

internship & Co-op Guide





*Your UConn resource for jobs,
internships, & employer connections*

What is HuskyCareerLink?

HuskyCareerLink is the Center for Career Development's online job management system, exclusive to UConn students and alumni.

What are the Benefits of Using HuskyCareerLink?

Students who use HuskyCareerLink can immediately start **networking** with employers, participate in on-campus **interviews**, and view and apply to electronic **job postings** and **internship** opportunities.

How Do I Get Started?

1. Log in today by going to www.huskycareerlink.uconn.edu.
You will need your NetID and password to access this prime resource for locating and applying to full-time and internship positions.
2. Upload your résumé to make information about your qualifications and experiences easily accessible to employers.

internship & Co-op Guide

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Understanding the Basics

What are Internships and Co-ops?

INTERNSHIPS are work/learning experiences that provide a hands-on way for students to confirm their choice of major and/or career while gaining practical work experience. They may be linked to an academic department or done independently. The internship is usually the length or equivalent of an academic term or summer, may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid.

Though some employers incorrectly believe otherwise, credit and compensation are not synonymous or interchangeable; only a university can determine if an internship meets educational objectives for an internship course to receive credit. Internships are different from volunteering or jobs in that there is an expectation for mentoring, networking, and opportunities to shadow and learn about the career field, regardless of whether or not the student earns credit. A quality internship does not exploit or take advantage of the intern.

At the University of Connecticut, CO-OPS are full-time, paid positions that take place for 4-6 months, over the course of a semester and may include part/all of the summer too. Students typically do not take classes, but they are considered full-time students. Students do not earn credit for co-ops, so there is no tuition cost associated with them, just low administrative fees. Students must work with the Center for Career Development to be properly recognized by the university, as co-op students.

Some internships require you to earn college credit for the experience. To determine if you are eligible for credit and/or if your major offers an internship course, visit www.internships.uconn.edu. If you do not meet the necessary requirements for credit through an academic department, contact the Center for Career Development for our alternative options: a one-credit internship course and zero-credit internship transcript notation.

What are the Differences Between Internships and Co-ops?

Common Questions	Credit Internship	Non-Credit Internship	Co-op Education
Will I earn academic credit?	Maybe. Credit varies for each academic program. See website* for details.	No.	Maybe. Up to 4 credits is allowed.
How long is the placement?	12-14 weeks during the semester. 3-4 months in the summer.	Often 10-12 weeks , though length is determined by your employer.	4-6 months between January and June, or July and December.
May I take a full academic class load?	Yes. Internships can be completed alongside traditional coursework during both the academic year and the summer months.	Yes. Internships can be completed alongside traditional coursework during both the academic year and the summer months.	No. You may take up to 4 academic credits during the fall, spring or summer term.
Can I be paid?	Maybe. Eligibility varies depending on your major. See website* for details.	Yes.	Yes. Payment is required.
What UConn-related conditions apply for participation?	Prerequisites and conditions vary from major to major. See website* for details.	None.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have 24 credits completed • Overall GPA of 2.0 in career-related work • Good academic standing • Full-time, undergraduate enrollment at UConn
Is there a UConn fee for me to participate?	Yes. Number of credits will determine cost. Credit internships during the summer also require a one-time registration fee.	No.	Yes. There is a small fee. If you choose to take a class, there are additional costs for credit hours.
Do I have to speak to someone at UConn after I have secured an opportunity?	Yes. See website* for contact information. You must make this connection PRIOR to registering for the internship.	No.	Yes. The internship/co-op staff at the Center for Career Development must be contacted prior to the start of your co-op.
Do I need to complete paperwork for UConn?	Yes. Completed in the academic department from which you will receive credit.	No.	Yes. Visit the Center for Career Development prior to your start date for appropriate paperwork.
When do I begin the application process?	Six months of prep time is recommended. Summer internships are more competitive and may have deadlines as early as October.	Six months of prep time is recommended. Summer internships are more competitive and may have deadlines as early as October.	Six months of prep time is recommended. Make an appointment with the Center for Career Development once the co-op has been offered.
Will this opportunity be documented on my transcript?	Yes. You will receive a letter grade and/or a rating of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.	No. You may approach the CCD about the zero-credit transcript notation.	Yes. Your co-op will be listed, indicating a semester dedicated to full time employment,
How many hours will I work?	Depends. Number of hours will be determined by your department and employer.	Depends. Hours will be determined by your site employer.	At least 35 hours per week, but no more than 50.
Will the Center for Career Development find me an internship or co-op?	Not directly. The Center for Career Development can help you identify quality positions through HuskyCareerLink and other reputable sources.	Not directly. The Center for Career Development can help you identify quality positions through HuskyCareerLink and other reputable sources.	Not directly. The Center for Career Development can help you identify quality positions through HuskyCareerLink and other reputable sources.

