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What is an Internship?
An internship is a short-term work experience related to a student’s major that provides students the opportunity to pursue and explore career goals, and expand upon their skills and classroom learning. Internships can be full or part-time, paid or non-paid and completed for academic or non-academic credit.

Types of Internships

Academic Internships
- Career related experience, approved by your Faculty Internship Coordinator.
- Required to be completed as part of your degree requirements.*
- You must register for the Academic Internship Course offered through your department and pay tuition per credit hour for the related academic internship course.
- Must complete and submit all required assignments and paperwork given by the Faculty Internship Coordinator.

*Check with your academic department to see if you are required to complete an internship as part of your Program of Study.

Non-Academic Internships
- Career related experience, approved by the Career Services Internship Coordinator.
- Contact the Office of Career Services to register for the course.
- Career Services offers non-credit* bearing courses that are either 9 or 12 hours depending on the need of the student.
- Must complete and submit all required assignments and paperwork given by the Career Services Internship Coordinator.

*DO NOT pay tuition per credit hour.

Benefits of Internships:
Completing one or more internships can benefit students in multiple ways both now and in the future. Benefits include:
- Acquire practical, hands-on work experience (employers look for students to have at least 1 year of relevant experience before graduation)
- Create a network of professional contacts, mentors and references
- Enhance classroom knowledge and learning
- Apply theories and principles learned in the classroom
- Develop professional, transferrable, and marketable skills
- Increase your competitive edge and earning potential after graduation
- Gain an understanding of professional culture and expectations

Why Complete an Internship?
- Internship experience is consistently ranked as the #1 factor employers seek in full-time job candidates
- Build your resume and explore career options
- Develop skills and make contacts in your field of interest
- Apply your academic background to “real world” problems and issues
- Internships can lead to job offers – many companies look to their former interns to fill full-time job vacancies and use the internship experience as a screening process for future employees
- Introduces you to people in your field who can serve as mentors, networking sources and references
When to Begin an Internship Search?
It is recommended that you begin the internship search process at least six months before you plan to work, as some industries have application deadlines many months prior to the intended start date. The earlier you start your search, the more opportunities you will find available.

Questions to ask before beginning your internship search
- Do I need to complete an internship for academic credit? (If you answered yes, work with your Faculty Internship Coordinator to confirm requirements).
- What semester would I like to participate in an internship (fall, spring or summer)?
- Can I afford to take an unpaid position?
- Am I willing to look beyond my hometown/state for an opportunity?
- Where will I live if my internship requires me to move there for a short time? How will I finance this?
- What skills do I hope to develop or experiences do I want to be exposed to from my internship?
- What type of company/organization am I looking to work for (public, private, non-profit, government)?

Steps to Finding an Internship
Self-Assessment
Focus on what kind of internship you want. Get to know your needs and your personality.
Take a skills assessment. Identify and gain clarity on your interests, your skills, and your individual values. Career Services offers a variety of paper based and online assessments.
Determine your geographical and financial constraints. Are you limited to working in a certain area or are you willing to travel for the perfect internship? Are you able to accept an unpaid internship? Can you afford housing in your internship location?

Set Goals
Consider two factors as you set the objectives for your internship:
- What is your basic goal for taking on the internship?
- What needs to happen during the internship for you to know that you have fulfilled your basic goal?

Your basic goal is a general ambition for completing an internship. For example, you might seek to learn more about a career field, a specific organization or an occupation. Keep the goal simple (clearly stated) and manageable (something that can be achieved within the timeframe of your internship).

With your basic goal in place, think about what needs to happen during the internship in order to fulfill this goal. What sorts of work, people, projects, and settings do you need to experience to feel that you have achieved your basic goal? For each need that you cite, develop a corresponding objective. If you seek to learn about a career field such as marketing or graphic arts, a corresponding objective might read like one of the following statements:
- To identify the primary skills that are used in marketing.
- To clarify the primary responsibilities of graphic artists.
- To assess the educational backgrounds of marketing professionals who work for bio-tech firms.

As you go through your internship, consider keeping a journal and documenting what insights you gain regarding your objectives. Keep in mind that your objectives may change as your internship continues. The internship journal can provide a useful record for completing course assignments if you are taking the internship for academic credit. The internship journal can also be useful as you prepare for employment or graduate school.
interviews. By reviewing the journal, you can recall insights and experiences that will help you strengthen your candidacy.

