

We can help you decide what type of experiential learning opportunity is right for you—and help you find an internship or experience site.

Internship or experience?

Internships are generally undertaken for academic or professional reasons. Many programs at UMass Dartmouth require an upper-level internship as part of the requirements for the degree. Internships are usually taken in your major discipline. Internships provide a venue through which you can integrate classroom theory with real-life experiences and gain greater understanding of the relevance of your coursework.

Why should I do an internship?

An internship provides relevant, real world work experience in a career field of interest. Internships are a valuable way to learn about a job or career and determine if it is a good “fit” for your skills and interests. During your internship you learn things about an industry and job function that you could never learn without seeing and doing the work every day. You will also meet people who can help you connect to other companies, industries or job functions that interest you.

Having an internship on your resume demonstrates that you have work-related knowledge and skills, increases your marketability and, if you perform well in your internship, offers you the opportunity to land a full-time job at your internship site.

When should I do an internship?

It's never too early to do an internship! You can start as early as the summer after your first year of college, but it's crucial for you to have a solid, well-targeted internship the summer after your junior year. You should aim to have at least one internship before you graduate.

A common misconception among college students is that you can only do internships during the summer, but there are many great internship opportunities. **Handshake** is a great resource for the latest listings of internships. Handshake can be accessed through the student portal.

What should I consider when looking for internships?

Before you start your search, create a list of your most important criteria for an internship. Talk with a career counselor who can help you determine a strategy for your internship search. Consider:

- **Pay:** Do you need to be paid for your internship or can you take an unpaid position? If taking an unpaid internship is possible, you will find more potential opportunities, depending on your industry. If the internship is not paid, can you receive academic credit for your internship?
- **Location:** Where do you want to work? Should you go back to your hometown and live with your family? Can you live in a different city if you find inexpensive housing?
- **Career Industry or Function:** What industry and/or job function do you want to target? Are you aware of all of the possible options? What is the best way to learn more about your industries or functions of choice?
- **Timing/Deadlines:** While it's never too early to start looking for an internship, there are a few important issues to be aware of:
 - For some extraordinarily competitive fields like investment banking or consulting, you must plan ahead and compete to get relevant summer internships during the summers after sophomore and junior year. In many cases, firms in these industries look for a 2.0 GPA or higher.
 - Government agencies like the CIA, NSA, and the State Department require background checks that can take months. As a result, the deadline for summer internships is in the fall of the year before the internship.
- **Organization:** What kind of culture are you looking for? Will you receive enough attention and guidance from your supervisor? Will there be an opportunity to develop a relationship with a mentor?
- **Academic Credit:** This is determined by your academic department, so be sure to meet with your academic or faculty advisor. Not all paid internships guarantee credit.

How do I search for opportunities?

Now that you have a better idea of what kind of internship you're looking for, check out the resources below to jump-start your search:

- **Network** – start connecting with people who work in your areas of interest (career field, company, or industry). Networking is the best way to learn about careers and companies and land an internship.
- **Internship websites** – try websites which list multiple internships, i.e., Handshake, Simplyhired.com, Indeed.com, Internships.com

How can I stay organized while I search and apply for internships?

Expect that finding an internship will be labor-intensive. You will need to keep applying and interviewing until you land an offer, which can mean 20 applications or more.

How do I write my resume and cover letter?

A targeted resume and cover letter is the key to presenting yourself professionally and landing an interview. Stop by the Career Center for a one-on-one meeting with a career counselor so we can help you perfect these important documents.

We also recommend creating a LinkedIn profile. It's one more way to present yourself to employers and it can make a significant difference.

How should I prepare for interviews?

When it comes to interviews remember to prepare and practice.

Prepare by researching the company and the position and think about the interview from the employer's perspective. What are they looking for in a candidate and what kinds of questions will they ask to determine if you're a good fit?

Practice by scheduling a "mock interview" with a career counselor or practice on your own or with BigInterview. Remember that the more you prepare and practice, the more confident and successful you will be!

Other experiential learning, internships, clinical experiences, practicum in majors

An **upper-level** internship, practicum, or clinical experience is:

- included among the program requirements for some majors
- offered as an optional course in other majors

These studies may vary:

- from a close-to-campus experience in a course, taken concurrently with other courses during the semester
- to a semester, or even a year, in an extensive experience which may be away from campus

For further information about these opportunities:

- **Consult the course listings in the Academic Catalog**
- **Contact your department chair or academic dean**

It is the policy of UMass Dartmouth to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employers offering internships are asked to comply with all terms of the Act when determining whether an internship is to be offered as paid or unpaid.