*For information regarding academic credit, payment options, special conditions, and people to contact, click the “Internship Course Listing by Major” tab on www.internships.uconn.edu and select the academic department in question.

Purpose of Internships and Co-ops

Why Do an Internship or Co-op?

- Acquire practical, hands-on work experience.
- Enhance classroom knowledge and learning.
- Refine academic interests and long-term career goals.
- Develop transferable skills.
- Build self-confidence and leadership qualities.
- Create a network of professional contacts, mentors, and references.
- Prepare for graduate/professional school and/or a future professional position.

Why Do Companies Hire Interns and Co-op Students?

- To introduce a fresh perspective.
- To increase diversity within the workplace.
- To help companies build relationships with local colleges and universities.
- For free advertising, as the interns will inevitably talk about their position.
- To offer supervisory experience for full-time staff not in management.
- To devote time to projects that are not a priority for full-time staff.
- To provide a cost-effective way to train potential new employees.

Are You Ready to Do an Internship?

- **Expectations** – What are you expecting from this experience? Be realistic, and know those expectations prior to applying and prior to being granted an interview. You will want to be clear about your intentions before starting a new opportunity.
- **Maturity** – Are you in the mindset to work up to 40 hours per week if the position requires it? Are you prepared to work with a variety of people who are different from you, whether by age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, or educational level? Are you ready to be off-line during work hours – no Twitter, Facebook, etc.? Are you prepared for the possibility of having a lighter social life, given the demands of the position?
- **Planning** – Have you begun to do research on the organization to determine if you will acclimate to their culture? Are you knowledgeable about your personal skill sets, values, and interests that best match the career field you are considering? Have you been acquiring experience (in clubs, part-time jobs, informational interviews, etc.) to develop necessary skill sets?
- **Paperwork** – Have you updated your résumé to reflect your current interests? Have you found faculty or staff to serve as references? Are your applications being submitted on time? If pursuing credit, have you filed appropriate documentation?
- **Cost** – Will you be able to purchase a new wardrobe if needed? Can you pay for course credit and/or incur commuting and living expenses? Will you have time to get a second job to cover unexpected costs?

“[The internship] gave me an inside look at how a news room functions, an opportunity I couldn’t possibly have gotten anywhere else. I was able to ask all of the questions I had about the industry and get them fully answered. Acquiring this information as a rising junior will only help me as I narrow my career options after graduation.”

-Junior, Journalism Major

How Do I Get an Internship or a Co-op?

Ideally, your search will begin at least six months before you plan to work. The earlier you start, the more opportunities you will find. Even if you have less than six months to search, use this checklist to help you search for an internship, co-op, or other career-related position.

1. Prepare for the Search

- Narrow your search. You might target a specific field, industry, and/or geographic region.
- Decide what type of position you would like to pursue: part-time job, internship, or co-op; credit or non-credit; paid or unpaid.
- Visit the Center for Career Development for help finding focus in your search.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, advisors, mentors, and faculty members, that you are seeking career-related work.
- Join a professional association and/or club associated with your possible career.
- Set up an account in HuskyCareerLink, UConn's online job management system, at: www.huskycareerlink.uconn.edu.
- Remove any unprofessional material from your social media accounts and set appropriate privacy settings.
- Arrange for an informational interview or job shadow with a person in a career or industry of interest.
 - An **informational interview** is an opportunity for you to ask a professional questions about his or her background, skills, education, and job responsibilities.
 - A **job shadow** gives you a chance to observe a professional performing day-to-day tasks in his or her work environment.

