Internship Guide

What is an Internship?

An internship is a monitored work or volunteer experience where an individual has intentional learning goals and objectives throughout the experience. It serves as a "bridge" between the classroom and work world, where a student is assigned professional and/or pre-professional tasks and responsibilities.

What is the Difference Between a Job and an Internship?

A job is generally a paid work experience. Often when individuals are hired for a job, the employer expects the individual to have most of the job skills needed in performing the duties of that position. In a typical entry-level job, an employee receives training to perform the tasks necessary for the position, and then the employee is expected to carry out the duties as assigned, preferably with little supervision. In an internship, the employee brings learning objectives that support the student and University's academic and career goals. An internship is designed to connect on-site experience to the student's academic training.

How do I Arrange Academic Credit for an Internship?

Academic credit may become a component of an internship, but this will be arranged by the student and USD faculty. While employers may call a position an internship, only faculty can determine if it is a credit-bearing experience. This agreement must be created before the experience. If a student is unable to obtain credit for the internship through their department, they may still be able to get credit for the internship through the Academic and Career Planning Center.

How Many Hours a Week is an Internship?

Work schedules may vary and tend to be flexible, depending on the needs of the employer and student. Typically, students work ten to twenty hours per week during the academic year. Some may work full-time if the internship is completed during the summer.

If the internship is offered for academic credit, then each academic area has prescribed contact hours each student must meet in order to receive credit.

Hours for an internship may also be determined by an employer depending on the project(s) and duties of the intern.

What is Appropriate Compensation?

Compensation varies widely and is dependent on the organization's needs, budget and position description.

The University of South Dakota
ACADEMIC & CAREER PLANNING CENTER

Academic Commons (First Floor, I.D. Weeks Library)
advising@usd.edu (605) 677-5381 www.usd.edu/advising

Reasons to Complete an Internship

1. **Employers increasingly want to see experience in the new college grads they hire.**

According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 95% of employers said candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions. Employers expect that new grads will have gained experience through internships. If you have completed internships, you will clearly have an edge over your classmates who haven't.

2. **Employers see their internship programs as the best path for hiring entry-level candidates.**

An internship can be an avenue to a job. Many employers prefer to hire from their internship programs and an internship gives you the chance to show an organization the strong skills that you have to offer as a future employee.

3. **You may get paid more when you graduate if you've done one or more internships.**

New employees with experience (including internship experience) get higher starting salaries. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, organizations report that new hires with internship experience were paid 6.5% more than those without the experience.

4. **You could earn college credit toward your degree.**

Credit for your internship may be available through your major department or through the Academic and Career Planning Center.

5. **Internships enable you to gain a better understanding of your field and test out your chosen career path.**

You might discover by interning in your planned career field that it's not what you thought it would be like, or that a particular area within your career field is a better fit than others. Better to learn this information before you graduate and start job searching. Also, you will gain valuable insight into your career field and be able to enhance your skills.

6. **You'll be able to apply your academic knowledge to your career field.**

You have been learning the most updated information about your career field in your classes and now is your chance to put that knowledge to work and contribute to your profession prior to graduating.

7. **You'll gain confidence.**

If you're afraid of facing the work world when you graduate, an internship will teach you that you can do it and give you a better understanding of what to expect.

8. **You'll build your network.**

Everyone you meet in an internship is a potential contact for your network and someone you can call upon for advice and referrals when you are job-hunting closer to graduation time.

9. **You will build your resume.**

Internships=Work Experience and employers love to see them on a resume! Any kind of experience on your resume is helpful, but career-relevant internship experience will make a better impression on employers than your serving job at Applebee's.

10. **You might make money.**

Not all internships are paid, of course, but those that do pay can yield pretty decent salaries. Employers queried in NACE's 2008 Experiential Education Survey reported offering their undergraduate interns an average of $16.33 per hour.

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