

Internships and Summer Jobs

MIT Careers Office ♦ 12-170 ♦ (617) 253-4733 ♦ <http://careers.mit.edu>

Gaining work experience while you are in college or graduate school can be an important part of your career development. Internships and summer jobs give you an opportunity to apply academic concepts in practice, and to explore possible future occupations.

What exactly is an internship? An internship is a work experience – for example, a summer job - that typically provides structured opportunities to learn about a career field while working in that field. Internships may be with companies, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, other universities, research organizations, and advocacy groups, among others. They are available to students at all levels, from freshmen to graduate students as well as for degreed professionals. Such positions give you a chance to find out what it's like to work in certain occupations and industries. Employers are delighted to see internships on a resume because it makes you already half a colleague. Work experience helps you establish a network of professional contacts that may prove valuable when you look for permanent employment – as mentors, references, and sometimes as champions to help you obtain work in an organization.

How do you find an internship? Finding an internship is very much like finding a full-time job. Take the time to think about what it is that you want, explore options, and create an effective resume and written materials. You can look for advertised opportunities, hidden opportunities, or try creating your own internship with a company. There are some excellent internship programs at MIT, and many public and private companies and organizations outside of the Institute hire interns as well.

What kind of internship are you looking for? Some useful questions to ask yourself:

- What do you want to get out of the internship experience?
- What skills would you like to develop?
- What industry would you like to learn more about?
- Where do you want to be geographically?
- What type of working conditions appeal to you?
- Would you like a structured or unstructured program?
- What kind of people would you like to work with?
- What knowledge and skills do you have to offer?
- What skills do you most enjoy using?

Internship Reference Books:

National Directory of Internships
America's Top Internships
Internship Bible
Peterson's Internships

Where can you look to find internships?

- MIT resources (see specific references on the back):
 - ◊ Companies that recruit for interns through MonsterTrak
 - ◊ School-based (e.g., Engineering) programs
 - ◊ Departmentally-based internship programs
 - ◊ Companies that send vacancy notices to your department
- Newspapers, journals, publications
- Company websites
- Internet jobsites, bulletin boards
- Listservs
- Network: ask friends and classmates where they have found/done internships in the past

When should you look for an internship? For summer programs in general, it's good to start talking with us early in the school year, as some have deadlines in the fall. In theory it's never too late to search for a summer internship, but your options are greater if you are actively looking during the winter – February is a very busy internship search month. Check individual programs for their deadlines. If you are seeking an internship overseas, you should start your job search at least six months to a year in advance, depending on the countries and positions that interest you.

How about compensation? Most internships in industry and in the executive area of government pay a reasonable to good stipend. Many in the nonprofit sector pay little or nothing. If you don't need the money, the experience and networking in an unpaid internship can still be extremely valuable.

Internships Continued

Resources to Explore - Internships at MIT:

- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP): offer a wide range of experiences to students. In addition to applying for those listed, read up on interesting work being done by faculty, contact professors and ask if you can do a UROP with her/him. It often works! <http://web.mit.edu/urop>
- Alumni Externships during IAP, for undergrads and grad students: (deadline for these - generally in November) <http://alum.mit.edu/ccg/students/externships/index.html>
- Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (UPOP): sophomores in Engineering, <http://web.mit.edu/engineering/upop>
- MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI): <http://web.mit.edu/misti/www>
- Departmental internship programs: for a list of several current programs see: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/jobs/internshipprograms.html#dept>. Search dept websites for new programs

Resources to Explore - Internships Outside of MIT:

- MonsterTrak: <http://college.monstertrak.com/index.html>, see: *InterviewTrak, Jobs and Internships*, the seasonal *efair* (generally begins in February and lasts for 2 weeks; geared toward summer internships)
- Tech Internships: <http://tech-interns.com>
- Short Term Job Adventures: <http://www.backdoorjobs.com>
- Internships Abroad: <http://www.cie.uci.edu/prospective/iopother/intern.shtml>
- Internship Programs: <http://www.internshipprograms.com>
- CareerBuilder.com : <http://www.careerbuilder.com> , Select “Intern” under “more options”
- TheJobResource.com: <http://www.thejobresource.com/jobseekers/internships/>
- Vault.com Job Board: <http://www.vault.com/jobs/jobboard/searchform.jsp> , Use keyword “internship”
- Many others – go to Google and search for “Internships” or “Internships Abroad”

Resources to Explore - Internships of Special Interest to Graduate Students:

- How Internships Can Open Doors for New Careers [for PhDs], (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, Aug. 2000) <http://chronicle.com/jobs/2000/08/2000080401c.htm>
- The National Academies, Christine Mirzayan Internship Program: science and technology policy programs, <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/policyfellows/>
- Presidential Management Intern Program: all disciplines interested in public policies and programs, <http://www.pmf.opm.gov>
- AAAS Science and Technology Fellowships: social, physical, or biological sciences, <http://fellowships.aaas.org>
- AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows Program: 10 wk. placement in mass media organizations <http://www.aaas.org/programs/education/MassMedia/apply.shtml>
- National Academies Fellowships: for advanced study in research-based disciplines. <http://www.nationalacademies.org/opportunities>

Additional Resources and Ideas:

- Network - talk to people you know about what you want to do: faculty, classmates, family, friends, community members, service professionals (e.g., doctors, dentists), etc. Do they know of companies or organizations doing things that interest you? Do they know anyone in a related field for you to talk to?
- Network with alumni: the Institute Career Assistance Network (ICAN) <http://alum.mit.edu/cs/ican> , is made up of alumni who have volunteered to talk with students and alumni about their work. They don't have jobs to offer, but may be able to help you focus your interests, learn about an industry or company, and they might suggest additional people with whom you can talk, helping you get closer to work opportunities.
- Check online and bulletin board listings at the Student Employment Office, <http://web.mit.edu/seo>
- When you are home on break, inquire about summer opportunities. Remember the alumnus who interviewed you for admission. He/she may be a good contact.
- Write to companies that recruit for full-time positions here at MIT but haven't mentioned summer positions. Express your interest in an internship and ask if you might interview with them when they are on campus.
- Cold call a company that interests you – propose an internship.
- Don't automatically restrict your search to the Boston area or your hometown. A summer job away from MIT and from home can be fun and broadening. And some companies will help you find housing.