

EY Center for Careers

Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

An “internship” is a full or part-time work experience that is directly related to your academic major. A lot of internships occur during the summer; however, there are also internships during the fall and spring semester. Some internships are for a finite duration (i.e., 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 3 months, etc.), and some get extended if the employer needs and wants the continued services of the student, and the student is performing well and interested in continuing the work experience. It is often difficult to differentiate between an internship and a part-time job in your field; however, the part-time job typically is ongoing.

Many companies/firms/government hire interns to provide both a hands-on learning experience for the student as well as gain direct experience with the student to determine if that student is a good fit for full-time employment with the employer. Some students will complete one internship; others will do more than one (i.e., winter and summer internships consecutively).

**** Do not *assume* that the internship will result in a full-time offer! Inquire during the interview process about the expectations and process. Also, the full-time offer is earned by displaying an appropriate attitude and delivering a strong performance throughout the internship! (It demonstrates a poor attitude if you using your phone, for any reason, consistently and/or for long periods of time.)**

The following information is to help you prepare for and perform well during your internship, understand the employer’s expectations, communicate honestly and completely with employers if you receive / accept more than one internship offer, and properly handle a potential offer following the internship.

1. Multiple Internship Offers

- If you receive more than one offer for an internship, and the internships are scheduled during the same time period (i.e., summer, fall, or winter), you typically can accept only one offer, unless they are part-time, do not conflict with one another, and you are able to work two or more concurrently. You cannot work two full-time internships at the same time.
- If you receive one or more offers for internships that are scheduled at different times (i.e., winter and summer; summer and fall; fall and winter; fall and summer), you may be able to accept offers for consecutive internships.
 - i. **You must communicate openly and honestly with all employers** and should obtain their approval to work multiple (consecutive) internships. ** Most of the larger firms, and some local firms as well, intend to extend you a full-time offer at the end of the internship, so they have the expectation that you interested in staying with them if the fit is good for both of you. This should be discussed during the offer process; if not, it is in your best interest to ask and clarify.
 - ii. **** Do not take bad advice and conceal your multiple internships from employers!** If they find out (and they usually do), they may rescind your offer as you have broken an ethical code of understanding (and you will burn bridges for the future).
- If you do accept more than one offer for concurrent or consecutive internships, it is imperative that you continue to communicate with the employers to let them know what you are doing.
- **** See below for Recruiting Guidelines** regarding offer and acceptance dates.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

2. Preparation for the Internship

Before you begin an internship, learn as much as you can about the employer and, if possible, about the structure and expectations of the internship. Your primary contact is the recruiter, so start with her/him. Confirm the date(s), times, location and parking (i.e., if parking is covered or reimbursed at the office and/or at a client? and where to park - make sure you know which is the correct lot, especially downtown). Determine what you want / need to learn about the organization and potential career opportunities while participating in the internship so that you are in a better position to make an informed decision if you receive an offer at the end of the internship. **It is beneficial to begin networking prior to the internship** to learn as much as you can in advance, and strengthen your relationship with the firm (see more about networking below).

**** Important Questions to Ask:** “What will I be doing during the internship and how is the work assigned (re: projects, specific responsibilities, clients)?” “What should I do if I am not 100% busy?” “Where should I seek assistance if I have questions, need additional training, or need specific help?” “How will I be evaluated, how often, and how will I know that I am performing well?”

3. Networking Prior to the Internship

It is very beneficial to continue networking with a firm after you receive an internship offer and throughout the school year prior to the internship. Learn more about the firm, the structure, the different practice areas, industries and clients, how the work is assigned, who does the assigning, and how you will be evaluated. **Do not make any assumptions!**

****** For the Big 4, you may be asked in advance what are your top 4 industry preferences. Depending on the popularity of a particular industry, you may not get your first choice. If you do not yet know what industries and clients you prefer, networking will help. Once you do know, networking will continue to help. Connect with the managers and partners who are in charge of specific practice areas, industries and clients. Set up “coffee chats” to build a rapport (see the Coffee Chat guide on the EY Center website).

