

A photograph of a modern university hallway with a person walking in motion, a large black sphere, and a white pillar. The scene is lit with a cool blue light, and the floor is highly reflective.

INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE



DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE
JOBSHOP

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1. Internships and work experience

An internship, placement or work experience is an arrangement with an organisation outside your faculty that allows practical learning in an area related to your studies and career goals.

Types of internships

Internships can be:

- university sourced and for credit
- student sourced and for credit
- student sourced and not for credit

Planning considerations

Insurance

If you are paid during your internship then you are an employee and the responsibility for insurance issues such as public liability and Work Cover falls to your employer. However, if you are unpaid, Deakin University offers this indemnity where the experiential learning is a formal requirement of the course or where it is being done for credit.

You could also consider organisations with a history of volunteerism, such as hospitals, not-for-profit or community organisations, as you should be covered by their volunteer insurance arrangements.

Payment

Internships for university credit are usually unpaid; however, privately arranged internships may be paid or unpaid.

Length

The agreement may vary from weeks to months or even a year and whilst it is usually part time, you may arrange full time over summer or at other times depending on your study load.

Location

You may choose to complete an internship locally or with an organisation overseas.

Goal or focus

Organisations with a developed internship culture may offer a structured program with a goal or a predetermined project. You could approach organisations that do not advertise internships with a well-planned proposal as they may be able to incorporate the specific goals you have.

Internships for university credit

For an internship to be eligible for academic credit you will need to ensure you meet the course requirements and application process specified by your faculty.

Check with your [faculty course advisors](#) to find out if internship units are offered.

Why should you do an internship?

- Boost your employability and competitiveness when applying for graduate positions
- Identify your talents
- Gain work experience relevant to your intended future career
- Build professional networks
- Develop insight into career paths in your field
- Acquire and apply practical and professional workplace skills and knowledge
- Gain confidence and a mature perspective
- Acquire a professional referee

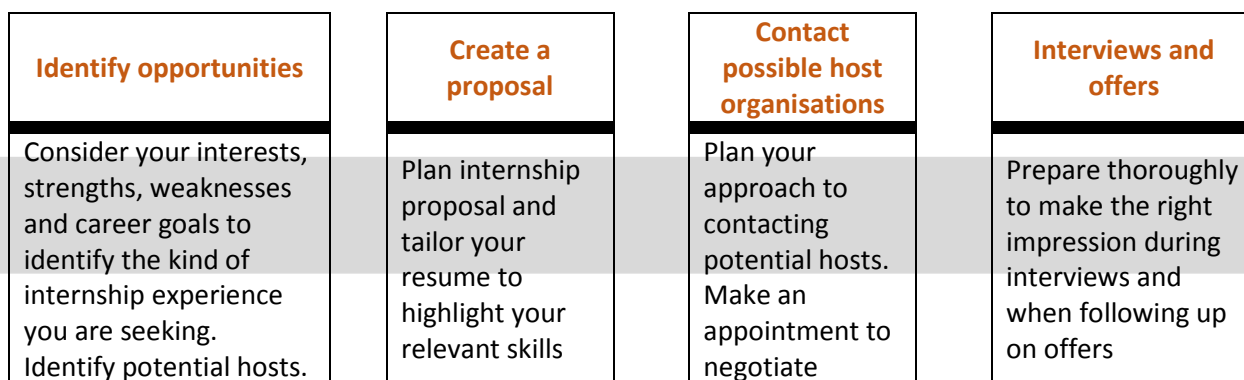
Why would an organisation want an intern?

Running an internship program or having an intern in the workplace can help employers to:

- source the right graduates early
- solve short-term staffing needs
- bring fresh perspectives and research into their organisation
- increase awareness of new theories, technologies and research

So... how do I get an internship?

Your chances of landing an internship will be enhanced if you prepare carefully having to:



- ✓ Check faculty website for internship information
- ✓ Any pre-requisites for internship for credit?
- ✓ What part of the academic year would suit me best?
- ✓ Local or overseas?
- ✓ Credit or not for credit?
- ✓ Ideas on learning goals?

