Internships are critical components of your professional development and educational experience. They are on-site work experiences, possibly related to your major or career interests, that allow you to test drive career options, develop important career related skills, and establish relationships with people and organizations who may ultimately help you land a great job after graduation.

**VALUE OF AN INTERNSHIP**

A recent study conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that overall, employers extended job offers to close to 65 percent of their interns—emphasizing the important role that internships can play in future career success.

Internship opportunities can be found during the academic year as well as during the summer, and may be full-time or part-time. Whether an opportunity is called an “internship,” “co-op,” “part-time job,” or “summer job,” what’s important is that it allows you to develop skills and explore a career field, not just fill an employment void in an organization.

Interns in many fields are paid for their time. In other fields this may not be the case but the experience may be very worthwhile and you may earn academic credit.

**Chapter Action Items**

- Start early! Some of the best formal internship programs have a 6-10 month application process, and many companies recruit most heavily in fall.
- Sign up for Callisto, and use its events calendar to check up on events and fairs that can serve as networking and research tools during your internship search.
- Mark your calendar to attend the Cal Career Fair (September), Early Bird Internship Fair (October), and the Internship & Summer Job Fair (February).
- Sign up for CareerMail via Callisto for advance notice of internships and events related to your major or interests.
- Draw on your existing network of family, friends, peers, and professors to help you uncover additional internship opportunities.
- Competition can be tough and leaves little room for error. Develop a polished resume and cover letter; come to the Career Center for a critique or workshop.
- Consider an externship/job shadow experience, which can often lead to an internship!
credit as “compensation” for your time. Getting paid doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a “better” internship—you need to develop your own criteria. In any case, evaluate all your options carefully. For more information on obtaining academic credit for interning, visit “Don’t Blow Your Job Search” on internships.berkeley.edu.

### REASONS TO INTERNS

1. This is your chance to test drive a variety of different fields before choosing a career direction.

2. Hands-on career experience can enhance your academic performance and success.

3. You can develop professional skills and demonstrate them for future employers; i.e., you become much more marketable!

4. 19.1% of 2014 Cal graduates reported that they got their current job because they previously worked for that employer; i.e., an internship can be the key to longer-term employment at a given company.

5. Employers prefer candidates with previous work/internship experience, and it is becoming harder to land a good job without it.

6. Professional contacts in the field can help you get hired and get ahead in your career.

7. Many organizations use internships as extended interviews for full-time employees.

8. Most organizations prefer to hire successful interns over candidates they have just met.

9. Many internships are paid, and even if they are not, they can be lots of fun. You could also apply to earn credit.

### INTERNSHIP SEARCH TIPS

1. Get involved early. Start building your knowledge and network as a freshman.

2. Use a combination of search tactics; you never know which one will get you hired.

3. Network with professionals, recruiters, fellow students, professors, and family members.

4. Explore Callisto both for internships and for organizations in your field to approach directly.

5. Consult internships.berkeley.edu for internship listings and tips by career field.

6. Be proactive! Target organizations and approach them directly. They may have internship opportunities that they are not advertising right now or you may be able to develop your own opportunity.

7. Use this book or the Resume Builder within Callisto to write a draft of your resume. See a career counselor or peer advisor for a critique.

8. Apply to multiple organizations. Internships are competitive and you may not land an offer from your top choice.

9. At career fairs, talk to additional companies that you’ve never heard of, or aren’t on your list.

10. Ask students in your major where they interned in the past, or research alumni to see where they had internships.
1. **Build relationships as a student**
Connect with your professors, GSIs, and peers. Go to your professors’ office hours. Graduate students are a good resource too because many of them may have had internships in your field. Most educators are very supportive of students who show interest and initiative, and they often know other professionals in their field.

2. **Broaden your contacts and relationships outside of school**
Networking, networking, networking! Talk to alumni, employers, family and friends, and any other professionals you interact with, such as those you encounter at your volunteer position or in your community. Joining a club or an organization is a great way to be active on campus and grow your network.

3. **Before applying for an internship, first think about your own interests and needs**
Do you want to work in a big firm or small organization? What type of work interests you the most—corporate, academic, nonprofit, community-based, etc.? You may not land the ideal internship your first time out, but at least you could gain some clarity about what you would prefer. Know what you want and go after it!

4. **Write down what you are good at and what you want to learn**
Ask your friends and former employers to describe your strengths and areas to improve and explore. What are your goals for the internship? What would you like to learn? Include these points in your communication with a potential employer phrased as areas of competence and areas you would like to develop.

5. **Research specific companies and organizations that you would like to work for**
It is often more beneficial to identify specific companies where you would like to intern and then contact them directly than only to respond to posted positions. Many of the best jobs and internships are NEVER publicly posted! So come up with a list of at least 5-10 organizations that catch your eye and that you want to learn more about. See “Developing your Own Internship” on the next page if you are not able to find listed or advertised opportunities.

