

# **STUDENT INTERNSHIP & CO-OP GUIDE**

**FROM OFFER TO EXIT**

**UConn**

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**CENTER FOR  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Page 3</b>	Introduction
<b>Page 4</b>	Background Checks
<b>Page 6</b>	Know Your Rights and Responsibilities
<b>Page 7</b>	Post-Interview/Pre-Offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect From the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 10</b>	Post-Interview/Post-Offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect From the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 13</b>	After Acceptance/Before First Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect From the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 16</b>	Your First Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect from the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 19</b>	Your First Week <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect from the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 22</b>	Duration of Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect from the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 27</b>	Ending the Experience and Beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your To Do List</li><li>What to Expect from the Employer</li><li>Words of Wisdom</li><li>UConn Considerations</li></ul>
<b>Page 29</b>	Additional Resources

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help the intern or co-op student who has identified experiential learning sites within the United States and is already interviewing. (If you are still in the early stages of the search process, reach out to a member of the [Career Coaching](#) team at the UConn Career Center for assistance.)

The guide starts with facts and legal considerations, regardless of where you are in the process of securing the opportunity. Laid out chronologically, this guide will provide insight and strategies for those getting ready to accept an offer all the way through the end of the internship or co-op experience. Students new to the process as well as those who have held positions in the past should find relevant information in the guide. Additionally, keep [career competencies](#) in mind, as you participate in the internship or co-op, to enhance your learning and overall experience.

If you found an opportunity outside of the US, skim the information in this guide for general information; then use [GoinGlobal](#) for the career and country guides, as well as discuss details with a Career Coach, [Experiential Global Learning Office](#), or [ISSS](#) as applicable.

# BACKGROUND CHECKS

## A Necessary Step

Employers may choose to run one or more background checks and select specific reports depending on their needs, the nature of the position you're applying for, and where it is located. Once hired, there are rights and responsibilities for both you and your employer that you should familiarize yourself with to ensure you are aware of your obligations and employer limitations.

A background check is not about race, ethnicity, marital status, gender, age, medical status, etc. There are many types of background checks available, with states and cities having different laws regarding how they can be used by employers. While the background check process may seem opaque (and even scary!), you can make it quicker and simpler by being aware of what is needed and providing information in a timely manner (see below); that stated, this process can take days to weeks, or even months, especially for government positions.

### What does a background check consist of?

- Employment and education verification. The screening agency (not necessarily your future employer) will attempt to verify your dates of employment for previous jobs that you listed on your résumé, the university degrees, and any professional licenses you have listed are accurate, as well as check whether you are authorized to work in the United States.
- Criminal and civil record searches (federal, state and county). This is the most common type of background check. If your internship or co-op involves working with children or vulnerable populations, a thorough criminal background check that includes a search of the National Sex Offender Public Registry can be expected.
- DMV records check. If driving is a component of your role, your driving records will likely be a component of the background check as well.
- Credit history. While less common for internships and co-ops, an [employer credit report](#) will typically show your payment record, the amount you owe and your available credit. It does not show your credit score or disclose any account numbers - and omits information that might violate equal employment regulations, such as your birth year or marital status. Employer credit checks are more likely for positions that involve a security clearance or access to money, sensitive customer data, or confidential company information.
  - Know your [rights in the state of Connecticut](#).

# BACKGROUND CHECKS

## A Necessary Step

### What can I do to prepare?

You may think that a background check is straightforward, and you can just sit back and wait for the results; however, that's not always the case. Here are a few examples of how and why you should prepare for a background check and anticipate any hiccups.

- Keep good records of your academic history and past employment. When applicable, get your paystubs and W2s/1099s from past positions in order; you may be asked to provide documented proof of your employment in order to pass the background check. You can also give your previous workplaces a heads-up that they may be contacted and also be ready to share contact names with the screening agency as needed. Retain paper and/or secure digital copies of your academic transcripts and diplomas.
- It may be helpful for you to know what a potential employer can learn from your records. Request information from various sources - such as your state's Department of Public Safety, Department of Motor Vehicles, various financial services firms for a credit report, etc. If you like, before you begin a job search, you can run a complete background check on yourself. This gives you the chance to spot and correct errors if there are any. Note: there may be a charge for these reports.
  - You can start looking for free through the US Government's site, <https://www.usa.gov/credit-reports>. There are three main credit bureaus, and each allows you to initiate one free credit score check a year; many people check one of them in four-month increments, or three times a year. This allows you to get a year's worth of updates at no costs, keeping in mind each bureau analyzes slightly different content.
- Clean up your social media profiles and check your privacy settings. While not typically part of the formal background check process, it is common for hiring managers and recruiters to look at the social media profiles of job candidates. Know your industry and make good decisions with what you post as it regards to alcohol use, language, etc.
- Be honest. If you know of something that may come up in your background check that could be a concern, discuss it with the employer so they hear it from you first. If you are specifically asked about your past in an employment application, tell the truth as an employer is more likely to hear you out if you address parts of your history, while also explaining how you could fulfill your job duties.
- Know Your Rights. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforces a federal law that regulates background reports for employment, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal laws against employment discrimination. [This publication explains these laws](#), and how to contact the FTC and EEOC if you think an employer has broken the law. There might be other rules in your city or state ([Connecticut](#)), so it's a good idea to check with someone who knows the laws of the area where your internship or co-op is based.