2. Identify internship opportunities

In order to plan for an internship you need to:

- Discover the type of experience you want
- Identify possible host organisations
- Research the organisations

Discover the type of experience you want

Initially you need to identify what you expect from an internship. Think about your career goals and ask yourself:

- What kind of work interests you?
- What are you hoping to do when you graduate?
- Where do you want to be five years from now?
- What path do you want your career to follow?

Identify a field of interest

Is there a specific place where you've always wanted to work? For example, if you want to work for a football team, or if you love animals consider a wildlife park. Define the type of work you want to do within that field of interest.

Evaluate your experiences

Looking at your career goals, go over your background to identify both your areas of strength as well as the skills you need to further develop for the kind of positions you want to apply for when you graduate. Look at position descriptions or selection criteria for jobs you'd like to apply for in the future to help you identify in which areas you need to gain more experience to make you competitive.

Prepare early

Start thinking about what you want from an internship at least one or two trimesters before you want to start it, and be prepared to send applications out at least one trimester before. Some highly selective programs may have application deadlines six months to a year in advance of the actual start date for the internship.

Identify possible host organisations

Once you have identified what kind of experience you want to gain, it will be easier to identify appropriate organisations or internship programs that offer the types of roles that match your goals. There may also be an option to arrange an internship overseas.

Also consider smaller organisations that might not usually advertise internships, as they may be able to offer broader experiences and more flexibility. Organisations with a history of volunteerism are also a good place to consider for internships and placements as they often appreciate assistance with projects that require specialised knowledge.

Research the organisations

Before you start preparing applications, spend time researching the organisations in which you are most interested.

- Note your impressions on the information they present on their website.
- Learn the basics about the organisation: its major market, innovations and new products or services and the organisational culture.

You may also want to:

- search the internet for any relevant news stories
- research job advertisements they have posted recently for attributes they seek
- create a list of questions to ask the organisation - you will be interviewing them as well to ensure the experience they can offer will match your goals

Find out who is in charge of the area in which you are interested, as it is unlikely you will get any response at all if you simply post your resume to the human resource department. Through your networks, telephone enquiries or the Internet, identify who will be your best contact.

Be aware that not every organisation will be interested, so don't pin all your hopes on just one organisation, and don't take it personally!

Locating internship leads:

- [Experience and Internships](#)
- [Work Integrated Learning](#)
- [Deakin Internship Scheme](#)
- [Internships on Jobshop](#)
- [Graduate/Vacation Program Blog](#)
- [Professional Associations](#) – attend upcoming networking events
- [Vacation Programs](#)
- [Graduate Opportunities](#) - internships

Use your initiative and look at:

- Carrying out internet Job Searches
- Career or employment sections of company websites
- Contacting HR Departments of organisations
- Talking to family, friends, colleagues and customers
- Using a professional online profile: [LinkedIn for Students](#)

Faculty Internship Programs:

- [Arts and Education Experiential Learning and Internships](#)
- [Science, Engineering and Build Environment Work Integrated Learning Program](#)
- [Business and Law Business Internship Programs](#)

Internships for International Students:

- [International Students' Internship Scheme](#)

Overseas Internship leads:

- [Going Global](#)
- [International Internships](#)
- [Antipodeans Abroad](#)
- Check your faculty website for international Programs

Internship Ideas:

My area of career interest:

I'd really love to work at:

Or

I have strong skills in:

I want to improve:

I have no idea!! [Make an appointment online with a Careers Consultant](#)

Who will I ask for leads?

Family & friends:

Co-workers/customers:

Deakin Staff:

My network:

3. Creating an internship proposal

Whether you plan to do your internship for university credit or in addition to your studies, it is important to be clear on your goals. If you are planning to do your internship for university credit, some faculties require you to negotiate your internship as part of the unit assessment and to submit a report on the process.

An organisation that doesn't usually consider internships may be receptive to a student who has a clear proposal of how they can contribute. Your knowledge of what you want to learn about the industry and the research into the organisations you are interested in plays an essential role in planning your proposal.

