



University Career Center – EXPERIENCE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Internships (for Students)

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| What is an internship?..... | Page 2 |
| Why is it important to do an internship?..... | Page 2 |
| Who can do an Internship? Are internships only offered to juniors?..... | Page 3 |
| Will the University Career Center place me in an internship?..... | Page 3 |
| When should I look for an internship?..... | Page 3 |
| As a student, how many hours can I work in an internship?..... | Page 3 |
| What should I look for in an internship?..... | Page 3 |
| How do I decide what internship I should pursue?..... | Page 3 |
| What national or professional guidelines exist related to internships?..... | Page 4 |
| How do I find an internship?..... | Page 4 |
| What can I do to increase my chances of finding a good internship (or co-op)?..... | Page 5 |
| Do employers come on campus to recruit for interns (and co-ops)?..... | Page 6 |
| What do I do if I cannot find any internships I like posted on-line?..... | Page 6 |
| Are internships paid or unpaid?..... | Page 6 |
| Why do employers offer unpaid internships?..... | Page 6 |
| Can I get academic credit for my internship?..... | Page 7 |
| How do I get academic credit for my internship?..... | Page 7 |
| Can I receive academic credit for my internship through the University Career Center?..... | Page 7 |
| What do I do when I find an internship?..... | Page 8 |
| What do I do when I find an internship and the employer is demanding I receive academic credit for the experience?..... | Page 8 |
| What if I am an International Student: Can I do an internship?..... | Page 9 |
| How can I get an internship if I have no experience?..... | Page 9 |
| What if I run into challenges in my internship?..... | Page 9 |
| What if my internship supervisor and me seem to have conflicting goals or priorities?..... | Page 10 |
| What is I am experiencing boredom at my internship?..... | Page 10 |
| What if I experience communication issues at my internship site?..... | Page 10 |
| If all else fails?..... | Page 10 |
| What if my question is not answered here?..... | Page 10 |



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Internships (for Students)

What is an internship?

UNC Charlotte broadly defines an internship as a fixed, short-term, work experience in a professional setting, which is an extension of classroom learning. Internship opportunities are open to undergraduate and graduate students. At a minimum, an internship will last 5 weeks and require 80 hours in a given semester. UNC Charlotte Interns can work up to 40 hours a week during summer, and up to 20 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters.

Internships may be obtained through an established internship program or something that the student and the employer create together to fit the student's skills and interests and the employer's specific needs.

Internships may be paid or unpaid.

A combination of goal-setting, training, supervision, and evaluation should be defined and agreed upon by all parties, the student, the employer, and a university faculty/staff administrator, especially if academic credit is involved.

Why is it important to do an internship?

In today's competitive job market, an internship is just one more step in creating a well-rounded portfolio of experiences that will give you a competitive edge.

Internships or other relevant work experiences provide the following benefits:

- New skills and professional contacts in the world of work
- Exploration of career interests without making a long-term commitment to a position or field
- Opportunity to clarify your interests, skills, and career goals
- Establishing a relationship with your supervisor who may serve as an important professional reference for you and might help you build a network within the organization and/or industry.
- Potential full-time job leads or conversion from an intern to a full-time hire
- Application of classroom knowledge to the workplace, potentially shaping your course of study.



Who can do an internship? Are internships only offered to juniors?

Every student can benefit from one or several internships. Unless a company, organization, or academic department specifies class status, GPA, or other requirements all students may apply.

Will the University Career Center place me in an internship?

No. The University Career Center (UCC) professional career advisors can provide you with guidance and resources to explore your internship interests, abilities, and values. The UCC can help you brand yourself, enabling you to make a stellar first impression and conduct an effective internship search.

When should I look for an internship?

It is never too early! Do not wait! While many students plan to do an internship the summer after their junior year, internship opportunities also exist for freshman and sophomores.

Most internship opportunities are posted in the fall and early spring for the following summer. In 2017, 76.8% of the Internships were post before the end of February.

As a student, how many hours can I work in an internship?

At a minimum, an internship will last 5 weeks and require 80 hours in a given semester. UNC Charlotte Interns can work up to 40 hours a week during summer, and up to 20 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters.

The hours students may work in Internships for academic credit may vary per the agreement between the department/college faculty/staff instructor of record, the student, and the employer.

What should I look for in an internship? How do I decide what internship I should pursue?

Before you begin your internship search, the University Career Center encourages you to assess your interests, abilities, and values to determine how they connect with the company and industry for/in which you would like to intern. Our professional career advisors can help you.



Next, as you begin the application and interviewing process, review position descriptions and ask appropriate questions during your interviews to determine if the internship you are being offered fit all of the following criteria:

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience enabling you to apply knowledge gained in the classroom.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end
- A job description with desired qualifications must be provided.
- Learning objectives/goals are clearly defined and related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- A professional with expertise and an education or professional background in the field provides supervision.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

What national and professional guidelines exist related to internships?

