

INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

**A STUDENT GUIDE TO GETTING
A QUALITY INTERNSHIP**



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The path to a quality internship can feel challenging, but the rewards are worth it. The Internship Handbook is here to help you every step of the way in securing an internship that's both meaningful and rewarding. Let's get started!

- **CONSIDERING AN INTERNSHIP**
- **DISCOVERING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**
- **APPLYING FOR INTERNSHIPS**



We'll share helpful tips throughout this guide--look for the light bulb logo.



CONSIDERING AN INTERNSHIP

An internship offers the amazing opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a real-world setting under the supervision of an industry professional. Use this as a guide to determine if an internship is right for you and when to do one.



Plan ahead and start the process early--it can take time to arrange an internship! We recommend beginning this step at least one semester before you're hoping to start your internship.

Consider your career goals—what do you want to do after school? An internship can be a great way to gain experience and prepare for your future career.

Think about how much time you have for an internship alongside other life commitments, such as:

- School
- Work
- Family obligations
- Time with friends
- Sleep

Check in with your academic counselor to discuss your plans. Key questions to ask include:

- Which semester is best for me to do an internship?
- Is an internship for credit right for me?
- If planning for a credit-bearing internship, is it included in my MAP (Major Academic Plan)?

Use the following questions to help identify your ideal internship experience:

- In what specific area would you like to intern?
- (For example, rather than just teaching, consider what subject(s) and grade level you'd like to teach.)
- What skills do you want to learn or improve?
- What type of work environment would you prefer?
- What specific knowledge or experience do you hope to gain?



To learn more about internships for credit check out the [Information for Students handout](#) and "Internship Dates and Deadlines" section of the [Prepare for an Internship website](#).



DISCOVERING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Seek out a high-quality internship experience to maximize your time and growth as an intern. **A quality internship includes:**

- **Meaningful learning experiences with clear goals:** The internship should provide structured learning aligned with your academic and career objectives.
- **Hands-on experience in your desired field:** Focus on professional tasks relevant to your career, with minimal clerical work.
- **Guidance from experienced mentors:** Receive coaching and supervision from professionals who offer feedback and support to enhance your skills.



We recommend allowing ample time for this important step. If you need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to Career and Transfer Connections!

There are numerous resources available to support your internship search. Consider using the following tools:

Web-based Resources

- **College Central Network**
 - Refer to the [College Central Network handout](#) for access instructions and tips.
- **Other Internship and Job Search Websites**
 - www.calinterns.org
 - www.internsource.org
 - www.indeed.com
 - www.Linkedin.com
 - Job/internship search sites related to your major/field of study
- **Search Local Company Websites Directly**

People Resources

- Instructors, especially those teaching courses in your major
- Academic counselors
- Friends and family (your personal "network")
- Professional associations related to your field of study
- [Campus clubs](#) and organizations
- [Career and Transfer Connections](#)



APPLYING FOR INTERNSHIPS

Begin by updating your resume! It's your chance to highlight your coursework, education, skills, and experience for potential internship employers.



Tips, sample resume formats, and other resume resources can be found in the "**Create an Unforgettable Resume and Cover Letter**" section of the [Campus to Career: A Student's Toolkit for the Workforce](#).

Formal Application: Apply for internships that align with your major and interests by submitting applications for posted opportunities.

Informal Application: Explore unadvertised internships by reaching out to potential employers directly. We can help create tailored opportunities if needed.

When discussing an internship, be prepared to share:

- That you're a Sierra College student.
- Your interest in gaining real-world experience to develop your skills.
- What you want to learn or work on.
- Relevant coursework, skills, experience, and accomplishments.

Clarifying Internship Expectations

- **Set clear expectations** for yourself, the employer, and the school (if the internship is for credit).
- **For credit internships**, the employer must supervise activities that promote active learning, as well as provide training and mentorship.
- **Internships can be paid or unpaid**—the key is gaining professional experience related to your career goals.
- If the employer offers a stipend, it is considered a **paid internship**.
- **For unpaid internships for credit**, Sierra College provides Workers Compensation coverage for you as the intern.

Employers value interns who:



- Show enthusiasm, courtesy, and interest in the company
- Demonstrate motivation and a "can-do" attitude
- Are eager to learn and ask questions

Consider using this sample script when reaching out to a potential internship employer:

"Hi, my name is [Your Name]. I'm a Sierra College student studying [Your Major], and I'm looking for an internship that offers hands-on learning related to my field of study. Do you have any opportunities available?"



If an employer doesn't have an internship opportunity available or isn't able to create one, consider asking if there is anyone they could refer you to for a potential internship.

Resources for Potential Internship Employers

- Your resume
- [Information for Internship Sites handout](#)
- Information for Internship Sites handout (if applying for credit), which explains how internships for credit work from the employer's perspective.

Preparing for Interviews: Assessing the Right Fit

- Start preparing for interviews so you're ready when you get a call back. An interview helps both the employer and the intern assess whether the employer, the internship, and the candidate are a good fit.
- Before accepting an internship offer, take the time to evaluate whether it's the right opportunity for you.
- Check out the [Campus to Career: A Student's Toolkit for the Workforce](#) for tips on preparing for an interview, what to wear, how to answer employer questions, and more!

Choosing the Right Internship: Tips and Resources

- Choose your internship carefully and avoid settling for a poor fit.
- Check the 'Discovering Internship Opportunities' page for tips on identifying quality opportunities.
- If you're unsure, contact Career and Transfer Connections for guidance

Once you've secured and accepted your internship, you're ready to begin!

Setting Up Your Internship for Credit

If you'd like to earn academic credit for the experience, make sure to set up an Internship for Credit before you start working any hours. Reach out to Career and Transfer Connections as soon as possible.

Once you've confirmed your internship, let us know, and we'll guide you through the necessary steps and timelines to get your internship registered for credit. This process includes completing required forms, attending an orientation, and enrolling in the internship course before you begin.



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