

Creating Your Own Internship

U N C G C A R E E R S E R V I C E S C E N T E R

In some cases the internship of your dreams may not be posted in SpartanCareers or anywhere else. It could be that your dream internship has not yet been developed and is waiting for you to create it. Maybe you found a great internship, but the organization offering it is too far from home. You could possibly create an internship at a similar organization nearby. If you have identified an organization that you are interested in and they are not currently offering an internship, you may be able to create one of your own. When creating your own internship, it takes effort. You have to prepare early and give yourself time to make it happen. Additionally, you need to develop a solid plan.

Assess Your Goals

If you want to create your own internship, you need a plan to get started. Remember, you are not only creating the internship plan, you are also convincing the employer that your proposal is a good idea! Your plan should include an assessment of your goals for the internship. What are you hoping to learn? Why do you want to intern for the company? What have you learned in class that you can apply and practice during the internship? What is it that you hope to walk away with when you leave the internship? These are important questions to answer early in the process, because they will help you to move forward successfully.

Develop a Plan

Once you complete an assessment of your goals, you should start to visualize what the internship will look like. You should develop a plan that lays out what you would do during the internship. An hourly break down of duties is not necessary, but a plan that includes how you can contribute is a good starting point. If there is a position that you would like someday, perhaps you can offer to assist someone currently in that position with their projects or assignments. Developing a list of projects that you could possibly contribute to would also be beneficial. In general, just think of what you have to offer.

Make the Contact

If you have not yet identified a company, a Career Counselor can assist you with strategizing a professional way to contact employers of interest. These strategies can include researching online, networking, contacting human resources, and on-campus employer information sessions. Visit the “Make Connections” section of the Career Services Center’s website to get started with identifying contacts. Once you have identified contacts, contact them by phone, e-mail or in person. There is no one correct way to make the contact or write your internship plan. However, you should be prepared to effectively sell your plan and answer questions about it. You should also have your resume ready to submit to employers of interest.

Layout the Logistics

The logistics of your internship plan could include: a start and end date, your availability, paid vs. unpaid, etc. This is a collaborative process with you and the employer that you have contacted. Know what you want to get out of the internship, but remain flexible as you draft the internship logistics with the employer. If you need academic credit for the internship, you should obtain information from your academic department early on to learn about requirements and the employer’s role in the process.

Stay Encouraged

When creating your own internship, it will require patience and commitment. Not every company you approach will say “yes” to the idea. Be flexible, keep your options open, and stay encouraged during your search. The work that you put into developing the internship can result in great reward – the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and contacts with your company of choice. Remember, the Career Services Center is here to help during the process of making your dream internship a reality.