****** *With a Mid-Tier firm or other employer, it is also beneficial to network in advance of your internship. While you may not be assigned a specific industry, you will be assigned to specific clients and projects, and it is to your advantage to learn about your options and advocate for the assignments that most interest you.*

4. Attendance

Always arrive early / on time - do not arrive late. Once you start, observe when others are arriving, and if they mostly arrive early, do the same. Showing up late indicates a lack of interest and commitment, and it will reflect poorly on you and possibly impact your chance of receiving an offer at the end of the internship. If you are ever running late, call and let the employer know that you are late, on your way and when you expect to arrive. Don't schedule any vacations or days off during the internship, unless absolutely necessary. Discuss with the employer in advance, if at all possible. Ask ahead about the expected dress code (at the office and at a client) and dress appropriately.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

5. Performance and Participation

Participate fully in the work you are assigned. Ask questions (there are many different kinds of questions which will arise depending on your specific situation) to help you perform at and above expectations. Try to understand the management style of your seniors and managers, and learn how best to approach them if you do have questions. Reach out, if necessary, to other people at the employer with whom you have connected, to seek their advice as well.

If you finish your assignment early, ask for additional work; do not sit idly. Look for opportunities to get involved, where and when appropriate, learn as much as you can, seek feedback, respond accordingly to constructive feedback and make improvements, whether it be with your technical performance or work attitude. Get to know your fellow interns, whether or not they are from CSUN. Many of your fellow interns will become your fellow co-workers if you and they receive and accept full-time offers with that employer.

Network with other professionals in the organization - you know the importance of networking and that, in most cases, it helped you get into an organization; now, you must continue to learn about the employer and build relationships with others including staff, seniors, managers, directors, partners and other key individuals.

****As you learn more about the practice areas, industries and clients, you may begin (if not previously) to develop preferences and/or strong interests. Identify the key professionals (managers, directors and partners) for those practice areas, industries and clients as they will be in charge of who is assigned to work on specific projects.**

You will benefit greatly throughout the duration of your employment with an organization if you establish and maintain strong professional relationships. (While many firms will assign a “mentor” or “career advisor” when you start, the key relationships you develop with managers and partners will provide you with a lot of helpful guidance and support throughout.)

There is a lot of networking during an internship. Whether it is during a coffee break, meal or other unstructured time, meeting and getting to know professionals and students alike is very important.

What if you are “shy”? Many of our students tend to be more “shy” than “outgoing”. So, if you consider yourself to be “shy”, how can you feel comfortable and network and participate effectively? Look for students who are also “shy”, and introduce yourself. Start a friendly casual conversation - ask them what school they are from, where they are from, what they like about school, what are their interests, etc. Be curious without being intrusive. Make casual conversation and make new friends.

You will also be interacting with professionals throughout the internship and other networking events. When starting a conversation with a professional, ask them about their prior recruiting experience, how long they’ve been with the firm, what they do in their work, what are their goals, and what they like about the firm. In other words, be curious and show genuine interest. The conversation may turn to informal topics such as interests as well. With professionals and students, avoid talking about any controversial topics such as politics and religion.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

The key to networking is getting to know others, learning about the firm, the work and the professionals, and developing a rapport and possible friendships with other students, most of whom will be your future colleagues at the firm.

An internship may include events prior to the start of the internship or additional activities outside of the regular workday. While it may not be required for you to participate, it is recommended that you do so whenever possible. It is important to demonstrate your level of interest and commitment to the organization and take part in all activities.

6. Dining Etiquette

You may be going out to lunch and/or dinner at a nice restaurant, and dining etiquette is important. Here are some tips to help you navigate the meal(s):

- Do not order the most expensive item on the menu. Pay attention to what others are ordering, and do similarly.
- Do not order alcohol.
- Order something that is both easy to eat and filling.
- Observe others who have dining experience as to where to put your napkin and utensils when not using them.
- Watch your table manners - don't reach across the table, try not to spill food or drink, do not eat too much at one time, and do not talk with your mouth full.
- Try to get to know the professionals and students during the meal. This is a casual, yet important part of the networking process. Listen carefully, participate in the conversation, and smile appropriately. Ask questions and share similarly as to what others are doing.
- Be yourself, and if you tend to be "shy" (as discussed above), make an effort to stretch your comfort zone and make conversation. Once you get started, it will get easier.
- Most importantly, enjoy the opportunity to get to know some professionals and other students in a more casual setting.

