



Internship Guide

Impact of COVID-19 on Internships

As you think about ways to gain experience, we encourage you to be flexible and open-minded. Employers now have more experience supervising interns remotely but we encourage you to ask thoughtful questions and gain a clear understanding of employer expectations as you look ahead to Summer 2022. Career Services has a curated list of [remote work experiences](#) including our new [SwatWorks](#) program of funded micro-internships that we encourage you to explore.

Internship Checklist

1) Identify Internship Goals

- Are you exploring a new career field? Building experience and contacts within a field you have already chosen?
- Be open-minded about where you would like to work and what you hope to learn.
- Consider your geographical preferences and housing.

2) Search

- Begin your summer internship search in the fall; deadlines are often November-March.
- Utilize the Career Services internship resources:
 - [Handshake and UCAN](#) are our two primary internship databases
 - We also subscribe to other internship databases found on [our website](#)
- Schedule an exploratory meeting with a Career Counselor via [Handshake](#) and/or have your questions answered by a Career Peer Advisor (CPA availability is also on Handshake; see events)
- Use Swarthmore's [Alumni Directory](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to make [connections with alumni](#), who can offer helpful advice about your internship search and make referrals to their organizations.

3) Apply

- Most organizations require a resume and cover letter to apply; see the [samples in our guide](#) and highlight how the internship will further your career goals and what you can contribute to the organization.
- Email your resume, cover letter and any application materials to cpa@swarthmore.edu for review.
- Effective interviewing is a skill that can be learned like any other; schedule time on [Handshake](#) to practice with a Career Counselor and prepare for video interviews using [Big Interview](#).
- Uncertain what to wear for your interview? [Business Casual](#) is often best but if professional business attire (e.g. a business suit) is typically worn in your field, you should wear a suit for your interview.

4) Follow Up

- Follow up after you apply to confirm the receipt of your application materials.
- Send a thank you e-mail after every interview.
- Evaluate your internship offers in light of your original goals.
- Send thank you notes to other employers whose offers you choose to decline.
- Prepare to make the most of your internship. Develop your own learning goals and discuss mutual expectations with your employer. Approach the experience with a professional, proactive attitude.

INTERNSHIP SEARCH RESOURCES (Accessible via [Career Services website](#)):

- ☐ **[Handshake](#)**: Handshake is our main jobs database, containing internships posted by Swarthmore alumni and employers specifically seeking Swarthmore students. You can also find out which employers are offering information sessions and webinars, a valuable way to learn about organizations and make contacts.
- ☐ **[UCAN Internship Database](#)**: Swarthmore partners with 16 highly selective colleges and universities to host a dynamic database of internships and fellowships across the country in a range of diverse fields. Access via Handshake under Resources. Username: Full Swarthmore email address; PW: Use "Forgot password" link to create your own password.
- ☐ **[Internships USA](#)**: Human rights, women's rights, environmental, international affairs, community/social service agencies, law, policy, Congress, history, advertising, media, sports, business. Username: *Swarthmore*, PW: *GoGarnets*
- ☐ **[USAJobs](#)**: The federal government offers internships across all fields and majors; search under the categories of *Student Career Experience*, *Student Temporary Employment* and *Summer*.
- ☐ **[Additional Resources](#)**: Non-password protected internship databases, summer research, summer camps.
- ☐ **[Networking](#)** is a great way to learn about careers and make valuable contacts. Alumni can give you a better sense of the work in your fields of interest, suggest types of experiences you might look for and make referrals to organizations. [LinkedIn](#) is a great place to start looking for alumni and if you find someone you're interested in connecting with, you can email them through the [Alumni Directory](#), managed by the Office of Alumni & Parent Engagement. For details on connecting with alumni, including sample email scripts, see our [Networking Guide](#). Career Services hosts alumni and employer networking events for students, all accessible on [Handshake](#).

There has been a disturbing recent trend of fraudulent job postings on every site. The typical scam has an "employer" send fraudulent checks to students, requesting they deposit into their accounts, keep a percentage, and then wire money from their accounts or purchase gift cards to send to another party. While we carefully review each internship and job posting, these scams can be quite difficult to detect. **NEVER pay for an internship or send an employer money.** Swarthmore College Career Services acts only as an intermediary between employers posting job opportunities and candidates searching for job opportunities. Career Services does not verify the authenticity or legitimacy of the jobs or internships that are posted. The ultimate responsibility for researching a potential employer lies with the applicant. Career Services has no control over the quality, safety or legality of the jobs or resumes posted, the truth or accuracy of the listings, the ability of employers to offer job opportunities to candidates or the ability of candidates to fill job openings. Learn more about [avoiding fraudulent opportunities](#).

