



Get Prepared!

How to Create Your Own Internship

By creating your own internship, you have the chance to tailor your interests and geographic requirements. You should ask yourself the question, "Where would I love to work?" Many organizations would love to have a college student help them with a range of assignments or a single project, but they may not have a formal intern program. The student that thinks organizations rather than internship postings opens up a whole new world of possibilities in which to gain a meaningful and challenging internship.

While created internships can be extremely fulfilling, they are sometimes not paid. You should consider combining part-time internship with a part-time job. An internship can make you stand out in the crowd when it comes time to interview for full-time employment, According to the 2007 Recruiting Benchmarks Survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers; organizations reported that an average of **62 percent** of their new hires from the Class of 2006 had internship experience.

Ideas for Locating Organizations

- **Join professional organizations.** Nothing is more effective than networking. Many professional organizations have a student rate and opportunities to meet professionals in the field. Students can attend workshops, conferences, and read the organization's journals and newsletters. There are professional associations for any career field [examples: American Psychological Association {APA} or the Association of Electrical Engineers {AEE}].
- **Speak to your professors.** They are experts in their field and can often provide you with suggestions and contacts in your field.
- **Talk to you family and friends.** Many students find their own internships by networking with personal acquaintances. Ask them to help you com up with the top ten organizations in your area.
- **State Government Internship.** www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov
- **Federal Government Internships.** www.studentjobs.gov
- **Search the using keywords.** By using a search engine such as www.google.com and plugging in a variety of keywords related to your area of interest, you are likely to come up with information about organizations dedicated to the field you would like to explore. This process is similar to research on databases for class projects/papers where

the right keywords produce better results. It is usually good to include a geographical location in your string of keywords. Example: 'public policy + Boston'; 'historic + museum + Chicago'; 'children's advocacy + San Francisco'.

- **By going to the ATU website**-<http://careers.atu.edu>
- **Look at the businesses and organizations listed with your local Chamber of Commerce.** Any sizeable city or town has a local Chamber of Commerce which promote business opportunities in that locale. The national website www.chamberofcommerce.com will have links to Chambers in your state and city/town. There are some Chambers that list members by categories such as accountants, engineering, etc.
- **Look at organizations listed with your local United Way.** The United Way provides support to many social and civic organizations in a community. The United Way often has a list of social/civic organizations in your area.
- **Look into the Business Journal for your Region.** Use Google.com or another search engine. Follow the links and research the site. Look for the Business Journal's 'Top List' or 'Book of Lists' online.
- **Look into local trade commissions and economic development councils.**
- **Phone Book.** In the back of your local phone book under Yellow Pages, many non-profits are listed under the 'Association' section. Also in the phone book, the Blue Pages list human services agencies, local, state and federal government agencies.
- **Read newspapers, magazines, journals and online information.** Find out what organizations are making news and why. If any of the organizations you read about interest you as potential internship sites, contact those workplaces. See 'Proposing an Internship' below.
- **Lexis-Nexis Academic.** This database retrieves articles from newspapers, journals, magazines, and transcripts from television and radio. It is a very effective way to learn about industry trends and organizations on the cutting edge of their fields. To access Lexis-Nexis as well as other databases go to <http://library.atu.edu/articles/dblist.php>. Lexis-Nexis is restricted to ATU students, faculty and staff.

Contacting Organizations and Proposing an Internship

- **Think about what you are bringing to the workplace.** Always remember that you have plenty of great skills that you have learned that will make you a valued employee: writing, analyzing, research, report preparation, collaboration, communication, presentation, reasoning, problem-solving, leadership, working in teams, quantitative skills, and more. You may have also developed skills through campus activities, community service, or part-time jobs.

- **Using e-mail to contact organizations.** Once you have come up with some interesting organizations, your next step is, of course, to contact them. E-mails are fast, and they make it easy for employers to get back to you. What should be in an e-mail? Here is a sample first paragraph from a student's e-mailed letter of inquiry. It is short, simple, and effective:

Dear Ms. Doe,

I am a junior at Arkansas Tech University, majoring in English. I am very interested in learning about the operations of a non-profit organization such as the March of Dimes. Although I realize you have no official program in place. I would be very interested in working with your organization as an unpaid intern this summer.

The next paragraph should include information about your background and experience. You can also emphasize your interest in the particular career field, or in the particular organization, and let your reader know if you have the skills specific to the job.

How to close your letter of inquiry? Here's another example from the same e-mail:

I hope you will consider my proposal. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Again, the closing is short and simple. If you don't hear back, do follow up.

Attach a file with your resume.

- **Contacting organizations by telephone.** Phone calls can be very efficient if they don't lead to a 'telephone tag'. Rehearse what you are going to say before getting on the phone. For tips, see *My One Minute Commercial*. Introduce yourself and tell your listener about your interest in his or her organization and the fact that you are seeking an unpaid internship. The conversation should take off from there.
- **Contacting organizations by mail.** Except with organizations that have no e-mail, there is no need to send your proposal for an internship by mail unless someone from the organization directs you to do so.
- **Whom do you contact with the organization?** In a small business or small not-for-profit organization, contact the executive director. In larger organizations, contact the head of the department or unit where you wish to work, or the Human Resources Department. If you wish to learn marketing at a large company, for example, find out the name and e-mail address of the director of marketing by calling the company's general number and asking for this information. Then call or e-mail your internship proposal to the director of marketing.

- **Evaluating offers.** When an organization says that it will accept you as an intern, it is important for you to understand clearly what type of work assignments you will be given, how you will be supervised and any other conditions for the internship. Once you have this information, evaluate the offer carefully before you accept it.

Do you have any questions? Do you need some help with the process of obtaining an internship? The Career Services Center is here to help. To schedule an appointment, call 479-968-0278 or e-mail me at dboop@atu.edu.