

EY Center for Careers

Professional Etiquette: Summer Leadership Program (SLP)

What is a Summer Leadership Program (SLP)?

Each Summer Leadership Program (SLP) is different, but there are common ingredients and themes across the various firms that host SLPs.

- SLPs run from 1 to 3 days, with most being 2 days
- They include professionals presenting about the firm - i.e., history, size/locations, practice areas, client industry groups, internship & full-time opportunities, career paths, culture, training & mentorship programs, and more
- Some may include firm tours
- SLPs take place at the firm, hotel / conference centers, and other locations
- SLPs are generally local; some firms offer regional, national (and international) SLPs as well
- SLPs vary in terms of programming. In addition to firm presentations, they typically include group activities during which you may work on a business case or work together on a fun, non-business related activity (the group dynamics and individual participation are most important); some include outside community service or scavenger hunts
- Firm professionals are observing you throughout the SLP to determine if you are a fit, and if you are genuinely interested in their firm
- You may have a formal interview before, during or after the SLP for an internship opportunity
- The dates for the SLPs vary throughout the summer (check for overlapping dates)
- Big 4 SLPs also include a lot of additional networking events (i.e., coffee chats, meals, events, client site visits) before and after the SLP

1. SLP to Internship Offer

The SLP offer with a Big 4 is typically an internship offer in-waiting. That does not mean that the internship offer is guaranteed because, in fact, there have been situations where a student did not perform at/above expectations, and they did not receive an internship offer. All that is presented below is just as important whether you are doing an SLP with a Big 4 or a mid-tier firm to help obtain the internship offer.

The SLP to internship offer conversion rate with the mid-tier firms varies, so you should not expect an internship offer automatically, and instead, read what is below, and implement as much as possible. Do not look at the internship offer process as a competition with the other students at a SLP as many of them are going to be your co-workers should you ultimately work with that firm. In addition, the firm's professionals are observing how you are interacting and behaving with not only professionals but with the other students. They are looking for team work, collaboration and inclusion, not winning at all costs.

2. Preparation

Before you attend a SLP, learn as much as you can about the firm and, if possible, about the structure and expectations of the program. Confirm the date(s), times, location and parking (i.e., if parking is covered or reimbursed, and where to park - make sure you know which is the correct lot, especially downtown). Determine what you need and want to learn about the firm and career opportunities while attending the SLP so that you are in a better position to make an informed decision if you receive any offers at the end of the summer. It is beneficial to begin networking prior to the SLP to learn as much as you can in advance, and strengthen your relationship with the firm (see more about networking below).

3. Attendance

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Do attend. If you have accepted a SLP offer with any firm, it is unprofessional not to show up, and it reflects poorly on CSUN as well. You may also have taken a space that another CSUN student might have been offered. If after accepting a SLP offer, a conflict arises with another SLP or other scheduling issue, call the firm's recruiter immediately to discuss. Be 100% honest. Do not wait until the last minute. If you give the firm enough notice, they may be able to invite another CSUN student to fill your vacated spot.

Arrive early / on time - do not arrive late. It indicates a lack of interest and commitment, and showing up late can / will reflect poorly on you and possibly impact your chance of receiving an interview invitation or offer at the end of the summer. Prepare directions for driving or public transportation in advance (you can even scout the building in advance), and as mentioned, know exactly where you are to park.

Ask ahead about dress code and dress appropriately. Find out if you need to bring anything (i.e., resume).

4. ** Participation

Active (and appropriate) participation at a SLP is very important. What does this involve? Asking questions, listening intently, interacting not only with the firm professionals, but also with the other students (from all colleges/universities), collaborating with your team members on team projects and activities, learning about the firm and the professionals who present and with whom you interact, and demonstrating a sincere interest in the firm.

What does it mean to participate with a team? Team work is helping the team achieve its goals. It does not require formal leadership, so do not feel that you have to manage the team and project; only if you want to do so. Observe the team's process, and help fill in needs where appropriate. Help the team stay on track. Help others get involved. Your goal is not to "stand out" at the expense of others. You are being observed throughout, so how you help the team collaborate and reach a consensus, will display your team work.

