

Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics

How to Get a Teaching Internship

Searching for and securing an appropriate internship requires planning, research, and following through a period of several months. Yet, the professional benefits gained from such efforts are well worth it. This key information will serve you well in promoting your professional career. The more time and effort you invest now, the greater your rewards in the future.

Develop Focus

- Assess your teaching interests and experience. What would you like to do more of, where is the gap in your experience, what skills do you need to strengthen?
- Select the areas (geographic, teaching field and level) in which you want to work.
- Determine the type of skills you are interested in attaining.

Research Opportunities

Questions to ask yourself:

- What do you want out of the internship?
- What does the organization do?
- What are your interests in this organization?
- Does the organization have an established internship program?
If not, can you create one? Would the administration be interested in having an intern?
- Who is the person most likely to hire you?

Self-marketing Strategies

- Identify the schools or companies where you would be interested in working.
- Develop application materials. This may include individually tailored cover letters, your resume or CV, letters of recommendation, transcripts or other documents verifying your education and experience.
- Probe the job market using the GSLEL and Career Development Offices, the internet, faculty, classmates and other resources. **LEAVE NO OPTIONS UNEXPLORED!**
- Send out application materials.
- Organize a master list to control information flow.

Feedback and Follow-up

- Respond or re-contact organizations as appropriate
- Promptly complete and return all application forms or other materials requested.

Consolidate and Negotiate Final Details

- Tie up loose ends
- Research and prepare for interviews

Effective internships are developed to meet the needs of both the intern and the employer. Creating an internship contract is the best way to ensure that the expectations of both parties are met. The contract should specify: start and end dates, intern's tasks and duties, supervisor names, special skills needed, pay scale and benefits, liability/insurance coverage. A short paragraph about what you and the employer expect as end results should also be included.

By discussing mutual expectations with your employer, you can avoid many frustrating misunderstandings. Once you have worked out an acceptable arrangement, use it as a guideline for unforeseen situations. The contract should allow for a certain amount of flexibility rather than being ironclad.

No internship is complete without an evaluation. The final item in the contract should specify that both student and employer will summarize the experience in an evaluation or report. If your employer agrees, make a copy of the CDO education files.

Benefits to employers

- Highly motivated employees, usually willing to work for below market wages in exchange for practical experience.
- Extra staff to accomplish short-term projects
- Opportunities to evaluate potential applicants for future job openings
- Temporary replacement for personnel on vacation

Benefits to Interns

- Implement classroom theory in practice
- Network with key people and solicit their advice and help in entering the field.
- Develop marketable job skills specific to their chosen field
- Accomplish a tangible project related to their studies.

Reminders

- Do your homework! Research your prospective employers in depth before applying.
- Always request agreements **IN WRITING**. Follow up telephone conversations with a documenting letter.
- Create an “insurance policy” by having several alternatives rather than focusing on only one employer.
- Check the status of your applications. Delays in processing an application are not uncommon.
- Edit your material carefully; first impressions really count. You may not get a second chance.
- Take initiative and inquire into details and legal or financial stipulations which must be attended to prior to entering the internship. Make it easy for them to hire you.
- Set up guidelines for the internship: arrange for a supervisor, contract, and specific projects or duties.
- Try to stay a step ahead, in order to get ahead!