

Internship Search Strategy

A Checklist and Some Resources to Get Started

Why is it important to be strategic about your internship search?

Internships are an important step towards building the career you desire. Both paid and unpaid internships can be very competitive, so it is crucial to start early and land an internship that makes sense for you in relation to your longer term career plans. Investing in experiential learning such as internships can help you intentionally gain knowledge, experience and skills that will be useful when you apply for jobs. Internships are also valuable for expanding your network and learning from experienced professionals in the field.

Internship Search Checklist

Follow this checklist to construct an efficient and effective internship search without feeling overwhelmed. These steps are not necessarily linear and you may go back and forth between them. For example, you might create your CV/resume and then tailor it further once you have found a vacancy and want to submit an application.

Know Yourself

- ✓ Identify your existing **skills, knowledge** and **interests**
- ✓ Update your **resume**
- ✓ Be ready to articulate your **career narrative** (pitch)

Advice: Use the self-assessment exercises offered by the Career Services Office, such as the 'Achievement Stories' and 'Career Reflection Boxes'. To create a good resume, use CEU's recommended templates and consult with your career advisor for input on a draft of your tailored CV/resume.

Make a Plan

- ✓ Develop your **longer-term career vision**
- ✓ Think of **issues** you want to work on and skills you need to develop
- ✓ Identify a **plan** (or plans) to reach your career goals

Advice: Check the Job Search Strategy handout for more suggestions on creating a long-term career plan. Your career advisor may provide some guidelines as well.

Do Your Research

- ✓ Identify organizations that are **a good fit** for your internship goals
- ✓ Find out what you need to **learn**, build your **experience** and gain and perfect your **skills** to pursue the career path and/or specific role you desire

Advice: Prepare a list of organization that align with your values and interests. Look at the 'About Us' and 'Mission and Vision' sections to learn more about what the organization is trying to accomplish.

Get Informed

- ✓ Check **job/internship platforms** to find vacancies
- ✓ Monitor individual organizations' **websites** to learn about opportunities
- ✓ Use **LinkedIn** to conduct research into individual career paths
- ✓ Use your **networks** for information and advice (conduct informational interviews)

Advice: Check the LinkedIn and Informational Interviews handouts to learn more about doing research for your internship and job search. Below you can find several suggested resources to get you started.

Be Resourceful and Land an Internship

- ✓ Think about the types of internships out there and how you can find yours
- ✓ Internships usually fall into three categories:
 - **Advertised** (on websites and forums)
 - **Hidden** (not broadcast to the public)
 - **Self-created** (crafted at the initiative of the potential intern, who approaches an organization to propose a collaboration)

Advice: Being pro-active and reaching out to organizations sometimes is an effective way to create an internship that would be beneficial for both you and the organization. See below for a sample email.

Suggested platforms

There are many resources on the internet with job and internship vacancies as well as career advice. The below platforms are a suggested starting point for your internship search. CEU's career>next careers platform includes a huge selection of resources, so make sure you regularly check it out, and that you read the monthly Careers Newsletter, as well.

- [career>next](#)
- [CEU Careers Newsletter](#)
- [Idealist](#)
- [EuroBrussels](#)
- [DevnetJobs](#)
- [HumanRightsCareers](#)
- [Reliefweb](#)

How do I know the internship will be beneficial for me?

Do everything you can to ensure your internship will be a valuable learning experience. Most commonly, internships done by CEU students and fresh grads last 3- to 6-months period, are focused on feasible short projects and often include some administrative duties. Read the call/vacancy carefully; don't apply if it doesn't look like you would be learning while there.

Sample Internship Call

RESEARCH INTERN FOR ORGANIZATION X

Qualifications required:

- Be enrolled or have just completed a Master's degree program in public policy, international relations, economics, or related area;
- Research experience is an advantage;
- Excellent analytical and writing skills;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- A well-organized individual with the ability to multi-task;
- Ability to work independently and as a team member;
- Have a demonstrated keen interest in public policies and good governance;
- Computer literacy in standard software applications;
- Language Proficiency in both written and oral Vietnamese and English;

Benefits

- Opportunities to work with leading experts in the field of public policy research, political economy, and legislation
- Be involved in applied research projects and experience the policy-making process
- Friendly and dynamic working environment

Sample Internship Terms of Reference (ToR)

Duties and responsibilities:

Under the guidelines and supervision of ORGANIZATION X the intern is expected to make contribution in three simultaneous projects: (1) Obstructions in implementation of public policies in Software and Digital Content Industry; (2) Digital economy and cybersecurity; and (3) Deregulations and open economy in Vietnam.

The intern will have the opportunity to carry out the following tasks:

- **Desk research:** review relevant and available governmental documents and policy reports.
- **Writing and presenting reports** of preliminary findings based on desk research.
- **Organizing discussion sessions** with representatives from the business sector. During these sessions, policy recommendations will be presented and representatives from the business sector, who are directly affected by implementation of the policies, will provide feedback.
- **Consulting policy experts' opinion** to discuss practical experiences as reflected by the business sector.
- **Conducting in-depth interviews** with business leaders.
- **Preparing a final report** for the research findings.
- **Disseminating information** to relevant governmental offices and ministries. Participate in the organization of the annual conference where the organization communicates research findings and promotes policy implementation instruments.

Creating your own internship

Sometimes it can make sense to approach a potential internship host organization to create your own internship. This process often starts with an internship inquiry email that is basically a shorter version of a cover letter and in which you express your interest in contributing to the organization's work. Make sure you briefly include the reasons the organization appeals to you and how their organizational profile fits with your skills, knowledge and experience.

Dear ORGANIZATION X Team,

I am writing to inquire about the possibility of interning with your organization this summer. I could not find any internship call published on the website, and was wondering whether you are open to accepting interns at the moment.

I have 5 years of experience in lobbying and advocacy in the private sector, where I developed relevant skills and knowledge that I believe could have greater value used in a more meaningful way. Currently, I am enrolled in the first year of the Master of Public Administration at the Central European University in Budapest and am seeking internship opportunities for the summer.

I believe that proper representation, promotion and defense of interests of the LGBTI community in the institutional forums is necessary for building more diverse, tolerant, fair and inclusive societies. ORGANIZATION X has been doing a lot in this respect and I would like to contribute to its work with the skills, knowledge and interest I have developed in another field.

In the event of an unpaid internship, as I am currently a student I am eligible to apply for internship funding from my university, which would help me cover my expenses during my internship in Lisbon.

I am happy to discuss my potential contribution to your organization further; I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

NAME