Be prepared to apply for more than one! Don't assume the first company you approach will be interested and take you. You also want to be able to compare some options to be sure you are getting the best possible experience. Contact as many prospects and set up as many interviews as possible.

Planning a proposal

Your proposal should inform the organisation of your goals and what you want to learn. If the employer is interested, they may work with you to design a list of responsibilities and activities for your internship.

Consider the following when you are planning:

- working hours and the number of weeks it will be completed over
- duties or task specifications
- to whom will you report within the organisation?

In your proposal outline:

- be clear about what you hope to gain by interning. Write down specific skills, knowledge and
- the experiences you hope to acquire through the internship
- the time period, your goals and what you can contribute to their team
- be clear about why you are interested in each organisation you approach

Research

Apart from the internet it is really effective to try informational interviewing. If you know of someone who works for that organisation (perhaps through your network), or in a similar position for a similar organisation, call or email to try to make a time where you can ask questions about the challenges in their everyday work and the kinds of projects they are responsible for. Ask about the skills and knowledge that makes them effective in that role.

Be realistic

It is essential that you are realistic about what you can achieve in the time that you have for the internship. Think about how much time you plan to spend in the workplace each week, and schedule the project using that time, taking into account interruptions and distractions that occur in the workplace.

Be clear and organised

In your proposal layout create a clear sequence or time line of what you hope to achieve in your internship. Use a simple a table, flowchart or spreadsheet to chart the experiences you expect to achieve. Summarise how you expect to gain those experiences.

Remain flexible

Expect to negotiate these ideas when you meet with your prospective internship host. They have knowledge about how their organisation's work environment functions, and may want to have some input and/or have ideas about what you can achieve in their workplace.

Proposal Outline

Deadline to communicate negotiated internship to program co-ordinator (if internship is for credit):

Internship goals:

Skills Used:

My knowledge base/expertise:

Duties, tasks or project aim:

Preferred start date: _____ Preferred finish date: _____

Period of internship hours each week _____ number of weeks: _____

Prepare a strong resume

A professional, well-written resume will allow your prospective host to quickly understand the skills and knowledge that you have already gained and how they can be applied in your internship.

Include examples of how you have used your strengths and skills in your studies, employment history and extra-curricular activities to show the employer what it is about YOU they should be interested in.

An easy way to get a well-structured resume with consistent formatting is to use [Resume Builder](#)

Get your resume critiqued

[Book an appointment online for an application check](#) online through Jobshop.

Resume Tips

Make sure:

- You tailor your resume to the job/organisation and includes evidence of skills and qualifications
- Your resume sections are logically ordered with appropriate headings. Page breaks are well placed to split sections. All sections follow the same layout and design
- The most relevant information/ examples /skills are in the first page and a half. (e.g. relevant degree/education, employment and experience)
- You have used short statements and bullet points rather than lengthy paragraphs
- Your statements should be positive in tone and begin with action words and without pronouns
- You give example of skills and experiences – writing concisely about the situation, task, action and result
- Your resume is a maximum of 3 pages (or in line with the employer's requested length)
- There is enough white space around the text and is easy to read
- The font size is appropriate (10 – 12)
- The correct spelling, grammar and punctuation is used
- Your resume is checked by a third party

Cover letter

You will also need to write a cover letter to accompany your resume. You want to get the employer's attention, but keep the tone appropriate to the industry.

Your cover letter should reflect your personality and unique qualities (without being over-the-top) while showing off your great writing skills!

Use a business letter format and keep your letter to one A4 size page (maximum).

Basic cover letter structure:

- Paragraph 1* State your purpose for writing and your interest in the internship opportunity. Make sure you are clear about what you want to achieve.
- Paragraph 2* Highlight your education/qualifications, and any course related experience that you will bring to the internship.
- Paragraphs 3/4* Choose a topic for each paragraph focusing on skills, experience or personal qualities that you will bring to the position.
- Final paragraph* this is your "action" paragraph. Ask for an interview and let the employer know you will follow up. Include any contact information that will help the employer contact you for an interview and thank the employer for considering your application.

