



STUDENT INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

NORTHAMPTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

What is an Internship?

An internship is a learning experience where students can apply knowledge gained from the classroom to real world experiences. Its purpose is to supplement learning, sharpen skills, and develop one's professionalism. An internship has clearly defined goals and learning objectives. This ensures the internship stays on track and focused. It should not advance the progression of the company or replace the work that an employee would perform. Nonetheless, interns are encouraged to contribute new ideas and questions.



HELPFUL TIP

Some programs at NCC have a required internship (or offer one as an elective). Touch base with your academic advisor and faculty to see if your major has an internship for credit. If yours does not, be sure to work with the Internship Manager in the Center for Career Development to support your search for an internship!

Benefits of an Internship

An internship offers many benefits beyond adding professional experience to your resume. It increases your skills and knowledge of the industry the classroom simply can't offer, expands your network and social capital, as well as creates a pathway to a job and future opportunities.

An internship will offer a supervisor that will oversee projects, provide feedback to develop both technical and professional skills, and ensure goals are being completed. The mentorship provided by a supervisor creates a safe space for interns to grow from their mistakes. That said, the experience provides an opportunity to make errors without larger repercussions. Interns are not formal employees of the company (however, they will be treated and held to the same standards). It is of utmost importance interns are performing professionally, even when mistakes are made.



How do I know if I'm ready for an internship?

To prepare for an internship students should determine a career interest, meet the academic recommendations, and understand professionalism.

Determine a Career Focus

Before pursuing an internship, a student must have a clear career focus resulting from career exploration with a Center for Career Development advisor, utilization of the Focus2 career tool, participation in a job shadow, and/or have previous work or volunteer experience.

Students must determine a career focus. For example, a business major has many paths to pursue: accounting, marketing, sales, and human resources to name a few. An engineering student may be torn between two different options. An internship is a great way to explore those avenues to gain better insight on a career path.

Contrary to this, if an engineering student has no idea which area is a good fit, then an internship might not be a right fit yet. There are steps the student can take prior to an internship to start narrowing down a direction. NCC's Center for Career Development can support students in additional experiential learning before an internship, including informational interviewing, job shadowing, and volunteering.



How do I know if I'm ready for an internship?

Academic Recommendations

1. The Center for Career Development offers the following academic recommendations:
2. Completion of 24 credits, including 2-3 major-specific courses with a C or better
3. A minimum overall GPA of 2.5
4. In case of prior learning of job experience, the Internship Manager will assess your readiness for an internship.

HELPFUL TIP

These recommendations are in place to ensure you are academically prepared for the internship.



Remember, an internship is defined as a learning experience extending from the classroom. It is important interns are preparing with a foundation of knowledge regarding terminology, research, best practices, and more. Not having this foundation may cause an intern to feel overwhelmed and unprepared. In addition, the employer may be unsatisfied with the intern's inability to apply skills if the proper academics are not achieved.

HELPFUL TIP

Employers will provide training to ensure tasks are completed according to the company's expectations, standards, or style. While this is provided, they will want an intern with the academic foundation needed to understand the tasks, projects, and overall training. Employers will outline academic expectations through a posting for candidates to review prior to applying.



How do I know if I'm ready for an internship?

Understand Professionalism

Northampton Community College expects students to present themselves with utmost professionalism when pursuing an internship. First impressions leave a lasting impact on one's career. For some, it might be your first time in a professional role. The Center for Career Development is happy to support you in this new adventure. Want to know what it takes to be a successful intern?

CAREER READINESS

Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce



Career & Self Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.



Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.



Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.



Equity & Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.



Leadership

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.



Professionalism

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.



Teamwork

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.



Technology

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.



What Is Career Readiness?

Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

Think Spartan!

Sincere

- Be true to yourself! The first step in making meaningful connections with your site supervisor and colleagues is to be sincere in your words and actions.

Professionalism

- You are representing NCC throughout your internship. You are expected to maintain professionalism throughout your experience. This means keeping a positive attitude while working on tasks/projects, accepting constructive feedback, and always giving your best effort. You will not take personal calls, emails, texts, visitors, etc. while on site.
- To learn more about professionalism and career readiness, check out the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) 8 career-readiness competencies – see image on page 5.

Appearance/Attire

- You are expected to match the dress code of your internship site. Talk with your supervisor prior to your first day about dress code policies. When in doubt, aim for business casual!
- Have you heard about the “First Impressions” resource on campus? Talk to the Internship Manager to learn more about how to access free professional attire here on campus.

Reliability

- You will follow through with all internship obligations and commitments outlined in the job description. This includes your agreed upon schedule/work hours, communication expectations, projects, and any other duties assigned.

Reliability cont.

