



STUDENT
INTERNSHIP
MANUAL
2023 - 2024

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OVERVIEW

Florida International University

Florida International University is an urban, multi-campus, public research university serving its students and the diverse population of South Florida. We are committed to high-quality teaching, state-of-the-art research and creative activity, and collaborative engagement with our local and global communities.

Division of Academic & Student Affairs

The Division of Academic & Student Affairs at FIU is devoted to providing high-quality education opportunities and effective academic and student support services to optimize learner success. With nearly 50 departments, the division is committed to responding to the changing landscape of higher education and preparing students for the rigors of the 21st-century workplace, while providing a meaningful learning experience for students in and outside the classroom.

The division supports a well-rounded, workforce-ready student and fosters an enduring connection to the university by teaching civic responsibility, leadership, and commitment to service; nurturing an understanding of diversity; contributing to academic success by providing support services and experiential learning opportunities; and providing professional development and career recruitment opportunities. Our university community has a tradition of excellence, and you are part of this unforgettable journey.

Career and Talent Development

Career and Talent Development (CTD) at FIU is committed to developing and delivering innovative career readiness programs for students and alumni, while engaging employers and stakeholders to foster mutually beneficial relationships that address the needs of an ever-changing and diverse workforce.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Before the Internship

What is an internship?

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and they give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent (National Association of Colleges and Employers - NACE).

What types of internships are there?

Paid/Unpaid

Each internship experience is unique, and often, the choice to pay or not to pay is determined by industry, company size, and other factors. Some organizations will offer to pay a salary as well as airfare and/or housing, while others will provide a “one-time” stipend at the end of the experience. It is important to remember that while an internship may not be paid, it is still one of, if not the best way for college students to gain real-world experience. So, what you are not getting paid in dollars and cents, you are getting paid in the experience and professional skills that all employers seek in potential new hires after graduation. It is also a wonderful opportunity to begin building a professional network, which is vital for a successful job search.

Credit/Non-Credit

One option to explore is whether or not you can receive academic credit for your internship experience. Only your advisor/department can answer this. This is a great advantage to students who are trying to find ways to fit an internship into their already busy schedule, and it also helps to balance the fact that the internship you want may be unpaid. The requirements vary according to your academic department, so be sure to gather that information before you accept an opportunity.

Full-Time/Part-Time

There are a variety of internship options available to students, allowing you to cater your experience to your own schedule. Part-time internships typically require students to be present 15-25 hours a week. Part-time internships tend to be advantageous for students already working a part-time job or enrolled as full-time students. Employers understand that student interns have busy and non-traditional schedules, so they should be flexible in terms of adjusting your internship schedule during the week of mid-terms, finals, or vacations/holidays.

Full-time internships typically require students to spend around 40 hours a week at the internship site. Full-time internships tend to be paid or offer a stipend. They are advantageous for students because they allow you to spend extensive time developing professional skills, working on multiple projects, and establishing deep relationships with the employees at your site. These can all still be achieved during a

part-time internship, but with more hours per week comes more time to dedicate to your work and more time to shine in a professional environment.

Before you decide to accept a full-time internship, you need to consider your school and life requirements to make sure you can balance everything. Most students who accept full-time internships will take evening or online courses during their internship or may take a semester off from classes to focus on maximizing their internship experience. Many students choose to seek full-time internship opportunities over the summer when they are either not in school or are taking a light course load.

Length of Internship

Typically, the length of an internship is one semester, but there are also opportunities for year-long internships, or in some cases, shortened internship opportunities (for example, an internship during winter break, known as a “winternship”). The important thing to remember is that the search and application process needs to happen the semester before the semester you intend to start your internship. So, for example, if you are looking for summer internships, you need to begin the process during the spring semester.

Internships are not a new phenomenon, so in most cases, they are very competitive. This means that you need to develop your professional resume and cover letter writing skills, as well as practice your interviewing skills to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Visit your Career and Talent Development Department to learn how to start this process.

What are the benefits of an internship?

Gain the real-world experience all employers seek.

When employers are asked what they are looking for in a recent college graduate, they say they want an individual with critical-thinking skills, excellent written and oral communication skills, the ability to work in a team, and above all else, real-world experience in their field. This skill set cannot be attained only by spending time in the classroom and earning your degree.

Volunteering and participating in student organizations are great ways to develop personally and professionally; but the best resource available to you to gain the skills that employers covet most is to participate in internships. During an internship, you will diversify your experiences by engaging in multiple projects and interacting with everyone in the office.

Employers know that internships are designed to be learning experiences for students, so you are also given hands-on training and feedback that will boost your confidence and empower you to tackle any task at your next job.

Test the waters in various fields.

A common mistake students make is that they choose a major that feels like a good fit for them and work hard to earn a degree, but they do not have experience working in the field before graduation.

Then, they realize when they enter the workforce that the field, they chose is not what they thought it was, and they want to find a new career. Do not let this happen to you!

One of the many great advantages of internships is they enable you to try out many different roles or careers during your time as a student. If you are currently undecided on your major or stuck between one or two different majors (or even if you are confident in the major that you have chosen) participating in multiple internships can give you the exposure you need to make an informed decision about your career moving forward. Take the time now to ensure your future career connects with both your personal and professional goals.

Build your professional network.

There's a common expression: "It's not about what you know; it's about *who* you know." Well, there happens to be a lot of truth to that. Certainly, the knowledge you gain as a student in the classroom is valuable, and the professional experience you gain at work or as a volunteer is also vital to your development. However, if an employer is considering two resumes for one job, and one candidate comes recommended by a colleague or friend in the field, chances are this is the individual who will be offered the job, even if they do not have as much experience as the other candidate. Students that graduate without any experience are often unsure where to direct their job search. National job search engines collect thousands of resumes from around the world, every single day. Is that what you want to compete with?

