

Summer Internships

Career Development

WHAT IS IT

This Guide is designed to help Undergraduates locate and secure an Internship during one or more of their summer vacations as a means of assisting their ability to secure the career and employment opportunity of their choice.

WHY USE IT

The Guide is designed to help students who need to plan and secure their own Internships as opposed to those Internships that are organised by their University or College as an integral part of their course studies.

The prime purpose of a Summer Internship is to gain one or more of the following benefits:-

- Limited exposure to a particular type of work
- Limited exposure to one or more types of employer or industry sectors
- Limited opportunity to learn and develop a range of skills, behaviours and knowledge
- Limited opportunity to gain experience of employment practices and business requirements
- Utilise the value from the experience to provide answers to an Interviewer's questions
- Confirm one or more of the above in their CV or Resume

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. Timing your Application Enquiries

Good value can normally be obtained from an Internship undertaken during any holiday period. However, in order to avoid negative impact on exam preparation or other study requirements then this Guide focuses on gaining the benefits from an Internship undertaken during your Summer vacation.

Given an academic year of October to June then it is recommended that you commence Internship application enquiries with potential employers in the period between your Christmas and Easter vacations or earlier. There is normally value to be gained by making your enquiries earlier rather than later.

2. Identifying & Selecting Potential Employers

Normally potential employers can be identified from one of more of the following options:-

- Family, friends, fellow students or tutors
- University web sites and career advice services
- Networking
- Organisation web sites

Try and select potential employers on the basis of:-

- Alignment with the type of career you are planning and / or
- Reputation, credibility or profile of the employer.

Each of these will normally offer good payback to your requirements, however there is an alternative option.

The alternative option is to focus on the potential 'intrigue or curiosity' value of an employer. So securing an Internship at 'The White House' or 'Number 10 Downing Street' or with your local Member of Parliament or Government Representative may not offer significant value for your chosen career but it can offer positive value for your CV and provide a significant focus of interest and curiosity at job interviews.

i.e Talking about an Internship working in the office of a Member of Parliament will normally provide more 'raw material' for your answer to employer's interview questions than possibly working in a fast food outlet.

Contact details for most employers can either be obtained from your original source such as family, friend, or University or direct from the organisation's web site. Finally, identify the email details for the most suitable person for your enquiry and if in any doubt telephone the organisation or person to obtain this information.

3. Your Applications

Draft an email or covering letter briefly specifying your request for an Internship, your availability for an interview and send this with your Undergraduate CV. At this stage it is helpful to be quite open as to the type of work or department you actually work or whether or not you expect to be paid.

Keep an up to date log of all your communications, employers' responses and your follow up actions. The actual quantity of applications required should be sufficient to generate the result you are seeking, bearing in mind the need to be flexible if your top choice cannot help.

4. Your Undergraduate CV

There is no need to duplicate in your covering letter all the content of your CV, as this should be attached to your email cover letter. See the LINK below for additional guidance on how to produce a good quality Undergraduate CV.

5. Interviews

Normally employers do not conduct structured face to face interviews with applicants for an Internship. However, short telephone discussions, informal face to face meetings or exchange of emails are quite usual in order to exchange of basic information.

However, when such meetings are arranged then the individual should attend as requested and be prepared to be very clear on their dates of availability and for a few questions about their ability to perform the potential duties outlined by the employer. This should include reference to any specific requirements aligned to a disability that may affect performance of certain duties.

6. Term of Employment

It is not unusual for a Summer Internship to be confirmed by little more than an email confirmation of the offer together with start and finish dates. Alternatively an Internship offer can be made along similar lines to a normal offer of employment complete with contract and request for references. So be prepared for either of these two extremes or anything in between.

7. Follow up

Once the Offer of an Internship has been confirmed ensure you respond promptly by thanking them and confirming all the details requested by the employer. Given that the Internship may not commence for some months then it is advisable to double check with the employer a couple of weeks ahead of the actual start date to ensure no misunderstanding.

NEXT STEPS

We trust that this Success Guide will assist your Career development and future success.

You may find some of our other Success Guides of value for your Personal or Career Development. For your convenience we list these below and you can access the index for these via the link below:-

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Author & Profile

Written by [S A Isherwood](#)