Analyzing Options: Do They Fit Your Goals?

Once you have established your goals and have identified a list of potential internships, consider the internship itself, what it offers you, and how it fits with your goals. When weighing your options, consider the following:

- Is this internship during the academic semester or during the summer?
- Is the size of the organization conducive to the kind of experience I want?
- What type of organization is it and what is the culture of its workplace?
- Is the location compatible with my living arrangements?
- How long is the internship, and how many hours am I expected to work each week?
- How will I fund this experience? Is there a wage or stipend provided?

Applying for internships

1) **Apply to a range of internships.** There is no exact number of internships that you need to apply for, but most students apply to at least 8-10 organizations. In determining how many internships to apply for, try to assess how competitive the internship program might be. Some organizations give preference to juniors and seniors seeking internships, so first year students and sophomores may need to apply to more organizations. *All students should meet with a Career Peer Advisor or Career Counselor who will help you develop a strong application and prepare you for interviews.*

2) **Begin gathering application materials.** Make sure you have all the components the employer is requesting (essays, recommendations, resumes, cover letters, transcripts, writing samples, etc.). Email your resume and cover letters to cpa@swarthmore.edu for review and schedule a mock interview on [Handshake](#). Consult our [resume/cover letter and interviewing guides](#). If asking former teachers or Swat faculty to write letters of recommendation for you, give them sufficient time to do so (at least two weeks).

3) **Contact the employer after submitting your application.** Let them know just how interested you are. Be sure to follow up your inquiries, submissions and interviews with adequate “thank you” emails; our resume guide has a sample.

Creating Your Own Internship

While thousands of internships are listed in databases, perhaps you’re not seeing what you want. Taking a proactive approach to the internship search can lead you to positions that are not widely advertised. You may even create opportunities where they did not exist before! This is an especially attractive option for students interested in non-profit organizations and community-oriented services that may not have the funding to establish internship programs, but that will appreciate the energy and commitment an interested student can bring to their projects. In general, employers welcome applicants who demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and a willingness to work. Follow these steps to create your own internship:

1) Research

Identify the interests and needs of the organization of your choice. Visit the organization’s website and look at their mission statement and other stated goals. Investigate the organization’s major work and familiarize yourself with some of their greater achievements. If there is not an internship description from the organization available for you to look at, try to find some indication of what the employer expects from their employees. Consider how you are able to meet their goals and needs. Also, identify the person who would be most effective for you to contact.

2) Introduce Yourself

Communicate your ability to meet the needs of the organization. Let employers know exactly why they want to hire you! This can be accomplished by sending a resume along with a cover letter expressing your interest in the organization and their work, indicating what you can bring to the organization. Be clear about your willingness to work with whatever opportunity they make available to you.

3) Follow Up

Follow up your resume submission with a phone call or e-mail. Make sure the employer has received your materials and has given them consideration or processed them in some way. Calling is also a good way to ensure that employers remember your name and for you to convey some of your passion and interest in a more direct fashion. Remember that all forms of contact with an organization can affect your chances of getting an internship opportunity with them. So, be sure to observe rules of etiquette, and leave a positive impression with whomever you speak. Be persistent, but not overbearing!

4) Make Use of Connections

Consider the connections you have through personal, school, and previous employment networks. Discuss your goals with professors and other contacts. You never know who might have a connection with a potential employer. People you know and work with, especially in your career field of interest, might have some suggestions for how you can further your chances with the organization of your choice, or find some alternative opportunities.

Funding Your Internship

Begin considering ways to fund your summer experience as early as possible, even while you are still engaged in the internship search itself. For instance, if you are pursuing an opportunity in a location where you do not have housing, your expected costs of housing, food, and transportation should be addressed well before the experience begins. Options available to you include:

Paid and Unpaid Internships

While some organizations provide a salary, many do not have the resources available to fund your experience. Internships with for-profits generally provide compensation, while internships with non-profits typically do not. In such cases, ask if some partial form of compensation can be provided, like a weekly transportation or lunch stipend. Your employer also might be able to guide you in locating other potential funding resources. You can easily search [Handshake and UCAN](#) for paid internships.

Swarthmore Grants and Fellowships *Deadlines are often in early February*

Each summer Swarthmore offers hundreds of grants and fellowships for summer internship and research opportunities. [Academic departments](#) offer funding for experiences, both research and internships, to further your academic interests or supplement your course of study. Community service and nonprofit internships are funded mainly through grants awarded by the [Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility](#). Career Services offers two funded internship programs: [SwatWorks](#) and [Swarthmore Future Entrepreneurs](#). [Rubin Scholars](#) receive summer internship funding and the [CIL](#) offers internship and project grants. For more information on application requirements and deadlines, visit our [Summer Funding](#) site.