So how do you build a professional network while you are busy as a student?

Internships! During your internship, you will have access to industry professionals in and out of your office, and you will have the ability to collaborate with them on projects. If you are professional, hard-working, and responsible during your time as an intern, the professionals you worked with will likely advocate for you and become wonderful resources when you begin your job search. Along with your professors, fellow classmates, family and friends, the individuals you interact with during an internship become your professional network.

Earn academic credit.

Internships are advantageous in many ways, and many cater to students' needs. As you consider whether an internship is right for you, remember that many academic departments offer the opportunity to earn academic credit for your internship.

Boost your resume.

Today's job market is very competitive, so if you are a current student or recent graduate, you need to consider what will set you apart from other applicants. Having the skills acquired through real-world work experiences on your resume helps you rise to the top of the applicant pool. The dilemma many students face is how to obtain those skills while managing a full course load. The key is internships! Visit Career and Talent Development to discover the possibilities available to you.

Practice for your job search.

The entire internship process, from start to finish, is a great way to prepare you for the full-time job after graduation. The requirements for preparing for and landing a great internship are the same requirements for landing your dream job. You need to prepare a great resume and cover letter, practice and perfect your interviewing skills, and have clear career goals in mind. This means that once you have completed one or more internships during your time at FIU, you will be confident and fully prepared to begin your job search.

Classroom → Internship → Job

Internships are a great forum for you to apply and practice the knowledge you are learning in the classroom, all while gathering the skills that employers seek. For example, you learn a theory in class that you then see in practice or decide to implement at your internship. This not only makes you an asset to your internship employer, as you are bringing a fresh educational perspective to the workplace, but it also helps you bring real-world applications back into the classroom, thus strengthening your comprehension and performance as a student. This symbiotic relationship helps you develop the knowledge, experience, and skills employers are looking for.

Effective time management helps balance an internship with your schedule.

Many students feel that an internship, particularly an unpaid internship, cannot fit into their already busy schedules. Remember that most internships are part-time, and they are set up by employers who know that students need flexibility. If you are a full-time student and are already working a part-time job, you can still fit a part-time internship into your schedule. You may only be able to complete a few hours some days, but the experience and the skills you will gain are worth the free time that you will have to sacrifice. If you need assistance learning how to balance a busy schedule, visit Career and Talent Development.

Create a strategy to find the right internship for you.

Finding a great internship is not easy. You need a great resume, but even more so, you need a great strategy. In the end, you need to develop as a professional to be taken seriously by an employer. Here are important steps to help you succeed:

Think about your general motivation for finding an internship. Do you want to explore a new field, gain contacts in a specific industry, learn on-the-job skills, or boost your resume? Understanding your motivations will help you focus on where to apply and help you remain open to different opportunities in case your ideal position does not come through.

- **Search for POSITIONS, not for a company.** For instance, searching all marketing positions in a given location will reveal options at a variety of organizations that need marketing help and offer marketing experience, but which are not traditional marketing firms. These include nonprofits or startup companies, which may be less competitive overall, but still offer ideal industry experience.
- **Find 10-20 positions.** One of the biggest benefits of an online search is that once your basic application materials are created, applying to additional positions online is easy. To improve your odds, find 10-20 positions that are all good options. In fact, you may want to apply to many more than this – there is no harm in opening more doors, doing more interviews, and testing the waters at more places.

- **Save all these positions**, along with your application status. Keeping your search organized is key. You are going to want to remember where you are in the application process, notes or reminders about the person you spoke to (we both grew up in Florida... awesome) and your next deadlines.

Search and save. A good first step on any job or internship search is to get in touch with personal, academic, and professional contacts as well as Career and Talent Development to network about potential opportunities.

Get your resume and cover letter materials ready. When you apply online, these documents are the only means by which an employer can evaluate you. It is important to see these documents as your personal brand. Market your experience to the organization you are applying to and eliminate any errors or typos that will make you appear novice. A lot of work goes into making these documents strong, but if you put in the time, you will stand out from the pack. Visit your Career and Talent Development Department today to get this process started.

Apply and follow up. With positions saved and materials ready, it is time to start applying. Ideally, you should customize your resume and cover letter for every organization you apply to. It is important to remember that after you submit materials, the process is still not over. While not always necessary, you may want to follow up a week after you submit your application with a phone call or email to the intern hiring director to make sure the materials arrived in their hands. This is an opportunity to show your ability to be confident and professional while speaking on the phone or emailing.

Get ready to interview. Just like improving your application flow and your resume documents, getting ready for an internship interview takes time and a lot of practice. We recommend taking advantage of interview workshops, mock interviews, and the practice interview program with actual employers – all available through Career and Talent Development.

Reflect, improve, and repeat. If you landed a position after the first five steps, congratulations! If not, do not feel discouraged. This is a challenging process, but you will be rewarded by becoming much better at the entire job search and application process. You should reflect on what worked and what did not, ask the people you have interviewed with what you can do better next time, and incorporate feedback to improve your future prospects.

There is no guarantee (especially in the current competitive job market) that there is an internship waiting for you – you need to go out there and get it. Following these steps *will* guarantee that you are approaching this process systematically for the best possible result. There will always be new opportunities, so don't feel discouraged. Focus on improving this process and learning as much as you can. Finally, remember to always be courteous to employers, even if things do not work out. Through this process you will become a stronger applicant and develop your professional network!

You can do it!

College is about more than just learning in the classroom. It is a crash course on how to begin organizing your schedule, balancing your responsibilities and priorities, and ultimately learning how to set and achieve goals. It

is normal to feel frustrated and overwhelmed at times, but never forget that there are wonderful resources on campus to help guide you through this process. Your professors, classmates, academic advisors, and Career and Talent Development Department are here to support you.

