

How to Develop An Internship

An internship is an ideal way to explore the practical, tangible aspects of your area of interest and to work with and learn from people who share your interest. An internship can increase your knowledge and skills, advance your personal growth and inform your thoughts about the work you might pursue after graduation. Having done an internship may make you more competitive as you apply for graduate programs or jobs.

Finding and applying for an internship is similar to searching for a job. You contact potential sponsors, submit applications, and sometimes interview. The process of planning an internship described below applies whether you are considering an internship for the summer, fall or spring semester, or January Term. CORC can help with your internship planning: attend CORC workshops, visit the CORC web pages, and meet with a CORC career counselor to discuss your thoughts about pursuing an internship.

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Be clear about what you hope to gain from your internship. There are a variety of possible goals. For example, you might want to:

- increase your knowledge and develop specific skills in your field of interest
 - take a break from academic study to learn by practical application, in a new setting
 - have an experience that becomes a significant aspect of your Division II or Division III
 - gain some experience working in a field that you might consider as a career
 - earn money as well as gain experience
- △ Stuck for ideas? Jump-start your thought process by meeting with a CORC career counselor, exploring the CORC library and checking out CORC's web site (<http://corc.hampshire.edu>).
- △ If earning money is a goal, you are more likely to find internships that offer a salary or stipend in certain fields such as business or science.

To ensure that your academic goals are met, clarify with your sponsor what the internship will involve and confirm that your faculty committee understands and approves the internship.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL INTERNSHIP SPONSORS

There are two basic ways to think about finding an internship sponsor. You can

- find an established internship, or
- identify a person or organization doing work that interests you and propose an internship.

Any of the methods below may be used to either find an established internship, or to identify a person or organization that might be willing to consider your internship proposal.

A. Personal Contacts

Spread the word that you are looking for an internship.

- Your Own Community: Having identified the sort of internship you are seeking, try connections such as friends and professional associates of family members, parents and other relatives of your Hampshire classmates, high school teachers, and anyone else you can think of.

- Faculty/Staff: Talk to Hampshire and Five College faculty and staff about your interests and ask if they might have any ideas, leads or contacts for you. Ask if they know what sort of internships students with similar interests have done in the past.
- Former work, volunteer, or internship contacts: Discuss your internship search with a former supervisor and/or coworker and ask for suggestions or perhaps a referral to a related organization. Consider working at the same site, either in a different department or with new responsibilities.
- Hampshire alumni: A list of alums who have agreed to talk with students and other alumni about their careers is available in the CORC library. These alums have volunteered to provide **information only**, not actual internship positions. You might ask them, for example, to share their personal experience of entering and working in their field. It's also appropriate to ask for suggestions on how and where to look for internship positions in their field and/or geographic area; advice on how to gain direct experience in their field; and names of other people (not necessarily alums) who might also be helpful.

B. CORC Internship Seekers Listserv

Every week, CORC receives announcements about internships. The best way to let you know about these opportunities is through our InternshipSeekers email listserv, where we also post the most interesting internships we find through Internet research. Subscribe to this listserv by following the links from CORC's homepage, <http://corc.hampshire.edu>.

C. The Web

There are many useful web sites listing thousands of advertised internships. A few worth noting are:

- MonsterTrak: Hampshire students and alums who enter this site with our password, which is "corc," will find thousands of internship opportunities. **Find internships offered by alums or other friends of Hampshire by doing a keyword search using *HampshireConnect*.**
- Spotlight on Careers: CORC subscribes to this site, which was created by a group of colleges called the Liberal Arts Career Network (LACN). It covers over 30 different career fields with a wealth of information and links for each. Enter User Name: LACN and Password: lewiston
- Other sites and searches: Check out the Hampshire CORC web pages for other useful links. We have chosen sites that seem especially helpful in specific career areas and would welcome suggestions for additional links.

