Creating INTERNSHIPS

APPLYING TO OPEN POSITIONS isn’t the only way to find an internship. Many students create their own. Employers without structured internship programs (most often smaller companies and non-profits) aren’t necessarily closed off to the idea of having interns...they’re just waiting for curious, self-motivated students to reach out to them!

REFLECT & RESEARCH

> Find an organization you’re genuinely passionate about...you love their products, care about the population they serve, believe in their mission, etc.

> Reflect on what you want out of an internship...to hone a skill you learned in class, develop a new skill, practice a new style of working, experience a new work setting, etc.

> Figure out a good-fit contact within the organization...somebody who works in a department of interest to you, somebody with whom you share something in common, or somebody who knows somebody you know.

WRITE & REFINE

> Tailor your resume to showcase your most relevant skills and experiences.

> Write a one-page proposal letter (similar to a cover letter) that covers the following:
  - How do you know about the employer and why are you interested in interning there?
  - How can you contribute to their organization? Give brief ideas of projects you can work on, problems you can help solve, populations you can serve, etc.
  - How are you qualified? What knowledge, skills, and experience would help you be successful there?
  - What do you want to learn from them? Share some brief ideas; you’ll create actual learning goals later.
  - Available start date, preferred end date, and approximate number of hours per week you’re available.

> Craft a professional email with a short, compelling summary of what’s in your attached resume and proposal.

> Have your documents reviewed and then polish them.

REACH OUT

> Consider setting up a meeting with your contact to discuss your proposal or get advice.

> Give/send/email your resume and proposal letter to your contact or a hiring manager on a specific team.

> Follow-up in a week or two...and then follow-up one more time if you don’t hear back.

> Send thank you notes to your contacts and the employers who engaged with you.

NOTE – These tasks do not have to be completed in the order presented. For example, you could set up a meeting with a contact first and then create a proposal that builds on what you discussed. Do what works for your situation!

TIPS:

> Connections can be key. Resist the urge to sit behind your computer and randomly send a gazillion resumes.

> Enthusiasm goes a long way. Isn’t it fun seeing somebody light up (on paper or in person) when they’re passionate about something?!

> Make it easy for them. Employers like when candidates spell out how they can contribute or bring value as interns.

WHAT TO DO NEXT:

> Go to events where you’ll meet employers and other contacts - careers.uw.edu/events/student

> Connect with potential employers at linkedin.com

> View sample resumes in our Career Guide - careers.uw.edu/resumes

> Get 1:1 coaching on creating internships - careers.uw.edu/career-coaching