**Research & Explore**

- **Develop a list of targeted companies and organizations that interest you.** Conduct Google and Yellow Pages searches, as well as searching Chamber of Commerce Member Directories for business in the area in which you want to work.
- **Review websites.** Research company/organization websites as well as professional association websites.
- **Seek assistance in Career Services.** Utilize the internship resources listed in this guide as well as those available in the Career Resource Center. You should also regularly check your Georgia Southern email account for information on internship opportunities sent to you by your Career Development Specialist. Eagle Career Net has numerous internship postings as well and is accessible to all Georgia Southern students and alumni. ([www.georgiasouthern.edu/career](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/career)).

**Prepare**

- **Create your resume and cover letter.** Pick up a copy of the Career Services Resume and Cover Letter Guide which include samples and instructions on creating professional quality documents. Utilize the Optimal Resume program to assist with creating and formatting these documents.
- **Get feedback on your resume and cover letter.** Have your resume critiqued by a Career Development Specialist or Career Educator. Stop by during daily walk-in hours, schedule an appointment, or email your resume to a staff member.
- **Practice your interview skills.** Call or stop by to schedule a mock interview with a Career Development Specialist or participate in Employer Mock Interview Day to sharpen your interview skills and receive feedback on your interview techniques.
- **Obtain appropriate interview attire.** Purchase professional business and interview attire. Utilize the Career Services Suited for Success Program (free business attire available in our office).
- **Update your Eagle Career Net account.** Log into this **FREE** on-line recruitment system, brought to you by the Office of Career Services, which assist students and alumni with career planning and job/internship needs ([www.georgiasouthern.edu/career](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/career)).
- **Post your critiqued resume in Eagle Career Net.** Upload up to ten (10) documents including your resume, cover letter, transcripts and writing samples to this powerful on-line recruitment system.

**Searching**

- **Review internship postings in Eagle Career Net.** Take advantage of this powerful recruitment system to search for internships, see companies scheduled to conduct on-campus interviews, and have your resume emailed directly to employers.
- **Review books and websites.** Utilize the internship resources listed in this guide as well as those available in the Career Resource Center and on the Career Services website.
- **Attend career fairs and events.** Mark your calendar with all of the Career Services and departmental career fairs dates and make plans to attend. Determine companies who are scheduled to attend and research their websites before the event to see if they have established internship programs.
- **Review professional publications and attend professional association conferences.** Many associations have free newsletters or listserv’s that you can sign up for which often advertise job postings. Also many professional conferences provide great opportunities to network with companies. Many publications and conferences offer discounted student membership and registration rates.
Applying

- **Assess the opportunities you have identified.** Find out the specifics of the internship to see if it’s right for you. Consider time commitment, required qualifications, location, training and compensation. Also make sure to keep a lob of application deadlines.

- **Apply to a range of internships.** There is no exact number of internships that you need to apply for, but most students usually apply or 8-10 organizations. In determining how many internship’s to apply for, try to assess how competitive the internship program might be. Some organizations give preference to juniors and seniors.

- **Begin gathering your application materials.** Make sure you have all the components the employer is requesting (i.e. resume, cover letter, references, recommendation letters, transcripts, etc.). If asking a faculty member or former employer to write a recommendation letter, give them sufficient time to do so. Send your application materials in at least four days before the deadline (if sending via US Mail).

- **Contact the employer outside of submitting your application.** Let them know just how interested you are. Be sure to follow-up your inquires, submissions, and interviews with adequate “thank you” notes.

- **Track your applications.** Create a system of record keeping where you can organize the internships you have applied for, application deadlines, documents you submitted, application status, and any notes you took when you followed up on your application.

Analyze Options

Once you have established your goals, identified a list of potential internships, applied for and been offered an internship, it is now time to consider the internship itself. What does it offers you, and how does it fits with your goals? When weighing your options, consider the following:

- Is this internship during the academic semester or during the summer?
- Is the size of the organization conducive to the kind of experience I want?
- What type of organization is it and what is the culture of its workplace?
- Is the location compatible with my living arrangements?
- How long is the internship, and how many hours am I expected to work each week?
- How will I fund this experience? Is it paid or is there a stipend provided?

**Compare every internship offer.** Review the guideline and goals that you set for yourself. Before you accept any position, make sure to get all of the details (e.g. start date, expectations, compensation, job descriptions, etc.)

**Learn from rejection.** If you were rejected for an internship, take it as a learning experience and try to find out if there was anything that would have made your application stronger.

