

# INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

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



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## **INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK: A STUDENT GUIDE TO GETTING A QUALITY INTERNSHIP**

A quality internship can provide an amazing experience, but looking for an internship might feel scary or overwhelming. The Internship Handbook is a guide designed to help navigate the process of finding and arranging a meaningful internship experience. Let's embark on this adventure together!

- Plan the Journey: Prepare for the Internship Search
- Equip for the Voyage: Search for an Internship
- Arrange the Expedition: Apply For and Accept an Internship



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

# PLAN THE JOURNEY

## PREPARE FOR THE INTERNSHIP SEARCH

We're delighted that you're thinking about doing an internship. As we navigate these steps together, we'll start by planning the journey toward a meaningful experience as we prepare for the internship search.

### **Step 1: Determine if an internship is right for you and when to do one.**



*Let's 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 starting the internship.*

- An internship offers the amazing opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a real-world setting under the supervision of an industry professional.
- Think about your career goals--what do you want to do when you are finished with school? An internship can help you prepare for your future career.
- Consider how much time is available for an internship when added to other life activities such as:
  - school
  - work
  - family commitments
  - time with friends
  - sleep
- Check in with your academic counselor. Questions to ask them include:
  - Which semester should I do the internship?
  - Is an internship for credit right for me?
    - If planning for an internship for credit, is it on my MAP?



*An internship for credit may elevate the experience by:*

- *Ensuring meaningful learning related to your major or career goals*
- *Including oversight by a Sierra College instructor*
- *Incorporating professional mentoring from the employer*
- *Allowing you to earn college credit*

To learn more about internships for credit check out the [Information for Students handout](#) and [Internship Dates and Deadlines](#).



## Step 2: Consider what you want to learn from the internship

Before starting to look for an internship, it's helpful to think about what you'd like to learn or work on. When speaking with a potential employer about an internship, their first questions often are something like "What work could you do as an intern?" or "What kinds of projects or tasks would you like to do if you were to intern here?" Use the following questions to identify your ideal internship experience:

- In what specific area would you like an internship?
  - For example, not just teaching, but what subject(s) and grade level would you like to teach?
- What skills do you want to learn or improve?
- What environment would you like to work in?
- What do you want to learn about or gain experience in?



*Be flexible--an employer may have other ideas that will benefit everyone!*

## Step 3: Develop your resume

Your resume gives you the opportunity to showcase your coursework, education, skills, and experience to a potential internship employer. It's helpful to have a resume ready to give to a potential internship employer, to avoid having to scramble and put one together in a rush.



*Feel like you don't have relevant experience to put on a resume? An internship resume can include skills and completed classes in addition to any work experience.*

- Tips, sample resume formats, and other resume tools can be found in the "Create an Unforgettable Resume and Cover Letter" section of the [Employability Skills packet](#).
- Contact Career and Transfer Connections for assistance with drafting or reviewing your resume--we're here to help!

Once we've prepared for the internship search, we're ready to Equip for the Voyage: Search for an Internship. Hooray!

# EQUIP FOR THE VOYAGE

## SEARCH FOR AN INTERNSHIP

We've completed some important steps to prepare for the internship adventure. Next, we'll get equipped for the voyage as we search for an internship opportunity.

### Step 4: Search for an internship

- We want to look for a quality internship experience to make the most of your time as an intern.

A quality internship includes:

- An opportunity that offers meaningful learning with specific goals identified.
- Hands-on learning in the desired field or career area, with limited time spent on clerical or non-professional tasks.
- Mentoring, coaching, and supervision by a professional with experience and expertise in the internship tasks.



*We recommend allowing plenty of time for this important step. Be sure to contact Career and Transfer Connections if you need help!*

- There are many resources available for the internship search. We'll likely need to use several resources to find the ideal internship. Consider the following tools to find internship opportunities:

- Web-based resources

- [College Central Network](#)

- See the [College Central Network](#) [handout](#) for access instructions and tips



*Search "My School's Jobs," looking at internships and jobs*

- Additional internship and job search websites to consider

- [calinterns.org](http://calinterns.org)
- [www.internsource.org](http://www.internsource.org)
- [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)
- [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)
- Job/internship search sites related to your major/subject area



*Google "Job Board for" + your major or subject area*

- [Sierra College Student-recommended Internship Sites](#)

- Search local company websites directly



- People resources
  - Instructors, especially those who teach classes in your major
  - Academic counselor
  - Friends and family (your "network")
  - Professional associations related to your major
  - Campus clubs
  - Career and Transfer Connections



*Don't hesitate to reach out --we're happy to help!*

At this point, we've located possible opportunities as we searched for an internship. We're now ready to Arrange the Expedition: Apply For and Accept an Internship. Woohoo!