4. Contacting possible host organisations

Always ensure that you are prepared, polite and professional when contacting staff in any section or level within that organisation.

Before the call

Before you call ensure you have prepared a clear explanation why you are calling. Essentially you are hoping to arrange a face-to-face meeting, but be prepared to discuss your proposal in more detail and answer questions.

Cold/warm calling

- You may be cold calling, which is contacting people you have not met, or warm calling, which is contacting someone to whom you have been referred, or someone you contacted previously.
- If you have been referred, make sure you mention who put you in contact with the organisation.
- Be clear about what you hope to achieve, your areas of interest and why they matter to you.
- Outline your proposal, your goals and what you can contribute to their team.
- Explain why you are interested in their organisation when you contact them.
- Be aware that the person you contact may not initially be interested, so don't take it personally and be prepared to sell your idea.
- Always politely thank them for their time, even if they couldn't assist you with your enquiry.

Practise

Be prepared to describe in about 45 seconds your education, work and volunteer experience, and career interests. Be as specific about your experiences as possible:

Practise your proposal summary so that you feel comfortable and confident in your presentation, but avoid sounding as though you've memorised a script. Don't read from notes.

- Research the employer thoroughly so that you can relate your qualifications and interests to their focus.
- Find someone to practise with. Ask them to act uninterested in your internship proposal so you get practice in selling it and how it will be productive for the organisation.
- Call to discuss your proposed internships with the companies you are least interested in first, so you can use those calls as practice for the companies you are very keen on.
- You want to try to secure a face-to-face interview, but be prepared to discuss your whole proposal then and there on the phone if necessary.

The Victorian Government website Youth Central www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs provides an interactive guide and tips on cold calling.

During the call

It is important to give a positive impression at all stages of contact - you want your prospective internship host to remember you for the right reasons! Careful research means you are able to plan questions based on what you do know, not what you don't know.

(Example: I saw on your website that your company <designs its own systems software>. Can you tell me if you have a team dedicated to this area?)

Organise

- Create a checklist of points and questions you want to cover in the call.
- Organise your information so it is easy to access and right in front of you.
- Choose a quiet time and place where you won't be distracted or interrupted.
- Start the call with your brief explanation as an introduction. You may need to repeat this to a series of people before you reach the right staff, so be clear and remain polite and friendly to everyone.
- Be aware that you might be calling at what may be a bad/busy time for them, so if they say they don't have time, be prepared to ask when will be a better time to call back.

Get a date!

- Once you have put your proposal to them and asked your questions, don't forget to ask when you might expect to hear more from them, or if possible when you could come in to meet them. Get a specific date (and time), and write it down with the notes you have made from the conversation.

Prepare these items:

- my proposal outline
- my up-to-date resume
- the name or job title of the appropriate contact
- information on the unit and documentation requirements (if the internship is for credit)

Call checklist

Points to cover:

My questions:

The date to meet or when I'll hear back: _____

What additional information do I need to send?

Reflections on improving my telephone approach:

After the call

Follow up and maintain contact without being overbearing.

- Sit down and write a thank you letter immediately with a brief summary, include a copy of your resume and a copy of the course information and send it within 24 hours of your call.
- Be sure you have a professional sounding answering machine message and know how to retrieve voicemail from your mobile phone.
- It is perfectly acceptable to follow up with a phone call if they have not contacted you by the date they gave you - make sure you get one!
- When you follow up by phone, politely tell them that you are checking on the status of your resume and cover letter and you are still very interested in an internship. Your goal in this phone conversation is to convince them to schedule you for an interview.
- Be persistent and polite, but do not make excessive enquiries! Calling more than once a week is going a bit overboard.

Follow up Checklist

- Is my voicemail and answering machine message simple and professional?
- Do I need to send further documents? (resume, internship overview, university agreement)
- Write a thank you letter or email, proof read and send (including any required additional documents).
- Add notes to the information you have been gathering on that organisation.

