

# Internships- *what do I need to know?*

## Top 6 Reasons to do an Internship...

***I*ncinvestigate Career Options:** clarify career goals and learn if this is the field you would like to pursue for a later career.

***N*avigate Your Future:** make the most of your opportunities. Determine what you will do and how competitive you will be.

***T*ransition into the Workforce:** Learn the skills that are necessary to be successful in the career field.

***E*xpand Career Opportunities:** make yourself marketable to a potential employer.

***R*ecord Real-World Experience:** gain practical skills and experience to list on your resume and discuss in an interview.

***N*etwork:** meet professionals in the field for future contacts and potential employment opportunities.

### What is an Internship?

**An internship is a form of experiential education where students may work within a career field for a period of training to gain practical experience in their field of study. Internships may be completed for academic credit or to gain experience in one's major. Please contact your faculty advisor or Career Services to learn more about gaining academic credit for an internship.**

## ***Food For Thought***

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It is highly beneficial to have some experience in the field when applying for jobs to be competitive in the job market. Often you will be competing with candidates with experience – sometimes years of experience.

In 2019, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducted a survey of the graduating class of 2019. Of those recent graduates, 68.1% of the graduating seniors had completed an internship. ([www.naceweb.org](http://www.naceweb.org))

What does this mean to you? Be proactive! Get some experience. If you don't think an internship is for you, consider alternatives to start gaining experience in your field.

## ***Some Common Misconceptions...***

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### **1) An internship will be full-time = 40 hours per week.**

*This may or may not be the case. Internships typically involve 10-15 hours per week of your time, but may involve more or less time, depending on your agreement with the employer and faculty sponsor.*

*Cooperative (Co-op) experiences typically involve a full-time commitment, however, this is an agreed-upon arrangement with the college or university. Often practicum/internship experiences at the graduate level may be full time.*

### **2) An internship involves answering phones and getting coffee, not anything important or relevant to my major.**

*Although an internship may involve some clerical work at times, it typically will be included to assist you to learn about the career field or about the particular business. Often employers would like you to start learning the fundamentals, so you know what is involved in the industry.*

*An internship should involve an agreed upon set of learning objectives, verbal or written, which will take place throughout the experience. This might include particular projects you will work on or skills you will obtain by completing various tasks.*

### **3) I will have to wear a suit every day.**

*This may be a possibility, depending on the industry/field. An intern should “dress for success” so to speak, but this will involve dressing for the position/industry. Look at others in the field or in the work place to determine the appropriate dress.*

## ***What's Involved?***

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### **Where should I begin?**

There are many resources available to assist you in your search for an internship – faculty,

your personal network, Career Services, etc. It is best to speak with professors in your field of study to help you decide whether to complete an internship for academic credit.

Internships pursued for academic credit require a faculty sponsor. When planning your internship, you will need to locate a faculty member able to sponsor an internship in your field. Please consult with the faculty within your major/field of study. In addition to this, you may want to visit the Office of Career Services to clarify your goals, write a resume, or learn about internship opportunities.

### **How is an internship different from a job?**

The key difference is that the student intern is expected to learn NEW skills and techniques. Students may not receive internship credit for their normal job responsibilities. However, in some cases, a specific project or new learning opportunity may be undertaken for an internship, but must be approved by the faculty sponsor.

### **Do students earn academic credit for internships?**

Often internships are completed for academic credit, however some students complete the internship solely for the experience. Students should consult with their department to discuss potentially doing an internship for academic credit and to learn more about the process. Some internship sites may also mandate that the internship be undertaken for academic credit for various reasons.

### **How long does an internship last?**

Most internships last for one term. Students are expected to be at the internship location for a minimum of 120 hours for a three credit internship (40 hours/credit). The way that the hours are broken up over time will be up to you, your site supervisor, and faculty sponsor, if the internship is being done for academic credit. If the internship is not being done for credit and solely for the experience, you may want to discuss this with your site supervisor(s) to determine a particular project or a length of time they feel would be beneficial to complete. Remember this experience – for credit or not – should be included on your resume!

### **Where can I find an internship?**

Internships may be located in a variety of ways and it may be most beneficial to you to start with your department of study to determine resources available to you and the process for internships within your major. Some of the most common ways students find internships are through researching University and regional resources and networking. See the chart on the following page for some suggestions on online resources and contacts.

## Websites

- Pitt-Greensburg postings:  
[www.collegecentral.com/pitt-greensburg](http://www.collegecentral.com/pitt-greensburg)
- HANDSHAKE (located in the Pitt Portal)
- Pittsburgh Technology Council:  
[www.pghtech.org](http://www.pghtech.org)
- Pitt job fairs (Spring & Fall-Oakland campus)
- WestPACS Job Fair:  
[www.westpacs.org](http://www.westpacs.org)
- WANT Job & Internship Expo  
[www.wantexpo.org](http://www.wantexpo.org)
- Government-Related  
<https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>

## University & Personal Resources

- Faculty/Departmental Contacts
- Career Resource Library:  
218 Chambers Hall
- Networking Opportunities
- Campus-related
- Family and Friends

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## EXAMPLES OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

