

# **The University of Mississippi School of Business Administration**



## **Student Guide to Internships**

### **Contact Information**

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# Why Intern?

## 1. Test your career choices

How do you **truly know** you want to do something unless you have done it before? An internship allows you to “try on” a career before making a long term commitment. It can help you discover if the career you’re considering is right (or wrong) for you.

## 2. Increase your marketability

Employers consistently rate internship experience as one of the top criteria used when selecting candidates. Employers look for students with education **and** experience.

## 3. Develop skills and apply knowledge

Apply theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to actual on-the-job experiences. Develop skills specific to your chosen industry and confidence in the skills you already possess.

## 4. Acquire job search skills

Create a professional resume, sharpen your interviewing skills, and a practice interacting professionally. These skills are essential for finding a job or for applying to graduate school.

## 5. Build networking contacts

An internship is a great opportunity to build a network of contacts in your chosen career field. In addition, over half of all interns are hired by the organization where they interned!

# Getting an Internship

## When Do I begin?

The entire process of finding an internship – from identifying potential employers, to applying, interviewing, and accepting a position – will likely take several months.

**Consider an Internship Timeline:** Typically, college students complete their internships during their junior or senior year, but few realize that they have to **plan ahead**. It is recommended that you begin the internship search process at least six months before you plan to intern.

Some industries have application deadlines many months prior to the intended start date. ***The earlier you start your search; the more opportunities you will find available.***

# Maximizing the Internship Experience

It's up to you to get the most out of your internship. Follow these steps to help maximize your experience:

## Set realistic goals and expectations

Meet with your supervisor to discuss your work plan. What specific skills and competencies do you need to acquire and demonstrate? What is the time frame? What training is available? Monitor your progress and arrange to meet with your supervisor regularly. Share your career interests and ideas. Communicate concerns early. If you are having problems getting an assignment completed, be sure to talk to your supervisor and discuss ways to prioritize your tasks.

## Maintain a “can do” attitude

Show your eagerness to learn new things by welcoming new assignments. Understand all positions engage in a wide range of activities ... some that catch your eye while others do not. Tackle all assignments and projects with enthusiasm. Only seek additional (more exciting) projects when completed with other assignments assigned by your supervisor.

## Perform to the best of your ability

Be sure you understand the assignment and its deadline before you begin. If you need assistance, ask. Check your work before submitting it to your supervisor. Ask for feedback.

## Be respectful of colleagues

You are the new person in the office and you can learn from every colleague, regardless of rank. Show all of your colleagues that you value their opinion and experience.

## Support the team

Your ability to work well with others is key to your success. The team's goals are your goals. Understand how your work fits into theirs.

## Understand the unwritten rules

As a new employee, you will absorb a tremendous amount of information. Observe. What is appropriate attire? What are expected hours? How do things get done? How do colleagues interact with one another? Are there office politics to steer away from?

## Be flexible

You may be near the end of a project when you are asked to start a new one. Be aware that priorities in an organization change. Your willingness and ability to switch gears easily is required for your success. Your supervisor will help you to prioritize your assignments.

### Identify a mentor

A mentor may be assigned to you or you may need to identify your own. This is often a more senior, respected professional in your field who would like to take a personal interest in your career development. With your mentor, you will feel free to ask advice about your career decisions.

### Document your success

Record assignments, projects, and achievements. Keep copies of evaluations and samples of your work. Ask for letters of recommendation. Keep these handy for future career conversations.

### Seek answers regarding the industry/company

Below are a few questions to ask:

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| How would you describe a typical day?  | Where do you expect to be in 5 to 10 years in your career?                                   |
| What are the frustrations that individuals face in this industry?                    | What are the greatest challenges about working here?   |
| What educational and career requirements are necessary for this work?                | What suggestions can you give a college student who is interested in this field as a career? |
| What are the pros/cons about working in this industry/company?                       | What training opportunities are available in an entry level job?                             |
| Who else should I contact to learn more about career paths related to this industry? | How do most people get into this field?<br>Why do people leave the field?                    |
| What is the best educational preparation?  | Is it necessary to change companies in order to advance?                                     |
| What are the personal attributes that are essential for success in this field?       | How many hours a week do staff work on average?  |
| How much travel is required for the work?  | Which professional journals, organizations, or websites are recommended?                     |
| What can I do to expand my experiences to fit in this career area?                   | What do you wish you had known before choosing your career path?                             |

These questions are only suggestions; there are many other questions you could ask, so feel free to come up with your own.

## Use this checklist as a general guide to locating an internship:

### Freshman Year

- Visit the Career Center located in 303 Martindale and the Office of Undergraduate Career Preparation located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Holman (Room G6 and G7).
- Meet with a Career Advisor and possibly take a career assessment to select your major or career path.
- Explore Ole Miss academic programs.
- Join a club or participate in campus activities.
- Create a résumé and cover letter.

### Sophomore Year

- Meet with a Career Advisor to clarify your major and career options.
- Declare a major by the end of the academic year.
- Schedule an informational interview or job shadow a professional working in a field that interests you.
- Complete Career Preparation Activities in BUS 271: Business Communication.
- Connect with the Office of Undergraduate Career Preparation to discuss internship and career preparation.
- Register with EmployUM, the Ole Miss online job/internship board.

### Junior Year

- Determine the field, industry, and geographic region where you would consider interning.
- Inform everyone in your personal network, including family, friends, neighbors, advisors, mentors, and faculty members, that you are seeking career related experience.
- Refine your cover letter and résumé.
- Practice your job interviewing skills with Interview Stream or a Mock Interview in the Career Center/Office of Undergraduate Career Preparation.
- Attend Career Center/School of Business Administration networking events where you will meet potential organizations offering internships.
- Arrange for an informational interview within a career industry of interest, to learn more about the field, get an inside look at an organization you may want to work for, and identify potential contacts and opportunities.
- Build your professional wardrobe.
- Complete an internship.

### Senior Year

- Begin your internship/ job search early – develop a prospective employer list and distribute your cover letter and résumé.
- Refine your job interviewing skills.
- Check out EmployUM and other online internship/job resources.
- Intern possibly for a second time.