Internship Search Resources

There are various resources available to students to utilize in the internship search including networking, accessing online and print resources as well as initiating contact with specific employers in which you have an interest in working for.

**Networking**

Networking is the simplest way to find an internship. By telling the people you know (relatives, friends, classmates, parent’s friends, friend’s parents, former or current employers, etc.) that you are looking for internship opportunities; you have increased your searching abilities.

- **Student Organizations:** Consider joining a professional student organization. Often, these organizations will bring in speakers from industry. Also, since there is usually a range of class levels in the group
membership, it is a great opportunity to find out what other people have done and possibly get contacts from them.

- Professors: talk to professors in your interest area. Often they will have their own professional contacts in the industry or they may know of former students who have done interesting internships. Once a company or organization has hired one GSU student, they are generally more open to hiring another in the future.

**Initiate Contact.** If there is a specific employer that you are interested in working with, check the organization’s website to see if they have an internship advertised. If you do not see an advertisement for internships with them, consider initiating contact. Introduce yourself and tell them why they want you.

**On-Line Resources**

**Eagle Career Net** is Georgia Southern University **FREE** on-line recruiting system that allows students to search and apply for internships, co-ops, and full-time jobs, sign up for on-campus interviews, view companies scheduled to attend career events, and have your resume referred (emailed) directly to employers.

**Internships USA:** Listings in human rights, women’s rights, the environment, international affairs, community/social services agencies, law, policy, Congress, history, advertising, media, sports and business. To access this website please visit – [http://www.internships-usa.com](http://www.internships-usa.com). Username is **GaSouthern** and the password is **GaSo201213**.

**Chamber of Commerce websites:** Chamber of Commerce websites are great places to find businesses in the geographic areas in which you are seeking to work. Once you have determined the geographical areas in which you are seeking to intern, you can target your job search to specific companies in those areas. Most cities, counties, and states have a Chamber of Commerce. Many businesses will belong to multiple chambers.

- **US Chamber of Commerce** [http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/directory](http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/directory)
- **Chamber Find (US & World Chambers)** [www.chamberfind.com](http://www.chamberfind.com)

**Professional Associations:** This directory service takes you directly to many of the associations currently operating on the World Wide Web. The search results provide a list of associations that meet your selection criteria [http://www.asaecenter.org/Community Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm](http://www.asaecenter.org/Community Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm).

**General Internship & Summer Job Listings:**

- College Grad [www.collegegrad.com/internships](http://www.collegegrad.com/internships)
- Wet Feet [www.internshipprograms.com](http://www.internshipprograms.com)
- Vault [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)
- Intern Web [www.internweb.com](http://www.internweb.com)
- Back Door Jobs [www.backdoorjobs.com](http://www.backdoorjobs.com)
- Cool Works [www.coolworks.com](http://www.coolworks.com)
- Government Jobs [www.studentjobs.gov](http://www.studentjobs.gov)
- Intern Jobs [www.internjobs.com](http://www.internjobs.com)
- Campus Career Center [www.campuscareercenter.com](http://www.campuscareercenter.com)
- Camp Jobs [www.campstaff.com](http://www.campstaff.com)
- Tech Interns [www.tech-interns.com](http://www.tech-interns.com)
- Idealist [www.idealista.org](http://www.idealista.org)
- Making the Difference (Govt. Internships) [www.makingthedifference.org](http://www.makingthedifference.org)
This is by no means an exhaustive list of internship sites available on the Internet, rather a starting point. Career Services has compiled a list of internships site by college, please visit our website at www.georgiasouthern.edu/career to view the lists.

Creating Your Own Internship

While thousands of internships are listed through books and databases, taking a proactive approach to the internship search can lead you to valuable opportunities that are never advertised. You may even create opportunities where they did not exist before, particularly if you are willing to forgo a few perks. This option is an especially attractive option for students interested in non-profit organizations or community-oriented services that may not have the funding to establish an internship program but will appreciate the energy and passion that an interested student can bring. Follow these steps to create your own internship:

- **Research.** Identify the interests and needs of the organization of your choice. Visit their website and look at their mission statement, stated goals, and what they expect from their employees. Familiarize yourself with some of their greater achievements. Consider how you are able to meet their goals and needs.

- **Introduce Yourself.** Communicate your ability to meet the needs of their organization. Let them know exactly why they want you! This can be accomplished by sending a resume along with a cover letter expressing your interest in the organization, their work, and what you can bring to the organization. Be clear about your willingness to work with whatever opportunity they make available to you.