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- 1) *Biology/Chemistry*: working as a research assistant in a laboratory setting for a semester-long study. The work might involve such activities as: initial population survey/interviews, experiment, and follow-up data processing.
- 2) *Psychology*: acting as an assistant counselor for a court-adjudicated youth facility or foster care center. The work might involve such activities as: daily routines with the patients/residents, monitoring resident activities and outings, and maintaining a log of events for the psychiatrist to determine resident/patient behavioral patterns.
- 3) *Accounting/Finance*: providing for the accounting needs of a facility during tax season.
- 4) *Management*: working with a consulting organization to assist new business owners with the development of individualized business plans.
- 5) *Journalism*: working for a daily/weekly newspaper or magazine – may include: behind-the-scenes work such as printing/editing, as well as writing.
- 6) *Foreign Language*: working with a local English as a Second Language program to assist students to learn conversational English.
- 7) *Criminal Justice*: working with the daily routine of a local police barracks or campus police.
- 8) *Management Information Systems*: working with a user support group of an organization to determine client needs to provide suggestions for updating or using new programs/equipment.

- 9) *Communication*: working with a non-profit agency to develop a public relations plan for upcoming events.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**Q. Does Pitt-Greensburg require an internship for graduation?**

**A.** Four majors require internships to graduate: Criminal Justice, Public Policy and English Writing (Journalism Track), & Healthcare Management. Nursing major requires clinical rotations. Some majors have an internship or capstone project option (MIS/IT). While other departments do not require internships, students are strongly encouraged to gain related work experience prior to graduation. This may include internships, part-time and summer jobs, as well as volunteer experience and involvement in campus activities.

**Q. Can an internship be paid?**

**A.** In most cases, an internship can be paid or unpaid. However this also depends on the policies of the internship site and the department through which you are doing the internship. This tends to vary from field to field. Psychology internships for credit cannot be paid.

**Q. How many credits is an internship worth?**

**A.** Most students who choose to complete an internship for academic credit will register for three (3) credits. For three credits, students are required to complete a minimum of 120 hours at their internship site during the course of the semester (averages 8-10 hrs./week), meet with their faculty supervisor on a regular basis, and meet the requirements for evaluation, (e.g., a written report of the experience), as agreed upon by the faculty sponsor and the student.

**Q. Does Pitt-Greensburg “place” students in internships?**

**A.** Many internships are competitive and require a student to apply and interview. While students are not assigned to a particular internship, a variety of resources are available to assist students in locating and preparing to apply for opportunities, as well as advising and faculty supervision during the internship. Through the process, students learn valuable job search and interviewing skills that will benefit them in the future.

**Q. When do students usually do an internship?**

**A.** This may vary. Individual departments, as well as companies, may have specific requirements regarding internship candidates, such as academic year, completion of a particular course(s), GPA, etc. Therefore, students are advised to work closely with a faculty advisor from their department when considering an internship.

**Q. How do I start exploring options if I’m not ready for an internship?**

**A.** There are ways to gain experience or clarify career goals if you’re not ready, or do not have time for an internship. Some options include:

- **Shadowing** - a brief period of observation of a career or occupation within an area of interest. Duration is dependent on the company or agency, but typically lasts between a few hours to a few days.
- **Informational Interviewing** – discussion with a professional in the field to gain insight into your area of study or future career goals. This may take place in person, over the phone, or via email.
- **Volunteer Work** – oftentimes community service, in addition to being altruistic in nature, can also be valuable due its relation to your major.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

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### A. Finding an internship

- Research & time to find an internship
- Resources in your search
- Creating/editing your resume and materials to apply

### B. Will you want to do the internship for academic credit?

- Is there a faculty member that would be able to supervise the internship?
- Paperwork and responsibilities
- It can be helpful to plan ahead and consider when an internship would be a good time for you around your schedule, as well as financially.

**People to talk to...**the order of the conversations may depend on the individual and situation. *(Each will sign the Internship Agreement when academic credit is sought.)*

**Faculty Sponsor-** acts as a means of support for the student intern, to assist the student to determine whether or not the experience will be completed for academic credit. The faculty sponsor may have a list of approved locations or internship opportunities. The faculty sponsor also may assist the student intern to outline specific learning objectives for the experience. The method of evaluation for the internship will be listed on the agreement for academic credit.

**Employer/Site Supervisor** – acts as a resource at the company/organization. He/she may be a means of support at the work site, but may assist in the development of work-related goals or projects to promote gaining experience throughout the internship.

**Career Services** – acts as a resource for the potential intern. Career Services may assist in the location of possible sites and preparation for an internship application – e.g., resume & cover letter writing, and interviewing skills. The Career Services office is available to students throughout the internship for support.

# Develop Your Plan

Major \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Career Options \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gaining Experience can be done in a variety of ways, such as: volunteer work/community service, classroom-oriented activities, internships, or part-time and full-time work.

What are your goals?

Freshman Year \_\_\_\_\_

Sophomore Year \_\_\_\_\_

Junior Year \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Year \_\_\_\_\_

For more information or to schedule an appointment contact:

Office of Career Services  
219 Chambers Hall/724-836-7869

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