Internships

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Why Should I consider doing an internship?

While completing an internship is not a requirement for graduating with a major in economics, gaining valuable practical experience through the completion of an internship is highly encouraged. Here are some reasons you should consider completing an internship:

1. Exploration – See if a career is right for you. Discover if you like a particular working environment.
2. Training – Develop important job skills that can be both transferable to other fields and/or specific to an occupation.
3. Experience – Demonstrate that you have learned important skills and can be successful in a working environment.
4. Contacts – Meet and work with people that can suggest future directions and make referrals to additional opportunities. Obtain references

What is an Internship? Is it different than a part-time or summer job?

An internship is a structured agreement between a student, a site supervisor, and a faculty sponsor (if credit is being earned) that is designed to give the student a significant, new opportunity to learn about economic issues and applications in an environment outside of the classroom.

What types of internships do Economics Majors do?

Just as you study many different topics in your economics classes, econ majors intern in many different fields. Some students intern as financial analysts. Students also intern as customer service reps at insurance agencies, finance internships at Amazon.com, international trade specialists at export centers, actuaries at human resource consulting firms, business managers in nonprofit organizations, data analysts in market research organizations, systems administrators in research offices, public relations assistants in media organizations and more!

Steps to creating a great internship

Explore your options

Identify your goals & consider the following:

- Ask yourself: What are my interests, values, skills & career goals?
- What am I looking for in an employer?
- Geographic location, organization size and type of organization (Profit, Nonprofit, or Government).
- Compensation. Consider alternative compensation, such as academic credit, experience, work samples for portfolio, references, network building, etc.
Set priorities. You may have to make choices among your desired characteristics.
Develop a “Plan B” and even a “Plan C.” Is relocation an option? This will broaden the possibilities.

Secure the internship position

Finding an internship is similar in many ways to finding a job. Once you have found an internship that interests you, the next step typically is to contact the organization to find out about the application procedure. Some organizations will expect a cover letter and resume*, others may want to discuss the position over the phone. Once you have secured your internship and agreed to its terms, your site supervisor must help you complete and sign your learning contract.

Need help polishing your cover letter and resume? The Center for Career Services offers workshops and drop-in hours to help!

During your internship

Remember – an internship is similar to having a professional job. This means that you will be expected to dress and behave professionally. If you are not sure what the style of dress is, you can gain clues from others at the organization, or ask your site supervisor. It is important that you and your supervisor come to an agreement on your working days and hours. Internship supervisors generally understand that you are also taking classes, however, you are making a commitment to the internship organization to perform important work for them as well. Try not to overextend yourself. It is good to challenge yourself, however, if you are unable to fulfill your commitments, it can reflect poorly on your values as an employee. Be sure to schedule regular meetings with your site supervisor to evaluate your progress towards reaching your learning goals.

Finding an Internship

- Economics Department: Any internship postings we receive will be passed along to students via the econjobs email list and posted to our blog.
- The Center for Career Services: The HuskyJobs database lists current internship possibilities. Also, make an appointment to see the internship counselor to help you find ideas and prepare.
- Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center: Subscribe to the Public Service Internship mailing list.
- Spring Fair for Careers & Internships: Numerous organizations promoting internships, summer jobs, and volunteer opportunities will be there!
- Academic Departments: Many departments post internship online, including the Business School, Political Science, English, Psychology and more.
- Target Organizations: Approach agencies and approach them directly (whether or not you know of openings). Small & midsized organizations are often good prospects.
- Network: Identify contacts, use them for information (not jobs), get referrals, write thank you notes, follow-up.

Earning Credit

You can earn credit in one of two ways:

- GEN ST 350 – for internships not related to economics.
- ECON 399 – for economics internships.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) requirement for International Students

As an international student, in order to have a successful CPT approval, you must submit a CPT Online Application with the UW Office of International Student Services (ISS). Please read the CPT Website carefully.

Since the Department of Economics does not require completion of an internship as a part of its graduation requirements, the CPT Request Form requires that you are registered for, and earn credits for, a course that relates your internship experience along with your academic experience.

In the Department of Economics, this course is ECON 399: Economics Internship. Registration for ECON 399 requires:

- A completed ECON 399 Application Form
- A completed ECON 399 Learning Contract

Please submit your ECON 399 Application Form & Learning Contract to a Department of Economics Adviser in order to register for this course. (Note: ECON 399 will require that you have a faculty supervisor from the Department of Economics. Faculty only. No Graduate Student Instructors.)
For the Adviser Section (of the online CPT Application), we will require that you register for ECON 399, and submit the following information via email to econadv@uw.edu to help us construct your letter.

- Full name
- Student number
- Pursuing a BA or BS in Economics?
- Intended quarter of graduation
- Name of internship employer/company
- Name of internship supervisor
- Mailing address of employer
- Start and end dates of employment
- Approximate number of hours worked per week
- Please briefly describe the internship or cooperative education experience and explain how it relates to the Department of Economics curriculum and degree program
- Academic quarter of ECON 399
- ECON 399 faculty supervisor
- Number of ECON 399 credits approved by faculty supervisor

Once you are registered for ECON 399, please allow the advisers at least 5 business days to complete the Adviser Section of the CPT Application (about one week). Please contact our office (econadv@uw.edu) when you are ready with your ECON 399 application forms, so that you can be registered for the course.

For those planning to work in internships that span more than one quarter, keep in mind that ECON 399 credit will need to be earned for each quarter of the internship. ECON 399 credits cannot be retroactive, for internship periods that have already occurred.

For example, for a 6-month internship, which spans two quarters:

- (1-5) credits of ECON 399 will need to be registered for Quarter #1.
- (1-5) credits of ECON 399 will need to be registered for Quarter #2.
- If you plan to ‘defer’ the ECON 399 Quarter #1 credits to Quarter #2, to utilize your Annual Vacation Quarter, please consult with an ECON adviser or your ISS adviser. You will also need to ensure that your ECON 399 faculty person is also aware of your proposed arrangement to defer the ECON 399 credits to another quarter.

In summary:

- Completion of ECON 399 is required for each quarter of your internship. Registration of ECON 399 is required for the Adviser Section of the CPT Application.
- The Adviser Section is required for the CPT Application.
- The CPT Application is required for your work authorization.
- Please allow up to one week for ECON 399 processing & completion of the CPT Adviser Section.

More information:

- Curricular Practical Training
- U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

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