# 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 there is not a discrimination policy in writing, ask about protocols should you determine there is a problem.

**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. Other forms of harassment, including microaggressions, can and should be brought to your supervisor’s attention as well as Human Resources. There are online resources that address how to resolve or respond to overt and covert harassment. Reach out to the Career Center or trusted advisors for support. If your supervisor is the person causing the harassment, or you are experiencing a toxic work environment, alert the Center for Career Development by email or call 860-486-3013, regardless of your home campus. You may also reach out to UConn’s Office of Institutional Equity directly at [www.equity.uconn.edu](http://www.equity.uconn.edu) or <https://equity.uconn.edu/reporting-form/>.

**Liability** Understand legal liability issues related to your work site and activities. The University of Connecticut does not typically 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.

**UConn Student First** While you are interning or on a co-op, you are still connected to the University in regards to the UConn Student Conduct Code, so please keep that in mind with your activities, choices, and behaviors.

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

Lastly, this experience will ideally help you determine your next step in your major or career development. Whether you pursue the field or industry that matches the internship or co-op, or not, we hope you are able look back on it as a valuable use of your time.



# **POST-INTERVIEW / PRE-OFFER**



# POST-INTERVIEW / PRE-OFFER

## The interview process is complete and now you're waiting to hear back

After interviewing candidates (once or more likely, multiple times), an organization's search committee, human resources, and/or hiring manager will determine which individual best fits their needs and make a formal offer. Keep these considerations in mind while you wait to hear back from the employer.

### Your To Do List

- **Send "Thank You" notes within 24-48 hours of your interview.** Prompt interview follow-up indicates to the employer that you're still interested and excited.
  - "Thank You" notes can be sent via email. If you really want to stand out, you could also consider sending a handwritten card.
  - Format your Thank You/Post-Interview Follow-Up correspondence [correctly](#).
- **Update your references.** Keep them apprised of your interview process so they can be on the lookout for a reference check.
- **Set up/Clean out Voicemail.** Remember to have a professional voicemail set up and able to take messages for follow-up conversations, second interviews, an offer, etc.
- **International Opportunities.** If you have been offered an international position, you need to connect with the [UConn Experiential Global Learning Office](#) for Travel Advisory recommendations and [student international travel policies](#).
- **Be aware.** If an employer calls or emails you for references, get back to them within 1-2 business days. This will indicate you are interested in the position and that you are professional. If you tell an employer when you are going to send a list of references, stick to your word.
- **Don't rush the process.** Everything now is a process - from the paperwork to drafting an offer. This may take a few days or a few weeks. Stay positive, and trust that the company is going through their own process on how they hire candidates.
- **Follow-up if needed.** After approximately two weeks have elapsed and you still haven't heard anything, you can reach out to the employer and ask for an update on their timeline and process.
  - This note is not the place to ask about your specific candidacy; it is more general.



# POST-INTERVIEW / PRE-OFFER

It may take several weeks to receive an offer, depending on the position and the organization. Here is an example of how to politely follow up:

Dear [Employer's Name],

I hope all is well. I'm following up to see if you have any status updates regarding the <Internship or Co-op Title> position at [Organization] that I interviewed for on <Date>. Any updates that you can share at this time would be most appreciated.

If I can be of any further assistance or if there is any additional information I can provide, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you again for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.  
Sincerely,

[Your Name]

**Keep applying!** This may sound counter intuitive, but don't stop applying until you have secured an internship or co-op in writing. You may be excited about the opportunity for which you just interviewed, yet you will want to keep looking until something is definite.

Remember, you are applying in order to secure multiple interviews, with the idea that an interview yields an offer.

## What to Expect From the Employer

The employer may reach out to you with additional questions, but more than likely you will have to sit tight until the hiring committee has concluded their internal process.

## Words of Wisdom

- You can use your "Thank You" correspondence to the search committee to underscore your value proposition. Remind them what you bring to the table and why you'd be a good fit for the role and company culture.
  - You can also address any points you want to follow up from your interview, such as areas you forgot to mention or reinforce a point of emphasis.
- Understand the employer's hiring timeline. If you didn't get a chance to ask this during the interview process, you can contact the recruiter or person who conducted the interview, to request the information via email (see example above).

## UConn Considerations

- If you are considering seeking credit for the internship, visit <https://career.uconn.edu/earn-credit-for-your-internship/> to review course requirements and see tuition/fee structure.
- If you are looking to discuss a co-op, email [careercoop@uconn.edu](mailto:careercoop@uconn.edu) to learn about the necessary steps.
- If you have questions about the employer's legitimacy, the interview, etc., email [internships@uconn.edu](mailto:internships@uconn.edu).



