

Summer Experience Search Strategies



(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.

1. What are some examples of valuable summer experiences?

- Internships: Supervised, project-oriented experiences that are tied to the curriculum and include reflection
- Externships: Short shadowing experiences to shed light on a field of interest
- Research: Supervised project focused on the pursuit of an academic objective
- Volunteering: Serving by using your skills to meet a community or organizational need
- Study abroad: Experience a new culture to develop your global competence and awareness

2. Why do you want to pursue a summer experience?

- What is your goal in obtaining a summer experience? How does it relate to your academic and career plans? What skills and characteristics can you contribute? What skills or knowledge do you need to master?
- Analyze your personal interests, needs, academic interests, and career goals to determine the best opportunity to fit these goals.
- Consider other factors: Pay, geographic location, housing, work environment, duration, other commitments during time of internship.
- Discuss your individual plans with a Career Services' Advisor to further clarify your goals.

3. How can you search for a summer experience?

- Create targeted résumé(s). Use [Career Services resources](#) to assist with this process (web site, drop-in hours, workshops).
- Diversify your search strategy
 1. Search postings
 - [SpiderConnect](#) (UR's opportunity database)
 - [US Federal Government Internships](#); [Idealist.org](#) (nonprofit/NGO)
 2. Target specific organizations that match your goals
 - Career Services' Resource Center books can help you identify types of organizations
 - Hoovers & Vault: online databases of organizations nationwide used to target opportunities (both can be accessed through SpiderConnect)
 3. Network-mobilize the people who are most invested in you
 - Think of your Top 10 fans: Professors, friends, family, alumni, coaches, supervisors, and more
 - Contact them and tell them about your goals for your summer experience
 - Ask if they know of anyone you should talk to or of opportunities you should investigate
- Make contact and follow up
 - Develop targeted letters and other application materials requested (résumé, cover letter, etc.).
 - Hone interview skills (mock interviews with counselors or employers, web site tips, walk-ins).
 - Keep in touch with interested opportunities regularly-a spreadsheet may help you keep track of it all.
 - Accept or decline all offers.

4. Making the most of your summer experience

- Develop goals with your supervisor.
- Regularly reflect on your experience and how it connects to your academic, career, and personal goals.
- Look for ways to get involved in additional projects.
- Remember that both good and bad experiences will help clarify your career goals.