

# [***Getting An Internship Is More Competitive Than Ever But The Experience Has Really Eroded***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HF-RY81-DXVP-50NJ-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** After three years of a pandemic, 2023 might have marked the internship s big return. Instead, internship postings are down, applications are up and camaraderie is still being held back by hybrid work.

**Body**

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When University of Maryland rising junior Zohneseh Fopenawoh was applying to internships, she says she sent an uncountable number of applications likely over 100 in four months to various companies, nonprofits and organizations but got few responses. Any internship opportunity I saw that I thought I might even be a little bit interested in, I sent an application out, says Fopenawoh, who is studying criminal justice, ***politics*** and economics.

Add in the pressure of an internship being required by her school, and Fopenawoh was feeling the heat. Finally, she landed two one at Teach For America and another at the ACLU of Maryland but none at the big law firms or companies she applied to.

Still, she considers herself lucky: Getting an internship you are genuinely interested in these days is like winning a raffle or the lottery.

Fopenawoh isn t the only one who felt the crunch of 2023 s internship search. Fifty-seven percent of jobseekers now say they are not confident they will find an internship or job that meets their standards, much higher than the 15% who were concerned about their chances in the fall, according to asurveyof more than 3,000 Gen Zers conducted bycollege recruiting startup RippleMatch.

Nearly half (49%) of Gen Z job and internship seekers are submitting more than 50 applications during their search, a higher proportion of candidates that submitted that many applications last year, according to RippleMatch s survey. Companies are also reporting more competition: ServiceNow says it saw a 50% increase in internship applications this year, while Citadelsaidapplications were up 65% from last year, and that it accepted less than 1%, or about 300 of the 69,000 applications it received, to this summer s program.

After three years of a global pandemic which canceled internships, sent college students home to work remotely from their childhood bedrooms and finally, returned them to more than half-empty hybrid offices last year 2023 might have marked the summer internship s big return. Instead, it s been a year of continued change, as an unstable economy and arash of layoffshave slowed the hiring of summer interns, sparking greater competition and higher uncertainty for those undertaking this white-collar rite of passage.

Internships used to be this special entry point to a top-tier workforce, says Aaron Terrazas, Glassdoor s chief economist, but the pandemic really changed that. The internship experience has really eroded.

Although internship postings remain above pre-pandemic levels, the job market for summer stints is cooling and internship listings are down 14.7% as of May 19, compared to the same time a year ago,researchfrom the job site Indeed found. It s not going to be as easy to get an internship, and you may not get some of the same benefits or advantages, as someone who was looking for an internship last year, says Nick Bunker, Indeed s economic research director.

Aslayoffs plague companiesfrom technology and banking to entertainment and healthcare, hiring is being halted and scaled back, affecting summer internships for students, too. In Silicon Valley, Meta and Google hired fewer interns this summer; the decreased number are part of larger efforts to trim the size of their workforces and slow hiring, the tech giants told**Forbes.**

If you re uncertain about how many folks you want to keep on full-time whether you re freezing hiring, slowing down or laying people off it s going to also be difficult to justify or add on interns, says Indeed s Bunker.

Glassdoor s Terrazas says the sectors hard-hit by layoffs, such as tech, finance and consulting, are the same ones that tend to hire the most interns, making the search process that much harder. Those industries are going through a period of turmoil, Terrazas says, which adds a new twist to what, for generations, have been this first entry point to work.

Even tech companies that havesaid they won t lay off workersthis year, such as ServiceNow, are bringing on fewer interns. The company s 2023 summer class includes 315 interns, which is only about 65% the size of last summer s record-sized class, the company said.

Jane Ashen Turkewitz, who oversees New York-based internship programs for students at the University of Texas at Austin, says some were still searching for internships last-minute, despite the program kicking off June 5. This has been a tremendously difficult summer, says Ashen Turkewitz, who says this is the worst she s seen the internship market. They're stressed out across the board.

The proliferation of remote work has also made nailing an internship more competitive. Now [companies] can hire students from Arkansas or Kansas or across the country, Ashen Turkewitz says, adding that students who have never had the opportunity to work for a New York-based company, now can.

Remote work has also put a damper on theintern experience. I remember joining the workforce in my twenties and it being super fun, Ashen Turkewitz says. You would do your work, but there was camaraderie, there was brainstorming. There was an energy that I believe students and early career folks are missing out on, big time.

Internships used to be this special entry point to a top-tier workforce. But the pandemic really changed that. The internship experience has really eroded. <footer> Aaron Terrazas, Glassdoor s chief economist</footer>

On Glassdoor, negative mentions of remote work in reviews by internsgrew by 548%between 2019 and 2021. Clearly a lot of companies' internship programs are struggling to adapt to the new normal, Glassdoor s Terrazas says. Big companies have been leading the charge in getting folks back into the office, so I'm really going to be curious to see if it has a measurable effect in terms of experience this summer.

Salesforce s head of global futureforce programs, Alex Murray, says its interns are back fully in person. We ve experimented with remote and hybrid programs over the past few years, she said in an email. But our interns told us they want to be in an office environment.

Kate Feeney, who is interning a second summer at Raytheon Technologies, spent last summer fully remote, but is going to the office one or two days a week this summer. It s a lot more isolating [working] online, she says of her experience last year. Now, I get to ask more questions about [my co-workers ] job rather than it being so focused sitting on a Zoom listening to them talk.

Megan Smith, SAP s head of human resources for North America, says hiring for its summer internship slowed this year. What all companies, not just SAP, want to think about is how to make sure we don t create too many disappointing experiences where you set people up, they get all this great experience and then you just don t have as many opportunities [for a full-time offer].

Hiring for entry-level jobs that require a bachelor s degree was down nearly 32% year-over-year in April, while ones without degree requirements were down 21%, a recentLinkedIn analysisfound.

The headwinds have also pushed recent graduates and interns to seek rolesbeyond the hottest, most high-profile tech companies. Internship applications wereup 163%this year in the semiconductor industry, where the CHIPS Act is expected to increase production and jobs, compared with just 21% in other industries, according to data from Handshake, ajob search platform for college students. Meanwhile, of the industries using Handshake to hire, the government saw thebiggest increasein tech job openings for college students and new graduates up 36% since the beginning of the school year.

For Vivian Tran, a rising senior at University of California-Irvine and an IT project management intern at ServiceNow this summer, not knowing if she will need to go through the job hunt again next year when looking for a full-time gig is a stressor. But she says her experience with ServiceNow, whichvowed no layoffs this year, gives her some hope.

Going into my last [school] year I m definitely nervous in general, she says. [The economy] has made me look more toward companies that are prioritizing their employees like ServiceNow.

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