2. Gather Application Materials

- Begin preparing potential application materials.
- Companies may require a variety of application materials, including a résumé, cover letter, reference list, official or unofficial transcripts, letters of recommendation, and writing samples.
- Create a résumé using the Résumé and Cover Letter Guide located at the Center for Career Development.
- Bring your résumé to the Center for Career Development for an initial review and subsequent critiques.
- Draft a cover letter and have it reviewed at the Center for Career Development.
- Upload your current résumé and cover letter to HuskyCareerLink and add your résumé to any relevant résumé books.
 - A **résumé book** is a collection of résumés from UConn students and alumni related to a specific major, industry, or job function that is available for employers to search and view on HuskyCareerLink.
- Identify and request individuals to serve as positive references and create a reference page.
 - Talk to your references in advance, and make sure they are willing so serve in that role. Professors, work supervisors, organization advisors, and personal mentors are all appropriate choices.

At a Glance

- **Define parameters for your search, including region, industry, and type of experience.**
- **Identify opportunities utilizing HuskyCareerLink, personal networks, and other resources.**
- **Gather application materials, including a résumé, cover letters, references, transcripts, recommendations, and writing samples.**
- **Apply for positions.**
- **Prepare yourself for a professional environment.**

3. Identify Opportunities

- Research companies and organizations that you are targeting.
- Attend career fairs sponsored by the Center for Career Development and other departments, both on and off campus.
 - The Center for Career Development sponsors several career fairs each year. For information about dates, times, and locations, visit www.career.uconn.edu, career fair page.
- Identify and evaluate multiple internship, co-op, and part-time career-related opportunities on HuskyCareerLink, (www.huskycareerlink.uconn.edu), other Internet search sites, company websites, social media, professional associations, etc.
- Contact organizations directly via email or telephone to inquire about opportunities.
- Utilize personal and professional networks.

4. Apply for Positions

- Record application deadlines and requirements, and establish a timeline for each position.
- Submit application materials. Be sure to follow any special submission instructions exactly.
- Follow-up with organizations via e-mail or telephone one to two weeks after applying to confirm that they received your materials. Inquire about a timeline for decisions and ask about any other steps you should take.
- Create a job search notebook, both hard copy and electronic, and keep detailed notes about where you applied, whom you spoke to, when you sent your application, and when you followed-up.
- Update your résumé to reflect new experiences, activities, and current coursework.
- Customize your résumé for each position to which you apply.
- Find out if academic credit is or is not a requirement for your internship. If it is, be sure to check your academic department's policy regarding credit for internships, or www.internships.uconn.edu.

- If you need credit and cannot get it through an academic department, inquire with the internship/co-op staff at the Center for Career Development (internships@uconn.edu) for alternatives.
- Prepare for interviews by participating in a practice interview with the Center for Career Development.
- Once you have completed an interview, follow up with well-written thank you notes to everyone with whom you interacted.

5. Prepare for the Job

- Do as much research about the company as possible. What are their big projects? Who are their partners? What does their organizational structure look like?
- Research office protocol, such as dress codes and rules about food at your desk.
- Be sure you have a professionally relevant wardrobe.
- Ask your supervisor ahead of time what you can expect on your first day.
- Begin searching for housing options and transportation possibilities, if necessary. See www.internships.uconn.edu for relocation resources.
- Contact all companies whose offers you are declining. Inform them of your decision over the telephone, not email. Be sure to speak to someone, not just leave a message.

Resources for Your Search

- **HuskyCareerLink**
- **Social media sites**
- **Academic departments**
- **Personal networks**
- **Private agencies**
- **The Center for Career Development**

Using Social Media

Since the launch of MySpace and Facebook in the early 2000s, social media has changed the way we communicate in both personal and professional networks. Media sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook have helped employers spread information about internship and career opportunities and do advanced scouting on potential interns and employees. To successfully navigate these resources, be sure to follow these tips:

Utilize Social Media

- Having no online presence is almost as bad as having an inappropriate online presence.
- Make sure you are visible to potential employers.
- Social media is only a tool; continue to network in person.