Define your internship goals.

What are your professional goals and career interests?

Before you dive into your internship search, you need to first think about and write down your professional goals and career interests.

- What type of work have you dreamed about doing?
- Where do you see yourself working five years from now? Ten?
- What are the skills and experiences that you can start building now to help you make those dreams a reality?

Once you can answer those questions, start building a top-ten list of employers you want to reach out to for an internship.

What type of organizations are you interested in?

Organizations come in all shapes and sizes, from Fortune 500 companies and federal agencies to local, nonprofit organizations. What are you looking for? Issues to consider are size, location, ownership, and corporate culture.

Where do you want to have your internship?

Internships are available to students locally, nationally, and internationally. Can you afford to spend a semester or two away from Miami? If so, are you looking to build a professional network in Washington, D.C., New York, California, etc.? Perhaps you are looking for an international internship experience. There are paid internship opportunities outside of Miami, so do not feel like you are restricted to Miami.

What type of internship can you take on?

Before selecting an internship, you need to map out your career and academic goals to find out what kind of internship is the best fit for you moving forward. If you need assistance designing that life map, visit your Career and Talent Development department. A big consideration is deciding if you can balance an unpaid internship. Remember that there is a lot of flexibility with internships, so you and your supervisor can build a schedule that fits into your school and part-time work schedule. Additionally, talk with your academic advisor to determine if you can earn academic credit for an internship, and if so, be sure to register for that course before the registration deadline. Finally, if you are interested in applying for a full-time internship, either locally or out-of-state, you need to consider whether you can take online courses or inquire whether your department offers academic credit for the experience.

Which term? (Deadlines!)

Internships are competitive, so employers place application deadlines on the internships they offer. You need to be cognizant of this during your internship planning process. You must remember to begin your internship search and application process the semester before the semester you intend to

complete the internship. If you wish to intern during the Fall semester, do not start looking for an internship during the Fall semester. It will take time to prepare a great resume and cover letter and work on your interviewing skills to land your dream internship. Come into Career and Talent Development to learn about that process.

How do I find an internship?

Career and Talent Development Department

No matter where you currently are on the internship spectrum, from not knowing what they are to finishing one up and wondering what to do next, Career and Talent Development is a great resource for you. Please contact the department today to learn about internship opportunities and how to prepare for and land them. <https://career.fiu.edu/>

Handshake

Handshake is FIU Career and Talent Development Department's database of jobs, internships, and career-related events and opportunities. This service is specifically designed for FIU students and alumni. The benefits of using Handshake include:

- Search jobs and internships posted for FIU students
- Participate in mock interviews and web-based practice interviews
- Meet and network at employer info sessions and meet-and-greets
- Upload your resume online in Handshake
- Set up job search agents in Handshake
- Submit resume to employers through Handshake
- Participate in on-campus interviews
- 24/7 access to our employment resources

How can I claim my account? Claim your account at <https://fiu.joinhandshake.com/>

Resume: You don't need a resume to join Handshake but uploading a resume when you create your profile will allow Handshake to import the information on your resume to the fields on your profile, saving you time. Your uploaded resume will be approved within approximately 48 - 72 hours in the Handshake system.

Students interested in applying for jobs or internship postings on Handshake must first upload their resume to VMock for analysis and feedback. VMock is an online resume review tool powered by cutting edge data-science, machine learning, and natural language processing that provides instant personalized resume feedback 24/7 based on your profile, experiences and academic achievement. Access VMock at <https://vmock.com/fiucareer>

Public Profile: A public profile in Handshake means that employers connected with FIU can view your profile information. It is not visible to other students nor anyone who is not connected with FIU. You can have a public profile and keep some information (for example, GPA) private. A public profile makes it easier for employers to find you for their top talent.

Workshops and Events: Finding workshops and events in Handshake is easy. Simply click on the Events or Fairs tabs on the left navigation bar, and then click the search tab in the upper right corner. You can join events and workshops that you plan to attend, which will add them to your calendar and 'upcoming events' list in Handshake, so you don't miss an event or fair you find interesting.

Career Coaching Appointment: Login to Handshake, select appointments, and click the 'schedule a new appointment' button at the top of the page. Follow the prompts to select the type of appointment, date, and available career coach. Your career coaching appointment request will be approved within 24 - 72 hours.

Networking

Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a specific type of internship. This includes your professors, advisors, fellow classmates, past employers, alumni, and Career and Talent Development. Just as with job-hunting, networking can be one of your greatest sources for landing a great internship. **Do not expect these opportunities to fall into your lap!** You have to be proactive and reach out to your network. If you feel like you do not have a strong network right now, there is no better day than today to start the process of building your professional network.

Network On Campus

- Career and Talent Development
- On-campus info sessions
- Employer mock interviews
- Career and internship fairs
- Program department
- Classmates
- Alumni and Alumni Association
- Faculty, teachers, and administrators
- Fraternity/sorority members
- Mentors
- Student orgs and professional associations
- Volunteer activities and board members

Network Off Campus

- Conference attendees
- Elected officials
- Friends and family
- Fellow job seekers (share leads)
- Former/current colleagues
- Mentors
- Professional associations
- Social networking sites (LinkedIn)

- Volunteer activities

Major/Minor Department

The process of narrowing down a top-ten list of employers can be challenging and confusing. Talking to the faculty and professors in your major or minor department can be a great help. They have extensive experience in the field you are interested in pursuing, so take full advantage of their knowledge. Schedule a time to talk with your professors and your advisor and let them know exactly what you are looking for.

Online Resources

There are several websites available to students looking for local, national, federal, and international internships. See **Appendix B** for a list of sites.

