Tips for a Successful Internship

Samford University Career Development Center

Be professional – Reporting to work every day on time is expected and it is best to arrive a few minutes early. You should remain professional in your attire, communication, and addressing workplace issues. Ask about appropriate attire before you begin. Remember that it is much better to be too dressed up than too casual.

Restrict social media & Respect technology –As an intern, it is very important to remain mindful of social media and technological chatter and distractions. Turn off and put away your cell phone while working. Also, do not use your social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram on your computer, or the organizations computer, unless given permission to do so by your supervisor for job-related duties.

Meet your co-workers –As a young professional, you may find yourself apprehensive about meeting more experienced professionals in the field. Your co-workers will help you adapt to your new environment by sharing organization culture. Spend time observing tasks, processes, and the flow and structure of the organization.

Network – As you work each day with your co-workers and supervisors you will learn more and more about what they do and their specialties. This is a great time to talk to them, learning why they entered this field, and what they can share with you for future knowledge and success. You may not know it, but this is exactly what networking is. You are building your database of professionals in the field who now know you and know what your special talents and skills are. In the future, you have a professional connection in which you can reach out to for employment, advice, and potential mentorship.

Take initiative – Do not be afraid to ask for assignments and projects you feel you are comfortable and fully capable of doing. During team projects or group work, ask to be included and offer your knowledge and skills to the group.

Meet with your supervisor –Ask for time to meet with your supervisor regularly to discuss your progress, areas of improvement, and ask questions. Supervisor are typically very busy, therefore, work with your supervisor to schedule time that is convenient to allow opportunities for you both to meet freely without distractions.

Set realistic goals – Ensure the goals you and your supervisor define and set encompass specific skills and competencies you wish to acquire and demonstrate. Create learning goals that will show a direct connection with your daily work activities.

Do not be afraid to ask questions – Ask question. If you do not, it may appear you have little interest in the opportunity and/or the career field. Therefore, ask questions related to the position, the field, and future career growth.

Do you best work – Every day is an opportunity to excel and show your skills, knowledge, and strengths as a young professional and as a student. Always strive to do your best work possible for yourself and your internship site.

Stay organized – Incorporate ways to keep track of assignments, tests, school projects, work projects, and life in general to ensure you stay organized and remember important dates. As a young professional it is very important to remember when assignments and tasks are due. One cannot make an excuse for a missed assignment or project in the professional world.

Reflect on your experiences – Creating a journal as your progress through your internship will help you reflect on the skills and experiences you have gained. You will have a personal account of the challenges you may have faced and the successes you earned. If not for the course itself, it is a great tool to help you see what your strengths and weaknesses are in relation to the field and the internship position.

End well – At the end of your internship, within the last two weeks, show initiative by asking for an end-of-internship meeting with your supervisor. During this meeting, you can go over what you learned and gained from the internship. This will also give your supervisor the opportunity to go over with you what was noticed about your work ethic and professional growth in the position. At the end of your time with the organization and supervisor, be sure to send a *written* thank you note to your supervisor expressing appreciation for taking the time spent working with you, introducing you to the field, and helping prepare you for the working by equipping you with irreplaceable knowledge and opportunities.

For more information, stop by or call the Career Development Center
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