Make your Summers Count!

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**Why an Internship or Research Experience?**

Give yourself the opportunity to gain professional experience and learn more about your major in an organization or company of interest.

- Evaluate a career field you are interested in or learn which specialized area within your field is most interesting.
- Strengthen and gain new skills, both practical skills related to your specific major, as well as communication, leadership and other transferable skills.
- Increase your professional contacts while building professional experience you can add to your résumé.
- Increase your confidence and gain a competitive edge for the after graduation job search.

**Internship & Research Experience Timeline**

It’s never too early to start planning for your internship or research experience. The total process—finding an experience and applying and interviewing for it—can take several weeks or even months. Here is a general timeline to assist you with the planning process:

**Complete approximately three semesters before you want to start your internship.**

- Talk with your academic adviser and a career counselor to find out what opportunities are available to you.
- Prepare résumé and cover letter.
- Decide what you would like from your experience. Responsibilities? Compensation? Experience?
- Attend job fairs to find out about internship opportunities.
- Start networking with everyone you know.
- Define where you would like to do your internship. City? Corporation? Industry?
- Start researching internship and research opportunities. Obtain general information about the company, the school, the programs, contact people and deadlines.

**Complete one or two semesters before you intern.**

- Refine your résumé and cover letter.
- Send out your résumé and cover letter.
- Practice your interviewing skills.
- Schedule an Interview Stream virtual interview at www.charlestonsouthern.edu/careers.

**Complete the semester before your internship.**

- Apply to multiple opportunities.
- Make sure your applications are complete.
- Interview with employers or research program.
- Send thank-you letters to employers who gave you an opportunity to interview.
- Decide on the experience that is best for you, and accept an offer.

Adapted from Jobweb.com
How to get selected by a Summer Undergraduate Research Program:

The purpose of most summer undergraduate research programs is to provide undergraduates with an opportunity to participate in ongoing research programs in the students' field of study. This hopefully implanting in the participants an interest in pursuing advanced study and thereby increasing the nation's student talent pool in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Graduate research universities often host summer undergraduate research programs in order to attract talented prospective students to apply to their graduate programs. However, summer undergraduate research programs can be found at all types of academic institutions (community colleges, four year colleges, comprehensive universities, and graduate research universities).

Applications
Applications often include the following elements:

- **Short answer application form** Most forms request the standard personal (gender, ethnicity, etc.), background (academic major, year of study, GPA, anticipated year of graduation, etc.), and contact information from each applicant. You may also be asked if you have had any past undergraduate research experiences. If the program uses an online application, print out the application form and compose your answers to each question. Proofread your answers for grammatical and spelling mistakes. When you are ready to complete the form online, copy and paste your answers into the appropriate fields.

- **Official transcript** The list of the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned in those courses at your academic institution will be used to determine if you have completed sufficient coursework and have demonstrated satisfactory aptitude to successfully participate in the research programs available at the summer undergraduate research program.

- **Essay** Essays can potentially provide program directors with insight into your interests, background, and motivation for participating in the summer program. Essays also provide useful information on how well you write, so be sure to proof-read your essay before submitting it. Sometimes applicants are asked to describe their future career goals in order to learn how the applicant's participation in an undergraduate research experience relates to those career goals. If you have a mixed or weak academic record, the essay is a good place to describe any extenuating circumstances. In addition, it is useful to remember that summer programs like to have diversity among their participants. While it is likely that you immediately think of ethnicity and gender, there are other characteristics that summer programs look for as well. For example, if you are enrolled at an institution where there are limited opportunities for participation in undergraduate research, this can also be an important consideration affecting your acceptance into a summer research program. Again, the essay is a good place to mention anything that makes you and your application unique.

- **Letter (s) of recommendation** One or more letters of recommendation may be required. Program directors generally use these letters of recommendation to determine whether or not you have the intellect, aptitude, maturity, independence, self-confidence, and motivation to do research. So, be sure to identify references who know you and who are likely to be able to speak well of your abilities and capabilities in these areas.