The University Career Center adheres to the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) and U.S. Bureau of Labor – Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines to review and approve internships on Hire-A-Niner. These are outlined for you, above, to help you understand the professional principles, which define an internship, especially if the opportunity is *unpaid*.

If all of the measures above are met, NACE considers the position is indeed a true internship experience.

How do I find an Internship?

Preliminary Considerations

- Start your search early! Organizations often recruit interns 1 to 2 semesters in advance.



- **Before you begin your internship search, make an appointment with your designated Career Advisor in the UCC to discuss information and resources for your search. Also, have your resume and cover letter critiqued.**
- **Consider mid-size and small companies, not just large ones. Allot time to research various industry-related employers in addition to the “big-name” employers of which you are already aware. Research can help you determine if an organization is a good cultural fit and make you aware of organizations with fantastic opportunities that you might not have previously considered.**
- **Network with your professors in your major about reputable organizations and internship experiences.**

Internship Search Strategies

- **Network! Network! Network! Network!**
- **Log into Hire-A-Niner to search for internships (and co-ops).**
- **Once in Hire-A-Niner, review the “Events” tab to find information on career fairs, company treks, employer information sessions, employer panels, and recruiting tables.**
- **Create a profile and use LinkedIn to network directly with professionals in your chosen field. Varieties of online resources are available to conduct your search - meet with your career advisor to discuss resources specific to your search and your industry.**

What can I do to increase my chances of finding a good internship (or co-op)?

In addition to diligently searching Hire-A-Niner, network with people who may have contact suggestions for you, directly approach employers of interest, develop a standout resume and be prepared to handle interview questions.

If you are having difficulty finding an internship, ask yourself if you can be more flexible or open. For example:

- **Can you be geographically flexible over the summer?**
- **Are you able to intern part-time throughout the year? (These positions can be a great way to make a name for yourself and can be less competitive than summer opportunities.)**
- **Use career center resources to ensure you are presenting your best self to employers.**



Do employers come on campus to recruit for Interns (and co-ops)?

Yes. Beginning in July/August of every academic year, employers post their internship (and co-op) opportunities on Hire-A-Niner (HAN). Employers also recruit for internships and co-op opportunities on-campus and schedule interviews via an On-Campus Recruiting function in

Hire-A-Niner On-Campus Recruiting traditionally begins the second week of the fall and spring semesters and ends each semester prior to reading days.

PRO TIP: Have your Hire-A-Niner profile and resume updated and approved by mid-July and begin your internship and co-op search in mid-July to ensure you are taking advantage of all opportunities.

What do I do if I cannot find any internships I like posted on-line?

Network! Network! Network! Network!

- **Speak with your professors in your major about reputable organizations and internship experiences.**
- **Use Hire-A-Niner to find information on career fairs, company treks, employer information sessions, employer panels, recruiting tables and other networking opportunities. These events enable you to meet professionals in your field of interest. Search for these opportunities under “Events.”**
- **Create a profile and use LinkedIn to network directly with professionals in your chosen field. Varieties of online resources are available to conduct your search - meet with your career advisor to discuss resources specific to your search and your industry.**

Are internships paid or unpaid?

Internships may be paid or unpaid.

Why do employers offer unpaid internships?

Labor market supply and demand, budget constraints, and certain majors may drive the offering of unpaid Internships, and thus cost savings can add value to employer participation in an unpaid opportunity.

Students who are offered unpaid internships are highly encouraged to work with faculty to receive academic credit. Receiving academic credit for internships guarantees adherence to labor standards and ensures the opportunity aligns with the goals of your program of study.



Employers providing unpaid Internships may advertise those opportunities on Hire-A-Niner. The posting must clearly state that the internship is unpaid, prior to the position being approved and available to students. Although the career center staff will review and approve each posting, it is the employers' responsibility to ensure that the unpaid position meets the criteria for acceptable unpaid internships, as established by the US Department of Labor.

Can I get academic credit for my internship?

Yes. Currently, Internship courses for academic credit are offered at UNC Charlotte in all colleges at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Undergraduate offerings include 60 optional and 13 mandatory internship credit courses. Graduate offerings include 64 optional and 32 mandatory internship credit courses.

Requirements for students to participate in and gain academic credit for their internship vary by college, major, courses offered, credit hours required, and prerequisite required.

Contact your academic department/college, directly, to learn about internship for credit courses offered in your major, or contact the University Career Center at experiential-ed@uncc.edu to access a list of all academic internship courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

How do I get academic credit for my internship?

Once an employer has offered you an internship, contact the faculty/staff who are designated "Instructors of Record," for the course in your college/department. You can also contact the University Career Center at experiential-ed@uncc.edu to access a list of all academic internship courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Can I receive academic credit for my internship through the University Career Center?

