

The Internship Advantage

Graduates who get better jobs recognize that employers not only check their academic record to verify learning potential, but also their relevant work experience and appropriate skills. Internships allow students to acquire the experience and skills essential to acquiring a satisfying job upon graduation. Internships are now offered in almost every career area by employers who recognize the importance of on-the-job training, and who often groom their most promising candidates for full-time positions. **There is no better way to get started in your career than by participating in an internship.**

What is an internship?

- An on-the-job learning experience in a work setting which is directly related to your personal interests, career aspirations, and major field of study.
- An off-campus position in a public or private organization.
- A planned, structured, and supervised, field-based experience where you learn about the demands and needs of a particular profession and/or industry.

Why should I consider doing an internship?

- Gain valuable hands-on work experience.
- Develop marketable job skills which are transferable to other jobs.
- Examine, explore and clarify career goals and options.
- Test personal aptitudes, abilities, and interests in relation to your career choice and job demands.
- Improve interpersonal skills such as confidence, maturity, decision making.
- Gain job-hunting skills of interviewing and resume preparation.
- Evaluate (and be evaluated by) potential employers.
- Develop references and professional contacts which may lead to future job offers.
- Integrate and complement academic studies with the on-the-job professional level experience.
- Obtain academic credit for the work performed (optional).
- Receive financial compensation (many internships are paid).

Who is eligible for internships?

- Currently enrolled USF students, in any major, at the sophomore, junior, senior or graduate levels.
- Some employers and/or academic departments may require a minimum GPA (this academic requirement may be waived by your faculty-advisor).
- International students with F1 status are eligible but should check each internship listing to see if there are any restrictions.

When can I do an internship?

- Any academic term-Fall and Spring semesters, Intersession or Summer.
- Plan at least one semester (8-10) weeks in advance of the date you want to begin work to give yourself time to meet employer and program application deadlines.

Can I develop an internship on my own?

Yes! You can arrange your own internship placement related to your field of study. Be sure to fully discuss any internship opportunity with your academic faculty-sponsor or advisor when doing an internship for credit. To gain credit the internship must be approved before you register for classes.

Internships are not restricted geographically. Opportunities may be set up convenient to your home or USF; they can even be out of state.

Are internships paid?

Often, the answer is yes. The organization providing the internship determines whether or not an intern will be paid. Internships are also frequently done on a purely volunteer basis.

What are the requirements to earn USF credit?

Taking course credit for fieldwork experience is just like taking any other course for credit. The only difference is that your classroom is in the world of work. The course is listed on your transcript, informing employers that you have had practical experience in addition to your classroom learning.

The requirements for academic credit vary from department to department. Generally, the classes are graded on a pass/ not basis. The number of credits is determined by the faculty advisor who takes into consideration the level of involvement by the student, the extent of responsibilities, and the number of hours on the job per week.

Each department has certain academic requirements which you must complete in order to receive credit. The internship must provide you with specific problems to solve whereby you will apply identifiable technical skills. A faculty sponsor may provide on-going monitoring of the internship which may include readings, writing a term report, doing a critical analysis of a project. Whatever the work, it should enable the faculty-advisor to review and assess your learning and performance

Is there a tuition charge for internships?

Only internships which are taken for academic credit are subject to regular tuition fees. Tuition covers the cost of having your faculty advisor supervise, monitor, evaluate and grade your work performance, and transcript notation. There is no charge for internships which are NOT taken for academic credit.

How can I participate?

- Meet with a career counselor or your academic advisor and discuss the possibility of participating in the internship program.
- Look through the internship listings in the Career Service Center Services Center Library (in the red binders) and follow the application procedures outlined by the employer.
- If doing an internship for credit, get approval from your academic department.