

Making the Most of Your Internship

At the Beginning of Your Internship

- Meet with your internship supervisor to develop goals and learning objectives for the internship. Make sure you know what needs to get done and when.
- If you are taking the internship for academic credit, align these goals and objectives with the requirements for the credit.
- Ask your supervisor about the dress code for interns at the site. Depending on the site and nature of the work, dress code can range from casual, business casual to formal.
- Attend any kind of orientations and trainings about office policies and procedures that you are requested to attend.
- Discuss with your supervisor any planned times that you will be away for vacation or another commitment. It is better to give advance notice of planned absences, which will help with coverage, planning and carrying out assignments.

During Your Internship

- Act professional at all times, following the established office etiquette and culture in place.
- Be prompt and on time to all of your appointments, meetings and obligations. If you find that some of your meetings are double-booked, talk with your supervisor about strategies for prioritizing which meetings to attend.
- Ask questions and be engaged in conversations with your supervisor and colleagues to show your interest. Be enthusiastic and interested to learn about how things work and why things work the way that they do.
- Be an active and engaged listener in conversations with people, keeping good eye contact and posture.
- Maintain a good attitude towards your work and with your supervisor and coworkers. A balance of confidence, willingness to learn and a hard work ethic is a formula for a great internship.
- Observe how others network and build good working/business relationships. Watch how permanent employees who are well respected and successful speak and try to emulate their style.
- Participate in office functions and events that you are invited to. This shows that you are part of the whole office team and experience, and are able to network with individuals from many parts of the organization.
- Do not take cell phone calls in the middle of conversations and/or meetings, unless it is an emergency.
- Keep lines of communications open with your supervisor and meet regularly with your supervisor to keep posted on the progress of your projects and tasks.
- Return phone calls and e-mails in a timely fashion.
- If you have any concerns about your internship, and/or any concerns about the work setting, talk with your supervisor about them.
- If you are taking the internship for academic credit, build in the appropriate amount of time to complete assignments for the credit portion of your internship. Keep lines of communication open with your faculty or staff internship coordinator on your campus.

- Take note of the variety of positions that are held by staff at the organization. If these positions are in line with your career interests, inquire about setting up an informational interview with the staff member to learn more about her or his background and how got into their current positions.
- Be proactive about learning as well! Ask to attend meetings, conferences, presentations and lectures in order to get a better sense of the organization.
- If you feel that the progress and focus of your internship is not on target with the original plan for it, check-in with your supervisor to revisit goals and options.
- If you are doing well and getting your projects done in a timely fashion, ask your supervisor about doing more projects. This shows initiative and interest on your part, as well as the chance to acquire new skills and abilities.
- Once you are acclimated to the office routine, expectations and core duties of your internship, take the opportunity to ask staff about any projects that they are working on and how you could be of help to them. Keep your supervisor informed. In some settings, your supervisor may serve as a point-person for staff members to first go to, if they have projects or assignments for you to work on.
- There may be grunt work to do at times, as is true in any office. The best thing to do is to monitor that and still carry out this work with the same effort as you are putting forth in other projects. If you feel that this kind of work may be increasing and/or getting in the way of your main projects, talk with your supervisor to seek clarification.
- Do not be afraid to fail. As an intern, you will make mistakes, but take responsibility and learn from it. Remember that as an intern you are not expected to know everything, so make an effort to learn.
- Take advantage of the geographical area of your internship to become involved with events, professional conferences, meetings, and volunteer opportunities. This will enable you to develop an excellent network in the area, which will be helpful if you do a future job search in the area.

At the End of Your Internship

- Meet with you supervisor to discuss accomplishments and suggestions for future growth.
- Check in with other staff on other projects that you have been working on with them, to tie up any loose ends.
- Graciously attend any thank you events and functions that may be planned at your site.
- If taking the internship for academic credit, complete assignments required for the credit.

After Your Internship

- Keep notes of tasks accomplished as an intern. You can list accomplishments on your resume.
- Send a thank you note to your supervisor thanking them for the experience. Keep in touch with them for future opportunities that may be available at the organization.
- Create a portfolio of your experiences that you can show at future interviews and other opportunities.