# **POST-INTERVIEW / POST-OFFER**

# POST-INTERVIEW / POST-OFFER

## You got the offer - congratulations! What's next?

The following tips and suggestions will help you navigate the offer and acceptance process in a manner that reflects well on you professionally and sets you up for a positive start.

### Your To Do List

- **If you receive a phone call** from the employer letting you know that you will be receiving a formal offer:
  - Thank them for the call; it's important to be enthusiastic but do not accept right away. You might lose the opportunity to negotiate if you "say yes" immediately.
  - Be sure to get the offer in writing-may need to ask for it, while others provide it automatically.
- **Once you get the offer in writing:**
  - **Read it carefully** to make sure necessary details are included and correct; acknowledge the offer was received, within 1-2 business days after reviewing the next few points regarding negotiation and the position's timeframe:
  - **Determine whether you are going to negotiate.**
    - Ask for a specific amount of time to think about the offer and get back to them within the agreed upon period.
    - Typically, 3-5 business days is an acceptable time-period. You can ask the employer by what time they need a response.
    - Even if you're offered a position and are happy with the initial salary, consider negotiating and/or asking to review the benefits package offered to you.
    - Internships and Co-ops are not typically as negotiable as the first time job; however, practicing these conversations can be helpful.
    - Review the Career Center's [Negotiating the Offer](#) publication for more tips and considerations.
- **Communicate** any pre-scheduled commitments to employer such as planned vacations.
- **Discuss** if any reasonable accommodations are needed for you to complete your work assignment.

### What to Expect from the Employer

- **A formal offer** - Just like full-time offers, an internship or co-op offer should be in writing. Many companies will first share a position offer over the phone, yet the offer is not considered "official," until they have sent it in writing. This point is essential, to make sure the terms are clear to both parties involved.
  - If you do not receive your offer in writing, it is perfectly acceptable to request they send you an official letter (usually via email but snail mail is acceptable too).
- **An offer letter should include the following:**
  - **Standard Information**
    - Internship/co-op title
    - Start date and end date, which may include training schedule
    - Supervisor's name (optional)
    - Duties (optional)
    - Deadline for responding:
      - Typically at least 2 or 3 business days at a minimum, while some employers allow for weeks or even a month
      - If the employer is vague or pressures for an answer within 24 hours, reach out to the Career Center for guidance!
    - Format (virtual, in-person, or hybrid)

# POST-INTERVIEW / POST-OFFER

- **Compensation/Benefits (as applicable)**
  - Rate of pay and basis (hourly wage, stipend, or salary)
  - Housing/relocation assistance provided
- **Conditions (optional)**
  - Maintaining a certain GPA prior to the start date
  - Successful completion of a drug test, medical exam, or background check
  - Student earning credit for the internship
- **Legal Agreements (optional)**
  - Non-disclosure: employees, including interns, many need to agree to keep company's intellectual property private to maintain the company's competitive advantage
  - Non-competes should not be included (contact the Career Center if one is mentioned)

## Words of Wisdom

- Considerations on evaluating your internship or co-op offer.
  - **First**, determine whether you can afford to accept the offer.
    - Consider any benefits in addition to salary or stipend (relocation assistance, professional development, travel, etc.).
    - It is not typical to negotiate internship or co-op salaries, though if lower than standard, you can opt to discuss options.
    - Use the [UConn Career Center's Negotiations Tip Sheet](#) as a guide.
  - **Second**, evaluate how the internship aligns with your personal and professional goals.
  - **Additionally**, other areas of consideration that have value beyond salary or stipend include (but are not limited to):
    - Opportunity title; organization's position and stature (prestige); commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); supervisor's work and communication style; access to networking opportunities; organizational culture and your fit within it; future internship, co-ops, or even full-time employment opportunities.

## UConn Considerations

- If you have any questions on the legitimacy of the organization, offer, or want support for the process, reach out to the [Career Center Coaching](#) team.
- For experiences where earning credit is an absolute necessity, determine whether you are going to [seek credit](#) for your internship before you accept the offer.
  - Internship credit must be approved by the course instructor BEFORE the start of the summer/semester for which you hope to earn credit.
  - Credit = a class, so there will be tuition, fees, and assignments.
- Confirm with Co-op Coordinator if the position is [co-op eligible](#), again, before accepting any offers.
  - Do not withdraw from classes for the semester you are taking the co-op (this is done later with co-op registration).
  - If you have not yet done so, meet with your academic advisor to see how taking a co-op impacts your plan of study and graduation date.
- **If you are not a US Citizen:**
  - Undocumented students are encouraged to meet with a member of the Career Center team to discuss their options.
  - International students need to connect with their [UConn ISSS advisor](#) to discuss visa requirements, CPT, OPT, etc.



**AFTER ACCEPTANCE /  
BEFORE THE FIRST DAY**

# AFTER ACCEPTANCE / BEFORE FIRST DAY

Congratulations on securing this opportunity! To set yourself up for success, consider these points as you prepare for your first day.