- Sometimes life happens. Changes to your availability should be communicated to both the site supervisor and Internship Manager as soon as possible. Employers need enough notice to make adjustments. Do not suddenly stop communicating with the employer or attending your shifts until a plan of action is decided. Failure to do this can impact the status of your internship.

Transparent

- You will maintain honest communication with both your supervisor and the Internship Manager. Share your goals, opinions, thoughts, and concerns in a tactful manner. If you have serious concerns regarding your internship, contact the Internship Manager in order to address your concerns and create a positive internship experience.

Accountability

- Take responsibility for your decisions and actions during your internship. Understand that breaking the internship code may result in consequences from both your supervisor and the Center for Career Development.

Network

- Make the most of your time in the internship. This is your opportunity to solidify your career path, make connections in your field of interest, and build your resume with skills and experience. Stay focused on your goals and the skills you want to master and take the extra step to develop them. You are in the driver’s seat of your career!

What to Know Before Applying

Paid versus Unpaid

Northampton Community College always advocates for paid internships. However, unpaid internships are still common for employers from public sectors, government agencies, and non-profits. That said, the Center for Career Development offers the Sharon S. Beales Alumni Association Internship Award. This is an award specifically dedicated to students participating in unpaid internships who cannot financially sacrifice doing so. Please contact the Internship Manager to learn more information and how to apply.

Credit versus Non-Credit

Select programs at NCC offer internships for credit. These internships are led by the department and are designed with the program's learning objectives in mind. The course instructor will support finding opportunities, answering questions, and providing materials throughout the experience.

The college cannot offer credit for internships if it is not a part of the program's curriculum. In this case, be sure to notify the Internship Manager from the Center for Career Development that you've secured an internship. This can connect you to the Internship Certificate Program (a non-credit, curriculum-based program). More information will be outlined on Page 11.



Preparing to Apply

Create a Resume

A resume is a document outlining your academics, experiences, skills, and other qualifications. It is a necessity when applying for internships. Most online applications will ask for a resume to be uploaded. It's also a great document to bring with you to fairs on campus or other networking events.

Never written a resume before? No problem! The Center for Career Development has plenty of resources to help get you started. You can utilize a free resume builder called SkillsFirst, review example resumes in the Job Hunter's Guide book, or you can schedule a resume appointment with the Internship Manager. To do so, contact the Careers office at 610-861-5344 or at careers@northampton.edu.

HELPFUL TIP

Keep in mind – you are the one responsible for seeking and applying to internships! The Center for Career Development is not a placement office. The Internship Manager is a great resource to keep you informed on current opportunities. Nonetheless, you are responsible for reviewing the internship entirely to know whether it is a good fit for you.



Where to Look for an Internship

Handshake is NCC's sponsored internship platform. This is a great place to start your search for an internship. Many local employers post internships (and jobs) on Handshake. This is a credible resource as the Career Services team reviews the postings before they're visible to students!

Some other places to look for internships includes LinkedIn, USA Jobs, and especially company websites! Be sure to connect with the Internship Manager if you're not sure who those companies are.

HELPFUL TIP

As an NCC student, you already have an account on Handshake, you just have to activate it! You will do this by going to northhampton.joinhandshake.com. Log in using your NCC student e-mail and password. Be sure to complete your profile by updating your information, setting your work preferences, as well as uploading a resume and a professional headshot. This will increase your chances of hearing from an employer!

Joining
 Handshake
northhampton.joinhandshake.com



Preparing to Apply

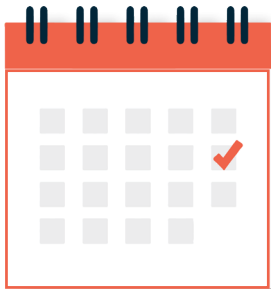
Quick Tips

Check for opportunities frequently: Internships are posted daily. You may miss opportunities if you only check occasionally.

Be an early applicant: You don't want to miss a deadline.



Apply to more than you expect: Make a goal of 3-5 applications a week. Very few students find success with submitting just one application.



Search 3-6 months ahead of time: Many employers post internships well in advance. For example, summer internships are often posted during the fall semester. Therefore, those pursuing a summer internship will need to begin submitting applications in the fall.

Be patient: Securing an internship might take longer than you think.

Networking: It's all about who you know! Stay up to date with Career Services events that can connect you to professionals. Participating in as many events as possible can expand your network and connect you to professionals in your field.



Create a LinkedIn Profile: This is an approved resource for the internship search. Post that you are searching for an internship and you may be surprised what opportunities present itself.

Internship Certificate Program

The Internship Certificate Program is a non-credit, curriculum-based program. It is led by the Internship Manager from the Center for Career Development. Successful participation in the program will result in a certificate of completion. Additional incentives may include a letter of recommendation, awards, and coordination with the Office of Prior Learning.

