

Tufts Career Center FAQ of the Week

A number of companies have cancelled internships, had layoffs, hiring freezes, etc. I am worried. Come July, the company might not have a job for me. Should I consider a graduate program? Is there something I should do besides worry? Would it be appropriate to email the company at a time like this and ask? What would that email look like?

Thanks to Professor Ming Chow for sharing this FAQ, along with his answer.

Yes, I've heard some companies have cancelled summer internship programs, had layoffs, and hiring freezes. This was even before the outbreak --in early February. I also know of companies who have been really accommodating. Some industries now have an even higher demand for employees (e.g., online shopping, medical, online education).

Yes, you should be vigilant, and it is very appropriate to email the company. Always keep an eye on what's happening at an organization and in the market. It is a fantastic idea to reach out to the company, especially to your supervisor if you know who that will be. It's a win-win for everyone. First, it will show that you are diligent and conscientious. Second, you have the opportunity to learn about the high priorities for the company.

Your email to your employer should be up-front: say that you are grateful and excited to start soon, yet you are worried about the future, given the economy. Ask about how you fit as a new hire, what are the top priorities, what are the needs and pain-points. Keep this email short (it can get really long) and ask if it is possible to do a call to talk more.

As for considering graduate programs, the bottom line is this: keep your skills sharp, learn how to learn, and apply new skills. You don't need a degree to learn how to learn. Before deciding on a 5-year or other graduate program, ask yourself (1) what do you want to get out of it, (2) why do you want to do it, (3) can you afford it?



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