6. **Search for posted internship openings through the Career Center and other websites**
Sign up for Callisto at callisto.berkeley.edu to access the Career Center’s online database of on and off campus internships and jobs. Also check out the internship databases listed on internships.berkeley.edu.

7. **Take advantage of Career Center resources and counseling**
Drop in to see a peer advisor, visit the Career Center website for tons of resources, and to make a mini or regular appointment.

8. **Start your search early**
Start looking for summer internships in the fall. Do not wait until the end of spring semester. Give yourself at least a few months to look for an internship. Some summer internship programs accept applications as early as the fall semester before you will start! If you are looking for an internship during the academic year, begin researching and contacting companies at least one semester in advance.

9. **Use a variety of internship search strategies**
The more places you look and the more strategies you use, the better chances you have of securing a great internship. Here are the major ways Cal students have found internships:
- Personal contacts and networking
- The Internet—Callisto, major internship search engines, Career Center website links, etc.
- Internship/career fairs
- Directly targeting companies of interest

10. **Contact the companies on your list and apply!**
If the internship was posted online, apply within the required time frame with a resume, cover letter, and any other documents requested. If there is not a specific opening listed but you’ve identified a company that interests you, contact the company directly and identify yourself and your situation—state that you have researched the company and would like to speak with someone about the possibility of an internship. This could get you and your resume some valuable face-time.

**INSIDER TIP!**
Get out and meet people in person to expand your network. Nervous? Don’t worry, the more you try the easier it gets. As you develop relationships, make face to face meetings a priority.
DEVELOPING YOUR OWN INTERNSHIP

Many companies have well established internship programs. Others may have roles to fill as the need arises. But what if you can’t find the specific type of internship you are looking for? The answer may be to research and develop your own position. Here are four steps to get you closer to your dream internship:

1. **Know Yourself:** Start by forming a general idea of what you want to do, what skills and experience you hope to gain, and the industry you’d like to work in. This may be the hardest part of the whole process. Review the previous chapter, “Preparing for Your Search” or our self-assessment section online if you need assistance with this step: career.berkeley.edu/Plan/KnowYourSelf.

Career counselors are also ready to help—go online for appointment information!

2. **Research the field:** Explore the types of work available in your field of interest online, in books and newspapers, and through networking. Determine who hires people or interns to do these jobs. Develop a list of organizations in your areas that you can contact.

3. **Contact the organizations on your list:** Even if a company does not have a formal internship listing, contact that company directly and ASK. Give them a call or send an email. Ask if they hire interns, have hired interns in the past, or if they might be thinking about hiring one. If they had not considered using an intern, your inquiry might plant the idea in their minds.

4. **Prepare a proposal:** Based on the information you gathered during your research, prepare a proposal for the work you would like to do as an intern. The proposal might target a specific project you know the organization needs done, or a particular position you know the employer is likely to have. Be as specific as possible. If you are willing to “do anything” then save yourself some work and go do it for a company with an existing internship position.

SEARCHING FOR LONG DISTANCE INTERNSHIPS

**How to Start**

Need to leave the Bay Area for your internship? Long-distance internship searches can be difficult for many reasons, most often because you lack the convenience of being able to meet with employers face-to-face. However, it is possible to find an internship from a distance if you are proactive and start your search early.

Start your research by creating a list of 10-20 employers in your target location through a variety of sources, including classified ads in local newspapers, Chamber of Commerce offices, professional associations, the @cal Career Network, and via general web searches. For more ideas, see “Research the World of Work,” p.6.

Networking is key! Talk with peers, friends, relatives, friends of friends, or alumni who live in your target location. Ask them for specific names of people or companies that you can contact. Use LinkedIn to help with your search. Be prepared to clearly articulate your interest both in their company and in the specific geographic region. Lastly, maintain professionalism in all communication with potential internship employers.

**Housing**

Prior to applying for an internship, it is important to consider your housing and financial needs.

If you are interning over the summer, will you also need to earn a set income, or are you willing to take an unpaid internship if you can stay with family or friends? If you will need to earn a certain income, consider working part-time in addition to interning (if it’s unpaid or only awards a stipend).

Some formal internship programs provide you with housing or resources to locate housing, but others do not. If you are interning away from your hometown, you may need to arrange and pay for your own housing and transportation costs.

Talk to your internship employer and/or people who have been to that geographic region for housing suggestions. Consider staying with family or friends, or rooming with other interns in your organization. Visit career.berkeley.edu/Internships/IntHousing for more housing resources.
Internship Search Time Line

One-to-Two Semesters Prior to Your Internship

• Engage in self-assessment: identify your skills, interests, and values related to your ideal internship.

