

Internships - Frequently Asked Questions

Internship Related Questions:

Q: What is an internship?

A: An internship is an on-site work experience that is either directly related to your major field of study or your career interest. It can be paid or unpaid, and the experience typically lasts the duration of the Fall, Spring, or Summer semesters/sessions.

Q: What are the benefits of an internship?

A: An internship gives you the opportunity to:

- Gain valuable work experience before you graduate.
- Develop new skills and refine others.
- Apply knowledge gained from coursework to on-the-job situations.
- Test-drive tentative career choices.
- Meet and work with professionals, establishing contacts for letters of reference and networking.
- Experience new work environments.
- Earn money for tuition and expenses.

Q: How do I find an internship?

A: The most effective internship searches utilize a variety of search strategies. A great place to start is the Career Center website. Many internship listings are available online via Handshake. You can search your interests by keyword(s) and by major (you may also want to use the word "intern" or "internship" in your search.) You will find information about additional internship opportunities elsewhere on this website. Internships can also be found on LinkedIn, Indeed, Internships.com, Glassdoor, etc.

If you want to learn more about internships, review our website and check out our Internships Policies and Procedures Manual.

Also, take advantage of all your networking opportunities. In addition to making contacts through friends, family, current/former employers, classmates, and faculty members, there are many other networking avenues you can pursue. Attending the Career Fairs and Networking events the Career Center hosts each semester are a great place to start. You may also learn about internship openings through newsletters, job fairs, work/study abroad programs, hometown contacts, professional associations, student organizations, trade magazines, community service/volunteer groups, and your major department office.

While there is a great deal of information available, you must be persistent in your internship search. Start early and seek out help from the Career Center by making an Internship Advising appointment. Have a plan that includes a great resume and cover letter, appropriate follow-up, and good record keeping. Be prepared, open-minded, flexible, and professional. It's up to you to make all your contacts count!

Q: When is a good time to start looking for an internship?

A: Typically, it is most common for students to complete an internship during the junior year, usually in the summer between their junior year and senior year. As such, the hiring cycle for summer internships tends to be at its peak in the early to mid-fall. If you mean during which year of academic study, the second semester of your freshman year is not too soon. Allow yourself at least one semester of academic study to adjust to the rigors of life at UNT. Then, depending on your major, GPA, and course-load requirements, you may be ready to intern. Remember that your academic work is always your highest priority.

If you mean at which point during the year, the Career Center receives internship listings continually. It's probably best to begin your internship search the semester prior to your desired placement. That way, you'll have time to respond to

listed positions and initiate contacts on your own as well. Lead time can give you a competitive edge when it comes to composing an effective cover letter or tailoring your resume to a desired internship.

Q: Can I get academic credit for my internship?

A: It may be possible to get academic credit for your internship, but not from the Career Center.

Only academic departments can offer credit, and policies differ greatly from one department to the next. Often your internship must relate directly to your major and will require you to complete a research project or writing component as part of special studies course. Check for courses listed in your academic department labeled 'Internship/Co-op'. These courses are typically 4000 level courses. Be sure to ask your academic advisor about course credit.

Q: Can I use my current job as an internship for academic course credit?

A: Some Colleges/Departments will allow a student to obtain academic internship course credit using the role they have at their current employer or if they move into a new role at the company they are employed with. Often your internship must relate directly to your major. Additionally, in order to satisfy the 'learning component' of an internship, you may be asked to complete a special project or add additional job duties, related to your degree program, along with the current job duties you have, in order for your job to qualify for internship course credit. Check with your college and/or academic department for clarification. Final approval for academic internship course credit comes from the Academic Program Faculty Internship Approver.

Q: What if I'm an international student?

A: International students can still complete internships! Students can typically participate in an internship using Curricular Practical Training (CPT.) Students can be eligible to use CPT for an internship if they have been enrolled in school full-time for 2 long semesters and have maintained F-1 status. The internship must either be taken for course credit OR required for completion of your degree. Internships taken under CPT can be paid or unpaid.

Students should work with their academic advisor and with International Student & Scholar Services as early as possible before searching for internships to ensure that they are eligible, the appropriate course is taken for credit, and that appropriate paperwork is completed.

Q: Can I reach out to companies I'm interested in to see if they have any internships?

A: Absolutely! Some employers such as non-profits may not have an internship program, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't love some extra help. Doing this may mean it will be an unpaid internship, but experience is an invaluable asset to have later down the road when applying to full-time positions.

Q: What's the difference between job-shadowing and interning?

A: Job shadowing – which can sometimes be called an externship – is a short-term experience that can last anywhere from 1 day to 4 weeks, whereas an internship can last anywhere from 12 weeks to 1 year. In addition, job shadowing is that – observing the work that is done on a day-to-day basis. Job shadowing allows you to gain a sense of the field you are in and the specific types of work you would do if you entered the profession.

Both job shadowing and internships provide students with industry experience and knowledge. Check Handshake for job shadowing opportunities through the Career Center's Take Flight program!

Q: Do all internships have to be paid?

A: Short answer – No. Internships are not required to be paid, but most of the internships posted on Handshake will indicate whether or not they are paid. If you are required to take an internship class, then your internship *must* be a paid internship.

Q How do I receive a platinum internship graduation cord?

A: You can receive an internship graduation cord for your internship, practicum, student teaching, or any other experiential learning during your time at UNT by [reporting the internship](#) in Handshake and filling out [this](#) form.

