Types of Internships

Internships come in all shapes and sizes; no two are identical. When searching for an internship it is best to first identify and prioritize the factors involved with an internship experience. Setting goals will aid you in this process.

A few of the factors to consider:

- compensation
- supervision
- design/structure
- timeframe
- funding source
- third party involvement
- location
- credit requirement
- terms of contract

Below are the most common designs for internships:

**Internship Programs** offer a student a structured (sometimes rotational) program typically with experienced supervisors within an individual company or department within the government. These programs are often competitive; hiring a handful of students each term or summer. The for-profit positions are frequently paid. Government positions are less likely to be paid.

**Sponsored Internships** are funded by a particular individual, professional organization, or governing body. The internships typically have stipulations or specific guidelines from the sponsor. For example, interns may be asked to select from a limited amount of prearranged internship positions/sites; or the intern may be expected to write an end of the year report and present to the sponsor on the experience.

**Third-party Internships** are commonly found with international internships or ‘hot spot’ internship sites, for example, New York City or Washington D.C. Third-party organizations help students locate internships with other organizations in a variety of occupations and offer administrative, housing, and travel support. Students often pay a fee for the third-party’s services.

**Individual Internships** are often one-time positions with a particular department within a company. The department may hire only one or two interns. The intern gains practical experience on one area of interest or with a particular project. For example, a marketing department may hire a student to work with a specific product campaign. These positions can be both paid and unpaid. A supervisor’s level of experience may vary. These positions are seldom offered on a regular basis.

**Create Your Own Internships** require much action and responsibility of a student. Students who opt to create their own internship will assess their interests and skills; submit blind inquiries to companies, offices, and professional contacts; will negotiate responsibilities; and set guidelines through a contract. These positions tend to be unpaid, but may offer perks. The supervisor may not have experience supervising an intern.