5. Internship interviews and offers

Before an interview

Prepare as you would for any professional interview by ensuring you have a strong knowledge of the organisation and genuine enthusiasm and interest in working with the organisation.

- Review your previous research on the organisation and ensure it is thorough.
- Read through your notes from any previous contact with them.
- Use [Interview GOLD](#), an interactive online system that provides training you can customise to the job you are interviewing for.
- Prepare for the questions they will ask you, including the obvious ones!

Write out key points for each question they may ask, and practice aloud, if possible with a friend who knows the field. You want to be able to comfortably describe your skills, strengths and goals. Of course you don't want to recite memorised responses, but a little practice will help you feel more confident. Here are some questions you may want to consider:

- Why are you interested in getting experience with us?
- Tell me about a time in your life when you had to be innovative.
- Who has been most influential in your life and why?
- Describe a time in your life when you used initiative to solve a problem without being asked.
- When have you had responsibility for achieving an objective?

Stay positive during the interview. Never be negative about previous employers, no matter how bad you think they were. Make your answers reflect a positive frame of mind and demonstrate that you will bring a positive influence into the organisation. If asked about a negative situation, simply state the answer and how you would improve it.

At an interview

- First impressions are critical, so regardless of what type of organisation it is, your best choice is conservative, well-pressed, business attire. If you have created an internship proposal, be prepared to negotiate. Expect that the employer will have some ideas and input.
- Take a copy of your resume and internship proposal, and any documents the employer needs to fill out for your course.
- Take a pen and your University schedule/planner in order to schedule further meetings. Make sure all these items are organised and easy to access.
- Turn off your mobile phone.
- Approach employers with confidence - smile, offer a firm handshake and thank them for their time.
- Chewing gum is inappropriate; so is taking in anything to eat or drink except water.

After an interview

Regardless of how the interview went, sit down and write a thank you letter immediately!

If they requested that you provide further information after the interview, send it by the method requested (email, fax or post) and follow up to confirm it has been received.

How to follow up on offers and rejections

- When you receive an offer, it is important to keep the following points in mind.
- If you receive an offer over the phone, you may accept over the phone, but ensure that all the appropriate documents are completed to enrol in your internship subject.
- If the internship you have arranged is not for University credit, ask for a letter that includes the details associated with the position such as the start date, hours of work and location (and salary if applicable).
- Always accept an offer in writing, even if you have already accepted it orally. Be sure to reiterate any terms such as salary, dates, and responsibilities. This action will ensure that you and the employer are in total agreement.

Declining and being rejected!

If you decline an offer, contact the employer promptly and professionally.

If you are not offered an internship by that organisation, remember there may be many reasons for their decision. Write and thank them for their time and consideration. Politely ask for any feedback they have to help you improve, but understand that they are not required to give you any.

In either case remember there is a chance you'll have contact or an opportunity with that organisation in the future, so it is important not to burn bridges. Always be courteous and respectful.

More than one offer?

If you receive multiple offers, take time to consider each one individually. You may want to discuss the options with your faculty's Internship Coordinator or a Careers Consultant.

If you are offered a position before all your interviews are finished, consider asking for an extension. This should be done in writing. Take into consideration the position, the organisation, the location, and the type of work you would be doing and how they relate to what you hope to do in your future career.

- Will the internship allow me to do the type of work I'm interested in?
- What kind of supervision will I receive?
- Are interns treated like valued employees or cheap labour?
- A great company name does not mean a great internship. Will I get the experience I'm looking for?

Categorise and compare offers based on the goals and workplace experience that is important to you.

6. Thriving in your internship

This section will cover some essential points to ensure you get the most out of your internship.

- Getting ready for the first day
- Communicating at work
- Dealing with workplace issues
- Time management
- Internship outcomes

Getting ready for the first day

A week or so before you start; get back in contact with the person you have been dealing with. This demonstrates your enthusiasm, and also gives you a chance to clarify arrangements for the first day. You should be clear on the organisation's standards of punctuality, attire, and organisational responsibilities so you are able to conduct yourself in an appropriately professional manner at all times.

