Internship Planning

What is an internship?
Internships have become the “pre-professional” workforce. Increasingly, employers implement internship programs as a recruiting pipeline for permanent hires. This reduces hiring costs to employers and provides both the intern and employer the opportunity to determine a mutual fit for an organization.

Some internship opportunities do not lead to permanent employment with a specific organization, but do provide students with opportunities to network, increase skills and build resumes.

An internship is:

• A one-time, time-limited opportunity in a professional setting to learn workplace and industry skills
• An academic requirement for most academic programs at Cazenovia College
• Sometimes paid and sometimes unpaid
• Designed to meet your specific academic and career objectives or to rule out career areas
• Your FIRST step into the professional workforce
• Your opportunity to practice appropriate workplace etiquette
• An excellent way to build your professional network

Most internship sites prefer interns who are in degree seeking programs at undergraduate and graduate colleges and universities. Some internship sites are seeking post-graduate candidates meaning that candidates have completed a degree and the internship serves as a full-time experience.

Internships are supervised, pre-professional work, service, or learning experiences. Internships allow students the opportunity to meet their learning goals and apply knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to a professional setting. Students may have the opportunity to share new perspectives and implement learned strategies and skills from the classroom.

Finding and Planning for an Internship – The Search Process

Before you begin….

• Because most students at Cazenovia College are required to participate in the Internship Program, it is recommended that you speak with the faculty internship coordinator of your program as the first step in the internship search process.
• Many Faculty Internship Coordinators will want to discuss with you your interests to help you determine an appropriate internship site.
• Your faculty advisors are excellent resources to contact when beginning the internship search process.
• Students are ultimately responsible for securing internships. Assistance with identifying, applying for and obtaining internships is available through faculty and the Career Services Office.

Getting Started

• After narrowing down what type of field/internship you want to find, you can begin the search process.
• If you are searching for an internship on your own, narrow your options by the following:
  o Location: in what city/state do you want to do your internship?
  o Semester and Year: In which semester will you be doing your internship and taking the co-requisite course?
• Remember: If you are planning an internship for academic credit, you must register for the number of credit hours in the semester you are actually doing your internship. Many students choose to intern during the summers. Please remember that Cazenovia College awards financial aid for the fall and spring semesters only. If you plan on a summer internship, please plan your finances accordingly.
Do research

- Search for organizations in your target location and in your field of interest.
- Browse company websites and check whether they list internship opportunities.
- Identify a few organizations that interest you and make contact the organization. Usually the contact is through the human resources department.
- Some students choose to request Informational Interviews* as a way of networking and obtaining an internship.

Where to look

- The Career Services Office maintains a complete listing of internship sites for your review. Please contact the Career Services Office for further information.
- The Career Services web page has internship listings and these can be accessed at http://www.cazenovia.edu/careerservices. Click on “I am a student,” click on “Internships,” and finally click on “Internship Websites.” Most of the sites are divided by major. Internship opportunities can also be found on the College's job posting system, College Central.com. Enrolled students and alumni can access internship and job opportunities from employers seeking Cazenovia College students as well as access internship opportunities from across the country.
  - Student Access
    - When at the Career Services (http://www.cazenovia.edu/careerservices.edu) web page
    - Scroll down and click on the College Central Logo or go to http://www.collegecentral.com/cazenovia/
    - Click on STUDENTS
    - Click on LOG IN AT STUDENT CENTRAL (students are preloaded so don’t register),
    - At the prompt, enter Access ID: Cazenovia, Password: First seven digits on students’ Cazenovia College ID cards
- Check internship posting sites often as opportunities are added and deleted on a daily basis. When you find a posting that you are interested in, please apply for it right away.
- Search for organizations in your target location and in your field of interest.
- Browse company websites and check whether they list internship opportunities.
- Identify a few organizations that interest you and make contact the organization. Usually the contact is through the human resources department.
- Some students choose to request Informational Interviews* as a way of networking and obtaining an internship.

*See the handout on preparing for and obtaining an Informational Interview at the Career Services Office

Onsite and Credit Internship Hours:

- For most academic programs at Cazenovia College, the number of on-site hours required for three academic credits is approximately 120 and varies by major. The ratio of on-site work hours to academic credit hours is 40:1.
- If you have an internship and are registered for three credit hours please consider the internship site’s needs. A requirement of 120 hours is equivalent to about four weeks of full-time work.
- An internship site will provide you with training and will give you opportunities to participate in projects. However, if you are ONLY willing to work for the 120 required hours, the internship site may be hesitant to work with you. By the time you learn about the organization and have enough knowledge to be involved in projects, you will have completed your required hours.
- It is strongly recommended that you extend the time you spend at an internship site. As an average, it is reasonable for an internship site to expect that you work approximately 12 - 15 hours per week for about 15 weeks. Some sites will require more and some will require less. It is in your best interest to be FLEXIBLE.

