

Student Internship Handbook

A Student's Quick Reference Guide to Securing an Internship

1) What's the point of an internship anyway?

In general, obtaining one or multiple internships will allow you to discover employers, create connections, generate references, make mistakes, and gain marketable skills and experiences. Internships are the perfect opportunity to try out different jobs or industries of interest in a low-risk setting before pursuing full-time employment.

In addition to gaining important self-knowledge, internships also increase students' rate of employment and salaries post-graduation. Data from Pioneer Careers Online shows that students who have completed an internship or professional experience are more likely to have secured post-graduation plans within 6 months of graduation, and they make on average \$5000 more in their first job after graduation. Therefore, internships are a win-win for your personal growth and job attainment.

\$5000

On average, the amount more a student with internship experience will make in their first job

Objectives and Learning Outcomes of an Internship or Professional Experience:

- To apply classroom theory in real-world, hands-on situations
- To discover the career paths and type of professional environment that best fits one's values, needs, and personality
- To explore and understand workplace issues such as time management, workplace culture, teamwork, giving and receiving feedback, and achieving balance in one's own life
- To meet and build relationships with other professionals in relevant industries

2) How do I find an internship?

Finding an internship can be achieved through multiple avenues, all of which can yield great results for students. Data from Pioneer Careers Online indicates that a large majority (over 65%) of DU students obtain internships through utilizing their social or professional networks, and fewer through applying directly to internship postings online.

Establishing connections with other professionals in industries of interest is going to be an important part of your professional career **and** is a great way to find internship opportunities. Therefore, your top priorities in the internship search (in order of importance) should be:

- 1) Building your connections
- 2) Targeting employers directly
- 3) Searching online

Building Your Connections

Most employers prefer to hire applicants they already know, have engaged with, or have a positive referral for. From an employers' perspective, they would much rather give someone an internship or job opportunity if they already have some indication that this individual will be an asset to their company or organization. Luckily, internships are a great way to begin this networking process so that you are already taking a step in the right direction.

Here are some great ways to begin building your connections:

- **Create an account in [Pioneer Connect](#)** to find DU Alumni who have volunteered their time and expertise to help DU students accomplish their professional goals. These alumni provide online resume reviews, informational interviews, job shadowing, and much more.
- **Conduct information interviews** with professionals in the field. Unsure how to go about this process? Read this [article](#)ⁱⁱ.
- **Use LinkedIn to find and connect with professionals** in career fields of interest. The LinkedIn [DU Alumni](#)ⁱⁱⁱ page is a great place to start.
- **Attend a Dine and Dialogues event** where you will be provided a free lunch and the opportunity to engage with alumni. Visit [PCO](#)^{iv} and click on the “Events” tab to browse upcoming Dine and Dialogue dates as well as other events.
- **Get involved! Join clubs and organizations** around campus and pursue volunteer opportunities in the community. These are all great ways to meet people you wouldn’t typically engage with.

Are you feeling uneasy about building your connections and reaching out to professionals? Rest assured that this is normal, but don’t let these feelings stop you from reaping the benefits of a professional network. Read this [article](#)^v for some extra inspiration and schedule an appointment on [PCO](#) with a Career Advisor to assist you through this process.

Targeting Employers Directly

One way to narrow your internship search is by creating a target employer list. This is a list of 10-15 employers you are excited about working for. This list will provide you a roadmap to follow as you begin to reach out to employers directly to see if they have any internship opportunities available. Here is an example of a target employer list:

Target Employers	Website URL	Professional Contact	DU Alumni?	Notes
Ibotta	http://ibotta.com/	Jared.fuller@gmail.com	Elise Lawrence-LinkedIn	Met Jared at DU internship fair
Layer3	http://layer3tv.com/	Patricia.white@layer3.com	Ken Jones- Pioneer Connect	Marketing Associate position open

After creating a target employer list, utilize Pioneer Connect and LinkedIn to identify and connect with DU alumni who work for your desired employers.