- What do you need to bring for HR purposes? (e.g. bank, tax details)
- What time are you due to start and at which office?
- Where will you be located? (Sometimes a different location to your interview so check)
- What should you wear/what is the dress standard of your unit?
- Who will be meeting you on the first day/who should you ask for?

Communicating at work

The first day - introducing yourself

Just as well they don't test you at the end of your first day on the job to see if you remember the names of everyone you just met! To make a good impression:

- Smile!
- Look people in the eye as you greet them
- Grab a business card if they have one on their desk
- Check if there is a unit organisational chart you can refer to
- Asking a question gets a conversation going and that's how you get to know people

Be aware of the policies and systems such as:

- Lunch – when, how long and where
- Tea breaks – when and how long
- What if I'm sick? (contact details)
- IT/email/phone access and usage
- Location of shared facilities e.g. printers, photocopiers
- How to use the phone system for internal and external calls
- Is there a procedures or policy manual you can refer to in either hard copy or on the web?

Asking questions

Better a dumb question than a dumb mistake, but better still to ask a clever question. A clever question is an informed one (this is known as active learning). Find out a little information on your own before asking for assistance. Not only will this help you to frame your question (and may lead to you not having to ask it at all), but also you will be more likely to understand and be able to act on the answer because you have an understanding of the context. Bear in mind that it is natural to make mistakes – the key is to minimise them through learning and to learn from the mistakes that you do make so that you don't repeat them. You only stop making mistakes when you stop trying out new things – when you stop learning!

Asking questions to clarify doesn't make you look 'dumb'. It helps you to avoid making mistakes, and it will also help you get a better and clearer understanding of the task, role, etc. Try each of these:

Closed questions

These simply require a yes/no answer (or a choice of limited options). They should be restricted to confirmation or approval. "Does the laser printer print in colour"?

Reflective questions

Framed from information provided by the listener (or your own investigation), reflective questions are used to seek clarification and to test your understanding. They usually elicit a closed response.

"You said you would like five copies of my report and in colour. Would you like all five in colour, or an original in colour and the rest in black and white?"

Open questions

Who, what, why, how, when

These questions should be used when you want an explanation or information to be given, and the options for the answer are either numerous or unknown. "How would you like me to present my report?", rather than, "Do you want a written report?"

Taking notice

Active listening is an important technique in demonstrating your interest and understanding. It involves:

- Nodding or expressions which demonstrate your comprehension of what's being said.
- Verbalising your understanding - *uh-huh, OK, I see, that's good, etc.*
- Making eye contact
- Asking questions/making comment

Make sure that you actively demonstrate that you are listening to the advice and guidance of your supervisor, buddy and peers.

Dealing with work place issues

Be aware that it is possible for difficulties to arise during your internship for one of the following reasons:

- You and your workplace supervisor have different expectations of your work & learning role.
- You cannot cope with some of the tasks
- Poor communication between you and your workplace supervisor
- The work allocated to you is inadequate or insufficient
- Your workplace supervisor changes during your internship
- You are unhappy with their feedback on your work

Most of these issues can be resolved through negotiation, and it is a good opportunity to practice your negotiation skills. Similar problems arise in many work environments, and the ability to work through them can mean the difference between a satisfying workplace and a difficult one.

Occasionally an issue may be resistant to negotiation – if your internship is for university credit, speak to your program co-ordinator for advice. If it is not for credit, approach the next level of supervision or the organisation’s Human Resources section for advice.

Dealing with interpersonal issues

We will always find some people easier to work with than others (and they feel the same about us). An internship is an opportunity to develop good working relationships with colleagues who may have different ideas about work styles, client relationships or even social issues. Different cultural backgrounds or a “personality clash” can lead to misunderstandings in any workplace. Where possible, sort out your difficulties directly with the person concerned - many workplace conflicts can be resolved by clear tactful communication with that individual, and a little humour. Where your efforts fail to resolve the situation, seek advice from an appropriate person, such as your or their supervisor, or your program co-ordinator.

Time management

Managing your time effectively is primarily about planning and organising.

