

## 5 Steps to Create Your Own Internship

There are many different ways to find a great internship. Certain majors, such as business and engineering translate easily to well-established internship programs, while students studying Liberal Arts often have a broader scope of possibilities, but fewer defined internship opportunities available.

Additionally, there are a number of employers that do not yet have developed internship programs. In fact, a recent *MonsterTRAK* survey revealed that only **6-in-10** companies reported having a formal internship program.

**Good news: many great internship opportunities are waiting to be created.**

It takes time and effort, but an internship that is specifically tailored to your own academic interests, career goals and passions will most likely be more rewarding than one that is randomly selected.

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### Step 1: Define Your Internship

Creating and acquiring an internship takes reflection, planning, research, organization, preparation, and initiative.

Identify:

- *What do you want to do?*
- *Where do you want to do it?*
- *What are you offering? What skills are needed to do it?*

- A. Identify your internship expectations.
- B. Define your internship by identifying your goals.
- C. Develop a clear idea of what skills you have and want to develop.
- D. Locate specific skills that are needed for this profession.
- E. Match your skills with the skills used in this field.
- F. Identify employers in this profession who hire interns.

**Action Step:**

- ✓ **Fill out the form "*Internships: Finding the Right Fit*" to thoroughly answer all of the questions and numerical steps listed above, and bring the completed form with you to your Career Center internship appointment.**
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## **Step 2: Develop Your Network**

One of the best ways to gather information about a given field, a specific position, or a particular company is to talk to people directly. Over 70% of internships and jobs are found by networking.

Individuals in your network may assist and support you in varying capacities, all of which are valuable to your career development. Some may serve as mentors or references, while others may facilitate connections or assist with developing opportunities.

- *Who do you know that works in the career field, or with the company, that interests you?*
- *Do you know someone with a lot of connections...a person who likely knows someone working in the field that interests you?*

**Action Steps:**

- ✓ **Use your own connections or locate a mentor through the Gonzaga Alumni Mentor Program (GAMP) and explore occupations that appeal to your personal interests, values and skill set.**
- ✓ **Attend career fairs, employer visits, and information sessions on campus advertised by the GU Career Center.**

- ✓ **Conduct an informational interview to gather information and identify opportunities that you can't get from reading online. People working in the field can provide the most up-to-date information on how people get started, what employers are looking for, career paths, corporate culture, and industry trends—not to mention, give you excellent advice.** (Resources on *Informational Interviewing* are available in the Career Center).
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### **Step 3: Draft a targeted résumé and cover letter**

Your résumé and cover letter will need to be tailored to reflect strengths, describe past accomplishments, and identify the skills and qualifications you are offering that match those that are needed in the field and/or the specific employer where you are seeking an internship.

#### 1) Résumé

- Your Gonzaga Jesuit Liberal Arts education has provided you with many traits and experiences that you will want to include in these documents: ability to think, solve problems, communicate, serve others, manage time efficiently, etc.,.
- In your education section, include class projects, related coursework and other vital academic information that can be helpful in showing how you have already started gaining valuable professional training and experience in the field.

#### 2) Cover Letter

- A cover letter will also be needed to apply. This document can also allow you to reflect on why you want to complete this experience with this specific organization. Additionally, prepare a list of professional references to present at the appropriate time.

#### **Action Steps:**

- ✓ **Create a quality résumé and cover letter using one of the Career Center's services: attend a Career Center Résumé and Cover Letter workshop, a Resumania session, use Drop In After Hours, and/or schedule an appointment with a career professional in the Career Center and GAMP.**
- ✓ **Use the form "*Three ways to integrate your Gonzaga Education*" to capture all the different facets of your Gonzaga education successfully in your professional documents.**

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## **Step 4: Craft Your Proposal**

Just because a company does not have a formal internship program or a current internship opening does not mean that you can't approach them and inquire about setting up an internship. Based on the information that you gathered during your research, (1) prepare a proposal for the work you would like to do as an intern. (2) Choose a key contact person: the person with whom you communicate should be someone in a position to make a decision about your proposal. (3) Articulate your goals: you need to be able to convince a potential employer that it would be beneficial to them to offer you this opportunity by articulating your goals. This means you will need to be clear about what you are offering the employer and why they should consider hiring you as an intern.

### **What Are You Proposing?**

The proposal might be for a specific project (from your research) that the organization needs, or it could be for a particular position you know about (from your research) that the employer is likely to have. HINT: Most employers are too busy for people who will "do anything" so be as specific as possible in terms of what you would like to do and what you have to offer.

### **What Should You Include?**

There is no prescribed format for your proposal, but a personalized letter written specifically for each employer is a good place to start.

#### It should:

- Include a clear and concise description of what it is you are offering to do for the company and why you think they will benefit from it.
- Be specific about the project you want to work on or position you wish to fill.
- Highlight why you are the right person to do this task for the company.
- Include your dates of availability and whether you are looking for a full-time or a part-time position.
- Indicate whether you are seeking a paid or non-paid position.
- Include a copy of your targeted résumé and cover letter.

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## **Step 5: Make Contact—Send out your résumé, cover letter, and proposal**

As you gather information you should start to get a picture in your head of what your internship is going to look like. Through your research you have identified companies that do what you want to be doing. It is in your best interest to contact such a company directly and ask them. You will be more successful in your attempt to create an internship if you communicate directly: Find the name of a specific person in the organization. Contact them through a phone call, send an email, or better still write a letter. Ask if they hire interns, have hired interns in the past, or if they might be thinking about hiring an intern. Send a personalized tailored résumé and cover letter with each of your correspondences.

### **Where to Send It:**

Be sure that your proposal gets to the person who has the power to hire you. The Human Resources department is often a good place to start asking questions, but also ask for referrals to managers who might have a better idea of the company's staffing needs and the names of those who can actually offer you a position. Consult websites and networking contacts for specific suggestions. This personalized approach will pay off.

### **Action Steps:**

- ✓ **Establish personal contacts with your target employers, sending résumés, cover letters and proposals.**
- ✓ **Follow up your proposal with a phone call or an email to the employer within a few days of the receipt of your mailing. Students sometimes feel it's pushy to make such a call or that they are bothering the employer. Don't be pushy, but a polite follow up is expected and reinforces your interest and commitment. Everyone in the working world understands the need for persistence.**

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## **Be Persistent and Send Thank You Notes**

Don't be discouraged if you can't find a position immediately. Even if a response from an employer does not yield an internship, follow up with a thank you note (hand-written preferably), expressing your appreciation. Professionalism and persistence are paramount to internship and job success!