LinkedIn

If you are not familiar with LinkedIn, you need to be. Think of it as Facebook for professionals. You can build a profile for yourself, which will include your educational and professional background, as well as any professional affiliations you have or student or volunteer groups you are associated with. LinkedIn enables you to connect with other professionals in your area. LinkedIn can be the perfect site for you to facilitate a conversation about an internship opportunity with a potential employer or in a specific industry. It also shows professionals in your field, or at the organizations you contact, that you are serious about finding a quality internship.

When you are applying for internships and full-time employment, it is essential that you have a LinkedIn profile created, because potential employers will search for you. Here are a few of the advantages that LinkedIn provides for students:

- **First Impression:** LinkedIn is a great resource for helping you make a professional first impression with employers. If they search for you online, your LinkedIn profile is the type of information you want to be accessible. Word of caution: Employers will check your other social media platforms as well, so make sure it is clean and free of anything that could offend potential employers.
- **Networking:** Through first, second, and third connections established, you are building a professional network that will serve you well during your internship and employment hunt.
- **Track Companies:** What are your top-ten dream organizations to work for? Find them on LinkedIn and learn more about them, as well as the individuals who work there.
- **Getting Recommendations:** Former or current professors, colleagues and supervisors can post recommendations on your page, which helps give potential employers a better look at you as an individual.

Career/Internship Fairs

Regularly check the [Career and Talent Development website](#) and [FIU Calendar of Events](#) so you know when career and internship fairs are taking place on campus. These are wonderful opportunities for

you to meet, network with, and deliver your elevator speech to hundreds of employers. The employers that register for the events are made available to FIU students before the fairs, which gives you the opportunity to research employers that you want to meet and prepare to blow them away. Some students are even interviewed and offered positions on the spot.

Informational Interviewing

For any student interested in learning more about a career, talking to individuals who are currently in these roles can be a great resource! If you want to learn more about being a lawyer, social worker, teacher, or marketing specialist, then reach out to the individuals in your community or in the city where you want to live who are in those positions and request an informational interview.

Researching company websites or LinkedIn can help you find contact information for their employees. From there, you can send a quick email introducing yourself as an FIU student and explaining that you are interested in their field. Tell them you would like to speak with them to learn about their job and what steps they took to get there. Informational interviews allow you to get a deeper understanding of the careers you are interested in and to inquire about possible internship opportunities. Be sure to maintain contact with these professionals after you meet – they'll become part of your network!

Company Websites

Some organizations may not list internship positions on general employment and internship search engines, so be sure to check the organization's website to see if they have an established internship program. If there is nothing listed, the website likely still lists contact information for its Human Resources department or even an Internship Coordinator, so you can send them an email inquiring about internship opportunities.

Books/Periodicals

There are some great print sources for internships. There are annual directories of internships, trade magazines, and newspapers published for your major or career field.

Information Sessions

Employers frequently come to FIU to recruit students for internships and employment opportunities. Information sessions are the perfect forums for students to get in front of an employer to ask questions and introduce themselves. Be sure to check with your Career and Talent Development Department to find out when employers will be on campus.

Create your own internship.

If you find out that the organization you want to intern with does not have an established internship program, should you cut your losses? NO! Chances are that employer is not aware of the benefits you can bring to them as an intern. Don't be afraid to approach employers with a well-researched proposal detailing what you are offering them and demonstrating your value as a potential intern.

There is no prescribed format for your proposal, but a 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 need you to do 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 for the company.
- Include your dates of availability and whether you are looking for a full-time or a part-time position.
- Indicate that you are seeking a paid (or unpaid) position.

Your proposal should include a resume that illustrates the strengths you are offering. Your academic experiences, participation in student groups, research experience, extracurricular activities, and part-time job experiences all translate into marketable skills such as time management, communication, teamwork, and analytical skills.

How do I prepare for my internship search and experience?

Visit the Career and Talent Development Department! <https://career.fiu.edu/>

Resume and Cover Letter Writing

Your resume and cover letter need to be exceptional. Even if you are the perfect candidate for the internship, if your resume does not reflect that, or it has not been critiqued by a professional before you send out 100 copies, you will not be given serious consideration. Each resume and cover letter you send should be tailored to the opportunity you are seeking. Go to your Career and Talent Development Department to have your resume critiqued today!

Mock Interview and Practice Interview Program

Your resume and cover letter look great, and you have just received a call from a potential employer requesting an interview with you. Are you prepared and confident to nail the interview? The key to answering yes to this question is ensuring you are fully prepared. Your Career and Talent Development Department offers mock interviews to prepare you for the interview. You can schedule to meet with a Career Advisor in preparation and/or once you have a scheduled an interview. Employers from the community occasionally come to campus to conduct practice interviews with students and share immediate feedback on their performance. These are employers that conduct interviews regularly, so their advice is priceless. There is no substitute for practice, and when entering an interview, there is no greater feeling than being prepared and confident.

Calendar of Professional Development Workshops and Career Events

The Career and Talent Development Department offers [professional development workshops and events](#) throughout the academic year. These include Internships, Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, and the Art of Networking. Check the calendar regularly and attend as many as possible.

Resources for international students

If you are an international student, before you begin your internship search, we suggest that you consult with an advisor at the [International Student and Scholar Services Office](#) (ISSS) regarding immigration, visas, and eligibility. Great internships are available for international students, but it is best to understand the guidelines already in place, so you do not unknowingly jeopardize your future.

Professional Attire

Whenever you have the chance to be in front of an employer, especially during an interview, be sure you are dressed professionally, and represent yourself well. When deciding what to wear, it's important to do a bit of research about the company and their culture. If possible, try to find photos of people in the office to see what they are wearing, and dress one step more formally than that. Attention to detail, impeccable grooming, and a well-fitting suit are vital to make a lasting, positive impression.

