Swarthmore Extern Program
F.A.Q.’s

Section 1: Externship: GREAT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

What is an externship and why do one?
• An externship is a week long in-depth career exploration experience. The idea is to allow you the opportunity to consider different fields in a short-term experience. The term externship was coined here at Swarthmore.

How old is the program and how many Swatties have tried it?
• The program began on a smaller scale 30 years ago by a Swarthmore alumnus. It’s existed in its current form for about a decade and has helped hundreds of students explore career options. We rely on a vast network of alumni and past externs to keep the program going.

How do I apply and am I guaranteed to get an externship?
• The application process is very simple. You will access the opportunities and the registration form via mySwarthmore after Fall Break. After reviewing the available externships, submit your contact information, resume and your top four extern opportunities online. After the deadline, we run a computerized lottery which will match students with one of their four preferences. We make this process random because we want each student to feel they have an equal stake in the program. Sorry, but NO, not all students are matched through the program. We encourage and help students to contact alums and set up their own externships. Many students have had great success setting up their own experiences either at a different time like fall break or a different location like their home town.

Section 2: Registration: BE OPEN TO OPTIONS

How do I register?
• Register online through mySwarthmore. Career Services will publicize the registration period.

When is the deadline?
• After fall break. Career Services advertises the lottery sign-up on its website and through Reserved Student Digest.

How do I get matched?
• The process has two rounds. The first round is the online lottery. The second round is for those who did not receive a match through the online lottery and it is run on a first come, first serve basis with the opportunities that are left. In the second round students are encouraged to reexamine the opportunities available and consider something they had not previously thought would be a good match.

What if I don’t get matched?
• A workshop will be offered to students who were not matched in early November. In addition, we work individually with students who are not matched in either the first two rounds to develop externships.

Are there any strategies to increase the chances I’ll get matched?
• The best strategy to secure an externship is to fill in all four options, in a diverse array of interests and locations, on the online registration form. This increases your chances of getting a match. So that students are not limited by location, in five major cities we also have alumni willing to serve as homestay hosts for students.

Section 3: You’ve Been Matched: COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR SPONSOR!

What do I do?
• You must reply through mySwarthmore confirming with Career Services know that you are accepting your externship and if you need housing or not.
• Contact your sponsor. Confirm the specific location of the externship as well as the date and time of arrival. Also, develop ideas for projects for the week of your externship with your sponsor. Ask about special forms or paperwork the sponsor’s employer might request from you.

Section 4: Housing: COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HOST!

How and why is housing available?
• Housing is limited to the extent that alumni are willing to host current students. Hosts are alumni who offer housing. (Not to be confused with Sponsors, who offer a workplace experience.) We ask alumni to host students during the externship week to encourage you to consider externship opportunities in other cities. We encourage you to find your own housing by contacting family and friends first, so we can offer housing to other students who cannot find their own housing.

Does it cost anything?
• Externships are unpaid learning opportunities. You are responsible for the cost of transportation (plane ticket, public transportation within host city). Some hosts will expect that you buy your own food and do your own cooking. Be clear
you understand your host's expectations of you so you can better understand and anticipate the cost of your externship.

**How do I sign up for housing?**
- After you have accepted an externship offer that requires housing, there will be a place on the online form for you to indicate if you need housing or not. If you know you will need housing, indicate yes on the form. If you've contacted your family and friends in the area first and found housing, indicate no. If you first put yes that you need housing, then find your own housing, please let us know so we can open up that homestay for another student. In Philadelphia, there is the option to stay in the dorms or with a homestay host. Housing is contingent upon the generosity of alumni and cannot be guaranteed, however.

**What if I can't find housing in the city of my externship?**
- Career Services works closely with you and alumni to find housing. *Don't wait long after contacting friends and family to contact us.* Securing housing often takes time and the longer you wait to contact us, the fewer options you will have.

**What if I have allergies?**
- The online lottery form will ask you about allergies and/or other special requirements (such as diet or medical concerns) which we then share with your host and sponsor.

**How should I thank my host?**
- It is recommended to bring a small house-warming gift to show your gratuity for your host's generosity. Please also send your host a thank you note after you leave to show your appreciation.

**Section 5: Extern Week: PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE IS KEY!!**

**How should I reconnect with my sponsor prior to the externship?**
- Make a follow up phone call or email your workplace sponsor to finalize and confirm your time and date of arrival. Also ask if there is anything you can do prior to arrival to facilitate your project or their work.

**What sort of research should I do prior to meeting my sponsor?**
- Ask if there are any articles your sponsor would like you to read. You will also want to research the firm or agency to have a general idea of where you are going.

**What should I wear?**
- Business attire, unless you have been told otherwise by your sponsor. (Business attire generally translates into khakis and a collared shirt for men and pants or skirt and blouse or sweater for women. Do not wear jeans, t-shirts or sneakers unless the sponsor has indicated that it is a very casual environment).

**What should I bring to my first day?**
- Bring a portfolio (or at least a notepad and pen) to jot down any questions. Consider bringing a copy of the Phoenix to update your sponsor on what is happening on the Swarthmore campus.
- Do all you can to be professional – don’t forget that you are in a work environment and professional behavior is expected. This means that you should be on time for all appointments, be well-groomed, and be ready to work. Your workplace sponsor will most likely give you a small project your first day, so be ready to work on any project your sponsor has for you – all work is good work.

**How can I thank my sponsor at week’s end?**
- Your sponsor has put in a lot of planning to make your schedule work for the week – clearing your presence with their management, setting up meetings for you, etc. Please consider reciprocating their generosity with a small gift if possible. Usually something Swarthmore-related is always appreciated. Please do not forget to send a thank you note to your workplace sponsor after you leave.

**Section 6: Tips on How to Approach the Externship: MAKING CONNECTIONS for YOUR FUTURE**
- Think about your extern sponsor as a sort of life coach – ask lots of questions regarding life after Swarthmore, finding a job, tips on how to work well in an office setting, etc.
- Ask for suggestions as to how you can better prepare yourself for life after Swat and for your career.
- Ask for constructive criticism toward the end of the week after your sponsor has had the opportunity to observe your work and ability to interact with other employees.
- If you enjoyed your externship and would like to extend the experience, ask your sponsor if they would be willing to sponsor you for a summer experiential fellowship.