Online Networking

- Only add people with whom you have a direct connection or prior relationship.
- Personalize the request for a connection.
- Follow-up with telephone conversations or in person.

What Should You Do with Social Media?

- You need to be thoughtful about the content you put on the web. Once you link, pin, tweet, blog, or post, it speaks to who you are and is almost impossible to remove.
- Be sure to follow the unwritten rules of each network. Is the site intended for sharing personal or professional information?
- Do research. Notice how other people with similar interests present themselves, and mimic the content or style of those you respect.
- Consider everything you post to be a mini writing sample - no typos, no text-speak. Proofread from an employer's point of view.
- Be sure to convey your personality through posts about hobbies or interests. This is what makes social media different from a résumé. However, show restraint with the information you post. This is not the forum for arguments or rants.
- When possible, personalize the URL to your social media pages so that your name appears in the web address. Each platform should provide a tutorial on how to accomplish this.
- Know what is being posted – both *by* you and *about* you. Be sure to “untag” any inappropriate photos and unlink your name from questionable statuses or notes.
- Be consistent about the timing and content of your sharing. If you only post sporadically, employers have no motivation to follow your page.
- Avoid posting too many negative statuses.
- It is especially important that you **never post negative information about a job or a company you work for** (or have worked for).
- Post career-related content that speaks to your interest in your chosen field. It lets companies know that you are serious about becoming a professional in that field.

What Is Social Media?

- **Websites devoted to user-generated content that allow for interaction and collaboration among people.**
- **Examples include online forums, blogs, social networking sites, pin boards, video sharing sites, and photo sharing sites.**

Maximize Your Experience

You have accepted an internship or co-op. Congratulations! Now, consider the following recommendations to make the most of your opportunity.

1. Develop Clear Communication with Your Supervisor

To ensure an excellent experience for both intern and host, it is important for there to be clear lines of communication. Take these steps on your very first day to ensure a successful work experience.

A. Have a meeting with your supervisor to address important questions about office expectations.

- What is common workplace attire?
- What are regular business hours? Should you expect to work hours outside that time frame?
- What are the office policies regarding weather or other emergencies?
- What is the office sick policy?
- What type of work will you be doing?
- How will you be evaluated?

B. Work with your site supervisor (and a faculty member if you are earning credit) to identify challenging, career-related goals to document in a Learning Contract.

- A **Learning Contract** is a formal document in which you establish learning objectives. See page 12 of this guide for an example.
- **Learning objectives** clarify the knowledge and skills you hope to gain. These objectives will guide your activities to ensure a rewarding experience.
- The Learning Contract will identify how you will accomplish your objectives and determine the evaluation process that will be used to measure your progress.
- Throughout your experience, refer to your Learning Contract on your own and with your supervisor. Revise your goals, if necessary.

“The internship was well structured and designed, where the interns got to meet and talk to executives, network, and participate in workshops. After the internship, networking, and workshops, I was interviewed for their Leadership Development Program, where I was then offered full-time employment. It was definitely more than a summer job. My summer internship was the beginning of my career.”

-Senior, Computer Science and Engineering Major



2. Document the Experience

While you are participating in your internship or co-op, it is important to document your work activities, thoughts, and difficulties for future reference. You can do this in several ways:

Journals. Use a journal to write down your thoughts, experiences, and accomplishments. Doing this will be especially helpful when you update your résumé. Journaling also allows you to reflect on what you like and dislike about the experience and enables you to make adjustments to fit your goals.

Formal evaluations. At the end of the experience, follow up with your supervisor for a formal evaluation. If the company does not provide an evaluation, you may acquire a basic evaluation form from the internship/co-op staff in the Center for Career Development.

Informal evaluations. Determine a regular meeting time with your supervisor. This should be used to garner feedback about your performance, both positive and constructive. Revisit your Learning Contract regularly to ascertain your progress in meeting your goals as well.

