work environment do I love, and do I hate?
4. What careers am I interested in?

Circle or underline the words that resonate most with you or that repeat themselves. Those are your keywords! You'll use them in your search in the next section.

### Internship Search

Once you have a focus for your search, go to one or two of the following websites, enter the key words, and see what comes up! These websites are the most common and easily accessible websites to find job postings:

- indeed.com
- joinhandshake.com (Ask your Career Center if they have or can pay for this!)
- linkedin.com (Did you know that LinkedIn has a jobs section? Look in the top menu bar for "Jobs", or on the app for the little briefcase icon at the bottom right)
- workforgood.com
- Idealist.org

Once you've found a few interesting options, it's time to organize and track your progress.

### Tracking Your Applications

When you start this process, you should make a spreadsheet to easily track your applications. It's a must to keep track of all deadlines and where you are in the process, since timelines move at different speeds. You don't want to accidentally ask someone about scheduling an interview if you've already been denied!

Starting with the first column to the left, add these titles across the top, one for each column:

1. Position Title
2. Application Deadline
3. Company Name
4. Location
5. Paid/Unpaid
6. Date you submitted the application
7. How you submitted the application (on a specific website or through email)
8. Date Company followed up
9. Two-week follow up date – *this is a reminder to yourself to reach back out two weeks after your last communication with the company just in case they don't get back to you first.*
10. Next stage (phone interview, in-person interview, final round, etc.)
11. Date Interview completed
12. Job Offer/Denial

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Record each application in your spreadsheet by filling in the columns with the corresponding information. Share this spreadsheet with your mentor so they can keep up with your search. And don't forget to make updates every time something changes!

## Materials

You will need to read through the job application carefully, then gather all the materials that the application is asking for *before you apply*. While some employers ask for very specific materials, typically here is what you'll need:

- Professional email address
- Up-to-date resume
- Cover letter
- Writing sample
- References

Then submit all relevant materials in the manner that they ask! Usually this will be through email or through a website.

## Thank-You Email

The thank-you email is extremely important, and shows off your professional skills (and a little of your writing ability). Follow the example below to create your own thank-you email template that you can use again and again. Don't forget a subject line!

Dear Title LastName,

Thank you for taking the time to read through my application for [Position Title]. I am excited to learn about [something in the job description], and grow in [another thing in the job description]. I know my experience in [this area] will help me complete my potential responsibilities in [Position Title].

I look forward to hearing from you about next steps.

Sincerely,  
Your Name