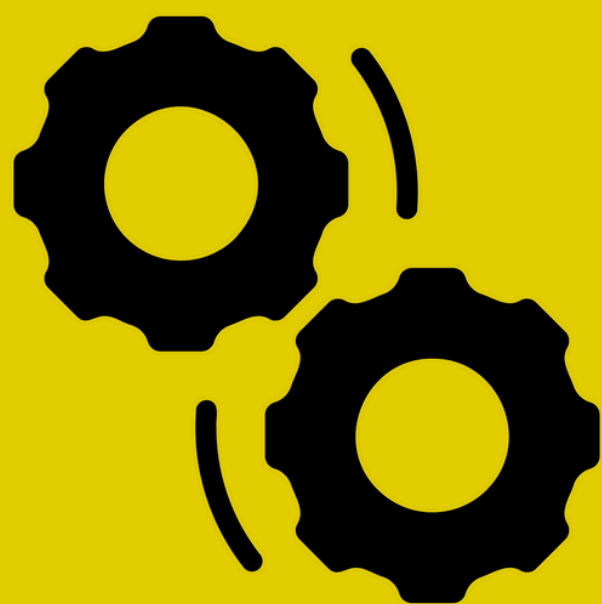


# Student Internship Guide Book

*A Student's Quick  
Reference Guide to  
Securing an Internship*



**Career & Professional  
Development**  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



# WHY INTERNSHIPS MATTER

Internships are a critical part of your college education. An internship is defined as “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional workplace setting.” (National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)). Internship is a broad term and may include other experiences such as research experience, field work, externship, gig work, practicum, and micro-internships, to name a few. This document uses the term ‘internships,’ but it should be considered in this larger definition and context. The key is that the experience allows you to gain experience, develop new skills, and get clarity on your career plans.

Obtaining one or more internships will allow you to practice your job search skills as well as discover employers, create connections, generate references, make mistakes, and gain marketable skills and experiences. Internships are the perfect opportunity to try out different career paths and industries of interest in a low-risk setting before pursuing full-time employment or continuing your education. Additionally, some internships turn into a full-time job.

**STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE INTERNSHIP DURING COLLEGE ARE 2.5X MORE LIKELY TO LAND A JOB AFTER GRADUATION**



## **OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF AN INTERNSHIP OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

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- **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, giving and receiving feedback, and achieving balance in one's own life**
- **To meet and build relationships with other professionals in relevant industries**
- **To develop career readiness skills (i) such as critical thinking, teamwork, and communication.**

# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

There's no one "right" way to land an internship, but some strategies are more effective than others. In most cases, connecting with people in your field of interest, such as alumni, professors, career advisors, and industry professionals, can lead to more personalized and promising opportunities than simply applying 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**

**4.) Tailoring Your Application Materials**



# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

## 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.

- **Create an account in [Crimson Constellation \(ii\)](#) 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 informational interviews with professionals in the field. Unsure how to go about this process? [Read this handout](#)**
- **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 Career & Professional Development 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.

# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

## 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	<a href="http://ibotta.com/">http://ibotta.com/</a>	Jared.fuller@gmail.com	Jared.fuller@gmail.com	Met Jared at DU career fair
Layer3	<a href="http://layer3tv.com">http://layer3tv.com</a>	Patricia.white@layer3.com	Ken Jones - Pioneer Connect	Marketing Associate position open



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

# HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

## 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:

- **PCO (Pioneer Careers Online)** – Employers seeking DU interns
- **Andrew Hudson's Jobs List (vi)** – Colorado-based internship/job search site
- **Idealist (vii)**: Has a lot of great non-profit organizations
- **BuiltIn (viii)**: Great for tech, marketing, HR, and business! Can make location specific
- **CPD Job Board Database:**  
An extensive wide-reaching job board database for DU students

## TAILORING APPLICATION MATERIALS

Once you identify an opportunity, make sure your **resume and cover letter** clearly connect your skills and experiences to the role.

- **Customize for each application:** Highlight relevant coursework, projects, and experiences that match the position's requirements.
- **Show your enthusiasm:** In your cover letter, explain why you're interested in that organization specifically.
- **Use keywords:** Mirror the language from the job description so your materials align with what the employer is seeking.

Tailoring your materials shows employers you've done your homework and that you're genuinely interested in the role, not just sending out mass applications.

# YOUR INTERNSHIP TO-DO LIST:

- Start my internship search approximately 4-6 months before my intended start date
- [Identify industries](#) of interest, skills to use & develop, and preferred type of work
- Update my resume and LinkedIn and ensure they represent my accomplishments and experiences
- Tailor my resume and cover letters to each job application
- Generate a list 10-15 target employers to narrow my search
- Utilize [Crimson Constellation](#) to research alumni working in industries and employers that interest me
- Organize my search by saving internship postings and creating folders for my resumes/cover letters and other important application materials. Use a tool like [RAIN](#) to stay organized
- Set aside \_\_\_ hours per-week to dedicate to my internship search
- Aim to connect with at least one alumni in Crimson Constellation each week
- Practice interview skills using [Big Interview](#)

You are not in this process alone! Schedule an appointment with your Career Advisor or a Peer Advisor in PCO (click the Appointments tab) to help you work through your list.

# 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

## 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.

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.

## 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 \(vii\)](#).*

## 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:

1. [Summer Internship Award Program](#) (Application open in February and closes in mid-April)
2. [Taylor Internship Scholarship](#) (Daniels only)
3. [Student Signature Work: Grants & Showcase](#)

# 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

## Make the most of your internship!

- **Set Goals** - Meet with your supervisor at the start of your internship to identify expectations, goals, and what you hope to accomplish and learn.
- **Observe & Learn** - Take notes in meetings! Notice how others act, dress, and show up for work so you understand office norms. Research the website and read the employee manual or other policy and procedures documents.
- **Ask for Help** - Ask clarifying questions or get support as you learn your responsibilities.
- **Don't Get Bored** - Ask for additional projects or to assist a co-worker with their responsibilities.
- **Manage Your Time** - Meet requested deadlines or talk to your supervisor ahead of time if you think you will miss the deadline.
- **Make Them Want to Hire You Again** - Be enthusiastic and positive! Mirror the behaviors of your supervisor and co-workers and show gratitude for the experience.

## Before your internship ends:

- **Ask for a Reference** - If you had a good experience with your supervisor, ask their permission to include them as a future reference for additional internships, jobs or graduate school. If your relationship isn't the best, ask a co-worker to be a reference for you.
- **Build Your Connections** - Connect with your supervisor and co-workers on LinkedIn. Take it one step further and schedule a meeting with your supervisor before you leave and ask if they have anyone within the organization or industry that they can introduce you to. And, stay in contact with your supervisor!
- **Update Your Resume** - Add your internship while it is still fresh in your mind. Ask your supervisor to review the description for accuracy and completeness.
- **Prepare Samples of Your Work** - Did you work on a project, develop a new marketing piece, write for a blog or create anything tangible that represents your work? Request permission to take samples of your work or create digital pathway to your work.
- **Reflect** - Your internship has become part of your experience, part of your personal and professional story. Ask for feedback from your supervisor and colleagues. Think about the new skills you learned or strengthened, what surprised you about yourself and the work you accomplished, and what challenged you. Being able to articulate and reflect on this experience will enhance your ability to tell this story during your next interview or personal statement for graduate school.

# CITATIONS

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- i NACE: <https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined#competencies>
- 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](http://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/admission-aid/financial-aid-scholarships/undergraduate-financial-aid/types-aid>



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