

Internship Tip Sheet

Career Development Center ■ 12-170 ■ (617) 253-4733 ■ <http://careers.web.mit.edu/>

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

What exactly is an internship?

An internship is a work experience that typically provides structured opportunities to learn about a career field while working in that field. Many internships take place during the summer but there are also semester as well as year long internships. 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 (networking), or create 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 Career Bridge, MIT's On-Campus Recruiting System
 - Academic Department-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?

In general, it's good to start talking with us early in the school year, as some established internship programs have deadlines in the fall. Some companies and organizations have deadlines in the winter or in the spring. Your safest bet is to do some exploration by October/November to explore internship application timelines in the fields that interest you. Check individual programs for their deadlines. In theory, it's never too late to search for a summer internship. 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. In some sectors - for instance with certain nonprofits or journalism/writing positions - they may pay little or nothing at all. However, the experience and networking in an unpaid internship can still be extremely valuable for your long-term interests and goals. In some cases you may be able to obtain grants or fellowships to help fund your internship experience.

Internships - Continued

Resources to Explore – Internship and other opportunities at MIT:

- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP): offers a wide range of experiences to students. In addition to applying for those listed, read up on interesting research 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 [Independent Activities Period \(IAP\)](#), for undergrads and grad students: (deadline for these – generally in **October**): <http://alum.mit.edu/students/NetworkwithAlumni/ExternshipProgram/index.jsp>
- Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program (UPOP): participants - sophomores in engineering programs: <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.
- MIT Public Service Center - NEW - Public Service Internships starting in Jan 2009: <http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc/>
- Career fairs - SUMA Internship Fair among others: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/events/careerfairs.html>

Resources to Explore - Internships Outside of MIT:

- Careerbridge: <https://www.myinterfase.com/mit/student/home.aspx>, MIT Career Development Center's On-Campus Recruiting system.
- Career Development Center Internship Listservs: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/jobs/internshiplistservs.html>
- iNet Internship Network: <https://inet-csm.symplicity.com/students/>, an internship listing shared by eight universities: U.Penn., MIT, Georgetown, Yale, Rice, Stanford, Northwestern, and NYU.
- Tech Internships: <http://tech-interns.com>
- Internships Abroad: <http://www.cie.uci.edu/prospective/iopother/intern.shtml>
- Internship Programs: <http://www.internshipprograms.com>
- Vault.com Job Board: <http://www.vault.com/jobs/jobboard/searchform.jsp>, Use keyword "Find a Job " and then "internship board"
- The JobResource.com: <http://www.thejobresource.com/jobseekers/internships/>
- Career Builder.com : <http://www.careerbuilder.com>, Select "Intern" under "more options"
- Federal internship jobs : <http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/directory>
- Go to your favorite search engine 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 a directory of alumni who have volunteered to speak with students and other alumni about their work. They may be able to help you to focus your interests, learn about an industry or company and they may be able to refer you to other alumni with whom you can speak, helping you get closer to internship opportunities.
- Check online and on 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 may help you find housing.