• Seek assistance from the Career Center to help you establish a plan for your internship search.

• Attend career and internship fairs and Career Center employer events to learn about internship opportunities in your fields of interest.

• Visit the Career Center to access internship books and resources.

• Begin networking with employers, faculty, alumni, and peers to identify possible internship opportunities.

• Develop a strong resume and cover letter emphasizing your transferable skills and educational goals. See a peer advisor or make a Mini-Appointment with a career counselor for a critique.

One Semester Prior to Your Internship

• Begin sending out your resume and cover letter and applying to internships that interest you.

• Continue to attend internship and career fairs to identify opportunities and make a good impression on employers.

• Continue networking with employers, alumni, peers, and campus contacts.

• Schedule a mock interview at the Career Center to polish your interviewing skills.

• Send thank-you letters to employers within 24 hours after any interviews.

• Once you have been offered an internship, consider how it fits with the goals and interests that you identified during the self-assessment process. Only accept if you plan to commit to your decision.

Get the Most out of Your Internship

• Clarify in writing both your and your employer’s expectations about your internship.

• Take advantage of the transition time at the beginning of your internship to ask a lot of questions and learn the “ins and outs” of life on the job.

• Meet regularly with your supervisor to ensure that both your expectations are being met. This is a good way for you to get feedback on your performance and helps keep you on track with current and future assignments.

• First impressions are very important. Strive to dress, speak, write, and behave like a professional. Shake hands, make eye contact, smile, be friendly, and show confidence.

• Be observant and ask questions about appropriate behavior at the workplace. Different organizations have different expectations regarding employee behavior and it is important that you learn about and make an effort to fit in with the organization’s culture.

• Focus on your communication skills, both written and verbal. Proofread your written work carefully. Use respectful, tactful, and professional language at all times. Keep emails brief, or consider picking up the phone.

• Show up to work on time. Call if you are sick or going to be late. Choose your sick days with care.

• Establish good relationships with your coworkers. Be friendly, polite, and helpful. Steer clear of gossiping and complaining. Refrain from bringing personal business to work.

• Take initiative. Accept assignments without complaint, ask for more work when you complete assignments, and produce quality work. Listen to instructions and ask for clarification. Be a team player.

• When you leave, ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation and keep in touch so that you can call upon him/her when you need a reference.

“Internships are a great way for students to jump in and get their feet wet. You really get to know the different parts of a business, and more importantly, figure out what you want to do.” Kori Dunaway, T-Mobile

“Students should expect hands-on experience and to work with different projects, all of which are meaningful work. You won’t be getting coffee, but instead, a wide range of experiences.” Kori Kirk, Broadcom Corporation
Internships: How to Say It!

While these “How to Say It!” templates and scripts can provide guidance, be original! Always modify them to fit your unique set of experiences and circumstances.

Introducing Yourself at Internship & Career Fairs

“Hi, Mr. Smith, my name is Susan Tran and I’m a junior here at Cal majoring in Economics. I’m very interested in working for an organization like yours that supports diversity and is engaged in a variety of community development projects. What types of internship opportunities are available at your organization during the summer?”

“Hello Mrs. Rodriguez, my name is Steven Hall and I am a sophomore at Cal planning to major in Molecular and Cell Biology. I am looking for an internship in the field of genetics research that will allow me to gain professional skills and hands-on experience for my future career. Can you tell me about your internship programs and the type of projects that students typically get involved in?”

Letters of Recommendation

Provide your potential letter writer with as much information as possible about yourself. Include your resume, a list of the projects and accomplishments you completed during your internship, a copy of your transcripts and a cover letter expressing your goals and the personal skills, qualities, and accomplishments you hope the letter will address. Here is a sample script to get you started:

“I will be completing my internship soon and I have greatly enjoyed my experience. Through my work on the major data analysis project I have developed stronger analytical skills and have been exposed to the realities of working in finance. I was wondering if you would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me? Here is a summary sheet listing the activities I’ve completed during my internship to assist you.”

Internship Resumes

Resumes for internships should look very similar to resumes written for full-time jobs. There may be some minor variance, such as in your objective statement or in the overall structure. If you do not have a lot of work experience to draw from, you might consider adding a section after the education section for projects or related coursework. For more information, see page 22 for the Resume & Letter Writing chapter.

Other Considerations

What Makes a Quality Internship?

Quality internships are project oriented, have specific learning outcomes, supervision, mentoring or professional skill building components, and specific durations.

After the Internship

Hold an exit interview with the organization to discuss how things went, what worked, what did not. Keep in touch with your supervisor(s) and colleagues for networking purposes, etc. Tell your story and share your experience with others. Determine how this experience shapes what you want to do or don’t want to do. Update your resume to reflect your accomplishments from your internship(s).