Searching Online

Lastly, conducting an online search can also be a great way to find internship opportunities. Although this may not be as effective as building connections or targeting employers directly, it’s important to also spend time each week exploring online internship postings. Here are some websites to checkout while searching for internships:

- [Pioneer Careers Online \(PCO\)](#) – Employers seeking DU interns
- [University Career Action Network \(UCAN\)](#) – National internship database shared with 21 universities (accessed via PCO)
- [Andrew Hudson’s Jobs List](#)^{vi} – Colorado-based internship/job search site

Personal Checklist for the Internship Seeker:

- I am beginning my internship search approximately 4-6 months before my intended start date
- I have designated a specific geographic location I would like find an internship (ex. Denver)
- My resume is up to date and accurately represents my accomplishments and experiences
- My LinkedIn is up to date and accurately represents my accomplishments and experiences
- I am tailoring my resume and cover letters to each job application
- I am staying organized by saving all internship postings and creating folders for my resumes/cover letters and other important application materials
- I have a list of 10-15 target employers to narrow my search
- I will set aside _____ hours per-week to dedicate to my internship search
- I will conduct _____ (number) information interviews per-month
- I will contact _____ (number) of employers from my target employer list each week

You are not in this process alone! Make an appointment with your Career Advisor on [PCO](#) (via the “Appointments” tab). Career & Professional Development is here to provide you direction, guidance, and support throughout this process (and yes, we can help with your resume, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles).

3) What are the different types of internships?

Paid Internships

Paid internships are a wonderful way to gain experience while earning money for your time and effort. If you’ve found a paid internship, congratulations! You may want to also consider earning course credit for your internship (see section below).

Internships for Course Credit

Similarly to taking a course through DU, students must pay for the number of credits their internship will count toward. Additionally, if students want to receive course credit for their internship, registration forms must be completed through their department of study. Make sure to contact the department you intend on earning internship credit through to ensure you are meeting all guidelines.

- Quick Tip: If you are a full-time undergraduate student taking 16 credit hours one quarter, adding a 2 credit internship course could be a great way to ensure you are making the most of paying “full-time” tuition, as it would not cost any extra tuition.
- If you intend on completing your internship over the summer and want to receive financial aid, apply through [Summer Financial Aid](#)^{vii}.

If your department is using the PCO Experiential Learning module, you will need to register your internship in the module. To do so, login to [PCO](#), click on the “Experiential Learning” tab, then click the “New Opportunity” button under the Internship Module. Make sure to check with your faculty supervisor as you set this up.

Unpaid Internships

Did you know that you don't need to earn course credit to do an internship? Many students pursue unpaid internships part-time and on their own schedules, while others find full-time summer internships with nonprofits or other organizations that can offer the very valuable experience, but not the funding.

If you've found an amazing internship but are unsure if you can afford to accept the opportunity because it's unpaid, here is a list of internship awards DU provides to assist students financially with their unpaid internships.

[Undergraduate Internship Award](#) (\$2,500)

For summer internships both domestic and abroad | April application deadline

[AHSS Summer Internship Award](#) (\$3,000)

AHSS juniors and seniors completing summer internships for credit | April application deadline

[AHSS Summer Research Award](#) (\$1,250)

AHSS undergraduate and graduate students eligible | April application deadline

[Chancellor's Global Innovation Fellowship](#) (\$5,000)

Undergraduate or graduate students doing global impact internship | April application deadline

[Summer Research Grant](#) (Up to \$3,500)

For summer research projects conducted with a faculty member | April application deadline

[Taylor Internship Scholarship](#) (Daniels College of Business)

Available for paid and unpaid internships for those with financial need | Ongoing application

[Partners in Scholarship](#) (\$1,500)

For conducting a research project with a faculty member | Deadlines on a quarterly basis

[Graduate International Internship Grant](#) (Up to \$1,500)

Supports graduate students with internship positions outside of the U.S. and outside of a student's home country | Deadlines on a quarterly basis

4) Found an internship?

First off, congratulations! Please take a moment to register your internship in [PCO](#).

- Under your Profile, click the red "Report Status" button and enter in your internship information

ⁱ Pioneer Connect: <https://du.alumnifire.com/>

ⁱⁱ Article: <https://hbr.org/2016/02/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-an-informational-interview>

ⁱⁱⁱ DU Alumni LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-denver/alumni/>

^{iv} PCO: du.edu/pioneercareers

^v Article: <https://www.businessinsider.com/jimmy-fallon-networking-key-to-success-2014-11>

^{vi} Andrew Hudson's Job List: <https://andrewhudsonsjobslist.com/>

^{vii} Summer Financial Aid: <https://www.du.edu/financialaid/summer/index.html>