## Your To Do List

- Send a thank you note to your references if you have not already done so. Let them know where you will be working and express sincere appreciation for their help.
- Send a thank you note to your interviewer(s) too, reinforcing your enthusiasm for joining their organization.
- Consider asking for a meeting with your hiring manager, supervisor, or human resources to discuss the following items. It is possible too, that those same people reach out to you first! Some matters may be discussed in writing, while others will be better verbally, over the phone, or even during a virtual or an in-person meeting.
  - Though it may seem obvious, if you haven't already done so, confirm your start and end dates, as well as the time you need to arrive. If in person, plan to show up in your actual work unit about 10 minutes early (allow for time to get lost!).
  - Follow up with any commitments such as pre-planned vacation or perhaps a class time that could interfere with work hours, with them, so your schedule can be properly managed (If you have not yet discussed, refer to [Negotiation tips](#)).
  - If not yet confirmed, determine if you will be working on-site, remotely, or a combination of both.
    - If virtual, ask about computer support and tech expectations (supplies and technology you might need, camera on/off, use of virtual backgrounds), other norms, first day protocols and expectations, documenting time, etc. Will the organization be providing your equipment, or do you need to supply your own?
    - If on-site, do you need to bring an ID to park, access the building, etc.? Where do you park? Do you need a parking pass or permit, and if yes, what is the procedure to get it?
    - What is the expected attire for either situation? Are there any items of clothing or body art/jewelry that might not be allowed to be visible?

## Test Run

- If virtual, confirm your internet connection is strong enough, camera and microphone settings are set correctly, lighting and shadows are correct, determine where you will physically work, have conversations with anyone else in your household about noise, pets, interruptions, etc.
- For on-site experiences, secure your transportation and do a test run at the time you would normally be on the road, to make sure you know how to get there as well as how long to allocate for the commute. If driving, be sure the vehicle is in good working order; if taking public transportation, learn the schedule, and build in extra time for delays.

## Housing/Accommodations

- Depending on your current situation and the work site, you may need to make alternative housing arrangements during the internship or co-op.
  - See if the employer has a relocation department or similar mechanism, that can assist you in finding suitable and safe housing
  - If there is a college or university nearby, they may allow you to live on their campus, have a listing of sublets, as well as legitimate landlords, etc. See if there is an Off Campus Housing office, such as UConn's.

## Insurance

- You may need to show proof of personal health and accident insurance, in case of injury or other similar circumstance.
- If your internship is a required aspect of a course or major, work with your faculty member or internship supervisor for University insurance or other documents that may need to be signed.
  - Typically, the University does not incur costs associated with the student's internship or can be held responsible for medical or legal expenses related to the internship or co-op experience on site.

# AFTER ACCEPTANCE / BEFORE FIRST DAY

## What To Expect From The Employer

- The employer may reach out to you ahead of time to discuss the following topics (or this could happen on your first day):
  - You may be told your hire is contingent upon a security or background check, which could include fingerprinting, and you may be asked to pay for it.
  - The employer may discuss your physical work station if you are working on-site; you can discuss sharing work space, mask policies, cleaning protocols, etc.
  - Complete hiring paperwork, I-9, W-4, direct deposit, confidentiality and/or non-disclosure agreements, emergency contacts, etc. If you are given a deadline, be sure to meet it, early if possible.
    - If you are shown a non-compete agreement, reach out to the Career Center for guidance.
    - If you are offered or asked to complete a 1099, that is not an internship tax document; instead, it is a form for independent contractors. Discuss with the Career Center team, as you want to make sure all is legitimate.
  - Determine you have multiple forms of official ID for your first day.

## Words of Wisdom

- Review the job description and any other materials shared with you, to refamiliarize yourself with the position and expectations.
- Be sure you have necessary contact information in an easy to get to location - minimally email addresses for key people: Supervisor, HR, Recruiter. If appropriate, they may choose to share cell phone numbers with you, as well as ask for yours.
- [Watch career related videos](#), read articles, etc. about customs and rules within your field. Your bosses may expect you to already know this content and may be frustrated if you don't demonstrate some proficiency right from the beginning.
  - Topics to consider include handshaking protocols, appropriate attire, communication strategies, writing professional emails, attending/participating in meetings, interacting with other co-workers, etc.
  - Though these may sound basic or common, each work environment has different norms, and all may be different than a university; being introduced to them before you start will make it easier to adjust.
- Nerves are normal. If you feel anxious, uptight, and/or excited, that means your body and mind recognize that you are about to do something important and you care. Keep your eyes open to new ideas and see what happens.

## UConn Considerations

- Confirm any course registrations are complete, if interning for credit or completing a co-op, through email or conversations with the course instructor or Co-op Coordinator.
  - Review syllabi and make sure you have everything you need regarding the class.
  - If prompted, you may have documents that need employer signatures, so have them ready for your supervisor, HR, Internship Program Coordinator, etc.





**YOUR FIRST DAY**

# YOUR FIRST DAY

All those months of preparation, applications, interviews, and organization has led you to this – the first day of your internship or co-op. Your first day is an opportunity to meet the people you'll be working with and to make a positive first impression. First days can be stressful, so do your best to follow these tips, and set yourself up for success.

