

The Role of Internships in Higher Education

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the topic of internships by discussing why internships are important and how they work. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Significance of Internships

An **internship** is an opportunity for work experience an employer offers to students or graduates who are interested in working in their field. Internships generally last a short, fixed period of time. They can be part-time (especially for current students) or full-time, paid or unpaid. In some ways, as a form of on-the-job learning, internships are similar to the concept of apprenticeship, though an internship is generally for a shorter term, and an intern isn't always as committed to the field as an apprentice. For both the intern and the employer, an internship is an opportunity to see if they are a match for each other.

For students, an internship can serve as a bridge between the higher education and professional practice—while they are working, an intern is part student and part employee. It's a great way to see firsthand if a given profession is right for you and put your education into practice. An internship gets you out of the classroom and places you directly into the work environment. There, you will work alongside people who have the jobs you are thinking about pursuing, and they may even be generous with their knowledge of the field or offer you career advice.

In addition to the value of “trying out” a career through an internship, in certain circumstances, an internship can lead directly to a job. This is not something you can expect to happen, but just as your internship gives you a chance to sample what it would be like to work with a certain employer, it gives the employer a chance to sample what it would be like to work with you. In any event, internships can provide you with valuable experiences that can lead, directly or indirectly, to future opportunities.



TERM TO KNOW

Internship

A temporary, entry-level position intended for students who are considering a career in a particular organization or field. The purpose of the internship is for the student to gain experience and apply the skills they have learned in school. For employers, it gives them a chance to evaluate the performance of new talent before offering a permanent position, although not all internships result in this.

2. Internships for Requirements or Course Credit

In some academic programs, an internship is required to earn your degree. More and more, entire schools or specific academic departments are realizing how integral an internship can be to the quality of students' educational experience and their readiness for the working world after graduation. Of course, before choosing any major or course of study, you should always familiarize yourself with the requirements for successful completion, but if you are interested in what an internship can offer, you might gravitate toward those programs that have incorporated internships into their curriculum.



HINT

Even if your internship is not required by your school, you may be able to receive course credit for it. If you want course credit for your internship, be sure to communicate this to both your academic advisor and your employer, as they will need to be in contact to ensure that the relevant academic standards are being met.

You may be asked to document your experiences in a journal or write a formal summary of what you learned during your internship in order to account for those standards. The number of credits you can receive will likely vary depending on the hours you put in at your internship. Your school may place a limit on the total number of credits you can earn through internships over the course of your college career, so (as always) make sure you understand the nuances of your institution's policies regarding the choices you make.



SUMMARY

This tutorial elaborated on **the significance of internships** to your education and discussed how internships can **fulfill requirements or count for course credit**



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