Clarify expectations

The first thing to do is to define the tasks that have to be completed. In order to do this effectively you need to know exactly what is required of you. Your job description and performance indicators will help you to do this, but it is a good idea to draw up a list of specific activities you plan to undertake and then run these by a supervisor to make sure you’re on the right track. Also ask if there is a particular high priority item(s) that the supervisor thinks you should manage first. It’s a bit like the tortoise and the hare, take a bit of time up front so that you don’t waste a lot on the wrong things.

Break it down

Break bigger tasks into manageable activities and list these in order of priority. A big job can be really daunting and the temptation can be to put it off as a result. By breaking it down you can see a way through it and you also give yourself the opportunity to feel the satisfaction of “ticking” things off your list. For this reason, always include a couple of quickly completed activities even if you don’t allocate them a high priority – at least you know that’s one thing you’ll be able to finish by the end of the day!

Set your priorities

You should prioritise before you start preparing a To Do list. Either highlight or asterisk the things that need to be done first because others are relying on you, you have specific deadlines or simply because you can’t continue with other activities until these are done.

Create a ‘to do’ list

Write the activities into a “To Do” list for a given period. At first you should prepare a daily list, but as you improve your time management skills, you may find that a weekly list will suffice. Obviously put your highest priorities at the top, and is a good idea to note an anticipated time frame. This will stop you from being totally unrealistic about what you could reasonably achieve and will help you determine if you have space for additional things thrown at you. Be sure to allow time for the daily tasks such as responding to emails, answering queries, seeking advice, etc.

Once you have listed the priority items for today, prioritise them again by giving them an A (do straight away), B (aim to finish by the end of the period), C (hope to do, but can be carried over if necessary).

Anything you don’t get done, transfer to tomorrow’s list at the end of the day.

Competing priorities

In a busy team environment or on multi-faceted projects, it’s not unusual to have unplanned activities suddenly arise, often requiring some urgency. This can create dilemmas with the priorities you have already set. In this instance you will have to make choices about the comparative priority between these and what you are already planning to do i.e. what takes precedent? Allocating C level priorities can help you work out where you can fit the unexpected by creating opportunity from postponed “to do’s”.

If someone else in your team or a supervisor asks you to undertake an additional task, don’t assume that it is an A level priority. Try one of the following approaches:

- “When do you need that done by?”/ “How urgent is it?”
- “I have some time later in the afternoon when I can do that. Is that okay with you?”

- “I have something that I have to take care of fairly urgently, but can get the details from you now and work on it in the morning/after today.”
- “I’m happy to do that, but I had prioritised a couple of other things for today in relation to the task you want me to complete. Can you give me some guidance on which of these activities should be done first and what you’re happy to wait a little longer for?” (This way you share the responsibility for a delayed task while taking the advice of your supervisor.)

Learn as much as you can during your internship. Even when things may seem dull, don't be afraid to ask questions about things you're interested in, or even get to know your employer better. You're there to learn and any employer would be willing to help you out.

Internship Dos & Don'ts

- DO treat every task seriously. Interns that show attention to detail and a good work ethic are the ones who will be kept in mind if a position arises.
- DON'T roll your eyes. Ever! This is a sure way to lose the respect of your new colleagues.
- DO ask questions. You are there to learn and work, so everyone expects you to have questions. Make the most of it.
- DON'T be afraid of senior staff. Many senior staff love to mentor but are time deprived. Being proactive in approaching them can be positive.
- DO show initiative and enthusiasm. Treat your internship as a job and you will gain the respect of your supervisor.
- DO treat every member of staff with respect - whatever their level within the organisation.

Internship outcomes

By the end of your internship, you should know whether you like the people in the industry you're working in. Do you want to be them in five years? And you should know whether or not you like the day-to-day work. Do the hours suit you? Does the work focus interest you?

Every day make notes on the areas you enjoyed and those that frustrated you. At the end of the next week reflect back on these – were the frustrations simply a lack of knowledge? Was the enjoyment only because it was new, or was there something about the process you enjoyed?