# ARRANGE THE EXPEDITION

## APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT AN INTERNSHIP

We've made it to the final phase of our internship adventure--great work! We're now ready to arrange the expedition as we apply for and accept an internship.

### Step 5: Apply for an internship

As we consider possible internship opportunities we have located, our next step is to apply for the opportunities, either formally or informally.

- Formally apply for an internship by submitting an application for the position.
  - Using the web-based internship resources from Equip for the Voyage: Search for an Internship, Step 4 (such as [College Central Network](#)), complete and submit applications for any internships that capture your interest and align with your major and what you want to learn.



*Contact Career and Transfer Connections for help with completing internship applications.*

- Informally apply for an internship by discussing a potential internship opportunity that isn't posted or advertised. We're not limited to advertised internships--we can work with a potential employer to create an amazing internship opportunity!



*The people resources from Equip for the Voyage: Search for an Internship, Step 4 may help locate these opportunities.*

- Be prepared to express your interest in an internship and discuss the value and contributions you have to offer a potential internship employer. Suggested talking points may include:
  - Mention that you're a Sierra College student looking for an internship--a meaningful learning opportunity in a real-world setting to develop your skills and gain experience.
    - Be prepared to share what you'd like to learn or work on (see Plan the Journey: Prepare for the Internship Search, Step 2)
    - Be ready to talk about classes completed in your major, as well as your skills, experience, and accomplishments.



*Employers appreciate interns who:*

- Show enthusiasm, courtesy, and interest in the company
- Are motivated, striving for excellence with a "can-do" attitude
- Are willing to learn and ask questions

- Be clear about expectations--yours and theirs (and the school's if an internship for credit)
  - If an internship for credit, the employer will be asked to supervise internship activities that allow for active learning, as well as training and mentoring you during the internship.
  - An internship can be paid or unpaid--the main goal is that you have a professional learning experience related to your future career.
  - If the employer offers a stipend, it is considered a "paid" internship.
  - If an internship for credit is unpaid, Sierra College provides Workers Compensation coverage for you, the intern.
- Consider using this sample script when reaching out to a potential internship employer: "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a Sierra College student who is studying \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm looking for an internship that offers a hand-on learning experience related to my studies. Would you have an opportunity like that 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 to offer potential internship employers
  - Your resume
  - [Information for Internship Sites handout](#) (if an internship for credit) that explains how internships for credit work from an employer's perspective

### **Step 6: Interview for an internship**

An interview allows an employer and a potential intern to explore whether the employer, the internship position, and the student are a good "fit."

- See the [Employability Skills packet](#) for tips on how to prepare for an interview, what to wear, how to answer an employer's questions, and more!



*Contact Career and Transfer Connections if you need help with preparing for an interview.*





### **Step 7: Accept a quality internship**

If an employer offers an internship, decide whether it is the right opportunity for you before accepting the position.



*Choose an internship position carefully, and don't "settle" for an opportunity, especially if it doesn't seem like a quality internship. Refer to *Equip for the Voyage: Search for an Internship*, Step 4 for help with identifying a quality internship. Still unsure? Reach out to Career and Transfer Connections for guidance.*

Once you have been offered and accepted an internship, proceed to Step 8 if you'd like to earn credit for the experience. If you don't want college credit, you are ready to embark on your internship adventure!

### **Step 8: Set up an internship for credit before completing any hours**

To establish an internship for credit, contact Career and Transfer Connections right away. Let us know that you have a confirmed internship for credit.

- We'll work together to navigate the specific steps and timelines required to set up your internship for credit, including an orientation and forms to document the experience and internship course enrollment before you start the internship.



*To learn more about internships for credit, check out the [Information for Students handout](#) and [Internship Dates and Deadlines](#).*

**Congratulations for successfully arranging your internship adventure, an important milestone in your college and professional journey! We have enjoyed navigating these steps with you. Bon voyage!**