

Internships

An internship is an extended work placement (typically between 3 to 12 months) that allows you to gain career-related experience (paid/unpaid) during or following your formal education.

Why Do An Internship?

Internships are used to gain skills and experience for a competitive edge in the workplace, confirm if a career is the right fit for you, to gain valuable contacts in your field, be offered more long-term positions, and gain understanding into workplace issues and ethics.

Step 1: Assessing Your Goals

Prior to selecting an internship, you will need to have a clear understanding of what you are hoping to gain from the experience. Do you want experience in Canada or abroad? Are you looking for a large or small organization? Are there financial issues you need to address? What experience and skills do you need to develop? The *Discover Your Skills and Career Options* workshop can assist you. Sign up is available on the Intranet.

Step 2: Finding an Internship

As internships can take on a variety of forms, there is often confusion as to what an internship really is, which can make it tricky to locate the internship of your dreams. Internships can be listed in a variety of places (or not listed at all!), so you need to have a multi-pronged approach to find yours. Start with some of the resources listed on this tipsheet to help you identify potential opportunities. Most of these resources are online as there are less and less internship directories being printed. The print directories, although older, can still be useful for generating some leads as they typically list organizations that are larger and more stable. It would be beneficial to look at specific company websites to see if they offer internships. If you would like to intern with a specific company or organization, but they do not advertise internships, contact them, explain your interest in the company and your background and ask if they would sponsor an internship for you. Many students have found internships by taking this initiative. If you need help identifying employers in your field, consult the employer directories available in the Academic Advising & Career Centre (AA&CC) *Career Resource Library*.

Step 3: Researching the Organization

You can never know too much about a potential placement. The *Career Resource Library* and the internet are good places to start. You will want to find out about the current trends, challenges facing the organization, innovations, recent successes, and workplace philosophy.

Step 4: Applying and Interviewing

Applying to an internship typically involves writing an effective résumé/application that clearly outlines your skills, education, experience, volunteer work, accomplishments and interests. If you are writing a résumé, be sure to include a targeted cover letter. For help, attend the *Winning Résumés and Cover Letters* workshop. Also, have these documents critiqued at the AA&CC *Résumé Critique Service*, to ensure you are marketing yourself effectively. If an interview is required, prepare for it as seriously as you would for any other job interview. The AA&CC offers the *Interview Techniques to Land That Job* workshop as well as one-on-one mock interview sessions. In addition to these services, the *Career Resource Library* offers a number of resources on résumés, cover letters, and interviews.

Step 5: Making the Most of Your Internship

This is your chance to get some of that much needed work experience! For a successful internship be sure to be punctual and professional; show initiative, energy and commitment; learn from those who have more experience than you; participate in team projects; ask questions; understand how the company operates; learn about the organization's recruitment strategy; ask for a letter of recommendation when you leave and keep in touch with the company; send a thank you letter upon completion of the internship.

- Campusaccess.com** www.campusaccess.com/internships
This directory contains an extensive list of internship programs that offer students and graduates an opportunity to gain practical experience and explore potential careers.
- Canadian Co-operative Association Ontario** www.coopscanada.coop
Provides information on internships aimed at post-secondary graduates and students still attending university.
- Canadian International Development Agency – International Youth Internship Program (IYIP)** www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/iyip
IYIP is a program for Canadian graduates (ages 19 to 30 inclusive) with international experience, skills and knowledge that will prepare them for future employment.
- CareerEdge – Canada’s Internship Organization** <http://overview.careeredge.ca>
Career Edge Organization, a national not-for-profit, helps new graduates gain valuable work experience.
- Charity Village** www.charityvillage.com
Co-op and internship opportunities in the non-profit sector.
- Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) Canada** www.eco.ca/public/services/student/internships-job-board/522/
ECO Canada internship can increase ones chances of not just finding employment, but also getting a jump-start in their career.
- Internship Programs.com** <http://internships.wetfeet.com>
A searchable directory of internship programs provided by WetFeet.com – most internships are in the United States/international.
- Ontario Internship Program** www.internship.gov.on.ca
A two year program for students who have graduated in the last 5 years.
- Ontario Legislature Internship Program (OLIP)** www.olip.ontla.on.ca
A 10-month internship for recent graduates who get a chance to work with backbench members of the legislature.
- United States Commercial Service Employment** <http://trade.gov/cs/employment.asp>
The United States Consulate General offers full-time, unpaid internships, lasting 14 to 16 weeks.
- University of Toronto – Career Centre (CC) Online** <https://www.careers.utoronto.ca/st/welcome.aspx?tr=>
Login, and click on “Search Internships.” This database lists over 400 annually-recurring or ongoing internship and volunteer programs throughout Canada and abroad. These opportunities may be paid or unpaid.
- University of Toronto – Centre for International Experience** <http://cie.utoronto.ca>
- University of Toronto Professional Experience Year Program (PEY)** www.engineeringcareers.utoronto.ca/programs/pey
A 12-16 month placement for 2nd or 3rd year Engineering, Computer Science or Arts & Science students.
- University of Toronto Scarborough – Co-op Programs** www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~askcoop/uoftcoop
- Young Canada Works (YCW) – Canadian Heritage** www.youngcanadaworks.ca
YCW gives participants work experience in key sectors to make the transition from school to work with summer and graduate positions.