3. Develop Soft Skills

It is important to understand how your internship experience can be beneficial in seeking other positions. That benefit is in the soft skills you develop. *Soft skills* refer to personal qualities that can be hard to quantify - your work ethic, communication skills, critical thinking skills, flexibility, attitude, etc. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), these skills consistently rated as the most desirable in potential employees. Take a look at the list below, and be sure to think about how to develop these skills while on the job.

10 Skills Employers Seek on Résumés

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Ability to work in a team | 6. Analytical/quantitative skills |
| 2. Leadership | 7. Verbal communication skills |
| 3. Written communication skills | 8. Initiative |
| 4. Problem-solving skills | 9. Computer skills |
| 5. Strong work ethic | 10. Interpersonal skills |

4. Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Internship and co-op participants, both paid and unpaid, have many of the same rights and responsibilities as full-time employees. Consider these guidelines, and ask questions relevant to your work situation:

Confidentiality. Maintain confidentiality regarding your employer, customers, clients, and co-workers. Disclose such information only on a “need-to-know” basis for the purpose of completing work assignments. You may be asked by your employer to sign a confidentiality agreement. Read this form carefully before signing.

Discrimination. Act professionally and respectfully when interacting with all people you meet on the job. Unequal treatment or harassment is typically against company policy and/or illegal. Review the company’s discrimination policy, which can be obtained from Human Resources or in the employee handbook, and notify your supervisor if you are subjected to such behavior.

If you are uncomfortable or unsure of how to address a particular issue in your internship or co-op, contact the Center for Career Development or a trusted faculty member to explore options and possible measures.

Harassment. Treat all co-workers - including other interns, clients, vendors, and others encountered on the job - politely and professionally. Unwelcome, uninvited behavior with sexual overtones occurring in the workplace is sexual harassment and is illegal. Alert the Center for Career Development and your supervisor if you are subjected to such behavior.

Liability. Understand legal liability issues related to your work site and activities. The University of Connecticut does not insure students during periods of temporary employment through internships or co-ops. It is recommended that you do not sign any waiver without speaking to the Center for Career Development’s internship/co-op staff or legal counsel.

Accommodations. Inform your employer of the accommodations you might need to successfully complete your work assignments. Employers must provide reasonable, but not the exact, accommodations requested.

5. Make the Most of Company Connections

Interns and co-op participants often have access to a variety of helpful company resources and connections. In order to take advantage of those resources, consider the following suggestions:

Network. As you meet people from the organization, keep a list of names, contact information, and conversation topics. Maintain regular contact with these people after your position has ended, and consider asking them to serve as future job references.

Find a mentor. Identify someone within the organization that you aspire to learn from, or that you believe would offer you guidance and support. After discussing it with your supervisor, you may be able to approach that person about mentoring you with career advice and ideas.

Participate in job shadowing. If possible, and with your supervisor’s approval, arrange to shadow someone who has a position you would like to learn more about.

Find UConn alumni. Alumni are often willing to help current students with advice, opportunities, and connections both before and after your work experience. Talk to Human Resources, visit www.uconnalumni.com, or use LinkedIn to find alumni at your organization.

Remember that The Student Code of the University of Connecticut applies to you during your internship or co-op, even if you are off campus. Any inappropriate behavior will be subject to the policies and procedures of your employer or organization, state or federal mandates, AND The Student Code.

6. Develop a Professional Reputation

As an intern or co-op participant, you are expected to behave in a specific manner and take advantage of the numerous resources and opportunities available to you. To meet these expectations, keep the following in mind:

Wear professional attire. Dressing for the work culture in your office sends a strong message of respect for the position and host organization. Ask your supervisor about dress codes before your first day and dress accordingly.

Understand and respect company policies. Be aware of and respect company policies about when and where you can use personal devices. Until you are clear about the rules, turn off your cell phone and music, and use the Internet only for work-related projects.

Define your role. You may be invited to attend staff meetings, decision-making discussions, client negotiations, or other gatherings. Do so, but be sure to clarify your role prior to these meetings so you behave in the appropriate manner.

Ask questions and request feedback. Meet regularly with your supervisor for feedback about your efforts, to learn more about the company, and to learn more about his or her perspective. Ask questions if you need clarification.