- **Follow Up.** Follow up your resume submission with a phone call, email or appointment. Make sure the employer has received your materials. Phone calls or one-on-one contact is a good way to ensure that you convey your passion and interest in a more direct fashion. Be persistent, but not overbearing.

- **Make Use of Connections.** Consider the connections you have through your network (school, family, work, etc.). Discuss your goals with those you know; you never know who might have an “in” with a potential employer.

Making the Most of Your Internship

**Before you arrive…**

- Re-evaluate your initial internship goals in light of the specific position you are offered. Determine what you hope to contribute to the organization, and have a good understanding about the employer’s expectations.

- Have a strong sense of the organization’s mission and how it works. Conduct some additional background research on the organization and industry. The more knowledge you possess, the more quickly you will acclimate to the environment.

**While you are there…**

- Maintain professionalism at all times (attire, communication, behavior)

- Learn as much as you can about the organization while you are there.

- Sit down with your supervisor in the beginning and establish goals so you both know what’s expected.

- Understand that some general office work may be a part of the job.

- Introduce new ideas gradually and avoid trying to change too much too soon.

- Ask for more responsibility. Look for things to do. Show initiative, remember you are not only representing yourself, you are representing Georgia Southern.

- Network! Continue to build contacts and relationships. The connections you make may lead to opportunities in the future.

- Find a mentor. Determine a professional who you aspire to learn from or who you believe will offer advice and support.
When it’s over…

- On your last day, be sure to thank your supervisor and co-workers and ask for their business cards. Follow-up immediately in the next few days with an email thank-you or handwritten card in the mail.
- Stay in touch afterwards to maintain networking connections and good rapport for future references and recommendation letters.

Social Networking & Internships

Social networking sites are an incredibly popular way for students to communicate with one another. They are also increasingly being used by prospective employers to learn about potential employees. Remember that your virtual self (Facebook, Blog, Website) is available for prospective employers to see. As many as 75% of employers use the Internet to research candidates and “Googling” applicants is often taking the place of reference checks. The following are a few tips to ensure your safety and confidentiality:

- Be safe! Never post personal information (phone number, address, daily schedule).
- What you post now may be on the internet for years to come and can be re-posted on various forums.
- Make your Facebook profiles private and don’t add friends you don’t know.
- Remove any questionable photos or exchanges between you and your friends and ask your friends to remove these types of references to you from their profiles.
- Remember what you post on your blog or website is open for public view – review them from an employer’s perspective.

Developing a Professional Reputation

As an intern, you are expected to behave in a specific manner and take advantage of the numerous resources and opportunities provided. In order to accomplish your learning objectives and develop a professional reputation, keep the following points in mind:

- **Wear professional attire.** Dressing for the culture where you work sends a strong message of respect to the position and organization.
- **Understand and respect company policy.** Be aware of and respect company policies.
- **Define your role.** You may be invited to attend staff meetings or decision making discussions. Clarify your role prior to going to these meetings so you behave in the expected manner.
- **Ask questions and request feedback.** Do not hesitate to ask a question if you need clarification.
- **Attend events.** When invited to a company sponsored event, it is in your best interest to attend and behave in a professional manner. Always use discretion and common sense (especially if alcohol is present).
- **Be punctual and dependable.** Be early to work and meetings, and always finish projects ahead of schedule.
- **Do quality work and take initiative.** It is important to demonstrate your abilities in the best possible light. Ask for more tasks when you are finished. Your work ethic is critical as employers see internships as extended interviews.
- **Display a positive attitude.** You could be asked to complete a task that you do not like. Avoid expressing your frustration, or speaking negatively about other employees; you may be rewarded with more responsibilities for your positive attitude.
Internship Search Checklist
The job search can feel very overwhelming, so it’s helpful to break it into manageable steps. The good news is you don’t have to do every step in order. For example, you can start working on your resume before you identify what you want to do. Speak to a GSU Career Advisor if you would like assistance with any of the steps. Use this checklist as a guide as you go through the various stages of career development and as you begin your internship or job search. Check off as much as you can and bring it with you to your appointments with your career advisor.

Step 1: Know yourself
☐ I have identified my personal strengths, skills, interests, and values (FOCUS Assessment, MBTI, etc.)

Career Services offers several career assessments to help you identify your skills and strengths. Call or visit our website to get started.

