

Creating Your Own Internship

(804) 289-8547 | careerservices.richmond.edu

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Drop-in Hours: M-F, 2 to 4 p.m.



Alumni & Career Services

When creating an internship, it's pertinent to do research and planning ahead of time. Just like a traditional internship search, there is a process that can be followed to successfully obtain a position. Remember that you can apply for funding through UR Summer Fellowships if the internship you create is unpaid or minimally paid (ursf.richmond.edu).

Identify Organizations and Contacts

- Brainstorm a list of organizations that would offer an ideal internship experience. A career advisor can help you identify helpful resources for generating lists of organizations based on your geographic preferences, industry interests, and other criteria.
- Research potential contacts within the organizations. Start with LinkedIn and SpiderConnect.
- Use your network—identify a list of contacts you already have (family, friends, classmates, faculty, past supervisors, alumni, etc.)

Know What You're Seeking—And What You Can Offer

- Reflect on your hard and soft skills: what strengths can you offer, and which skills do you hope to build or strengthen?
- What tasks and responsibilities will provide you with beneficial experience for your desired field?
- Research organizations you're interested in - what types of programs or services do they offer that could use your skills?

Draft Your Offer/Position

- Develop your own position description—use the template on the back of this handout as a guide
- Describe duties you could perform based on the organization's needs and your skills
- Detail how you can personally add value to the company, and your interest in the organization

Create Structure

- In addition to the opportunity you're looking to gain, remember to also offer information about the timeline for the internship. For how long and how many hours per week are looking to work?
- Design a check list to be used in evaluating your performance to both provide some guidance to the organization of your goals, and a way to receive feedback
- Develop a journal where you can record daily activities

Make Contact

- Draft an email to your contact at the organization, using the example on the back of this handout as a guide
- Offer to schedule a time to speak about your proposal, and how it might benefit the organization, whether in person, via Skype, on the phone
- Be sure to follow up with the organization after you make initial contact to check in on the status of your email and potential opportunity

Track Opportunities

- Create an Excel spreadsheet to track the organizations you contact, and communication with your networks
- Stay organized with the search to remember who has been contacted and the status of each opportunity

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Sample Contact Email

Dear Mr./Ms./Mx. Lewis:

Customize the underlined information to fit your specific internship interests

My name is Sam Spider and I am currently a sophomore at the University of Richmond where I am studying Leadership and Healthcare and Society. I have an interest in entering the field of Public Health upon graduation and am looking to further explore the area as well as gain some experience. I will be spending Summer 2013 at home in Sacramento, CA and would be highly interested in working with the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) in the Davis office during that time. After learning more about the CCPHA through my research, I know it would be an ideal organization to gain a foundational understanding of public policy surrounding health related issues.

I have a passion for educating children on issues pertaining to obesity. In the past I have taught nutritional cooking classes and coordinated after school exercise sessions at the local YMCA. This semester I took a class on healthcare policy where I researched urban gardens and their impact on reducing childhood obesity. Outside of the classroom I have served as the outreach chair for my sorority and honed my skills to effectively communicate with other organizations in our community in order to work towards a common goal. I would like to put my skills of teaching, research and outreach to use for the benefit of CCPHA.

Attached you will find my resume where you can learn more about the skills that I can offer to CCPHA. I will be available from May 15th to August 15th and am able to work up to 35 hours per week. I would be interested in setting up a time to speak with you on the phone/in person to discuss this opportunity. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration of my proposal and will follow up within the next week to ensure my materials were received. Please don't hesitate to contact me at sam.spider@richmond.edu or (555) 555-5555 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Spider

Sam Spider

Attached: resume

When you speak to your contact:

- Thank them for their time
- Ask them what their organization's needs are
- Ask them what projects they would want you to work on (be prepared to suggest project ideas)
- Ask them how many hours per week they could host you and when they would want you to work
 - Offer to draft a position description based on your conversation (see <http://hirespiders.richmond.edu/recruiting/internships/starting.html> for an example)
- Ask what next steps are and follow up accordingly
- Send a thank you note after your conversation