An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a real-world work setting.

Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in fields they are considering for career paths while under the mentorship and guidance of an experienced professional. Internships also provide employers with the opportunity to interact with and evaluate new talent.

Why do an internship?

Employers generally look for a balance of education and experience when recruiting employees. Participating in an internship is one of the best ways to gain the necessary experience to complement your education while helping you build your resume/portfolio. This, in turn, makes it far more likely that you’ll get a good job. In addition, internships are a great way to “try on” a career before you graduate and gain new skills in a supportive, professional setting. An important note is that employers have reported converting a large percentage of their interns into permanent employees, so the internship you have today could be the job you have in the future!

“My internship gave me insights I wouldn’t have gained otherwise and provided another perspective on business. Also, the skills I learned (networking, direct communication, interpersonal relationships) will definitely be helpful after I graduate and am applying for a job.”

Katherina, PSU Senior
Earning Credit for Internships

Students may be eligible to earn credit for internships through the Credit By Arrangement process.

PSU Requirements: When applying for credit, it is necessary to get approval from a faculty member who teaches courses in the area most closely related to the internship opportunity. The faculty sponsor will review the internship description and determine its value as a credit-worthy experience. In addition to the duties outlined in the internship description, faculty sponsors often require students to perform additional assignments, such as weekly reports, culminating projects, or papers. However, this is at the discretion of the faculty member.

Once the position is reviewed and deemed credit-worthy, the faculty member certifies the internship experience by signing a Credit By Arrangement form (available online and through the PSU Office of Registration and Records). The instructor then submits the registration form to the Registration Office, and the student receives credit in the subject area (upon completing the internship). The number of credit hours earned is relative to the number of hours spent working at the internship site.

Internships: Paid or Unpaid?

Compensation for time spent in an internship depends on the employer and/or project. Many government and non-profit organizations offer unpaid internships, while most internships with for-profit companies are paid, although there are exceptions.

Unpaid internships with for-profit companies are subject to federal labor laws, which are meant to distinguish the intern from a volunteer or employee, and also emphasize to the employer the necessary educational and legal aspects of an internship.

PSU Guidelines for Unpaid Internships with For-Profit Employers:

- The internship is highly educational and will primarily benefit the intern
- Learning objectives are established with the intern before the internship begins and revisited regularly
- The intern is supervised throughout the internship
- The intern should not displace a paid employee
- The employer derives no immediate financial advantage from the intern
- No more than 30% of the intern’s time should be spent on clerical or repetitive tasks
- An unpaid internship may be no more than 1 term or 3 months in

GET READY
Pathways to an internship

Visit PSU Advising & Career Services website:
pdx.edu/careers
- Register for CareerConnect, a searchable jobs/internships database to view current opportunities
- Attend free workshops on resume writing, interviewing, and finding Internships
- Schedule a meeting with a career counselor to polish your resume

Build a network
- Tell everyone you know that you’re looking for an internship, beginning with faculty, family, bosses, co-workers, and friends.

Schedule informational interviews
- Learn about specific careers in your area of interest by talking to professionals who have jobs in those areas

Make connections
- Talk to people, make phone calls, attend conferences and events.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNSHIP

- Identify a mentor or supervisor
- Decide what you want to learn
- Ask questions & take initiative
- Stay positive and enthusiastic
- Network within the company

“I could have never predicted how huge an impact an internship opportunity would have on me in such a short time.”

-Parisa, Grad Student