

Making Your Own Internship

Why establish your own internship?

Students establish their own internship opportunity for many reasons. You may already have a particular employer in mind that does not have a formal internship program, but is willing to have an intern. Also when creating your own internship, you can tailor the position to your academic and career goals.

Steps in making your own internship:

- **Identify your skills, interests, and experiences.** Think about the career options that connect to your major that you have an interest in or want to learn more about.
 - Questions to ask yourself:
 - What skills do I have that I want to build/enhance?
 - What experiences have I had before that I enjoyed?
 - What types of work/job functions do I enjoy?
 - In what areas would I like to grow/gain more experience?
 - What types of career paths am I interested in/considering for after graduation? Are there ways I can gain some experience in those areas now through an internship?
 - *If you are having difficulty answering these questions, please make an appointment to meet with an advisor in the Academic & Career Advising Center, 434-395-2063.*
- **Think about where you want to work/do your internship,** geographically and in what setting.
 - Questions to ask yourself:
 - Do I want an internship close to home for the summer?
 - If completing an internship during the Fall or Spring semester, what types of places are near or even on-campus?
 - Do you want to work in the business environment? Within the government field? For a non-profit organization?
 - Do you want to work at a small or large organization?
 - Do you want to be in an office or outside?
 - *If you are having difficulty answering these questions, please make an appointment to meet with an advisor in the Academic & Career Advising Center, 434-395-2063.*
- **Make a list of organizations you want to contact** and conduct any informational interviews.
 - You can identify organizations that match your interests by:
 - Visiting the Academic & Career Advising Center website: www.longwood.edu/career
 - Attending Job and Internship Fairs
 - Searching CareerConnect

- Researching organizations on the Internet
 - Checking out the resources in the ACAC Resource Room
 - Scanning the Phonebook/Yellowpages and Newspaper (classifieds)
 - Talking with faculty, family and friends
 - Networking/Alumni contacts – Student-Alumni Networking Event (in spring) and alumni database
- Conducting informational interviews is a great way to find out more about the organizations and to establish contacts
 - To set up an interview, contact the organization and describe how you would like to learn more about them. You may want to set up an interview with someone directly in the department in which you have an interest.
 - For the interview have questions such as: what is your typical day like, how did you enter the field, how do you see the organization growing, what are the opportunities and challenges in your position, what are the industry's/field's trends, etc.
 - You may also want to take your resume to the interview to have with you if the person asks.
 - *To learn more about informational interviewing, connecting with alumni and networking, call 434-395-2063 to make an appointment with an advisor in the Academic & Career Advising Center. You can also view our handouts for informational interviewing and networking at: <http://www.longwood.edu/career/Handouts.htm>*
- **Identify the contacts** within the organizations where you have an interest in doing your internship.
 - For some organizations, you may contact the person directly in the department in which you wish to intern. For other organizations, you may have to contact and work with Human Resources.
 - *To discuss how to approach the employer and questions to ask, please make an appointment with an advisor in the Academic & Career Advising Center, 434-395-2063.*
 - *Coming Soon! A guide for employers can be picked up from the ACAC to give to your contacts which overviews internships and creating opportunities.*
- **Draft a proposal/cover letter** to the organizations you are interested in:
 - When contacting the organization, be sure to provide your name, year in school, major and your interest in interning with the organization.
 - Describe what skills and experiences you bring to the organization.
 - Attach or send your resume along with this proposal/cover letter. Your resume should highlight your skills, education and experience.
 - Be sure to give employers the guidelines for your internship like how many hours you need to complete, what your responsibilities would entail and what you hope to gain. You may want to make your list of responsibilities more

general, then describe how you are willing to/looking forward to planning/setting your responsibilities with your supervisor.

- Your proposal and resume should be sent to the contact that you have made within the organization, whether that is someone in Human Resources or the head of the department. Be sure you address your proposal letter to a specific individual, not “To Whom It May Concern”.
- *For assistance writing your proposal or putting together your resume, please call 434-395-2063 to make an appointment with an advisor in the Academic & Career Advising Center.*
- **Meet with your academic advisor** to discuss your options, where you have applied for an internship and to gather and complete any necessary paperwork. Most departments have internship approval forms and contracts that will need to be signed by you, your advisor and the employer.
- **Follow-up on your proposals.** Be sure to contact those employers/organizations where you have sent proposals to check on the possibility of an internship. A follow-up phone call or email should be made 5-7 business days after the letter was mailed, and will reinforce your interest in the organization and your commitment.
- **Send thank you notes** to those you conducted informational interviews with and even those who did not offer you an internship.
- **Once you have accepted an offer** for an internship, be sure to notify your academic advisor so that any paperwork can be finalized and you can register for the internship course. **

** Most departments will require that you be registered for the internship prior to your start date in order to receive academic credit for the internship. Please discuss course registration with your academic advisor or department chair.