D. The Library

CORC has several directories of internships. Some cover many different career fields and some focus on a particular area. CORC also subscribes to job and internship newsletters. Telephone directory yellow pages are a simple but useful resource for identifying local organizations. In addition, the Hampshire (Johnson) Library subscribes to several databases that may be useful to you; see a reference librarian for help.

E. Community Partnerships for Social Change, Hampshire College

Community Partnerships (Franklin Patterson Hall basement, G-1) offers local, community-based internship and research opportunities, training seminars, and a variety of resources to strengthen students' social justice organizing skills. Students are encouraged to meet with CPSC staff for advice about making community work a central component of their Divisional work.

F. Five-College Job Fairs & Employer Information Sessions

Participating in these events is an effective way to make personal contact with representatives from hundreds of businesses and nonprofit organizations. For more information, go to <http://corc.hampshire.edu>, click on *Calendar of Events*, then click on *Five-College Graduate School & Employer Information Sessions*.

G. Professional Associations & Conferences

Professional associations exist to further the professional development of their members who work in the same field. An example is the American Institute of Architects. Some association web sites list job and internship opportunities. A Google search may provide information about professional associations in your particular field of interest; you may also refer to the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in the CORC library.

RESEARCH POTENTIAL SPONSORS

Once you have identified attractive internship options, find out as much as you can about each organization. Information contained in listings is often minimal. Find the organization's web site and learn about its philosophy, mission, work, target population, services, etc., so you will have a sense of what you can offer and what you can learn. You might find additional, different internships listed on the web site, or you might get some ideas for an internship proposal of your own. The information you gather will help you write a stronger, more customized resume and cover letter, and speak more knowledgeably in an interview.

PREPARE APPLICATION MATERIALS

Typically, internship sponsors require some or all of the following application materials:

- resume
- cover letter
- personal statement
- application form
- transcript/course evaluations
- references

You will be ahead of the game if, in advance of contacting potential sponsors, you draft a resume and cover letter or personal statement.

In a cover letter or personal statement, give prospective sponsors an overview of your relevant experience, academic work, community service activities and potential career plans. They'll want to know

- 1) **what you have to offer them** (e.g., experience, pertinent coursework, skills, dedication)
- 2) **what attracts you to their line of work** (e.g., interests, values, career goals), and
- 3) **what you hope to learn/gain from the internship experience.**

Preparing a resume is an excellent exercise in analyzing and articulating your background and qualifications. Drafting a cover letter or personal statement with a particular internship in mind is also valuable. You will tailor your draft somewhat for different applications. But provided that you are applying for similar types of internships, you should be able to reuse language from your initial draft.

△ CORC counselors offer guidance and information about writing your resume, cover letter, personal statement, and answers to questions on application forms.

CONTACT SPONSORS AND APPLY

Start early! Internship deadlines can be as early as November for the following summer.

Step 1: Initial contact

Call, email or write a letter to the potential sponsor. If you use email, approach it as if you were writing a letter, i.e., use complete sentences, good grammar and accurate spelling and punctuation. A phone call or email might be the quickest way to:

- Find out if the internship is still available
- Find out/confirm the name of the contact person
- Clear up questions you have about the internship and application materials/process
- Ask about other internship possibilities with the same organization
- Schedule a telephone or in-person meeting with the contact person

If you call hoping to schedule a meeting, you might find that the contact person wants to talk with you at that moment rather than schedule a subsequent meeting. So be prepared to discuss your questions or proposal.

Proposing an Internship

If you want to propose an internship and don't have the name of a contact person, your first objective is to find one.

- Obtain the name, title and telephone number of the person most likely to be selecting or supervising interns, e.g., a department manager, the president of a small company, the director of a not-for-profit agency, the internship or volunteer coordinator.
- Look for this information on the organization's web page, or phone/email and ask.
- Call, email or write a letter to ask if the contact person would be willing to talk with you about your interest in his/her field or organization and your ideas about an internship. Say that you will follow up and hope to schedule a meeting.