Attend events. When invited to company-sponsored events, it is in your best interest to attend and behave in a professional manner. If you choose to go out after work with other interns or full-time staff, use discretion and common sense. Behavior off-campus may impact activities and decisions back at work.

Be punctual and dependable. Be early to work and meetings, and finish projects ahead of schedule. Get names and telephone numbers of people you must contact if you are ill or will be late.

Do quality work and take initiative. It is important to demonstrate your abilities in the best possible light. Do quality work and ask for more tasks when you are finished with your given responsibilities. Your work ethic is critical as employers see internships and co-ops as extended interviews.

Demonstrate a positive attitude. You will not like every task you are assigned, but avoid expressing your frustration. You may be rewarded for your positive attitude with more desirable opportunities.

“Through my internship, I have developed a great, lasting relationship with my bosses and other co-workers. They offered to write me reference letters whenever I need them, and they promised to always keep me in mind whenever new opportunities arise. The business world is all about who you know, and how you use those connections. You never know when a new opportunity will come up because of a relationship with a former boss or co-worker.”

-Senior, Business Management Major

Sample Learning Contract

Objectives	Means to Accomplish Objectives	Evaluation
<p>SKILL OBJECTIVES – List skills you hope to gain through your internship experience. These can be soft skills, personal skills, or specific professional skills.</p>		
Gain experience in teaching techniques, lesson planning, and classroom management.	Lead daily reading lessons, tutor remedial math students, and craft practice lesson plans for evaluation.	Create and successfully execute one lesson plan by the end of the semester.
Learn to market events through various social media platforms.	Manage company Facebook and Twitter accounts.	Demonstrate increased traffic to company social media pages.
<p>PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES – Think about goals that will further your personal growth. These could be work-related, academic, or more personal.</p>		
Learn more about the differences between graduate programs.	Discuss options for graduate programs with internship supervisor, co-workers, and other interns.	Record, in writing, what elements are most important to me in a graduate program and what I hope to gain from a graduate program.
Become more comfortable working with confrontational clients.	Role-play different scenerios with supervisor	Observed by supervisor when working with difficult clients.
<p>CAREER DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES – Learn more about the field you are potentially interested in pursuing. Think about what you need to improve to be successful in that field in the future.</p>		
Determine if I am interested in teaching as a career, and what level I want to teach.	Design and execute lesson plans for several different classrooms.	Articulate what I like and dislike about teaching and about each specific level.
Establish a professional network.	Schedule informational lunch meetings with people from many different departments.	Demonstrate professional networks through connections on LinkedIn.

Note: This Learning Contract may be adapted for co-op experiences. It is useful for all opportunities, regardless of whether or not the student earns credit or is paid.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The Department of Labor (DOL) has issued guidelines and regulations regarding unpaid internships. Basically, if an employer from a for-profit organization wants to offer an unpaid internship, it needs to prove that the position meets six specific criteria. Details on these criteria can be found in *Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standard Act*, which may be accessed online at tiny.cc/factsheet71.

Sometimes employers will not pay you a salary or stipend and instead indicate that you are to earn credit. **Credit does not equal compensation.** If the experience provides learning similar to what a student would receive in the classroom, then credit may be an option. University internship coordinators review factors such as mentoring, educationally related work, quality of work projects, number of hours, and training. Please remember that the University, and not the employer, determines whether an internship meets educational objectives and is eligible for credit. This point of clarification is significant, as many employers believe credit and compensation are synonymous. In reality, they are independent of one another.

If the employer is a not-for-profit organization, educational institution, or a government agency, the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding unpaid internships does not apply. For those organizations that are for-profit, it is in the organization's best interest to follow the guidelines set forth by the DOL. The University does not police employers who do not follow the guidelines. Students may find, however, that academic departments are hesitant to award credit for work that violate these standards as clear learning objectives have not been stated and educators want to ensure students are not being exploited.

Questions about the Fair Labor Standards Act, or for-credit and unpaid internships may be directed to the internship/co-op staff via e-mail at internships@uconn.edu. A trained staff member will assist you in understanding these policies and procedures.