



Johnston Memorial Library, ACE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Telephone: 804-524-5211  
[www.vsu.edu/career-services](http://www.vsu.edu/career-services)

## To-Dos for Landing an Internship

If you want an internship, you need to start planning early at the beginning of the academic school year. You need to remember that fellow students nationwide are competing for the same internships, and before you know it, you'll be swamped with your spring-semester courses and activities. You need to act now!

Here's a five-step plan to help you during this time.

### Step One: Evaluate and Plan

- On your own or with your Career Advisor's assistance, identify the key skills and essential experiences an internship could provide.
- Determine what geographic locations you'll consider.
- Pinpoint when you'll be able to start an internship, given your classes and other commitments.
- Choose several areas of interest to help you begin researching internship possibilities.

### Step Two: Explore and Examine

- Explore your internship options by talking to a Career Advisor; chatting with your professors and instructors within your academic departments, fellow students and former students who have interned and alumni. Access and utilize VSU's Career Services online recruitment database for students and alumni, Trojans4Hire (visit <https://vsu-csm.symplicity.com/students/index.php>), and researching internship web sites.
- Develop three internship possibility lists: your top-priority dream internships, second-best and third place, but still acceptable, position.
- Talk and network with people to help you research your top-priority and second-best internships in depth.
- Ask your Career Advisor, professors, instructors and fellow students if there are any internship opportunities or organizations that you have overlooked.

### Step Three: Apply and Follow Up

- With the help of your Career Advisor, academic advisor or professors, develop a strong basic resume and cover letter. Each internship you apply for will require a customized resume and cover letter.
- Get at least three letters of recommendation from people who can speak highly of you professionally or academically, such as professors, employers and advisors.
- Apply for the internships that interest you most. Remember, if in doubt, apply. It's better to be rejected than to have no chance because you didn't even try. Keep track of your applications.
- Follow up with each organization shortly after the internship application deadline passes. Follow up sooner if you feel competition will be stiff or to make sure the organization received your materials.

### Step Four: Research and Interview

- Whether you are looking for your first internship or full-time job, you want to explore and research the prospective employer(s) to find out if they are a good match for you and your goals. Research and learn as much as you can about each organization. Researching is paramount to successful interviewing. Work with a Career Advisor to help you prepare for your interviews. Ask to schedule mock interviews with your Career Services office to work on your responses and demeanor.
- Come up with specific examples to prove you have the knowledge, skills, and experiences you say you do. Consider developing and using a career portfolio to back up your claims.
- Invest in appropriate professional business attire.
- Send thank-you notes after each interview. You'll stand out because most internship seekers forget this classy move.

### Step Five: Accept and Prepare

- Accept a desirable internship offer both verbally and in writing.
- Continue learning about the organization for which you will be working. Ask your future supervisor if there is anything you can do now to prepare for the position.
- Invest a little more money in appropriate business attire. Your future supervisor can tell you what's expected of you regarding dress requirements for the work place.
- Explore and then finalize any necessary living and transportation arrangements. Practice getting to your internship site a day or two before you actually start to avoid being late your first day.
- Show up well-dressed, well-groomed, well-rested and a few minutes early on your first day.