## Your To Do List

- **Make sure you are prepared for the first day** – this could include getting enough sleep, eating a meal prior to starting your day, ironing/steaming clothes, etc.
- **Be early.** Arriving around 20-30 minutes early the first day should allow you ample time to find your workplace, and it allows some buffer time in case you do get lost or held up on your way.
  - If your first day is virtual, follow the same 30 minute rule to ensure you are logged in on time and don't have connectivity issues.
- **Dress for success.** Unless you have been told specifically what to wear, it is always a good idea to be slightly overdressed on your first day (whether in person or virtual). [Check out this video for more information.](#)
- **Be courteous and professional** to everyone you interact with. Remember: first impressions matter!
- **Pack a lunch.** If you don't know the norms for meal breaks, best to be prepared and have food with you. Plus - being hungry can be quite the distraction.
  - If you find your colleagues all go out for lunch and invite you along, consider joining if possible, and you can save your lunch for your second day – but at least you won't be starving.
- **Bring a notebook and pen/pencils.** You'll likely be taking lots of notes your first day. The organization may have ones you can use too, but you'll be prepared nonetheless.
- **Meet everyone you can.** Try to introduce yourself to everyone you'll be working with, especially colleagues in your immediate area.
- **You'll be provided with lots of paperwork**, some of which you will be expected to complete and some you will be responsible for simply reviewing. It's important to carefully read everything provided - especially documents that you are asked to sign such as a code of conduct, non-disclosure, and intellectual property agreements.
  - If you have any questions or would like clarification on anything, you can ask your supervisor or an HR representative. Asking questions now avoids questions later. When in doubt, ask.
- **Confirm check-in schedule with supervisor and/or mentor.** Will it be once a day? Once a week? Is there an online system or do they want to see you?
- **Set up your workspace.** Verify that you have everything you need to be successful (e.g., technology, office supplies, etc.).
- **Familiarize yourself with the office.** Where is the printer/copier? Your supervisor's office? Restroom? Supply closet?
- **If you have time, log into any applicable systems to ensure your credentials work properly and you have the correct levels of access needed.**
- **Complete a [Learning Agreement](#)** - a learning agreement is a document that outlines your goals surrounding skills and career objectives. Completed with your supervisor, it allows you to get the most out of the experience.
  - If you are earning credit or participating in a co-op, please refer to the "UConn Considerations" section for more information. For all other students, completing a learning agreement is strongly suggested but not required by the university.
  - Use the [Career Competencies](#) as a guide; adjust and add other skills as you deem appropriate.
    - You will want to identify the skills that match your current strengths with ones you want to develop, to stand out in your field and gain that competitive edge.

# YOUR FIRST DAY

## What To Expect From The Employer

- **You'll likely be provided with an onboarding schedule on your first day.** This process may take place over a period of several days or weeks.
- **HR Paperwork.** You will likely be responsible for submitting a variety of documentation to the employer on your first day (or before).
- **If your internship is in person, you will likely be provided with a workplace tour** - and if not, you can ask for one.
- **Reviewing work schedule.** Expect the organization to cover expectations for your arrival time, sick requests, other time off, hours worked, and time cards. The employer will anticipate you working the assigned schedule and to notify them if unable to meet it.

## Words of Wisdom

- Be patient with yourself. It's only your first day. You're not expected to know everything right away.
- Approach your internship or co-op experience with an open mind.
  - Remember: the purpose of an internship or co-op is to learn and to discover what you're interested in, as well as what might not interest you as much. As an intern, you're supposed to be curious and engaged, but you also aren't expected to have a vast amount of knowledge or experience, so it's important to reflect on what you'd like to learn more about. Begin your first day by asking some of those questions.
  - An internship or co-op is often about what you make of it and in order for it to be as successful as possible, you should voice any questions or concerns upfront - and consider sharing any ideas you may have as well.
- Consider your personality: are you more of an introvert or extrovert?
  - If you're introverted, do your best to speak up a few times a day, plan on extroverting with other students and employees. Build up your energy.
  - If you're more extroverted, challenge yourself to observe more than usual, learn by watching and listening.
- As you learn more about your role and your employer, you'll likely find yourself with lots of questions. This is normal and expected. Keep a list of your questions as they arise, so you can ask your supervisor and/or other colleagues at the appropriate moment.
- Take lots of notes. Not only will this help you to absorb all the information being provided to you, it will also demonstrate how engaged you are to your new colleagues.
- When you meet people for the first time, try saying their name ("Great to meet you, First Name."). This will help you remember their name.
  - Determine if you want to share your pronouns, as well as if the organization recognizes pronoun usage in email signatures, nametags, business cards, on a daily basis, etc.
- **Silence your cell phone** and be conscious about using it. You don't want to be seen as that student who's always on their phone.
- Observe the organization's work culture in order to make a good impression: how chatty are people? Is music allowed at work stations? Do employees wear ear buds? (This is a topic you can also discuss with supervisor, mentor, or other company representative)

## UConn Considerations

- [Learning Agreements](#) are documents where your goals and expectations are outlined and reviewed by you, your onsite supervisor, and if applicable, your UConn instructor or coordinator.
- Other Forms
  - If earning internship course credit or on an official UConn Co-op, you will have additional forms to complete, sign, and review with your supervisor. You may have to show the employer proof stating your UConn status, course registration, etc. Be sure to have all of these prepared and ready for your first day or first week.
- When interning for credit or on co-op, the rules and regulations associated with student conduct and [Community Standards](#) still apply. Be smart and safe.
  - Remember, you are like an ambassador between the university and the organization. There are standards to uphold and reputations to consider - yours as well as UConn in general.



