



Academic Internships

A guide for students

your **key** to a **brighter future**

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Top 5 reasons to intern

1. Test your career choices

An internship allows you to “try on” a career before making a long term commitment. It can help you discover if the career you’re considering is right (or wrong) for you.

2. Increase your marketability

Employers consistently rate internship experience as one of the top criteria used when selecting candidates. Employers look for students with education and experience.

3. Develop skills and apply knowledge

Apply theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to actual on-the-job experiences. Develop skills specific to your chosen industry and confidence in the skills you already possess.

4. Acquire job search skills

Create a professional résumé, sharpen your interviewing skills, and practice interacting professionally. These skills are essential for finding a job or for applying to graduate school.

5. Build networking contacts

An internship is a great opportunity to build a network of contacts in your chosen career field. In addition, over half of all interns are hired by the organization where they interned!

What is an internship?

An internship is a carefully monitored work or service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals.

Internships are designed to provide students with pre-professional experience before they graduate. This allows students to test various career options while developing skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership. Each internship is generally a one-time experience.

A typical internship will:

- Last three to six months
- Often be taken for academic credit
- Be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid
- Include an intentional “learning agenda” structured into the experience (learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation and assessment)
- Balance the intern’s learning goals and the specific work an organization needs completed
- Promote academic, career, and/or personal development



Identifying internship sites

The entire process of finding an internship — from identifying potential employers, to applying, interviewing, and accepting a position — **will likely take several months.**

When to start

Plan to do your first internship after your sophomore year. Begin your search early – at least one semester prior to starting your internship.

If you want to do an internship prior to your junior year, it is possible to register for field experience, usually a 200 level class.

Resources for finding an internship:

- Academic advisor or professors in your department
- Career Services Office
- Goshen College job & internship bank
(www.goshen.edu/jobs)
- Library - book on internships
- Online search engines and internship databases
- Local businesses
- Family and friends
- Students and recent alumni

Select at least three companies you think would provide a meaningful internship. Research each one and learn what you can about the application process.

Stay open to possibilities

It's possible to become so set on finding the “perfect internship” that you forfeit other opportunities. If you find an internship that offers the majority of what you are looking for, try it out. Remember, internships are a trial run to see if this may be a field of interest for you in the future.

A note for international students

Looking for an internship as an international student has its own challenges. Many employers have concerns about working with international students because they're afraid there will be communication barriers and difficulties adapting to the company's environment.

Make sure you emphasize:

- Intercultural skills
- Your ability to speak another language
- Experiences you have had working in the U.S.

Most importantly: Be able to verify your ability to work in the United States by having the proper documents available.



Creating your own

In some situations it may be more beneficial to design your own internship. Keep in mind, though, that this also involves more effort. *Always consult with your faculty advisor regarding academic credit.*

Set goals

- What do you want to learn from this experience?
- What type of skills do you want to develop or gain?
- How many hours do you want to work?
- Do you need to be paid?

Research

- What type of company do you want to work for?
- Do their values and mission statement coincide with your personal values and beliefs?
- Do you prefer a large or small organization?

Communication

- Be able to tell potential employers what you are looking for and how your skills can be of assistance to the organization.
- If the organization has never conducted an internship previously, provide them with resources the Career Services Office offers to assist employers in creating internship programs. (www.goshen.edu/careerserv/Employers)

Negotiation

- Be flexible – some employers may not agree with the terms you have.
- Understand what the employer will require of you; if you can adjust your terms, then do so, but if not, look elsewhere.

Keep your faculty advisor informed throughout this process.

- Create or update your résumé and a cover letter
- Complete an application and other supporting documents, if necessary
- Mail, fax, or email all required documents before the application deadline
- Prepare for interviews by practicing answers to typical interview questions (on your own, with a friend, and/or with Career Services)

A note on phone etiquette

Speaking effectively on the phone requires skill and practice. When contacting potential employers you want to be able to clearly communicate the purpose of your call whether you're speaking with a person or leaving a voice mail.

Prepare a script in advance so you can be clear and concise. Organizations receive many phone calls – don't spoil your chances by rambling.

Depending upon your situation, your script might include the following:

- Who you are (name, school, major)
- Why you are calling (inquiring about internship possibilities, responding to an ad, following up, etc.)
- Who referred you
- Inquire about the hiring process
- Why you are interested in the organization
- Valuable skills you have to offer

Remember to speak slowly, sound energetic, and always thank the person for the time they spent talking with you.

Accepting an offer

After receiving an internship offer, it's important that you understand the offer and the expectations.

Hours

Goshen College requires students to work at least 40 hours for each credit hour earned. In most cases, you have 12 weeks to work an average of ten hours per week during the school year. The hours you and your employer agree on should work with your class schedule.

Academic credit

Consult with your faculty advisor to gain approval for internship credit and officially register for credit (usually the "409" course in your department).

