

CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP SEARCH

Conducting an effective internship search is a process that includes steps that will ultimately lead to a “fit” or “match” with an appropriate site. An internship is a real world, career-related work experience, where students assume temporary roles and projects as workers in an organization.

SELF ASSESSMENT

According to the Webster’s Dictionary, self assessment is the evaluation and judgment of one’s own abilities, actions, and attitudes. Self assessment is a key step in finding an internship that is a good “fit” with one’s education and experience. Successful students should consider their abilities, interests, and goals while searching for an appropriate internship. Ask yourself the following questions to begin the process of self-assessment:

- In what *industry* am I searching-clinical, non-profit, government, business/industry?
- Am I limited to a specific geographic *location*?
- In what *type* of work do I want to engage-patient care, administration?
- Full-time or part-time? Paid or unpaid?

GOAL: Brainstorm and list the attributes and qualities of an internship you would like to pursue.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Career exploration is the process of identifying, evaluating, and locating potential career opportunities. Students should explore career options by using a variety of tools. These tools may include information interviewing and volunteering.

Informational Interviewing

An excellent way to learn more about career fields is to speak with people who are currently employed in career areas of interest to you. Your personal network of friends, family, colleagues, faculty members, and current and past employers can help identify people who are willing to meet with you to discuss their profession. Once you are able to establish contact and request a personal meeting, be sure to prepare for the appointment. Complete some research about the organization and the person’s position. Make a list of questions to ask during the informational interview.

GOAL: Create a list of questions that would be appropriate to ask in an informational interview.

Volunteering

It is often the case that researching a career and talking with professionals isn’t enough to gain a greater understanding of specific roles and responsibilities. Students who feel that a “hand on” approach is more effective may wish to consider volunteering for an organization. In some cases, a volunteer experience can become an internship or employment.

GOAL: Consider several sites at which you may be able to provide volunteer services.

JOB SEARCH MATERIALS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Presenting effective forms of communication to potential employers is a key component to finding an internship. Students will need to prepare several documents in preparation for communication with potential employers. These documents include:

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Follow-up Letter and/or Thank you notes

Students should use the resources of Career Connection in the Younkin Success Center to perfect their resume and other correspondence. Career Connection can be found online at www.careerconnection.osu.edu.

GOAL: Create a resume and other correspondence to be reviewed by counselors, friends, and family.

IDENTIFYING CAREER CLUSTERS

Students can pursue careers and internships in a variety of settings related to healthcare. Generally, students can find internships and employment in one of the following “career clusters:”

- Clinical/Hospital
- Government
- Non-Profit
- Business and Industry

Students should consider the industry which best fits their interests, abilities, and values. Organizing by career cluster can help more effectively manage the search for potential employers.

GOAL: Consider potential career clusters which might be a good fit with your interests, abilities, and values.

NETWORKING

One of the most effective and underutilized methods of finding an internship or employment is networking. Networking is building relationships with personal contacts and marketing yourself to friends, family, colleagues, peers, and other personal contacts. Networking is important because there are many jobs and internships available that are never posted on websites or advertized in newspapers or professional publications.

Think about how you might start a network. Attend job fairs, collect business cards, join a local networking group, join a professional organization, volunteer at local events which include business professionals, join a club or organization in the area that is devoted to your personal interests.

GOAL: Begin a “file” of potential relationships that may help you in your internship and employment search.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Identifying potential internship sites and employers can be the most challenging aspect of the internship search. Students should use a variety of networks to identify potential employers. The School of Allied Medical Professions circulates information via email to students about potential employers who have contacted the Office of Student Affairs. The School isn’t the only place to locate internships; students should also use their personal networks to explore. A student’s network of family, friends, colleagues, previous employers, faculty members, and volunteer sites are a good place to start.

GOAL: Review websites and online resources to create a list of potential sites.

EARNING CREDIT FOR THE EXPERIENCE

Students in the Health Sciences program can earn academic credit for internship experiences. The course is Allied Med 600 (Internship in Health Sciences) and is repeatable to a maximum of 10 credit hours. The number of credit hours will be determined based on the number of hours worked in the internship (1 credit hour=40 hours of work). Internships for credit are unpaid (except in special situations). Students who have completed coursework required in the “junior” year of the Health Sciences program are eligible to participate in the internship course. The course is graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory and will be assigned by the instructor of the Allied Med 600 course.

Allied Med 600, Internship in Health Sciences, will require that students complete assignments such as an Internship Proposal, Internship Agreement, Learning Objectives and Expectations, Mid-quarter evaluations, final evaluation, and a final report and/or a portfolio. Students should plan to consult with an advisor at least two quarters before the quarter in which the student will register for the internship.

GOAL: Work with the Health Sciences advising team to earn credit for an internship.

AFTER THE EXPERIENCE

Maintaining a relationship with the internship site is a critical component of the process. Express your appreciation. Remember that most preceptors are enthusiastic about mentoring a student, and it often takes a significant amount of time.

GOAL: Show your appreciation through a note, gift, or other token and plan to maintain contact with the site.