Internships

What is an Internship?
An internship provides actual work experience with an employer and may be completed during an academic semester or over the summer. Internships give students an opportunity to observe and participate in the workplace. A professional internship should meet the following criteria:

- Offer the opportunity to work on a specific project with a designated manager/supervisor.
- Provide training, either ‘formal’ or ‘on-the-job.’
- Participate in rotational assignments through different departments to gain an understanding of the “big picture.”
- Network with other members of the organization.
- Receive performance feedback and mentoring.

Why is an Internship Important?
A survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers reported that employers recruit more than 62% of their new full-time employees from 'in-house' internship programs. The trend is clear: Taking the time to work in a career field prior to graduation has benefits for either confirming a career choice or making a decision to choose a different path.

Is it Required to Get Academic Credit for My Internship?
The Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences offers the MDA 250 course that is open to students in all majors. In order to obtain clearance to register for this course you must already have secured an internship.

How do I find an internship?
Follow these steps to make sure you are taking advantage of all your opportunities:

- Register with connectSC at http://careers.usc.edu and sign up for e-mail updates to learn about internship opportunities through the Internship Programs Office.
- Develop a winning resume by making an appointment with a career advisor.
- Visit Internship Programs in the lower level of the Student Union Building, STU B1 during walk-in hours.
- Attend USC Career Fairs, Career Fest, and Internship Week events in the fall and spring semesters.
- Ask professors and staff members within your academic department.
- Use the Career Center resource library in STU 110 as well as the Career Access Resource Library online at http://careers.usc.edu/carl.
- Contact a professional organization in your field of interest and find out if there are student memberships available.
- Develop good record-keeping habits and send thank you notes or e-mail letters after an interview or networking sessions.

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Creating a Successful Internship Experience

- Set specific professional and career goals for the internship. Schedule a formal appointment with your supervisor to establish goals for your projects.
- Be aware of office politics. Learn the organizational structure. Who has decision-making power? How are decisions made?
- You probably have a lot of good ideas. Introduce those ideas at appropriate times when you will be heard. Your credibility is critical to your success.
- Make connections with as many people as you can both inside and outside the organization.
- Meet your commitments. Arrive on-time, let your supervisor know if you will be late or not be at work. Manage your time and work to your project’s deadline.
- Do not use organizational resources such as e-mail, internet, facebook (All social networking sites) or organizational discounts for personal reasons unless it has been approved by your supervisor.
- Communicate regularly with your supervisor. Address any work-related issues immediately. Your supervisor will evaluate your performance at the end of the semester and it is important to establish a positive professional relationship.