Below is an outline on what to expect throughout the Internship Certificate Program.

Onboarding Meeting:

- Schedule with Internship Manager
- Complete required paperwork (Student Agreement, Code of Conduct, Handshake Experience).
- Review Internship Certificate Program assignments.
- Prepare for your first day.

Weekly:

- Complete reflection sheets and timecards.
- Optional: Review career readiness models.

4-6 weeks into the internship:

- Participate in a site visit. (Internship Manager will contact you and your site supervisor to schedule this).
- Complete mid-term evaluation. (Provided to both intern and site supervisor).

Before you finish!

- Notify Internship Manager of your last day at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Complete the final evaluation. (Provided to both intern and site supervisor).
- Write final reflection paper.
- Schedule a final meeting with the Internship Manager to discuss next steps, if necessary.

HELPFUL TIP

The Internship Certificate Program uses Handshake Experience to submit all materials. To access, go to the Career Center then Experiences and submit under the current internship. Blank materials have been provided under Resources in the Career Center.



Wrapping Up Your Internship

Congratulations on completing your internship! Be sure to notify the Internship Manager that you've finished your experience. It may be a good idea to set up a meeting to reflect on your experience, offer feedback, and discuss next steps.

You will want to update both your resume and LinkedIn profile with the internship experience. The Internship Manager can support you with this update. It's encouraged to utilize your site supervisor at the internship to review your resume for additional feedback. In addition, don't hesitate to ask your site supervisor for a letter of recommendation! This can be useful as you apply for another internship or even a job.

Don't forget to say thank you to both your employer host and site supervisor. This can be done in a professional e-mail or even a hand written thank you card. Showing gratitude can leave a lasting impression as you depart with the company.





Q1 How long is an internship?

An internship is anywhere between 8-12 weeks long. It should have a clearly defined start and end date. Be sure to coordinate with the employer directly to determine these dates.

Q2 How do I know what my schedule is?

You will coordinate your weekly schedule with the employer. This schedule should not conflict with classes and/or any other commitments.

Q3 Can I do more than one internship at a time?

It is not recommended to do more than one internship at a time. This allows you to focus on the experience while juggling classes and other personal obligations. You can participate in another internship upon the completion of the first.

Q4 Will the Internship Manager place me in an internship?

No - The Center for Career Development is not a placement office. Nonetheless, the office does have many employer and alumni relationships that can connect you to an opportunity. While you are responsible for seeking and applying to internships, the Internship Manager is a resource to support your search. Be sure to stay in touch in order to be aware of upcoming postings, events, and connections.

Q5 Can I do a remote internship?

Absolutely! Remote internships are posted on Handshake. Be sure to take extra precautions in vetting the company before applying. The Internship Manager can support this.

Q6 Do I need a cover letter to apply to internships?

In most cases, you do not need a cover letter to apply for an internship. Most employers simply request a copy of your resume. It will be stated on the application whether a cover letter (or additional documentation) is required. The Internship Manager can help you write a cover letter.

- Q7** I have an interview scheduled and I don't know how to best prepare. What do I do?
An interview doesn't need to be scary! Connect with the Internship Manager to review a list of common questions or schedule a mock interview. This can be a great way to prepare and calm down any nerves you may have before the interview.
- Q8** I don't have any professional attire for my internship. Where can I go to update my wardrobe?
The Center for Career Development has a free professional attire on campus called "First Impressions". This is full of professional attire, including suits, blouses, skirts, khakis, belts, and more! Schedule an appointment by calling 610-861-5344 or e-mailing careers@northampton.edu.
- Q9** I'm a dual enrolled student at NCC. Can I do an internship?
Not yet! It's important to note most employers may require a minimum of a high school diploma or at least 18 years of age in order to participate in an internship program. Instead, take advantage of other experiences, such as a job shadow, volunteering, and extracurricular activities. These experiences are beneficial to boost professionalism, gain exposure, and discover your skills, interests and talents that can apply to a future career.
- Q10** Will an internship help me get a job?
An internship is a great way to gain real world experience while also adding to your resume. This can certainly help you secure a job after graduation. Many employers use an internship program as a way to pipeline interns into a job afterwards. This will be dependent on the employer and whether an opportunity is available. That being said, there is no guarantee of securing a job after an internship, but it certainly be a great way to connect to employment!
- Q11** Am I protected by Title IX during the time of my internship?
Yes! As an NCC student and intern, your rights protected under Title IX extends to your internship. Northampton Community College will help you explore ways to protect you from a discriminatory work and learning environment. Be sure contact the Internship Manager in the Careers office to discuss further, in the event you are experiencing any concerning treatment.



NCC does not discriminate against any person in employment or educational opportunities because of race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, or based on an individual's actual or perceived disability, or on a person's association with a person with a disability.

NORTHAMPTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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