- **Telephone interviews** From a programmatic standpoint they are a useful, cost effective mechanism for ensuring a good match between the student and the summer program; Program directors are often interested in learning something about the maturity and personality of the applicant. Be enthusiastic, personable, and most of all, be yourself.
HOW TO FIND A SUMMER INTERNSHIP

• Work with a career counselor
Career counselors know where other students from CSU are interning now or have interned before. They also work closely with on-campus recruiters from organizations in the area and even nationally. Thus, career counselors can be a prime source of internship leads for you.

• Talk to your professors
Like career counselors, your professors will also know where at least some students are interning now or have interned before. Additionally, many professors have consulting, research and other ties to various companies and organizations outside of academia; thus, they may be aware of internship programs hosted by these organizations.

• Network with your fellow students
If a student you know has an internship that intrigues you, ask him for advice on landing a similar internship yourself, either with the same organization or elsewhere. Chances are that students who have internships now have a better sense of the many internship opportunities that exist, in both their own organizations and in others. So be sure to tap into their collective knowledge, especially as it relates to people you should contact.

• Use your school's alumni network
Most campuses, usually through their career services or alumni offices, work hard to establish and maintain contacts with alumni working in various organizations and industries. Consider contacting some alumni from your school to check into internships in their places of employment. You’d be surprised by how strong the fellow alumnus tie can be.

• Tap into the resources of your own family, friends and acquaintances
Does your mother's company have an internship program? Does your sister's friend's nonprofit organization offer any internship possibilities? Many college students don't think to ask their family members, friends and acquaintances to help them with career-related tasks like internship hunting. Be sure you don't fall into this trap.

• Page through an internship directory
If you stop by your school's career services or campus library, or spend some time browsing in your campus or local bookstore, you'll undoubtedly find one or more internship directories listing internship programs at organizations around the United States. Several companies publish these guides, including Peterson's Internships and The Internship Bible, 10th Edition. These books are typically well indexed so you can search for internships by organization, field of interest and geographic location.

• Check out internship sites on the Web
Search for internship opportunities on the Web. If you're willing to go almost anywhere for your internship, you'll be able to find many opportunities across the country through NACElink Connect, Internship.com, MonsterTRAK and other various web sites.

Once you've developed a list of internships, you can work with a career counselor to ready yourself for the important tasks to follow. Among them: developing and writing a résumé and cover letter, learning how to follow up with prospective internship providers to keep yourself in the front of their minds, and preparing for internship interviews.

Apply for several internships. Check the guidelines for paid or unpaid status and housing. Most summer internships are funded by grants, and no prior experience is necessary. In addition to a stipend, these grants also provide funds for travel and housing.

If the deadline on the web site is from the previous year, e-mail the contact person anyway. Many times the due date is the same each year, but the Web sites have not been updated.

With time and diligence, your efforts will pay off in an internship that gives you the experience you need to land the future job you want.
Useful Web sites:

The Career Center: www.charlestonsouthern.edu/careers
   Click on any of the following:
   The BucCareer Network
   NACElink Connect or
   “Make your Summers Count”

Web Guide to Research for Undergraduates:
   www.webguru.neu.edu/

Research Experiences for Undergraduates:
   www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm

Science Undergraduate Summer Research Programs:
   www.cse.emory.edu/sciencenet/undergrad/Summer_Research/Browse.cfm

Programs for Students in Mathematics:
   www.ams.org/employment/reu.html

Science and Technology Centers Summer Internships:
   www.nsfstc.org/

National Institutes of Health:
   www.training.nih.gov/student/

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship:
   www.surf.nist.gov/surf2.htm

MUSC Undergraduate Summer Research Programs:
   www2.musc.edu/grad/SUR%20Listings.html

Association for Computing Machinery
   www.acm.org/student/internships.html

Semester at Sea:  www.semesteratsea.com

Internship search sites:
   www.internships.com

   www.InternshipPrograms.com

See additional links on The Career Center Web site at
   http://www.csuniv.edu/careerplanning/summerjobslinks.asp

   LET US HELP YOU WITH YOUR SEARCH!