For more detail on professional attire guidelines, read [Career and Talent Development's "Dress for Success Tips"](#) (**Appendix H**). Your professional network is also a good resource for learning how to dress professionally.

During the Internship

Keys to Internship Success

Set personal goals.

While some internships are very structured, others are not. So, before the internship, you need to set goals you wish to accomplish. Maybe it's deciding on what area in the field you want to specialize in, learning new skills, or building your network. Whatever your goals are, you will feel a greater sense of accomplishment once you achieve them.

- ✓ **Hint:** Setting unrealistic goals could make even a good internship experience seem bad, so be sure your goals are realistic and attainable.

Meet regularly with your supervisor.

Sound obvious? Well, maybe, but you may get a supervisor who never schedules meetings with you or who travels quite a bit. So, make sure to have regular meetings during which you can share experiences and lessons learned – both good and bad – as well as give progress reports.

- ✓ **Hint:** While you want to keep your supervisor updated on your accomplishments, remember to also be a good listener, and learn as much as you can during these meetings.

Show a positive attitude and enthusiasm.

In about every company, the new hire/intern is going to have to “pay their dues.” You will undoubtedly be given some grunt work to do, such as making photocopies, but the key is to complete all your work assignments with the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism.

Avoid negativity.

To preserve a positive internship experience, it's essential to steer clear of negativity. Therefore, refrain from expressing grievances, being impolite, disrespecting colleagues, arriving tardy or leaving early, having a closed mindset, failing to meet deadlines, displaying arrogance, dressing inappropriately, behaving unprofessionally, appearing inflexible, and engaging in office politics.

- ✓ **Hint:** It is crucial to avoid the mistake frequently made by interns and new hires of considering administrative assistants or custodial staff as inferior. Make sure to refrain from engaging in this behavior.

Seek opportunities to learn more about the company and industry.

Take every opportunity presented to you to attend company or industry meetings, conferences, and events; participate in training workshops; and read all company materials.

- ✓ **Hint:** Meetings may appear (and be) boring to you, but they often increase your knowledge, network, and build relationships.

Get exposure.

Some of the best internships will rotate you among departments and supervisors; but, if yours doesn't, don't let that stop you from tackling new tasks, meeting people outside your department, and

attending company social events. The more you are exposed to new ideas and new people, the more you'll learn.

- ✓ **Hint:** Joining the company softball team (or other informal groups) is a great opportunity to meet new people in a relaxed and informal environment.

Ask questions.

Remember: An internship is a learning experience for you. While the employer expects quality work from you, you are not expected to know everything. Seek advice and raise questions whenever you encounter something that is not familiar to you. Be open-minded about new ideas and procedures – remember that you don't know everything and that your professors didn't teach you everything.

- ✓ **Hint:** People know that there really is no such thing as a dumb question, so ask before doing.

Take initiative.

Employers love employees who tackle tough problems and who think "outside the box" to find solutions. Just make sure you work with your supervisor(s), so you don't overstep your authority – and make sure you share successes with your supervisor.

- ✓ **Hint:** There is a fine line between taking initiative and being perceived as a "know-it-all." For interns especially, it is best to err on the side of caution.

Network and build relationships.

One of the keys to job-hunting is utilizing your network to find your next career step. Build professional relationships with your supervisor(s) and other managers in the organization. These people are also a great source for job-hunting advice and tips from their years of experience.

- ✓ **Hint:** Even if you have an unpleasant experience on an internship, do your best to behave professionally and courteously. Always leave on good terms.

Record all accomplishments and work completed.

The goal of any internship is to leave it with tangible results for your resume and your career portfolio (if you use one). Maybe you developed a brochure, computerized an inventory system, organized a sales conference, met with clients, or tracked industry trends – these are just some examples of tangible results that could impress a future employer.

- ✓ **Hint:** Keeping a journal may help you remember all the things you accomplished at your internship.

Have fun!

Last, but not least: Enjoy learning, sharpening your skills, and developing personally and professionally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community.

* Source: www.quintcareers.com

*See **Appendix I** for a list of “internship dos and don’ts.”*

How do I manage a negative internship experience?

Be sure to maintain regular contact with your supervisor. Employers understand that internships are a learning experience, so if you feel that you are not getting what you had envisioned out of your experience, or if you are looking for more responsibilities, be sure to communicate those concerns to your supervisor.

Before your internship starts, or even in the early stages of your internship, it is recommended that you sit down with your supervisor and complete a Learning Contract (see **Appendix C**). Setting clear goals will enable you and your employer to determine learning objectives for your internship experience. It also serves as a valuable tool for measuring your progress at the half-way point of your internship, as well as during your final evaluation.

If you are having communication issues with your supervisor, or you do not feel comfortable bringing certain issues directly to your supervisor, schedule a time to meet with a Career Advisor, where they can work with you to address those concerns in a professional manner.

Negative experiences in the work environment can be quite common. The key is not to react in a way that will hurt your reputation or negatively affect your feelings about the career you have chosen. There is always a professional way to handle conflicts at work, and the Career and Talent Development Department can help you evaluate your plan. Reflect on your experience, as there is much to learn from the negatives as well.

After the Internship

It is important to network and maintain professional contacts.

Thank your staff/supervisor.

As soon as you can, send personalized emails or notes to everyone you worked with over the course of your internship to express your gratitude for the opportunity and experience gained. Failing to properly say thank you before exiting your internship may make you seem ungrateful. This can also influence recommendations and future opportunities.

Conduct informational interviews.

This is your last chance to pick everyone's brains. Write down any unanswered questions you may have. Are you still clueless about your boss's back story? Confused about a process in your department? Ask your boss for 5-10 minutes to go over your last questions – and bring a list. While you're there, it's probably a good time to ask your boss to share their thoughts on your performance and what you might need to improve to succeed in the field.

