



# STEM Internship Strategies

MESA/STEM

# Overview

- ▶ Why Intern
- ▶ What does an internship involve
- ▶ Researching/exploring internship opportunities
- ▶ Developing the application
- ▶ Resumes, cover letter, interview
- ▶ Creating your own internship experience
- ▶ Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)
- ▶ Internship opportunities

# Why Intern?

- ▶ Provides an invaluable learning opportunity
- ▶ Develops new skills and strengthen existing ones
- ▶ Gain valuable professional experience
- ▶ Build your resume and professional network
- ▶ Build your confidence
- ▶ Strengthen your communication skills
- ▶ Test drive your intended career and determine if it is the right fit
- ▶ Demonstrates initiative
- ▶ Strengthens your chances of landing more internships
- ▶ Prepare yourself for your future
- ▶ Explore your career options/interests
- ▶ Earn money - sometimes

Hello  
my name is

INTERN

# What does an Internship Involve?

- ▶ Time-limited work experience ranging from one month to one year, usually lasting 3 months
- ▶ Intended to bridge the gap between the classroom and the professional world
- ▶ Promotes academic, career and/or personal development
- ▶ Typically includes learning objectives, shadowing, reflection, evaluation and assessment – may be project-based
- ▶ Integrates the intern's goals with a specific project the organization needs completed
- ▶ Has varying daily time commitments and may be part or full-time
- ▶ May be part of an educational program carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit

# Before getting started ...

- ▶ Get yourself organized
- ▶ Identify your skills, experiences and knowledge
- ▶ Identify your needs, wants, interest, goals and values
- ▶ Prepare yourself to put the best of you forward
- ▶ Stay positive and open-minded throughout the PROCESS

# STEP 1: Research and Explore

- ▶ Begin searching early (start in the fall) – ongoing basis
- ▶ Visit the MESA/STEM Internship toolkit on the AHC website, Career Centers website
- ▶ Search the web
- ▶ Contact potential organizations/ companies (cold calling)
- ▶ Talk to your instructors and peers
- ▶ Attend career fairs, visit career center, attend industry trips industry presentations
- ▶ Take note of opportunities you can get in the future
- ▶ School announcements, emails, and websites

<https://www.hancockcollege.edu/mesa/MESAinters.php>



# Creating your own Internship Opportunity

- ▶ Pinpoint companies of interest to you
- ▶ Decide types of work and experience you would like to gain
- ▶ Tap into your professional/social network
- ▶ Create your elevator speech
- ▶ Contact companies that you are interested in interning for, you can email or call them

# STEP 2: Developing your Application

- ▶ Read directions carefully
- ▶ Complete the application in its entirety
- ▶ Pay close attention to deadlines
- ▶ Develop your **resume** and update it regularly
- ▶ Utilize the internship description to identify **key terms** to tailor your experiences to the employers need
- ▶ Include previous experience such as projects, volunteer work, school involvement, special qualities, etc.
- ▶ Allow enough time to complete **personal statement** and/or **cover letter**
- ▶ Request **letters of recommendation** with ample time (at least 2 weeks)



# Common Documents Required

▶ **Resume** - A resume is a document that job applicants use to summarize their work experience, educational background, and special skills.

- outline your different roles, education, and anything else you'd like to include, such as interpersonal and technical skills, or college organizations you're a part of

# Common Documents Required

## ▶ **Cover Letter** - a document where the applicant expresses an interest in the internship opportunity

- State the name of the role you're applying for.
- Refer to the company by name.
- Use specific keywords that the employer uses in the internship description along with examples that show how you meet these criteria.
- Your cover letter should include your name and contact information, such as your phone number and email.
- Connect your unique skills and experience with the requirements of the internship you're applying for. If you haven't had a job, mention completed courses that are relevant to the posting.

# STEP 3: The Interview

- ▶ Interviews allow both the organization/company and the applicant to determine if there is a good fit
- ▶ First impressions can make a lasting impact for both the interviewer and the applicant
- ▶ Know your resume inside and out
- ▶ Be prepared to answer questions, give examples or tell a story about jobs you have held achievements, projects and education noted on the resume
- ▶ Study the internship description and talk about skills and strengths that you possess that are relevant to the job
- ▶ Know your personal and professional goals and how they may benefit the company/organization
- ▶ BE TRUTHFUL. Don't exaggerate or give inaccurate information

# STEP 3: Interview (cont.)

## **Physical Preparation**

- ▶ Get plenty of rest
- ▶ Dress for success

## **Situational Knowledge**

- ▶ Where/when interview takes place
- ▶ Virtual interviews
- ▶ Arrive 10 minutes early!
- ▶ Practice Run

## **Mental Preparation**

- ▶ Knowledge of company/organization (research)
- ▶ Practice a mock interview

## **Written Preparation**

- ▶ Take notes
- ▶ Ask questions

## STEP 4: Follow Up and Reflect

- ▶ Send thank you note or email
- ▶ Follow-up at appropriate time to see if a decision has been reached and/or if there are any further questions they can answer
- ▶ If past the deadline, send a letter or email expressing your continued interest - there may have been a delay in the decision
- ▶ Reflect back on your experience with the internship application process through the interview – talk through it with a counselor or instructor
- ▶ Make note of what went well and what could have been improved

# Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)

- ▶ REU's are summer programs that offer college students the opportunity to conduct full-time research, under the mentorship of faculty and sometimes graduate students and post docs in larger research teams.
- ▶ Each student is associated with a specific research project, where he/she works closely with the faculty and other researchers.
- ▶ Students are granted stipends and, in many cases, assistance with housing and travel.
- ▶ [https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu\\_search.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp)



# Questions