Internship Overview

What is an internship?

San Diego State University recognizes the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) internship definition. An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

Internships are a high impact practice that allows students to develop the professionalism and learn how to apply the knowledge that is needed to transition successful into the work place. Internships are hands-on, experiential opportunities that bridge your academic work with an industry or field in the professional world.

What are the characteristics of an internship?

Internships vary according to tasks, work time, and compensation. Standard internships usually require 10 to 15 hours weekly during the semester, and up to 40 hours per week in summer. Compensation possibilities can include hourly pay, class credit, or a stipend.

To qualify as an internship, an experience must include professional experience, and therefore internships are not primarily unskilled or clerical in nature. An internship experience needs to relate to your academic work and have learning outcomes that are set by and achieved under the guidance of a supervisor.

Why complete an internship?

Internships promote provisional development and are a useful way to:

- Explore your interests and gain valuable experience
- Experience a career before graduating
- Apply academic knowledge to a work setting
- Build professional connections and practice networking with employers and professionals
- Investigate potential employers’ organizations
- Develop career readiness competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and teamwork
- Build your resume and LinkedIn profile with experience that will attract future employers
- Transition into a job or prepare for graduate school

What factors should I consider when looking for an internship?

- Where am I in my academic career?
- Have I discussed internships with my major advisor?
- What careers am I most interested in doing/learning about?
- What employers am I most interested in learning about?
- What work-related activities would I like to try?
- What skills do I want to use, refine, or develop?
- What work settings would I like to experience?
- What are my goals for the internship?

Updated 4/11/18
What resources are available to search for an internship?

- Create an Aztec Career Connection account and search for internships
- Visit the Career Services Resource Room (SSE 1200)
- Attend Career Fairs and workshops
- Speak with the Department Internship Contact in your major
- Network with friends, family, and professors (LinkedIn is recommended)
- Visit company websites that interest you (Glassdoor is recommended)

How do I apply for an internship?

Companies and academic departments will require various materials to apply for an internship. These could include a resume and cover letter, formal application, references, transcripts, essay, and/or an interview. Respond to an internship announcement according to the directions.

How do I ensure success in my internship?

Career Services offers three internship workshops that are designed to help you be a successful intern. Visit the Workshops & Events page to get the dates for the internship workshops, other workshops and events, and career fairs to take your first steps to intern success!

Internship 101: Jump Start Your Success: Get an Internship!
Learn what an internship is, why you need one and what you should expect to get from the experience.

Internship 201: All You Need to Know to Be a Successful Intern
Move from just “showing up” to “shining” as an intern. Learn best practices to have a successful internship search and experience.

Internship 301: Internships and Beyond, Your Next Steps to Success
Looking toward the end of your internship. Learn how to close the experience and pursue other experiences that lead to success

Recommended internship websites

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<th>International internships</th>
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<td>Access GoinGlobal through your Aztec Career Connection account (international and domestic positions)</td>
<td>CSU Entertainment Alliance- open to all majors interested in interning in the entertainment industry- <a href="http://csuentertainment.com/internships/">http://csuentertainment.com/internships/</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.cie.uiuc.edu/prospective/iopother/intern.shtml">www.cie.uiuc.edu/prospective/iopother/intern.shtml</a></td>
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<td>SDSU Aztecs Abroad Internships- Intern abroad with SDSU's preapproved providers <a href="https://goo.gl/etDLtM">https://goo.gl/etDLtM</a></td>
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