

How to gain an internship before you graduate from university

Having an internship during your university study can be a great way to set you up for job searching after you graduate. Internships are not always easy to get though, so you need to know where to find them and how to have your applications looking excellent and ready to send. The tips in this article will show you how to do just that.

1. Ensure your resume is up to date and an appropriate length

One of the first things to do is make sure your resume is current. You do not want to apply with a resume that says you are in first year university when you are actually now in third year. Include all relevant and notable experience that you think is necessary but remember to keep the resume short. 1-1.5 pages is fine but try to make it no longer if possible. If a resume is really long, it is less likely the employer will look at it in detail or even look at it at all.

2. Always include a cover letter

Including a cover letter is something you should always do when applying to an internship and also every job you apply to in the future. A cover letter should provide more info about you as a person, your interest in the company you are applying for, why you think you would be a good fit, and how the employer can best contact you. Try to keep the cover letter less than a page in length.

3. Remember to proofread and spell check

Always proofread and spell check your resume and cover letter. If you have great content in your resume and cover letter but also multiple spelling or grammatical errors, then the employer will be much less likely to consider you for the internship position. Having good grammar, spelling, and general writing skills will show the employer that you have good attention to detail, which is something all employers will be looking for.

4. Contact your university for help

One of the easiest ways to find potential internships is to contact your university's careers department and ask them to help find you possible internships. Universities generally put a lot of funding into their careers departments, so it is their job to assist you and point you in the right direction. Attaining an internship through your university will also likely be easier than applying directly to random companies that interest you. This is because universities tend to have strong relationships with particular companies that regularly provide students with internships or work experience.

5. Elective internships that count towards your degree

Building on from the previous point, you should research if there are any elective internships available to apply for through your university. Many universities advertise internship opportunities on their job board website, which normally count as a credit towards your degree. This can help you stay on track to complete your degree, as it means you won't have to take time out of your degree to complete an internship.

6. LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great tool to find internship opportunities, but also to find jobs, show off your professional achievements, and make new connections with people in the industry or industries that interest you. Most employers and hiring managers regularly use LinkedIn, so having an updated and fully filled-out profile can greatly improve your chances of being noticed by potential employers. In your 'About' section on your LinkedIn profile, you can say that you are interested in internship opportunities. You can also actively search through LinkedIn for possible internships, and this means it is easy for the employer to quickly look at your profile and decide if you might be a good fit for the company. You can find great resources on Google about how you can make an impressive LinkedIn profile.

7. Contact any organisation you are interested in

Although it can be difficult to attain an internship by contacting a company you are interested in, it is not impossible. If you can think of a company in your country that you would love to work for, you can contact them about any internship opportunities even if they are not openly advertising for them. Even if the company says no, they will at least know that you are interested and might even keep you updated if an internship opportunity becomes available.

8. Volunteer opportunities

Finding volunteer opportunities can also be considered an internship in most cases. Being accepted for volunteer work is typically easier than attaining a formal internship or job, but this does not mean it is not worthwhile. Volunteering means unpaid work, so this is one of the main reasons volunteering is easier than applying to certain internships or a job. Volunteering at your local aged care home or RSPCA is a great step to attaining an internship in the future that is more directly related to your degree.