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 interns at Amazon.com, international trade specialists at export centers, actuarial 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 UW Career & Internship Center 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.
- UW Career & Internship Center: 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!

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

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an authorization that allows international students an opportunity to gain employment training through an internship that can be directly-related to the student's academic work at the UW.

The process for applying for and gaining CPT authorization can be complex, so it is important for students to carefully adhere to the CPT policies and procedures. See our CPT for Department of Economics Students page for details.

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)
- How do I know if my internship or job experience qualifies for CPT?