Offer to continue to help.

Volunteer to continue to work on a project you've already started, or take on a new one of your own, like a company blog or event idea.

Ask for a letter of recommendation.

It's best to mention this with plenty of notice, preferably as part of the "Just wanted to remind you I'm wrapping up here in two weeks – was there anything you wanted me to finish up for you?" conversation. Don't worry about seeming too forward. Your boss was in your shoes once and should understand the need for references when you're starting out in the workforce. Offer to do a quick write-up of projects you worked on to jog your boss's memory, and again, give plenty of notice.

Stay in touch.

Out of sight, out of mind – but it doesn't have to be that way. Adding your contacts to LinkedIn is a nice way to keep them close by and provides a quick means of contacting them that is less likely to change than email addresses, especially when people change jobs.

As a general guide, try reaching out around three times a year, and mention a development you noticed in the company or a recent career achievement you've had. Keep the notes brief, brag-free, and more interested in the reader than yourself. It will keep you fresh in your boss's mind, which may prompt them to call on you first if an opportunity arises.

Finally: While it's instinctive to look to higher-ups for advancement, keep in mind that your fellow interns will all end up with jobs eventually – quite possibly at a company you'd like to work for, too. So, keep in touch; you never know where your next opportunity might come from.

* Source: www.vault.com

What do I do with my internship experience?

Self-Evaluation

So, you have successfully completed your internship experience. First: Congratulations! The ability to balance school and an internship is not an easy task. You should be proud knowing that you have made that sacrifice to brighten your career path and open the door to new opportunities. Now, it is important to evaluate your entire experience and how you feel because of it. You may ask yourself the following questions:

- What have you learned about your field, and what would you still like to learn?
- Has this internship changed your ultimate career goals?
- If you did not like your internship experience, was it the company culture that turned you off or the job tasks?
- If you liked your experience, are you interested in further developing in that field, and how can you do that?
- How have you grown from this experience? In what areas would you like to improve for your next professional experience?

Remember that an internship is a learning experience, so it is important to assess what you have learned about the field you interned in, as well as about yourself. This type of reflection will inform and guide your next career move.

Transferable Skills

People tend to forget about all the great things they have done as time passes. Do not let this happen to you following your internship experience! Keep a journal or log of your work during your internship. If you did not have a chance to do that, set aside time to reflect on your experiences and note them. The more details you can record about the work you were involved in and your accomplishments, the better. The skills you gained during your internship are the same skills you will put on your resume and highlight while you are hunting for your dream job.

Resume Building

When reading resumes, employers want to see accomplishments, skills (both hard and soft), and the ability to work in teams. Once you complete your internship, you need to add that experience to your resume. What did you accomplish there? What new skills have you developed? What work or projects were you involved in? Adding that to your resume will bring a great sense of accomplishment, and it will motivate you to seek out your next internship! Visit the Career and Talent Development Department to explore the best strategy for adding your internship to your resume.

Reporting your internship

Once you have completed an internship as a student at FIU, contact your Career and Talent Development Department and your academic department to report your internship. FIU tracks internship experiences, which helps the university grow and creates future internship opportunities for the next generation of Panthers. Please help us in this pursuit!

Appendix A:

FIU Career and Talent Development Internship Checklist

DETERMINE YOUR INTERNSHIP GOALS

- What are your specific career interests?
- What do you hope to gain from an internship? Responsibilities? Compensation? Experience?
- What type of organization are you interested in?
- What industry would be best for your needs?
- Where do you want to have your internship? City? Corporation? Industry? Hometown? In state? Out of state?
- Paid vs. unpaid? Credit vs. non-credit?
- Fall, spring or summer semester?
- Part-time or full-time?

INTERNSHIP TIMELINE

- Talk with your academic department about what kinds of internships would be best to help you gain practical experience in your field. Does your department offer credit for an internship?
- Talk with your Career and Talent Development Department and an academic advisor to find out what internship resources are available.
- Write your resume and cover letter and have them reviewed by your Career and Talent Development Department.
- Attend FIU career and internship fairs to learn about internship opportunities.
- Start networking with everyone you know.
- Start researching internship opportunities. Obtain general information about companies, internship programs, contact people and deadlines.
- Be prepared to complete your search and application process the semester before the semester in which you wish to complete your internship.
- Be ready to send out your resume and cover letter in advance.
- Practice your interviewing skills. Schedule a mock interview, participate in the Practice Interview Program (PIP), and utilize the Interview Stream resource available through your Career and Talent Development Department.
- Make sure your application is complete for each company where you would like to intern.
- Interview with employers.
- Send thank you letters to employers who gave you an opportunity to interview.
- Decide on an internship that is best for you, and accept an internship offer.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

- Attend Career and Talent Development Department workshops
- Stay active with your Handshake account and search internship and career opportunities.
- Have your resume and cover letter reviewed by Career and Talent Development. Upload your resume for approval on Handshake.
- Improve your interviewing and networking skills through practice.

INTERVIEWING FOR INTERNSHIPS

Before

- Research the organization.
- Research the dress code and dress professionally.
- Rehearse/role-play answers to typical questions you may be asked.
- Prepare questions to ask the employer during an interview.

After

- Send a follow-up thank you letter.
- Make notes about what went well and where you can make improvements for your next interview.