7. What to take away from an internship

An effectively documented internship will provide useful stepping stones into your future career. Ensure you take advantage of them all!

Career insight

You will learn about yourself and your work style through your internship experience. Pay attention to what you liked and disliked, as this can help you understand your work place preferences, the style of management you work best under and the kinds of colleagues with whom you enjoy working. Use this insight when looking for further internships or jobs and when making future career decisions.

The reflective practice component of an internship completed for credit helps you develop insight into how theory translates into real world practice. If your internship is not for credit, it is worthwhile keeping a daily log book and writing a report on the process. A clear understanding of what you have learnt and how your skills have developed can translate into more money and/or a more desirable position upon graduation due to the experience gained at that internship.

Referees, networks and referrals

It really is all about networking.

Any internship can provide great contacts for the future. Even if your internship host cannot offer you a job when the internship ends, they can offer useful advice. If you have demonstrated a good work ethic, built a good rapport with your colleagues and stay in touch after the internship ends, the return can be more than just industry experience.

Recommendations can help you land other jobs within the industry. Even unpaid internships can pay off in the future!

Good referees are just as essential as a strong resume. In the final week of your placement, follow up with your direct supervisor in the internship to ask if they would be willing to be a referee for future job applications. Send them a thank you note after the internship and a copy of any report you write. Stay in touch!

Don't be over bearing, but do send them an occasional brief email to let them know how things are progressing in your degree and your career plans. (Always maintain a positive tone.) If they hear of suitable opportunities, they will still have you in mind and will have some idea of whether you may be interested.

Resume

A well-documented internship experience will provide strong content for your resume. You will be able to demonstrate how you have used your skills and may have quantifiable examples, which is the essence of a solid resume. Consider adding the following components to your resume.

Industry knowledge

If this is the area you decide to make a career in, the academic knowledge you apply during your internship can create a strong foundation for the next steps.

Hint: Make notes on industry specific knowledge you discovered during your internship

Portfolio of work

Check with your internship supervisor if you can keep a copy of any project reports, plans, presentations, publications or other concrete evidence of your work that you produce throughout your internship. Store them together as a tangible portfolio of your work to show future employers. If you are unable to keep a copy keep a detailed record of what you contributed and how you did so.

Hint: Record some notes so you can put together a one page snap shot that provides an overview of what you achieved in your internship.

Relevant skills

You can learn a good work ethic and, if you end up turning the internship into a career, you can learn a lot about what to do on a daily basis and practice and improve those skills and knowledge areas. Make notes on how you used your communication, teamwork and organisational skills.

Use S.T.A.R. (Situation - Task - Action – Result) to ensure you've noted all the key information.

Communication: Written and/or verbal. How did you communicate your ideas? Did you have to explain specialist information? Did you adapt your approach for different audiences?

Customer Service: How did you interact with internal and external clients? Did you persuade, negotiate, or mediate?

Teamwork: What was your role as part of the team? Did you have to handle conflict? Did you take on different roles?

Planning & organisation: Did you plan or organise events, set time lines, co-ordinate tasks for yourself or others? Did you adapt plans to cope with unexpected changes? Did you collect, analyse or organise information?

Time management: Did you work to deadlines, balance competing priorities, organise your work and prioritise tasks?

Self-management: How did you identify your weaknesses and address them? How did you articulate your ideas and visions? Did you take responsibility for your development?

Technical: What technical knowledge of tools for your profession did you use? What IT systems, programs or tools were you exposed to? Did you apply OH&S knowledge?

Initiative: How did you identify opportunities not obvious to others? Did you bring ideas into action?

Interpersonal: How did you build and maintain effective professional relationships? Did you mix with a broad range of individuals and groups?



**WARRNAMBOOL
CAMPUS**
Princes Highway
Warrnambool Victoria

**GEELONG
WAURN PONDS CAMPUS**
Pigdons Road
Waurn Ponds Victoria

**GEELONG
WATERFRONT CAMPUS**
1 Gheringhap Street
Geelong Victoria

**MELBOURNE
BURWOOD CAMPUS**
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria

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