



Internship Success Guide

What should your employer expect of you as an intern?

- **Pay attention to your attitude:** You should radiate an attitude of “Yesssss! I’m so pleased to be here to learn all I can.”
- **Be attentive:** You are there to learn, be alert, take notes on what is being said, and be a good listener. Ask questions if you don’t understand. It’s much better to ask questions all along than make mistakes that were avoidable.
- **Dress appropriately:** Pay attention to what you wear and how you look. Your appearance can make or break your internship. There is an expectation that you will blend into a professional business environment. Take notice of what your colleagues are wearing and try to wear something compatible. Do not wear open-toe shoes. Do not wear perfume or cologne or scented hairsprays...do wear deodorant 😊
- **Your work habits are critical:** Work hard!!! Ask for more work when you finish. In most situations, you should not socialize, do homework, eat, make personal calls, take lots of breaks etc. If you have down time, review research papers or company profiles.
- **Learn to provide excellent customer service:** If your internship puts you in contact with customers, in-person or by telephone, represent your employer well!
- **The quality of your work should be “A” level:** Produce high quality, careful work, at your level of expertise...but don’t forget that you are a beginner. You will be noticed in a positive way if your work is of a superior quality.
- **Work accurately:** Check and double check your work for accuracy, or have a friend or co-worker check your work. You are known for the quality of your work.
- **Prepare for your workday:** Have your own pen and paper handy for taking notes. You will impress your employer.

How to Make the Most of Your Internship

- **What to do if and when the boss criticizes you or your work.** Accept constructive criticism from your Immediate Supervisor. This is a time for learning and growing and an opportunity for you to become a better future employee. Try not to be defensive.
- **Try not to worry if your work is not perfect.** Of course you are trying to do quality work, but we all make mistakes. Don’t expect to be an expert...you are there to learn and you will make mistakes at the beginning.
- **Be careful what you say.** Never, never, say negative things about your employer to another employee, to a site supervisor, or to another intern (e.g. “What a silly assignment!” or “That person is really rude.”) You would be so surprised at how quickly your comments get back to your employer! The person in whom you are confiding your complaints may be smiling at you and inviting you to comment, but that does not mean that what you say will be held in confidence.

- **Be a can-do type person.** Show your employer that you are a go-getter by taking the initiative and showing your eagerness to take on tasks. Ask for work. But be sensitive to not overstepping boundaries, acting bossy or too aggressive on the job.
- **Remember, you represent the best of UC Berkeley – Shine!**

What can an internship do for you?

1. Explore a possible career.
2. Improve how well you do as a college student: That's right! You are likely to improve your college grades and level of achievement. Your class curriculum may become more meaningful. Material that you are learning in class may relate to your internship assignments. This may help you see additional value regarding your class lessons.
3. Provide references. When it comes time to look for a job, your supervisor can act as a reference for you.
4. Make contacts for the future. A great networking opportunity.
5. Lead to a higher salary. When you take the time to complete an internship, you gain valuable experience. This experience can justify asking a future employer for a higher rate of pay than if you were applying for the job with no experience.
6. May turn into a job. Some employers use the internship as a way to evaluate potential new employees.
7. Acquire valuable, real-world research experience and training on a long-term project.
8. Work full-time and earn a competitive salary to help cover college expenses.
9. Define direction for graduate studies and research career options.
10. Develop new technical, communication, and leadership skills.

Adapted from the Student Internship Handbook of Santa Monica College