INTERNSHIPS

An internship is an opportunity for you to take the skills you’ve been developing in the classroom and try them out in the professional arena. Are internships worth the time and the effort? Absolutely!

You’re earning a UW degree, and that is a great credential. But so are thousands of other students. How will you distinguish yourself when you apply for jobs? A recent study published in the *Atlantic Monthly* revealed that prospective employers value internships and prior employment in new college graduates far above other factors such as college major, relevance of coursework, or GPA.

Recent research shows that more than 70 per cent of new college graduates securing career-track jobs have completed one or more internships. Sometimes, the internship turns into a paid job, but more often it serves as a resume builder, a way to gain professional skills, an avenue for networking, and a source of job recommendations.

Internships and volunteer work show a prospective employer that you are dedicated, committed, accustomed to a professional environment, and actively building skills. Even if the internship is for just a few hours a week and not directly related to the job you’re seeking, it is an opportunity to show what you’ve been doing in the community and the professional world. This is very meaningful to employers, who are eager to hire “self starters” who’ve gone above and beyond their classroom experiences, transferring their skills into a professional setting.

It’s important to evaluate internship opportunities carefully, both paid and unpaid opportunities. There is nothing wrong per se with an unpaid internship: often you are being “hired” to learn a job that you are not yet qualified for, or are still training toward, and it can be an opportunity to polish your skills and transition them from academia to the workplace as well as to network and gain some experience. Unpaid internships are common in the non profit and government sectors especially. Most internships (both paid and unpaid) provide structured learning opportunities for students, and sponsors are explicit about the skills and experience you can hope to acquire. While in most internships there may be a certain amount of “scut” work involved, the majority of your assigned tasks and responsibilities should be substantive learning opportunities. For more information, read the UW Career Center’s *Tips for Evaluating Internships*.

FINDING AN INTERNSHIP

- Guidelines and Eligibility
- Internship Reviews, Reflections, and Advice from UW students.
- Search Tips
- Internship Listings (view recent internship announcements)
- Information for Internship Sponsors

REGISTERING FOR ENGL 491

- How to Register
- Internship Learning Contract (fill out the online contract to register for credit)

EARNING CREDIT

- The Internship Paper