Appendix B:

Internship Search Websites

- [InternshipPrograms.com](#): Apply for internships directly within this database
- [Idealist.org](#): Find nonprofit jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities nationally and worldwide
- [Internships.com](#): Browse internships based on major, desired location, desired companies, compensation, and time commitment
- [Indeed](#): Free internship search shows available opportunities from employer websites and job boards
- [InternZoo.com](#): Committed to maintaining current, accurate listings
- [CareerBuilder.com](#): Narrow internship search based on industry, field, job type, etc.
- [Simply Hired](#): Search extensive database for internships by field, job type, etc.
- [Career Rookie](#): Employment search website for students with database of internships, part-time jobs, and entry-level careers; allows students to post resumes and contains articles and other resources for job search
- [College Recruiter](#): Search employment opportunities and continuing education opportunities
- [InternJobs.com](#): Internships and entry-level jobs in more than 60 countries worldwide
- [Anyintern.com](#): Directory for internships in U.S. and abroad

International Internship Sites:

- [Global Experiences](#): Fee-based; international internships and work experience abroad, summer internships, fashion internships abroad, volunteer programs, teaching English as a second language, foreign language training, and similar programs
- [SummerInternships.com](#): Fee-based; extensive internship opportunities around the world, including all-inclusive programs (guaranteed internship placement, housing, meal plans, six planned weekend activities to the best tourist attractions in the area, weekly seminar series, and daily transportation to and from work)
- [iHipo](#): No cost to job seekers; a combination of social network and job site, users can browse hundreds of international job and internship postings, post a profile, and develop contacts
- [GoAbroad.com](#): Thousands of international opportunities for study abroad, internships, and volunteering

Federal Internship Sites:

- [Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars](#): Through its programs, students can earn academic credit while they gain practical experience, discover professional strengths and weaknesses, and evaluate career paths.
- [HACU \(Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities\)](#): The HACU National Internship Program also operates out of the Washington, D.C., office and places 500 student interns each year with federal agencies in the capital or in field offices around the country.
- [Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute](#): The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) is one of the leading Hispanic nonprofit and non-partisan 501(c)(3) organizations in the country. CHCI was

established in 1978 to help increase opportunities for Hispanics to participate in and contribute to the American policy-making process.

- [Washington Internship Institute](#): Search this database to find vital information about academic internships – mostly in government – in the Washington, D.C., area.
- <http://www.dciinternships.org/>: Washington, D.C.-based and virtual academic internship programs for undergraduate students
- <https://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/>: Student Jobs is a part of USA Jobs, the federal government's official site for jobs and hiring information. Student Jobs lists internships, part-time opportunities, and entry-level federal government careers throughout the country (and in some cases, abroad).
- [AmeriCorps](#): AmeriCorps is an initiative of the US government to get more individuals to volunteer and work to address the critical needs of communities across the nation. AmeriCorps features opportunities with non-profits in a variety of sectors. It requires a part-time or full-time commitment for either a year or a summer. Participants receive a stipend as well as an education award.

Learning Goals Agreement

1. What do you hope to achieve by participating in this internship?

2. What specific knowledge and skills would you like to gain from this internship?

3. How will this internship relate to your academic experience?

4. What criteria will you use to evaluate your progress at your internship?

Intern's Signature _____ Date _____

Site Supervisor

Signature _____ Date _____

TIPS FOR DRAFTING A LEARNING GOALS AGREEMENT

Your learning goals agreement outlines what you intend to learn and accomplish during your internship. It represents an agreement between you and your site supervisor built on mutual intentions and expectations for the internship, both educational and work-related. It also outlines specific strategies for achieving your goals and how your progress will be evaluated.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Internship goals or learning objectives describe what you intend to learn through your internship. Be specific. Are you looking to improve or develop skills or expand knowledge of a particular field? Are you interested in testing a career interest, trying to decide what you want to major in, or in clarifying the direction of your remaining college years?

STRATEGIES:

Describe the specific process for how you will achieve your goals. Will you undergo training? How many hours? Will you be working on a specific project? Will you attend related conferences or meetings? Do you plan to interview professionals or experts about careers they have chosen? Have you thought about visiting another organization to get a better perspective? More than one strategy can be used to meet each objective.

EVALUATION METHODS:

Describe how your progress regarding each objective will be measured. How will you know and show others that you have achieved your learning objectives? Will you compile records of your activities throughout the internship (e.g., reports or other written materials you have prepared for the organization, notes on training sessions, staff meetings, or conferences)? Will you ask your supervisor or other people at your internship site to observe you at work and give you feedback and suggestions?

LEARNING GOALS

Learning Objectives (What I intend to learn)	Strategies (Specific processes for achieving my objectives)	Evaluation Methods (How my progress will be measured)

Appendix D:
Sample Student Intern Information Form

Student Information:

Name _____ ID# _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Major(s) _____ Minor(s) _____
Term: Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer ___ Year: 20___

Internship Site Information:

Name of Organization _____
Address _____
Site Supervisor Name _____
Site Supervisor Job Title _____
Phone _____ Email _____ Website _____

Additional Details:

Is this a paid internship? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please list compensation amount _____
How many hours per week will you work? _____
How did you hear about this internship? _____

Brief Description of Duties and Responsibilities:

--

Intern

Signature _____

Date _____

Site Supervisor

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix E:
Sample Internship Evaluation by Supervisor

The Career and Talent Development Department at FIU appreciates your willingness to participate in our Internship Program. Your feedback and support are appreciated and will remain confidential. Please complete and return this form to the Career and Talent Development department at your earliest convenience.

General Information:

Intern's Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Agency/Organization Name: _____

Internship Information:

Start date: // End date: // Hours per Week:

Please select the column that best describes the intern's performance during his/her internship:

	Excellent	Very Good	Average	Below Average	Comments
Attendance Attends work regularly and on time					
Production Produces the expected volume of work					
Thoroughness and Accuracy Attentive to detail and gets the job done right					

Initiative Takes initiative on project assignments and offers effective solutions for improving operations					
Written Communication Writes with clarity and uses critical thinking skills					
Interpersonal Communication Articulates ideas and concerns clearly; maintains effective two-way communication with staff, peers, and supervisor					

In reviewing the intern's Learning Goals proposal, do you believe that the intern has successfully achieved those goals? Please explain.