Step 2: Pre-application meeting

If you are applying for a well-established, clearly described internship, this step may not be relevant. Two reasons why you might want to meet with your potential sponsor before applying:

- To clarify details about an established internship with a more in-depth discussion
- To propose an internship

Proposing an Internship

Having done your research about the organization's mission and work, think about what you would like to be doing and what would serve the organization, and suggest responsibilities.

- Propose that you assist with on-going projects, take on a special project, move forward a project that has been stalled because of lack of staff, help out with routine tasks, or "shadow" staff as they work.
- Design a special project. Describe clearly what you have in mind – how your project could help the organization as well as further your goals.
- Have a clear proposal in mind. If you are meeting in person, bring a written proposal.
- You and your sponsor should decide in advance what your specific responsibilities will be. We recommend that you write up the details in an "Internship Agreement" that will help you, your sponsor and your faculty advisor/committee members completely understand the expectations.

Step 3: Application

Finalize the application materials required by your internship sponsor.

- resume, cover letter, and/or personal statement
For assistance, CORC offers how-to guides, books, workshops and individual guidance.
- application form
CORC counselors can help with your questions.
- transcript/course evaluations
If the sponsor requires an official transcript, contact Central Records early in the process. You can obtain an unofficial transcript and course evaluations from the Hub.
- references
Ask faculty or job supervisors if you can use them as references and be sure to **give them plenty of time** if they need to write a letter.

Step 4: Follow up

Unless you are specifically asked not to, always follow up on applications and inquiries with either a phone call, email, or second letter. Organizations often receive many applications and may be slow to respond. Being politely assertive may make the difference between landing an internship and not getting one.

- When following up with a phone call, be prepared for the conversation to turn into an interview. Be ready to answer questions about your career goals, your interest in the organization, what you have to offer, etc.

Step 5: Interview

An interview may be required; a CORC counselor can help you prepare.

Step 6: Thank you letter

Always send a thank you letter after speaking with a potential internship sponsor, to convey your appreciation. Mention something specific that you gained from the conversation, e.g., more specific information, new knowledge, better understanding, increased interest/enthusiasm, or an actual internship offer.

Step 7: Evaluate offers

Before accepting an internship, make sure you have enough information about what your responsibilities will be, with whom you will be working, how you will be supervised, etc. Ask all your questions up front, to be clear that it is a good opportunity for you. You may want to seek the opinion of your faculty advisor/committee members.

Step 8: Follow Up

Once you have accepted a position, contact (phone, email or letter) the other organizations that were considering your application to let them know. You might say that you appreciated their consideration and hope to possibly work with them in the future.

FUNDING AND HOUSING

Funding

Some positions offer a reasonable hourly wage, and you may search for paid internships online or in the internship directories at the CORC library. Others offer a small stipend and/or housing. Many internships are part-time, allowing you to also earn money at a part-time job. You might volunteer as an intern for January Term, sacrificing just a month of earnings in exchange for a unique experience. In some cases, your family may be able to support you for one summer during your college years so that you can do a really exceptional internship.

Hampshire sometimes has grant money available for particular types of internship programs, including those offered by Community Partnerships for Social Change, Civil Liberties and Reproductive Rights, and Peace and World Security Studies. Paste the following url into your browser for more information on these sources of funding:
<http://www.hampshire.edu/cms/index.php?id=3447>

Housing

Although some internships provide housing, most do not. If housing is not included, you may want to consider an internship in a location where you can live at home or with friends or relatives. Colleges and universities often rent out dormitory rooms in the summer and sometimes year-round. For example, interns in Washington, D.C. can find housing at American University, Georgetown University, or Trinity College. Also, the Washington Intern Foundation has an apartment building for interns. For any city, go to area college homepages and click on summer programs or off-campus housing.

Check the CORC web site for links to information about internship funding and housing. From the CORC home page (<http://corc.hampshire.edu>) click on “For Students”, then on “Internships.”