Q: What is the unpaid internship scholarship?

A: The Career Center offers scholarships for undergraduate students participating in unpaid internships. The intention of

the scholarship is to encourage and support experiential learning opportunities that help students prepare for their careers. Learn more about the [Unpaid Internship Scholarship](#).

Summer Internship/Employment Related Questions:

Q: When should I start looking for a summer position?

A: Begin searching in the preceding fall semester in order to take full advantage of all the resources and listings available to you. Some deadlines are very early! Beginning early allows you to more evenly balance the time required to conduct a successful summer job search with other demands on your time. Being better informed will help you make better use of academic breaks to investigate summer job possibilities.

Q: How do I find a summer internship locally?

A: Summer internships are particularly challenging because of the limited amount of time involved and competition for them in the DFW Area. Rule #1: Start early! Many of the larger organizations which offer summer internships begin listing them the previous Fall Semester. The Career Center lists most paid summer positions online: Handshake and Work Study Positions. During Spring Semester, attend job fairs to meet people recruiting for summer opportunities. Lastly, tell everyone you know what kind of summer internship you're seeking. Networking helps.

Q: How can I find an internship/summer job outside of the DFW area?

A: In addition to searching Handshake, use resources such as LinkedIn.com to locate employer contact information for your desired location. Contact potential employers directly with the type of position you are seeking, your qualifications, and your scheduling availability. Follow up with employers if you don't hear from them in a reasonable time frame. Let employers know if you will be in their geographical area during one of the University breaks. Also, attend Career Fairs to meet employers recruiting for summer positions in a variety of geographical locations.

You can also utilize online job search sites and internship databases to identify opportunities in your ideal geographic location. Check the websites of universities in the area you're targeting for local listings, networking events, and helpful resources specific to that area.

Don't let housing needs and potentially competitive candidate pools deter you if you are headed for unfamiliar territory. Universities often rent housing to students working in their city during the summer, or your summer employer may have helpful suggestions or resources. Finding suitable housing may not be as difficult, or as expensive, as you think.

Q: How can I calculate how much money I will need?

A: The Student Money Management Center is a wonderful resource to help you calculate the cost of an internship! Schedule an appointment with them to learn how much an internship will cost you in terms of dress, networking, travel, etc.

Q: Do employers come on campus to recruit for summer employment?

A: Yes, they do! Typically, this happens most after the Career Fairs. One more reason for you to attend!

General Questions:

Q: How can I get an internship/job if I have no experience?

A: This is usually a matter of how you communicate the experience and skills you do have, and how they transfer to the positions you apply for. Making an Internship Advising appointment with your college's designated Internship Coordinator would be a good way to get guidance on how to communicate this on resumes, cover letters, and interviews. Employers do also understand that an internship may be your first work-force experience. As such, they look at any extra-curricular activities you may be a part of, significant projects you have completed in courses, and soft skills like communication, teamwork, or leadership.

If an internship does require very specific experience, you might consider finding a more routine position in a setting similar to what you would eventually like to hold a job with greater responsibilities.

Q: What can I do to increase my chances of finding a good internship/job?

A: In addition to looking at our Handshake listings diligently, network with people who may have contact suggestions for you, approach employers of interest to you directly, and put your best effort into writing your resume and preparing for specific types of interview questions. Consider being more flexible if you are having difficulty. For a summer position, can you consider other geographical areas? Would you be able to work part-time year-round since these positions are easier to find than summer only positions? Be sure to look at our Job Search information. Talk to one of our Internship team members about your internship needs and one of our Career Coaches if you need additional help with how this internship could impact your job search.

Q: What kind of salary can I expect?

A: Salaries vary according to experience and skills required, year in school, type of position, type of employer, field, and location. For student jobs in the DFW area, it is not unusual to find positions of \$13/hour and up (substantially higher for special skills and significant experience). Internships can be both paid and unpaid depending on the same factors mentioned above.

Q: How many hours can I work as a student?

A: If possible, wait to commit to an internship until you have a feeling for how much time you have outside your coursework, extracurricular activities, and personal time. Note that the Career Center receives job listings year-round including short-term, project positions which do not require a long-term commitment. When classes are in session, students are advised to work no more than 20 hours/week.

Q: Can my professors/faculty help me find internships?

A: Absolutely! Professors and faculty are likely to have contacts in your field of study, so by reaching out to them, you begin cultivating a professional network that could potentially put you in contact with employers and internships that are not posted on Handshake. You may also want to use one of your professors as a reference for internship applications! Professors that you have relationships with and who know you well should be asked ahead of time if they would feel comfortable serving as a reference for you.

Q: Does my internship have to be for credit? / Credit vs non-credit

A: No, it does not. Not all majors require you to complete an internship in order to graduate. Check with your academic advisor to see if your major requires an internship or if receiving course credit would be beneficial for you.

Q: What do I do once I have accepted an offer for an internship?

A: Report your internship to the Career Center! Even if the internship is not completed for course credit, this is still valuable data for the Career Center to have. Additionally, if you would like a graduation cord, you must report your internship to be eligible! You can follow these instructions to [Report Your Internship](#).

****Once you report your internship via the link, you will be eligible to receive a graduation cord for your experience! You will be able to pick it up at the Career Center the semester you are graduating, no matter when you reported your experience!!** Report yours today!**