Concurrent Employment

Many interns seek part-time, temporary employment as a way of ensuring income during an unpaid internship. You might find it useful to begin by estimating what your costs will be and setting a budget to determine how much you'll need to earn. Students often support themselves through [remote work](#), food service, retail, private instruction or tutoring, childcare, or office work. To manage both, some flexibility with your internship may be necessary. When setting up a schedule with your supervisor, inform them of your needs, which might include leaving an hour early, or working Monday through Thursday. There are also other ways to minimize your costs, such as taking advantage of *free summer housing offered by Swarthmore alumni* (email career@swarthmore.edu for more information). Group housing with friends or fellow interns, or opting for dormitory housing at a nearby college or university, are viable options. See our [summer housing links](#) for resources.

Making The Most Of Your Internship

Before you arrive...

Goals and Expectations. Begin your internship with clear goals and expectations. Re-evaluate your initial internship goals in light of the specific position you've been offered, as well as what you hope to contribute to the organization. Ideally, you should aim for a good understanding about what you can realistically expect from the experience before you accept the position. On your first day it is a great idea to sit down with your supervisor to clarify mutual goals and expectations.

Background Knowledge. Before beginning your internship, try to ensure that you have a strong sense of your organization's mission and how it works. Take the time to perform any additional background research on the organization and its industry. The more knowledge you possess going into the experience, the more quickly you will be able to acclimate to the environment and put into perspective the new bits of knowledge you gain.

While you're there...

Professionalism. Demonstrate standards of professionalism throughout your internship. Ascertain appropriate workplace attire, be punctual and meet deadlines. This ensures your effectiveness as an intern, demonstrates your commitment and dedication to the experience and your reliability as a valuable member of the organization.

Attitude. Maintaining a positive attitude is key to a successful internship experience. Be enthusiastic and do your best on every task you are assigned, even if at first it seems rather mundane. Demonstrating a cheerful and energetic attitude toward all of your work will prove impressive to your supervisors and potentially lead to more challenging tasks. Simply observing and soaking up your organization's environment is, in and of itself, an incredibly effective way to learn. Ask your supervisor if you might sit in on a few inter-departmental meetings and seek out opportunities to observe various members of your organization.

Initiative. Be proactive. When your supervisor does not have anything pressing for you to do, offer to expand on a small project you have already been assigned, or suggest another project you think might benefit the organization. On especially slow workdays, tactfully check with other co-workers around your department to see if you can lend a hand.

Be an active learner. Begin your internship with the intention of learning as much as you can during your time with your organization. Be inquisitive: ask questions and generally cultivate your curiosity about the organization and industry. Demonstrate your interest by seeking to learn as much as possible about the role of your department in the organization and how your company figures into the industry at large. Keeping up with industry news during the course of your internship is also a good strategy for building knowledge about the field and making sense of the environment within which you are working.

Network. Introduce yourself and be friendly with colleagues and co-workers. Invite your supervisor and fellow interns and staff members to join you for lunch periodically. Be curious about the people you work with, and ask questions about their specialty areas, interests, motivations for entering the field, and how they started out. You might indeed find a mentor willing to share experiences, perspectives, and offer career advice.

Investigate. Search [LinkedIn](#) and the [Alumni Directory](#) to identify any Swarthmore alumni employed within your organization and send a brief email explaining you are a Swarthmore student interning there. Mention that you would appreciate the opportunity to stop by and introduce yourself, or even invite them to a conversation over coffee/lunch. Once you have managed to schedule a meeting, consult our [Networking Guide](#) for sample questions and discussion topics.

Be flexible. It takes time to adjust to every new environment, so give yourself time to get oriented to the pace and rhythm of your workplace and colleagues. Keep an open mind and try to take something positive from every experience. If your internship proves more challenging than you anticipated, or you encounter difficulties communicating with your supervisor, feel free to email career@swarthmore.edu with any questions or concerns.

Reflect. Check in with your supervisor periodically to review progress on your tasks and projects, receive feedback on your performance, and share your own insights and learning. Reflect regularly on your experience by keeping a record of your experiences, tasks, and observations. Update your resume while the experience is fresh in mind.

When it's over...

On your last day be sure to thank your supervisor and co-workers. Follow up immediately with an e-mail thank-you or a hand-written card. Stay in touch afterwards to maintain networking connections and good rapport for possible references and letters of recommendation. Remember that many organizations hire permanent employees from their intern pool.



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