What suggestions would you offer the intern to enhance their career development and future job success?

Appendix F:

Sample Internship Evaluation by Student

General Information:

Intern's Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Agency/Organization Name: _____

Internship Information:

Start date: // End date: // Hours per Week:

Please rate the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I was encouraged to provide feedback and input.					
I was treated in a professional manner.					
Work assignments and tasks were challenging and stimulating.					
I was able to develop positive relationships and a network for future use.					
I gained skills and knowledge that will be helpful in the future.					
I was able to apply concepts I learned in class in the work environment.					
I believe I can get a good reference from someone in this organization.					
I feel better prepared to enter the work world because of my internship.					

Internship Evaluation by Student

How has this internship helped you achieve your learning goals?

Did the internship meet your expectations? Why or why not?

Would you recommend this internship to another FIU student? Why or why not?

Would you be willing to participate in a FIU internship student panel or other program for FIU students?

Appendix G:
NACE Career Readiness Competencies

8

CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

NACE, the *National Association of Colleges and Employers*, defines career readiness as the foundation for students to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management



CAREER & SELF DEVELOPMENT

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.



COMMUNICATION

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.



CRITICAL THINKING

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.



EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.



LEADERSHIP

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.



PROFESSIONALISM

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.



TEAMWORK

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.



TECHNOLOGY

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

FIU Career and Talent Development | career.fiu.edu

Appendix H

Dress for Success Tips

Dress For Success:

Whether you're going in for a job interview or to network with future employers, first impressions matter. With these tips and paying attention to details, you will be sure to leave a lasting impression on those you meet!



BUSINESS CASUAL

Business casual clothing is typically best suited for daily work wear. Colors and subtle patterns can be a bit more creative than the neutral recommended palette used in business professional attire. Skirts and dresses should hit or cover the knee. Ties and blazers are usually optional; therefore, cardigans are usually a good choice. Shoes like flats, boots, and low heels work best in this kind of attire. However, don't be fooled by the word casual, because jeans, shorts, or athletic wear are not allowed.

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

A good suit is the best option for business professional settings. A great option could be to wear a tan, blue, or black suit jacket or sport coat with a matching pair of fitted trousers. Business professional clothing should be dark or neutral on the outside with lighter colors such as white or light blue underneath. It's best to avoid complex patterns and bright colors, and opting for close-toed dress shoes. Consider carrying a professional bag, portfolio or purse to store any personal items and cell phones.



STANDARD INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Before going into an interview, research is key. The same applies when deciding what to wear. It's important to do a bit of research about the company and their culture. If possible, try to find photos of people in the office to see what they are wearing and dress one step more formal than they are. Attention to detail, impeccable grooming, and a well-fitting suit are vital to make a lasting good impression.

Dress for Success Tips



Shirts should be long sleeve, button down oxford. Your shirt sleeves should extend beyond the suit jacket sleeves by half an inch. The pant leg should touch the front of the toe. Belts should match the shoe color, and shoes should be black or brown and comfortable. Socks should be worn and cover your calves. Hair must be clean and neat.



Make up should be neutral and natural. Shirts should have a conservative neckline and is not too thin or too flashy. Skirts should be knee length or longer with no long slit. Accessories add polish and should be minimal. Heels should be closed toe and no higher than 2 inches.



Clothes should be clean and wrinkle free. Neutral colors (i.e. black, taupe, beige, brown, blue, and gray) are the best option. Matching two-piece suits are great. If you opt for a skirt suit, the skirt should be knee length when standing and thighs should be covered when seated. Shoes should be dress shoes, flats, or heels and are closed toed.

Appendix I

Internship Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** set specific goals for yourself and know what you want to accomplish with each internship.
 - ✓ **Do** try to obtain at least one internship during your college years – and **do** try to get multiple internships.
 - ✓ **Do** expect to be treated professionally. And **do** act professionally at all times.
 - ✓ **Do** utilize your network of family and friends to the fullest to get leads on internships.
 - ✓ **Do** schedule regular meetings with your internship supervisor.
 - ✓ **Do** get as much exposure to various teams and departments in the internship organization as possible.
 - ✓ **Do** find a mentor within the organization, whether it's your internship supervisor or some other manager.
 - ✓ **Do** make sure you leave your internship with new skills, a better understanding of your field, and tangible accomplishments.
 - ✓ **Do** take advantage of job and career fairs to scout internship opportunities.
 - ✓ **Do** be sure you have a dynamic cover letter, a superior resume, and polished interviewing techniques.
 - ✓ **Do** send thank-you letters to all people who interview you – and all the people who help you find an internship.
 - ✓ **Do** enjoy your internship – even when you are doing the inevitable grunt work many interns do as part of "paying your dues."
 - ✓ **Do** keep in touch with key coworkers from your internships – and do cultivate them to become part of your network.
-
- ☒ **Don't** expect all internships to be paid. We wish they all were, but many are not. And **do** at least consider accepting both paid and unpaid internships; some of the best internships may not be paid.
 - ☒ **Don't** expect internships to just be handed to you; internships must be earned, as with any job.
 - ☒ **Don't** pass up opportunities to have experiences beyond the regular scope of the internship that may lead to chances to learn more about the company or industry.
 - ☒ **Don't** be afraid to ask questions. And **do** be open to learning new skills and methodologies.
 - ☒ **Don't** forget to take advantage of the Career and Talent Development Department at your college – they typically have leads to numerous internship opportunities.
 - ☒ **Don't** ever give up in your internship quest. And **do** exhaust all internship leads.
 - ☒ **Don't** burn any bridges – even if your internship experience was not the best.

* Source: www.quintcareers.com