Ask your faculty advisor to specify how you should document your learning (keep a log, journal, build a portfolio, obtain a supervisor's written evaluation, etc.)

Compensation

Some internships are paid, while others are not. If you want (or need) to be paid, keep in mind that compensation does not always mean receiving a paycheck. Other things to consider or even suggest are:

- Helping with transportation costs. Perhaps your employer can reimburse you for gas.
- Allowing you to participate. Ask if you can sit in on meetings and other business related activities. This will allow you to gain skills for interacting with people in a professional setting.
- Trading goods for services. If the employer can't pay you, maybe you can receive company benefits, such as having parking fees validated, free products, etc.

Completing your internship

Expectations for professional behavior

Be mindful that as an intern, you are representing Goshen College. Your performance at your work site not only reflects who you are, but also the college. Your attitude and work ethic play a part in determining whether or not the organization hosting you will open doors of opportunity for future Goshen College students.

Remember that what you say, how you dress, and how you act have the potential for both positive and negative impact on your future employment.

The following is expected of you as an intern representing Goshen College:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding all work-related matters
- Understand what constitutes a permissible work absence and who to notify when absent
- Notify your supervisor ahead of time if you will be absent during GC holidays and academic breaks and vacations
- Dress appropriately for your internship site
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Do not conduct personal business during work hours
- Be fair, honest, and cooperative when interacting with co-workers
- Seek feedback from supervisors; view suggestions for improvement as valuable information

Academic work

Keep all deadlines for reporting and submitting assignments to your faculty advisor as previously agreed upon.

If problems arise

If part way through your internship you decide it is not what you expected, don't quit. Talk to your academic advisor, and see if you and your on-site supervisor can come to an agreement as to how to help make your experience more fulfilling.

I'm done, now what?

The most important thing to do at the end of your internship is **thank your supervisor** and anyone else who was helpful to you. You can do this in person on your last day, as well as by sending a card or note.

In addition, on or before the last day of your internship:

- Confirm you've fulfilled all your employment responsibilities. Make your supervisor aware of any projects you were unable to complete.
- Ensure you have met the requirements of the academic portion of your internship.
- Review your learning goals and objectives with your supervisor; determine if they were accomplished.
- Request a written reference letter from your supervisor.

Reflect on your experience

After you've finished your internship, it's important to reflect on what you learned, the skills you developed and your feelings about the organization and industry. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What made the physical setting of your internship comfortable or uncomfortable?
- How did you feel at work? Excited? Bored? Stressed? What were the situations that caused these feelings?
- Were you comfortable with frequent deadlines or did you prefer to develop a project over time?
- Was it better to have a mix of tasks every day or work on one project steadily?
- Did your co-workers enjoy their jobs? What did they say about the organization and/or about the industry?
- How did your supervisor provide supervision? Do you prefer close supervision or more independence?
- What did you learn overall about the field/industry? Did you like what you saw of the field?

Don't forget to revise your résumé to include your internship experience!

GC internship policy

This Goshen College internship policy provides guidelines for non-professional majors pursuing for-credit internships.

1. Students may register for internship credit (usually a course numbered 409) after completing 60 hours of college credit. (Lower-level students may register for course 209, Field Experience.) In consultation with a faculty member, students will identify possible internships.
2. After gaining approval from an appropriate faculty member, students may contact one or more organizations to explore internship options.
3. After a student and an employer have reached an agreement concerning an internship, the student should inform the faculty supervisor about the internship.
4. Goshen College requires a minimum of 40 hours of on-location experience in a professional setting for every hour of academic credit earned for the internship.
5. The learning that occurs within an internship constitutes a form of payment for interns who serve as volunteers. The Goshen College faculty place greater value on the educational quality of the internship than in having students work for pay in unchallenging positions. However, employers are encouraged to compensate interns whenever possible.
6. Evaluation of the student's performance during the internship will be coordinated among the student, faculty supervisor, and on-location supervisor. Evaluation should consist of a combination of measures. These might include a self-evaluation written by the student, a portfolio or other documentation of completed work, and a written evaluation by the work supervisor.

This is a condensed version of the internship policy. For the full policy, visit www.goshen.edu/careerserv/Students/Internships

Additional resources

The Career Services web site has a wealth of information. Visit www.goshen.edu/careerserv to:

- Learn to interview effectively
- Create or update your résumé and cover letter
- Answer common questions about internships
- Explore careers

Additional web sites:

Finding an internship

- www.goshen.edu/jobs (GC job & internship bank)
- www.indianaintern.net
- www.internshipprograms.com
- www.internjobs.com

Internship advice

- www.wetfeet.com (look under “Advice & Articles”)

Books: Search with keyword *internship*



Contact information

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For questions regarding academic credit for an internship, contact your academic advisor and/or the chairperson for your department.

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