7. Commuting / Mass Transit and Parking

If you work in public accounting, no matter what practice area you are joining, do not assume that you will only work at the office. Ask about the parking options. If you plan to take public transportation (bus or rail), ask if you will have to go to a client with short notice, and determine how best to handle it if you are not planning to drive your car to the office on a given day. It can be challenging if you do not have your car on a given day and are assigned to go to a client that is not near public transportation.

8. Recruiting Guidelines - Offers and Acceptances

The Public Accounting firms who conduct on-campus interviews (OCIs) through the EY Center for Careers have all agreed to specific recruiting guidelines. The firms include: Andersen Tax, Armanino, BDO, Crowe, CBIZ, CLA, CohnReznick, Deloitte, EY, Green Hasson Janks, HCVT, KPMG, Marcum, Mazars USA, Moss Adams, PwC, RSM, SingerLewak, Squar Milner, and Weaver.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

- a. If you complete a Summer Internship only:
 - The firm can extend you a full-time offer at any time during or after the completion of the internship.
 - You have at least 2 weeks following the offer to make a decision to accept or reject the full-time offer.
 - You cannot continue to recruit with any other firms if you accept the full-time offer - it is unethical to continue recruiting, and the firm could rescind their offer.
 - b. If you complete a Winter Internship only:
 - The firm can extend you a full-time offer at any time during or after the completion of the internship.
 - You have at least 2 weeks following the offer to make a decision to accept or reject the full-time offer.
 - You cannot continue to recruit with any other firms if you accept the full-time offer - it is unethical to continue recruiting, and the firm could rescind their offer.
 - c. If you complete both a Winter and Summer Internship (consecutively):
 - Some firms may allow you to work at another firm either before or after your internship with them (remember to communicate with them!)
 - Both firms must wait until the end of your summer internship to extend you a full-time offer.
 - This allows you to complete both internships without feeling any pressure from either firm to make an early decision.
 - You have at least 2 weeks following the offers to make a decision to accept or reject a full-time offer.
 - If you receive a full-time offer from both firms, and once you make your decision, you can accept the offer with the firm of your choice.
 - Upon accepting an offer with one firm, please let the other firm know immediately that you have accepted another offer and are declining their offer - be considerate and appreciative of their offer. It is recommended that you call the firm (specifically the recruiter), rather than send an email. (It is professional to contact all of the key individuals with whom you have recruited.)
 - ****Build and maintain bridges as you cannot predict the future, and therefore, you do not know with whom and where you will work down the road. You may be interested in that other firm in the future, you may end up working with or for someone from that firm, or any other number of possibilities may occur. As large as the professional world may be, it is important to build and preserve a positive reputation.**
9. Once you have accepted a full-time offer (following one or more internships), you cannot continue recruiting in the Fall or after. It is unprofessional etiquette to accept an offer and continue looking. You have only two options: (a) Accept an offer and stop recruiting - or - (b) Decline all offers and re-enter the recruiting process.
10. Once you have accepted a full-time offer, it is not OK to accept an internship offer with another firm without first discussing it with the firm with whom you have accepted the full-time offer.

EY Center for Careers
Preparation and Professional Etiquette: Internships

11. After the Offer - Networking to Prepare for the Full-time Position

After you have received and accepted an offer, the process is not finished; in fact, it is actually beginning the next phase, and that is getting ready for your full-time position with the firm.

As mentioned above, each firm may assign and schedule work differently, and it may vary by practice area and industry group. When you learn how the firm assigns and schedules clients and work within a particular practice area and industry group, as before, continue to network with the managers and partners within the practice area and client group(s) that are of interest to you. While there is no guarantee, students who network within the firm with those in charge of the clients and schedules are more likely to get assigned the industry(ies) and client(s) they desire. If you do not know yet what practice area, industries and clients interest you, networking can be very helpful as well. See the Networking and Coffee Chat guides on the EY Center website for additional assistance.

12. If you are unsure what to do or have any questions, please come to the EY Center to discuss ASAP. I will not tell you what to do (except regarding ethical behavior). I will help you understand your options based on your interests and needs.