☐ I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest
☐ I can name two or three careers/jobs I plan to research

Utilize Major Handouts, Occupation Outlook Handbook, Chronicle Career Library or O*Net to find careers and jobs.

Step 2: Know where you want to work
☐ I have researched organizations or companies that might hire someone with my skills, interests, and background

Review the Business/Membership Directories on Chamber of Commerce Websites, Use Reference USA, Hoover’s Online or Conduct Google Search.

☐ I have analyzed desired qualifications in my field and know what employers are looking for

Conduct an Informational Interview, review job postings on company websites, or in Eagle Career Net, Simplyhired.com/newgrad, Indeed.com or any other job posting system.

☐ I have researched potential career fields: typical entry-level jobs, best geographic location for jobs, and identified 10 potential employers for the type of work I am seeking.


☐ I have identified the top three geographic areas where I’d like to live and work
☐ I have conducted an informational interview or job shadow opportunity to learn more about the field and get an inside look at an organization(s).
Step 3: Get ready for the search

☐ I have had my resume and cover letter(s) critiqued a staff member in Career Services

Utilize Career Services Walk-In Hours for resume and cover letter critiques (Monday-Friday 12-4pm)

☐ I have prepared a portfolio, work or writing samples to highlight my experience, skills, and talent

☐ I have requested an official transcript, have copies of my unofficial transcript, and received recommendation letters from several references.

☐ I have developed my “60 second commercial or elevator speech” for all short encounters with employers.

Utilize the 60 second commercial/elevator speech handout from the Career Resource Center or from the Career Services website.

☐ I have identified three individuals who will serve as references (faculty, supervisors, etc.)

☐ I have developed my interview skills and have practiced my responses in a mock interview

Use the Career Services Interview Guide, books, web resources and/or call Career Services to schedule a mock interview.

☐ I have an interview suit that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work

☐ I have a professional-sounding answering machine/voice mail message in case an employer calls

☐ I have a neutral/professional email address to give to employers

☐ I have reviewed and modified my online presence (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.)

Step 4: Start searching

☐ I have updated my profile and uploaded my resume on Eagle Career Net (www.georgiasouthern.edu/career)

☐ I regularly check Career services web site for career opportunities and I read links sent to me by my department. I read the appropriate job-search resources for my field(s) of interest

☐ I have a system for keeping track of my contacts, interviews, and other job-search activities

☐ I follow up on every interesting job lead immediately

☐ I have developed a list of potential networking contacts and keep in touch with them (networking worksheet)

☐ I keep a copy of my resume next to my phone in case I receive a call from an employer

☐ I follow-up each cover letter with a phone call or email to the employer requesting a job interview

☐ I send thank you letters or emails to every person who interviews me
### INTERNSHIP SEARCH ASSESSMENT

**Adaptive Skills** — often describe your personality. Examples include hardworking, dedicated, etc. List three examples of your adaptive skills and examples of how you’ve demonstrated them.

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**Work Content Skills** — are needed to perform functions of a particular job. For example, an accountant needs to know how to balance an account or use Microsoft Excel. List three work content skills you have that are necessary for your chosen field and how you’ve used them.

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**Transferrable Skills** — are useful in all of your life roles. For example, strong organizational skills help you as a student when you arrange your homework schedule, as an intern when you organize time and resources in working on a project or as a club member when you coordinate a fundraising event. List three transferrable skills and examples of each.

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**Internship Goals** — it’s important to set **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Attainable**, **Realistic** and **Time Specific** goals when planning your search. Knowing your skills, what you’d like to do, and type of company you want to work with will help you identify your SMART goals. “My goal is to get an internship” is **NOT** a S.M.A.R.T. goal; “My goal is secure a summer internship with a graphic design firm” is a S.M.A.R.T. goal as long as you have design skills and it’s not July 30th!

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Qualifications — what qualifications are expected for your field(s) of interest

Job Positions/Possibility List — it’s also important to know what positions or areas your major qualifies you for. For example, the positions/areas that a computer science student might pursue are programming, systems development, network technology, web page design, etc. Knowing this can help you in your search. For help with determining potential positions use the “What Can I do with a major in…” handouts in Career Services.

Top 10 List — begin with a “Dream List”. Where would you love to work? List the top 10 companies or organizations you’d like to work for, no matter how large or unrealistic your choice may seem.

Desired Locations/Geographic Locations - list the cities/areas in which you would like to intern