There is a lot of networking during a SLP (and after). 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 others 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 speaking with professionals throughout the SLP and 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.

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, some/many of whom may be your future colleagues.

There may be presentations during the SLP. When possible, ask a question that is relevant to the presentation and presenter(s), and one in which you are interested in the answer (in other words, you

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want to learn something). Don't just ask a question to be noticed. You do not need to ask a question during every presentation, but do raise your hand at least once or twice to show that you are attentive, and engaged in what is going on.

Participating during the SLP is an ongoing "interview". Be considerate of others and their opinions, even when you think they might be wrong. Listen to different ideas and help to integrate them into the team discussion and outcome. Focus on being an effective team player, as explained above. Take a leadership role when possible, but do not dominate. Leadership is about facilitating the process, supporting each member of the team, and helping the team work together toward achieving the common goal(s).

Once you go to a SLP, participate fully, even if you do not think you are ultimately interested in that firm. You do not want to make a negative impression and burn any bridges (see below) as you cannot predict the future, and you may want to re-engage with that firm later in your career, or may work with one or more professionals from that firm in a different capacity.

The SLP may include dinner or other evening activities. While you may not be required to participate, it is recommended to do so. If at all possible, show your level of interest and commitment to the firm and take part in all activities. As mentioned previously, the Big 4 host a lot of "extra" activities outside of the formal SLP to provide additional networking opportunities. Take advantage of these activities to meet more professionals and students and to learn more about the firm, the future internship, and the actual work to be performed during the internship and full-time position.

For a mid-tier, you can set up "coffee chats" (see the Coffee Chat guide on the EY Center website) outside of the SLP to continue networking with the firm. If you meet a lot of professionals at one firm and do not meet many at another, your comparison of the firms will be uneven. Don't judge a firm just based on the people you meet, but also the other factors that are important to you such as the work, training and resources, work/life balance, practice areas, clients, etc. (see the Career Planning guide on the EY Center website to make a list of key factors for yourself). Utilize the SLP and outside networking to learn as much as you can about firms and make the best informed decision possible.

5. 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.

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6. ** Recruiting Guidelines - Offers and Acceptances

The Accounting firms who interview on-campus through the EY Center for Careers have all agreed to specific recruiting guidelines. The firms include: Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG, RSM, Grant Thornton, BDO, Crowe Horwath, CBIZ, CLA, CohnReznick, Moss Adams, Marcum, Armanino, Weaver, Andersen Tax, HCVT, Squar Milner and Green Hasson Janks.

While the 2018 SLP programs occur throughout the summer, accounting firms are not permitted to make any internship offers until July 27, 2018. The purpose for this guideline is so that each student can attend all of the SLPs they have accepted, do not have to make any decisions until they have completed the SLPs, and can receive one or more offers at the same time. Then, students have 2+ weeks to make the decision with the Offer Acceptance deadline set for August 13, 2018 (or later if a firm wishes to extend the deadline). Therefore:

- **No offers should be extended prior to July 27, 2018.**
- Firms can extend offers on or after July 27, 2018. So, if you receive an offer on July 27, do not assume that other firms are not interested if they have not yet extended you an offer as well. Reach out to the other firms, if you are interested in them, let them know you have an offer outstanding, and ask about your status.
- You do not need to make any decisions until after all offers are received and discussed, and you have until August 13, 2018 to make a final decision.
- Once you have made your decision, you can accept the offer with the firm of your choice. Upon doing so, please let the other firms who have also extended offers, know immediately that you have accepted another offer and are declining their offer(s). It is recommended that you call the firms, specifically the recruiters, directly. It is also good etiquette to contact other professionals at the firms with whom you developed a connection.

Once you have accepted an internship offer (following the SLPs), 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. 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. I will help you understand your options based on your interests and needs.

** Do not burn bridges! As large as Southern California is, and with as many accounting professionals as there are, it is still a “small world”, and it is likely you will come across many of the same people throughout your career - at the firm with whom you start, a future employer, a future client, etc.

7. After the Offer - Networking to Prepare for the Internship

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

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, the next step is 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.