The Employer’s Perspective

Employers are eager to have students as interns for a variety of reasons.
Employers incorporate interns as a way of recruiting full-time permanent employees at the completion of the internship.

Employers have the opportunity to observe interns, their work behaviors and work ethic and determine if there is an organizational fit between the students and the employers.

Employers have the opportunity to influence and mentor the next generation of the professional workforce.

Students are advised to begin thinking about internships when they begin college. However, internships are usually for students who have two years of college completed. Each internship site will determine the requirements they seek. Some sites welcome students at any stage of their college career; while others will require a particular class standing (sophomore, junior or senior). Employers often look for interns who have had some major-related course work. This allows the intern to participate in the company’s operations. Also internship sites may require a minimum GPA. Students need to begin college by thinking about their objectives and what may be required to obtain internships.

Some academic programs at Cazenovia College require two internships and students are encouraged to speak with the program director in their major to determine the number of internship credits required to graduate.

Based on your major and/or your career interest, begin seeking organizations and businesses that fit with your goals. For those students who may be having difficulty pinning down where they would like to pursue an internship and what they would like to do, consider the following.

- Do you have geographical restrictions or can you pursue an internship anywhere?
- What type of industry is most interesting to you? Consider business, education, manufacturing, social services, research, graphic design and businesses where you can use specific skills.
- Think about the type of work you would like to do.
- Do you want hands-on experience? An administrative experience? An experience where you are interacting with many colleagues and outside customers/clients? An experience where you will be working alone or with only a few colleagues?

The answers to these questions will help you narrow your internship search and find opportunities that will be most beneficial to you. If you are unsure about your major or area of interest, the Career Services Office can help you. We will talk with you one-on-one to help you decide what area or major bests fits your likes, dislikes, values, abilities, skills, and interests.

**When Do I Start Looking for an Internship?**

Students are encouraged to begin planning and looking for internships as much as a year in advance depending on the type of internship you want. Larger companies/corporations usually have organized internship programs that have application deadlines up to six months prior to the start of internships.

Smaller and/or local companies do not always require applications and may provide internships for students on an as-needed base. If you know of a company/organization you would like to intern for, start looking now and find out the process required to apply for an internship opportunity. If you are interested in an internship with someone who owns their own business and the operation is very small, you may need to discuss what internships are and how they are mutually beneficial.

Please keep this in mind: **START EARLY - AT LEAST ONE SEMESTER PRIOR TO THE TIME YOU WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN YOUR INTERNSHIP!!** Every company and organization has specific timelines for accepting internship applications and selecting interns. Research is critical and it is your responsibility to know when the application deadlines are.

**Getting the Most Out of Your Internship**

Your advisor/internship faculty member will discuss with you the requirements and assignments you need to do to successfully complete your internship. Every student is required to have a Learning Agreement. This agreement is developed by the student, the internship site supervisor and your internship course professor. All
parties sign the Learning Agreement. This ensures that all expectations are met and that it will be a meaningful academic experience. Conversely, if the goals you have determined are not being met or addressed, the Learning Agreement can help you, your professor and the internship site supervisor to revisit the goals and to stay on track.

Consider the following as you prepare for your internship:

- Determine what you want to learn from your internship
- Coordinate your goals with the learning goals/agreement that you will establish with your site supervisor and your faculty advisor
- Treat your internship as if you are in a full-time permanent position. Although you are there to learn, you are also there to contribute to the organization.
- Build good relationships with your site supervisor, the organization’s employees, external clients and customers. These relationships will help you establish yourself when you begin your professional career.
- Seek feedback on projects and tasks. Ask for constructive criticism. Be prepared to receive feedback.
- Establish how you and your site supervisor will communicate and how often.
- Understand the organization as much as possible prior to beginning your internship.
- Know who the leaders of the organization are.
- If you need clarification about something you are working on, ASK. Your site supervisor is there to help you learn.

Keep a list of your projects, tasks and accomplishments. This list will be very helpful when you update your resume. Many people, as they get further away from experiences, tend to forget crucial aspects and activities of internships and employment positions. Write a list or keep a journal of activities. This will help you recall the details of your experience.