**YOUR FIRST WEEK**

# YOUR FIRST WEEK

Congratulations! You made it through your first day. Here are some tips and considerations to have a successful first week.

## Your To Do List

- **Keep introducing yourself** to your new colleagues. Meet everyone you can - and don't wait for others to introduce themselves to you.
  - If the organization doesn't already encourage or arrange for this, you can start scheduling 15-minute meet and greet sessions with your co-workers and your supervisor. Whether they are formal or informal, these one-on-ones are essential not only for getting to know your team members, but also for learning how your role can support their own.
- **Make your workspace comfortable and productive**, and continue to assess what you need in order to be productive.
- **Come up with an effective organizational and time management system** in place to set yourself up for success. For instance, you can use online systems or just pad/pen to create a to-do list for each day and/or week. Ask about deadlines and protocols.
- **Draft a list of personal goals for your internship.** What do you want to get out of your experience? Think about how about your goals align with your supervisor's expectations. Refer to the [UConn Learning Agreement](#) for ideas for layout and structure, even if not taking an internship course.
- **Look up and engage [Employee Resource Groups \(ERGs\)](#) at the organization.** ERGs are voluntary, employee-led groups made up of individuals who join together based on common interests, backgrounds, or demographic factors. Read this [blog post](#) about ERGs from the UConn Career Center, to learn more.
- **Update your [LinkedIn profile](#) with your new position.** You can also do a post announcing your internship to your network. Add colleagues from your new employer to your network; write a note of introduction - do not use the generic message.

## What To Expect From The Employer

- Your first week will likely be largely onboarding, training opportunities, meet-and-greets, facilitated networking, etc.
- Your calendar should start filling up. By the end of your first week, you should have a sense of what regularly scheduled meetings you will be expected to attend.
- They may check in on you often, to make sure you understand your tasks; or they may leave you completely alone to figure it out. Either way, make sure you do the job you were hired to do, and keep a list of questions for anything you don't understand or cannot figure out on your own.
  - You may be asked to some administrative work or other tasks not typically considered part of an internship or co-op. As long as it is not illegal, demeaning, or inappropriate, and not more than 25% of your job, it is usually acceptable, and to notify them if unable to meet it.
  - Ex: Your supervisor may ask you to make copies of documents or to set up a room for a meeting. These are tasks many staff help out and do.

# YOUR FIRST WEEK

## Words of Wisdom

- Stay positive. Keep an upbeat attitude and avoid complaining or talking negatively.
- [Career Competencies](#). A recent survey of internship supervisors rated these three skills as most important in their staff: Critical Thinking, Communication, and Professionalism. The latter is hard to state on a résumé yet essential to demonstrate while working.
- Err on the side of professional - especially during your first week.
  - This means watch your cell phone use, use appropriate language, don't use headphones or play music in your workspace, unless directed otherwise, etc.
  - Observe co-workers and managers for cues, both subtle and direct.
  - Unless specifically directed to do so, keep all office supplies, documents, and work technology at the place of employment.
- Take advantage of any “optional” opportunities for networking, committee assignments, social outings, etc. This is your chance to learn and make connections.
  - Once you have a sense of your role, see if there are meetings or appointments you can attend, shadow, etc. It will allow you to learn more about the field.
  - If you're invited to happy hour or after work socializing opportunities, consider going. Be conscious of alcohol consumption in front of your new colleagues. You want to present as a professional - even outside the office.
  - If there's not any organized social outings, maybe think about starting something for you and your peers. Find out first if there are any rules regarding structured group gatherings.
- Additional Ideas, including how to write a professional email and other professional tips - [Rice University's Professional & Communication Guidelines](#)

## UConn Considerations

- If not already completed, turn in required paperwork for courses or co-op.
- Remember you can contact the Career Center [Internship](#) and [Co-op](#) staff with questions or concerns along the way. We're here to help!



# **DURATION OF EXPERIENCE**



# DURATION OF EXPERIENCE

For the next several weeks to months, there will be continued opportunities to build relationships, show your competency, and establish your reputation.

## Your To Do List

- Set up [informal/informational interviews](#) with other employees to get a better sense of the different routes into the field. Try to have about one each week, 3-4 each month. The idea is to [build and expand your professional network](#), making connections while in your current role as well as after it ends.
- Review your bank account to confirm your paycheck was deposited (if paid, if using direct deposit). If not using direct deposit and are getting paid directly, has that happened on the predetermined schedule?
- Establish your best work routine.
- Learn the cultural norms and expectations from individuals and the organization.
- Attend events designed for interns and co-op students, as well as for all staff.
- At the halfway point, meet with your supervisors to discuss your Learning Agreement and Objectives. See if any need tweaking.
  - If any do, and you are connected to a class or co-op, be sure to update your instructor or coordinator.