Yes, after you have exhausted opportunities with your academic department/college.

The University Career Center reviews all opportunities posted in Hire-A-Niner – both paid and unpaid. If a student and employer cannot be served by an academic internship for credit in a college/department, the University Career Center has a course (UCOL 3410) designed to allow students to take advantage of an experiential learning opportunity.

UCOL 3410 – Career Development Internship Course Description: This course requires at least 50 hours per credit hour of supervised internship experience. The internship must qualify as



a “meaningful work experience,” whereby the student uses the competencies gained from their academic program.

An internship proposal form must be completed and approved by the University Career Center in consultation with the student’s major department prior to registration and the commencement of the work experience.

Students cannot normally count the Career Development Internship course towards their major or minor requirements (it counts as elective hours only); exceptions may be possible at the program’s discretion.

Requirements: Must be a current junior or senior in an academic program (60+ hours on your transcript) with at least a 2.0 overall grade point average. Summer tuition rates apply to the registration for UCOL 3410. 1 credit = 50 Site Hours; 2credits = 80 Site Hours 3credits = 120 Site Hours.

Questions about UCOL 3410? Please contact the University Career Center at experiential-ed@uncc.edu or call 704-687-0795 for assistance.

What do I do when I find an internship?

Confirming internship employment with the University Career Center is very helpful to you, the University Career Center and the UNC Charlotte community.

Once you have been offered an internship by an employer, the University Career Center (UCC) asks you to access your Hire-A-Niner student account and “Report-A-Hire.”

From your Hire-A-Niner account home page, look down the column on the left; click “My Account.” Expand the list, click “Employment,” “Add New”, and provide the brief information requested. If it is a paid position, please record your salary in the comments section. Internship salary information is collected in aggregate (never connected to you) to provide to employers and students seeking internships.

What do I do when I find an internship and the employer is demanding I receive academic credit for the experience?

First, contact faculty/staff in your college/department, who are designated “Instructors of Record,” for the course, and work with them as you are

When in doubt please the University Career Center at experiential-ed@uncc.edu or call 704-687-0795 for guidance.



What if I am an International Student: Can I do an internship?

International students holding F-1 Visa Status can participate in training programs that are an integral part of an established curriculum, defined as alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship/practicum, which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

The UNC Charlotte International Student and Scholar Office (ISSO) can authorize these agreements, labeled F1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT), in two ways:

- [Through the University Career Center](#)
- [Through the Academic Department](#)

How can I get an internship if I have no experience?

Employers value skills developed through academic work, volunteer experiences, extracurricular activities, leadership roles, part-time jobs or other experiences, that demonstrate skills useful in the world of work. Many internships do not require job-specific skills. Employers equally value competencies, such as communication, teamwork, and analytical skills, which are essential to the workplace. Additionally, student and part-time jobs demonstrate to employers that you have been a successful employee and can effectively manage your time.

What if I run into challenges in my internship?

- **Assess your expectations. Are they realistic? Speak with a career advisor to help you evaluate these expectations and develop a plan. If your expectations are realistic, consider having a professional conversation with your internship supervisor about your career goals and internship expectations. If they are not realistic, try to figure out why.**
- **If you started the internship with a specific position description, reference that description to see if it accurately represents the work, you are doing.**
- **If you do not already have one, consider working with your supervisor to create a learning contract. This is a good way to chart out internship expectations for both you and the organization. If you already have a learning contract, review it and modify if possible.**



What if my internship supervisor and I seem to have conflicting goals or priorities?

Some degree of difference is natural. If your differences are extreme, talk to your supervisor openly and positively to see if you can find a middle ground. Remember that your supervisor should want you to have a positive, useful experience. Try to meet your supervisor's expectations while also meeting your own.

What if I am experiencing boredom at my internship?

Ask for new projects. If you notice a need or an area that could use some help, offer to work on it. If you show initiative and help solve some problems, you will stand out and gain even better experience for your future.

What if I experience communication issues at my internship site?

Many workplace problems are a result of poor communication. Do not hesitate to talk to your supervisor about your concerns, but be sure to do so in a diplomatic, positive, and professional way. Most supervisors do not take on an intern unless they are committed to providing positive experience.

If all else fails?

If you have applied the advice above with your supervisor or you are experiencing any concerns in your work place, you have two courses of action:

Contact your faculty/staff instructor in your college/department, if you are working an Internship for academic credit.

Or if you are involved in any other type of Internship format, the University Career Center wants to hear from you. Please contact the UCC at experiential-ed@uncc.edu or call 704-687-0795, if you are experiencing any issues in the workplace. We will guide you in resolving concerns that you have not been able to work out with your supervisor or sponsoring employer.

What if my question is not answered here?

Did not get all of your questions answered here?

Please contact the University Career Center at experiential-ed@uncc.edu or call 704-687-0795 for assistance.