

# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP SEARCH TOOLKIT



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
Office of *the* Provost: Student Affairs  
University Career Center™

## Getting Started

### **What is an Internship?**

An internship is an opportunity for students to work in an industry which matches their career interests to balance schoolwork with practical experience. An internship can be done during a summer, a semester or even a year to provide "real work" experience with a short term commitment. It may be a paid or volunteer position with part-time or full-time hours. Internships can be completed for course credit (depending on your college department's requirements) or simply for the experience.

### **How to Find an Internship**

#### **Brainstorm.**

What company would you like to work for someday? Begin with companies that you are interested in for future employment. Start researching companies early in your college career so you know which ones to target for your internship. If you have no idea where to start, consider using a resource like Vault, which is available to you through the University Career Center website. In addition to internship program reviews and company ratings, Vault provides resources to explore companies and industries that could help your brainstorming process.

#### **Consider an Informational Interview.**

Try conducting informational interviews. The purpose of an informational interview is to gain insight into a career that you're interested in. You can also use this conversation get advice about entering that field. Set up a time to talk with several people who are working in your field of interest. This can be done either on the phone or in person.

#### **Remember to Use All Your Networks.**

What contacts do you already have through way of your family, friends, alumni, professors, previous teachers, coaches, etc.? Use these contacts to your advantage. They may know of positions within their company or be able to connect you with someone else who does have an internship available.

#### **Use Online Job Boards.**

You can research companies and discover if they have an internship program by checking out their website. Through the University Career Center, you have access to Hire Red Raiders, an online listing of jobs and internships. Hire Red Raiders also allows you to review over 150 company links, the capacity to preview companies which are coming to campus for job fairs and the ability to upload your resume for potential employers to review.

#### **Think Outside the Box.**

Not all accountants work for a major firm. What other companies need accountants? Teaching also occurs outside the traditional classroom setting. Where could you use your teaching skills in a different environment? Nurses are found in more areas than just doctors' offices and hospitals. Explore all your options. You never know what will be the best fit for you until you think creatively about your skills and where they could best be used.

#### **Use the University Career Center**

Meeting with a career counselor can be a great way to talk through your options and develop strategies to help you meet your goals. The Texas Tech University Career Center is located at the southeast corner of the Wiggins Complex. Make an appointment by calling (806) 742-2210 to meet with a career counselor to discuss the internship search process.

## Planning Ahead

### Why?

**Experience.** An increasing number of students are doing internships to balance their classroom learning with real life experience. An internship provides a springboard from college life to career life, strengthens your background in your field of choice, creates the potential for future work with the company, provides potential work-related references and creates an opportunity for networking.

**Why not?** Experience is never a waste of time. You will either learn that you enjoy the field or that this field is definitely not something you would like to pursue. Either way, you will have learned some valuable things about career-life and have defined or redefined which direction you would like to head.

### When?

**It's never too early.** Internships are usually done after the sophomore or junior year. They can be completed during the summer or school year. Plan so you can incorporate an internship into your schedule at a time that is appropriate for you. Keep in mind that recruiting timelines for internships can vary by industry, so research is crucial. Start researching potential companies and internship sites early to gather information about application deadlines and requirements. Give yourself enough time to make an informed choice.

### Where?

**Wherever.** Internships can be done locally, outside of the state, or outside the country. You can choose the location that is best for you. Investigate your possibilities in advance so if relocation is an option, you will be prepared.

**Again, remember to use your contacts.** Do you have relatives in another city who are willing to house you for a summer or a semester? Do you have a friend you could live with while doing your internship in another city or country? Investigate your options. You never know where the best internship for you may be until you explore the possibilities.

### Additional Information

#### **Course Credit?**

You will need to check with your academic program to see what the requirements are to receive course credit for an internship. It is your responsibility to communicate the criteria and requirements set by your academic program to your intended employer. Some programs may not offer course credit for an internship; however, the experience you gain will be worth your time regardless.

#### **International Student Interns**

To learn more about the requirements for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), please consult with your International Student Counselor at the Office of International Affairs. For additional information, please see the link below:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/iss/f1/cpt.php>

# Preparing for the Interview

## Before the Interview

- Select two or three sites you think would meet your needs for a successful internship experience.
- Research the companies in advance through their website, social media and LinkedIn.
- Prepare your resume and cover letter by having them critiqued by a career counselor at the University Career Center.
- Consider setting up a LinkedIn profile to highlight and expand on your skills and experiences.
- Practice your interviewing skills with a career counselor at the University Career Center.
- If the internship will be for course credit, be prepared to provide the employer information about the requirements set by your academic program.
- Drive by the location of the interview. Even if you know the company's location, drive to the site in advance to determine parking options or if there are any detours or construction.

## Day of the Interview

- Arrive early. In the rare event that you may run into a delay, be sure to have the phone number of the person who will be conducting the interview. It is better to contact the person early to inform them of the delay instead of explaining your tardiness when you arrive.
- Take a copy of your resume, cover letter and list of professional references for quick access if these items are requested by the interviewer or in case your materials were not received in advance.
- Be prepared to ask informed questions at the end of your interview. Questions should focus on logistics, such as when you can expect to be notified, if there is an orientation, etc., as well as company-specific information you found in your research.

## After the Interview

- Remember to send a thank you letter. This is an important part of the process that many people overlook. A thank you letter shows you are courteous, appreciative of the interviewer's time, and take care of details.
- Reach out if you have not heard a decision in the agreed-upon timeframe.
- If juggling multiple offers, select the internship that will best serve your needs.
- Once a decision has been made, stick with the company you accepted a position with and avoid further interviews for that time frame. It is acceptable to interview for internships that will occur at other times (e.g. a fall internship if you have already accepted a summer position).
- Contact the sites you did not select to decline their offers. Speak to the specific person who interviewed you. Do not just leave a message. You never know when you are dealing with a future employer.

# Making the Most Out of Your Internship

## Before You Start Your Internship

- Complete all required hiring paperwork by your internship site.
- If you are earning course credit, make sure you have followed all requirements set by your academic program.
- Determine the hours you will work each week with your employer/supervisor.
- If a formal orientation has not been set up for you at your site, make sure you know the following:
  - How to use all of office equipment you will be required to use
  - Applicable dress codes
  - Protocols for safety, confidentiality, and security (if applicable)
  - Parking arrangements
  - Normal hours of operation and lunch hours

## During Your Internship

- Talk with your internship coordinator to see what will be expected of you and what projects, jobs, etc. you will be working on.
- Set goals for what you are hoping to learn and to achieve while doing your internship.
- Share your goals with your internship coordinator.
- Be prepared to work hard and to gain meaningful insight in your field of interest.
- If completing an internship for course credit, be proactive in planning for any required evaluations. If an evaluation is not required, ask your supervisor for feedback throughout and at the end of your internship.

## After You Completed Your Internship

- Reflect on your experience. Identify tasks and projects that you enjoyed and ones that were not your favorite. Think about the managerial style of your supervisor and the work culture of the organization. Were these experiences you would like in a future position, or would you prefer something different?
- Update your resume and LinkedIn profile to include your new experience.
- If you made meaningful connections during your internship, expand your network on your LinkedIn profile.

An internship is a great way to gain meaningful experience with a short-term commitment. It provides a way to apply what you've learned to the workplace, creates the potential for references and supplies an avenue for networking. Take advantage of your opportunity to do an internship.

## Contact Information



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