## What to Expect from the Employer

- If applicable, it is possible the position may be converted from internship or co-op, to a full-time role. Listen to the employer when they discuss this concept, and if they don't bring it up, you can, about one-third of the way through the experience.
  - If you are uncertain how to approach them, reach out for [Career Coaching](#).
- Weekly or bi-weekly/monthly meetings and check-ins with you.
  - Have notes ready to update on your progress, share successes and challenges as they occur. They may want a progress report on a long-term project vs. waiting until the due date, so they can provide any needed feedback.
    - That stated, most supervisors do want you to try and figure out tasks and situations on your own first, as much as possible. When you introduce a problem, also provide a solution if possible.
  - Your supervisor could change - sometimes they get promoted or leave. If that occurs, you will need to review and possibly revise your initial expectations and learning agreement with your new supervisor.
  - Your projects could also change, or your employer may add new trainings, for any number of reasons, and often nothing to do with your work performance. Do your best to be adaptable and amenable.
    - If it is in fact performance based, learn how to adjust and redirect, so the situation gets resolved. Ask appropriate questions and turn to a mentor (or the Career Center) for guidance if you have questions or concerns beyond what your supervisor has shared with you.

# DURATION OF EXPERIENCE

## Words of Wisdom

- Working with your boss
  - Some employers have a clear communication and supervision style, while others are more fluid or inconsistent. Certain supervisors are visual and like images, and others may prefer to talk and listen. Adapting your work style to your boss is called [Managing Up](#) and allows you to be a more savvy communicator.
  - Pay attention to cues and ask appropriate questions of them as well as your co-workers, without any gossiping!
  - Keep your supervisor(s) updated on project progress, as they don't like to find out there are problems late in the timeline.
  - If you determine your boss is someone who is open to talking about other topics besides your projects, you can see about discussing their career path, getting career advice, etc.
  - Be open to ongoing feedback; when delivered well, constructive criticism will help you learn and grow. Own mistakes you make, and it is always best to give your supervisor a heads up, in case they need to step in.
    - Ex: An employee recently organized an event and accidentally forgot to include a participant. By the time they realized it, the event was less than a week away. When the team was then invited, the participant's manager was greatly annoyed by the oversight. The employee told their supervisor, who contacted the manager first, to state and reassure that no further problems would occur, as well as offer ways to support their team in preparing for the event.
  - Always make your boss look good; this means no surprises or putting either of you in an awkward position situation.
    - Ex: you are in the hallway and casually have a conversation with a department head who is the same level as your boss; afterwards, you decide to send a thank you note and connect on LinkedIn. It would be smart to first drop a note or pop in and let your boss know you met the individual and that they shared some good advice about your career path. This way, when your boss' peer sees your boss and mentions meeting you, they are aware the conversation existed and won't feel betrayed or foolish.
  - Ask questions strategically. Some bosses are fine with daily interruptions or meetings, while others will only be available for a meeting once a week. If something is time sensitive, of course don't wait; use your critical thinking skills to problem solve.
  - If you don't already have one, put together an [Elevator Pitch](#). This 30-45 second self- summary will be needed when you start meeting with key stakeholders at your internship or co-op site.
  - Should you be in an environment where you are made to feel uncomfortable by co-workers or your supervisor, reach out to the Career Center for assistance. Working in a toxic or hostile environment is not something you should have to tolerate.

# DURATION OF EXPERIENCE

## Words of Wisdom

- Professional Development
  - Take advantage of professional development opportunities, even when not required.
    - You don't necessarily have to stay the entire time, extrovert for hours, etc.
    - Showing up is half the battle!
  - **NETWORK** - all in caps, because it has been stated already, yet cannot be emphasized too much.
    - Find ways to connect to other interns or co-op students, reach out to supervisors if you have an interest in the work they do, their background, etc.
    - Your employer may have set up formal mentorship opportunities; it is up to you to create informal ones. Most people like talking about themselves, so asking someone about the work they do and their path, tends to yield positive results.
  - Invitations to social events will be both formal and informal. If you are under 21 years of age, do not put yourself in a situation where you are tempted to drink alcohol. If you are of legal age, and can have a drink, remember that you are either with your bosses or co-workers, and your behavior might be monitored and/or impact future decisions at your place of work.
    - Ex: At a professional conference, a 1st year graduate student had too much to drink on the last night when there was a social and a dance, and ultimately she behaved in highly unprofessional ways. Her classmates helped her to her room as soon as they could, but the damage had been done. The hiring managers in attendance took note and the following year, when the student was job searching, were not interested in meeting her. Perhaps they could have been forgiving, but they weren't. Don't risk it.
  - Be proactive! Tell your supervisor your work related interests and/or areas you'd like to learn more about. If you have project capacity, ask to work on additional projects.
  - If you find yourself working at a pace that allows you to complete projects thoroughly yet early, ask your supervisor for additional work. If none is available, ask if you can offer your time or talents to others on your team, at the organization, etc.
    - Do not use down time to text, surf the net, email, etc.
    - Should there not be extra work for you or you are not able to help anyone out, go to your Learning Agreement and work on your objectives. For example, if you are still looking for Excel proficiency, down-time at the internship or co-op may be an acceptable use of your time.
  - Keep track of your projects and update your [master résumé](#) throughout the experience. Give as much detail as possible, as it is easy to forget details.
  - Update your [LinkedIn](#) profile too, to reflect both the opportunity itself, as well as the projects and responsibilities you've taken on.
    - Use LinkedIn as a way to connect with co-workers and state newly acquired skills, as well as find mentors in your industry.
  - Take lunch breaks, both alone and with your co-workers, from all levels (other students, part-time and full-time, supervisors, etc). Get to know people on a personal level.
  - Have a good note taking system (if you use your phone to take notes, find out if that is an acceptable method or if the organization prefers you use a laptop, tablet, or notebook). You will not be able to remember everything, so write down more than you think you will need to know.
  - At the halfway point, review your Learning Objectives to see if you are on track or need to adjust. Sometimes a new goal might emerge, or you will discover that others are not attainable or relevant and need to be removed.

# DURATION OF EXPERIENCE

## UConn Considerations

- If working with UConn in any capacity for credit or co-op, inform your course instructor or coordinator, if your supervisor changes or your tasks completely shift, so information can be updated.
- Conduct a mid-point review with your supervisor to determine if your Learning Agreement is still accurate; adjust if necessary and submit changes to the UConn contact if earning credit or on co-op..
  - If earning credit or on co-op, a check-in conversation may occur at the half-way point of your experience, with your instructor or co-op coordinator.
  - The UConn staff may also reach out to your supervisor at this time to discuss the experience and to see if future Huskies might be good fits with them.
- See if any UConn alums are working with your organization.
  - Ask your supervisor or HR if they can share that information or make introductions.
  - Use the [Husky Mentor Network](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to locate alums or others who may be able to provide key insights into your experience.
- If on co-op, pay attention to University emails, Daily Digest, etc. for deadlines related to housing, course selection, financial aid, etc.



# **ENDING THE EXPERIENCE AND BEYOND**

# ENDING THE EXPERIENCE AND BEYOND

Wrapping up your internship or co-op in a professional and productive way will allow you to keep your lines of communication open for years to come.

## Your To Do List

- Set up a final meeting with your supervisor.
  - Ask supervisors and any other key individuals if they would be willing to serve as positive references for you moving forward.
- If you have been asked to return for another position, extend the co-op or internship with a new start date, or perhaps were offered a FT role, discuss next steps with your current supervisor.
- If you are interested in a FT role but none are available when you leave, besides sharing with your direct supervisor, sign up for any job alerts they provide.
- Save portfolio pieces or other content that is not proprietary to your place of employment.
- Collect business cards, emails, phone numbers, etc. from your internal contacts - FT staff, other interns or co-op students, clients, etc.
  - Use Linked in too, to stay in touch with people
  - You can write recommendations as well on LinkedIn after the experience ended.
- Write thank you notes to your direct supervisor(s).
  - Consider emailing others in the organization you wish to stay in touch with, and offer your personal email as a means of communication to reach you.
- Work on your résumé, updating to reflect the experience. Have your supervisor and/or mentor review it for accuracy and industry perspective. Bring it to the Career Center too, for an impartial critique.

## Words of Wisdom

- Stay in touch with supervisor(s) and other key people, sending a note or LinkedIn message every 3-4 months.
  - If you know their birthday, always appropriate to wish them a happy one.
  - It is usually acceptable to send a holiday card.
  - When you have a milestone or big announcement, be sure to share it with them; it is nice touch to let them know before you make it public.
- Bring back your knowledge to the classroom.
- Facilitate meetings, introductions, etc. between anyone at UConn and your organization, if the situation presents itself.
- Reflect upon your experience; if you are interning for credit or doing an official co-op, you might be asked to do it anyway. Writing a reflection piece will help you articulate your thoughts and prepare you for future interviews, as well as help you focus on your interests and skills for your next position.

## UConn Considerations

- Nominate your employer for Intern or Co-op Employer of the Year.
- Nominate yourself for Intern or Co-op Student of the Year.
- Answer the UConn Experiential Learning Survey sent out each year.
- If interned for credit or did a co-op, submit final paperwork and then confirm your grade/transcript notation is correct on your transcript.
  - You may have the name of the experience also listed on your transcript if you interned for credit or were on co-op. Discuss with your course instructor on setting this up with the Registrar's Office.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Internqube](#)

[Career Advice | Chegg Internships](#)

[19 Tips for a Fantastic Internship | Indeed.com](#)

[10 Ways To Get the Most From Your Internship | Indeed.com](#)

