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INTERNSHIP BASICS

Boston University and the Center for Career Development (CCD) staff encourage internships as one way for you to explore possible career paths and gain educational experience in a specific field or industry. Internships are beneficial throughout your college journey and may often help you make key decisions about your professional future. The CCD supports you as you navigate all aspects of career development.

DEFINITION OF AN INTERNSHIP

An internship is an opportunity for supervised, practical experience in a career field of interest. Internships help you to make connections between your classroom learning and workplace experience. They also provide a chance for you to grow academically, professionally, and personally.

BENEFITS AND VALUE

Overall, internships are a chance to explore and expand your skills and opportunities. They are a wonderful, hands-on way to learn more about a career field or job type and can be an important part of your experience at Boston University.

An internship can help you:

- Explore career options and experience first-hand what a full-time job in a particular field might be like
- Strengthen your resume
- Build confidence in your abilities
- Meet people in the industry and build professional connections

INTERNSHIPS VS. VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

As mentioned above, an internship opportunity, whether paid or unpaid, focuses on providing valuable, meaningful, and professional field experience that is structured around a specific major or field of study and can directly complement a student’s classroom learning.

Volunteering is usually done for personal fulfillment and enjoyment as a student employs his/her interests and skills. There is usually no pay or academic credit involved, and it can occur on an on-going basis or for short-term projects. Many volunteer opportunities are affiliated with nonprofit or city agencies.

COMPENSATION

Unlike a summer job, an internship can be paid or unpaid. As you consider opportunities, be aware that the standards regarding internship compensation have and continue to change as they are debated in the court system. These standards, although not set in stone, are intended to protect interns and ensure that the internship is an educational experience and the primary beneficiary is the intern.

Internship experiences should provide you with the opportunity to connect your classroom learning to the workplace, gain new skills, and build professional connections. We encourage you to review the following information provided by NACE:

NACE Position Statement on U.S. Internships:
naceweb.org/connections/advocacy/internship_position_paper/

NACE: Appeals Court Vacates Ruling in Unpaid Internship Case:
naceweb.org/internships/legal-ruling-unpaid-internships-learning-experience.aspx

For questions regarding internship compensation, please contact the CCD at future@bu.edu or 617-353-3590.
Please note that the Center for Career Development (CCD) reserves the right to reject any internship or job posting on BU CareerLink.

PAID INTERNSHIPS
Intern pay rates vary based on the student’s experience, the organization, and the industry.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS
Not all organizations are able to pay interns and instead offer unpaid internships. Unpaid internships aren’t a feasible option for all students. The following are a few factors that you can use in choosing to apply for an internship, particularly an unpaid opportunity.

- **Hours:** What are the working hours and time commitment, and how flexible is the schedule? If you plan to find a part-time job to help meet your financial needs, this may be a challenge if the internship is full time or if the hours aren’t flexible.

- **Non-monetary benefits:** The internship may provide professional development opportunities as well as assistance with housing, transportation, and/or meals.

- **Location:** If you have to relocate for the internship and there is no housing stipend, you would have to weigh the costs of moving and summer housing. If this information isn’t available on the organization’s website or in the internship position description, then be sure to ask during the interview process.

ACADEMIC CREDIT INTERNSHIPS
Boston University does not currently have a University-wide policy regarding academic credit for internships; the various schools and colleges determine their own policies. It is your responsibility to work with your school/college when pursuing academic credit for an internship.

If you have questions, speak with your academic advisor or your school/college’s career office, if applicable: bu.edu/careers/additional-boston-university-career-centers.

For international students, academic credit internships may require Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT) student work permissions. Before accepting an off-campus internship you will need to be certain your F-1 or J-1 immigration status allows you to begin. Keep in mind that off-campus work permission for international students in the United States is quite limited, applications for certain employment authorizations can often take months to be approved, and that you must always have valid employment authorization to begin employment.

If you have questions, contact the International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO): bu.edu/isso

BOSTON UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP FUNDING
The CCD is able to offer funding for some students participating in unpaid internships.

For more information about funded internship programs, visit our website: bu.edu/careers
SECURING AN INTERNSHIP

WHEN TO APPLY

The timeline for internship applications depends on your field of interest. Employers with more formalized, competitive internship programs (e.g., government-related, consulting, business, finance, etc.) often launch the selection process several months in advance.

Employers in other industries may post internship opportunities as they become available. Always be on the lookout for positions of interest. Additionally, it is important for you to do your research well ahead of time so that you understand when applications will open and you are prepared to apply.

PREPARING FOR THE SEARCH

By knowing yourself and your needs and by conducting research, you will be able to identify your priorities so that you are applying for internships that are a good fit.

SELF-DISCOVERY

As a first step, it’s important to identify your skills, values, and interests. Knowing yourself will help you to articulate what you want and what you have to offer and will ultimately lead to a more successful internship search.

The CCD offers a Self-Discovery Workshop as well as individual career counseling appointments to guide you through the self-assessment process.

Learn more about self-discovery tools: bu.edu/careers/self-discovery-tools/ & bu.edu/careers/self-discovery/

Check our calendar for upcoming Self-Discovery workshops: bu.edu/careers/calendar.

EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS

After discovering what you’re interested in and what motivates you, the next step is to learn more about industries of interest.

There are many ways to determine if a possible path is a “yes,” a “no,” or a “maybe”—from online research to informational interviews. As you’re exploring, consider the kind of environment where you’d like to work, from a small nonprofit to a large corporation and everything in between.

• Informational Interviews: An informational interview involves talking with people who are currently working in your field of interest. This helps you to gain a better understanding of a particular job or industry, or even a specific organization.

• BU Alumni: BU alumni are a great resource for exploring your options. Start by joining the BUAA Official LinkedIn Group at linkd.in/BUalumni. Research alumni with your major, or who work in an industry of interest to see the career path they have followed. Consider connecting with alumni, who have volunteered to speak to students about their careers, through the Career Advisory Network (CAN).

• Online Research: Peruse industries and organizations of interest. Use sites like vault.com, businessweek.com, and wetfeet.com to inform your exploration. Use the CCD’s online resources as another option: bu.edu/careers/resources.

For more information on researching industries of interest and exploring possible career paths see our website: bu.edu/careers/research.

GATHERING APPLICATION MATERIALS

Now that you have a sense of what you’re looking for, your next step is to have your materials ready so that you can apply to an internship once it is posted.

• Resumes: Prior to any internship search, create a basic resume that relates to the industry or role you
are seeking. Then tailor it for each opportunity to which you apply. For more information on resumes and how to tailor them for specific opportunities, see our website: bu.edu/careers/resumes.

- **Cover Letters**: You have written your resume as a document that represents you, and the hiring manager has written a position description that reflects the organization’s needs. A cover letter ties them together. You’ll need a tailored cover letter for each position to which you apply. For more information on cover letters, see our website: bu.edu/careers/cover-letters.

- **References**: Line up your references ahead of time. Make sure to ask several people; two to three is customary. Also, you may want different references for different types of internships. Think about prior supervisors, professors, or anyone else who can provide a strong reference. For more information on references, see our website: bu.edu/careers/2015/02/12/references-101.

- **Portfolios**: Some employers might request a portfolio of your work. Chances are you’ll know if this is the norm in your industry (e.g., arts or journalism). Speak with your professors for guidance on what to include and gather materials in case the organization requests a portfolio.

**TRADITIONAL SEARCH METHODS**

This category of a search is also called a reactive search because you are responding (or reacting) to advertised positions.

**BU CAREERLINK**

BU CareerLink is BU’s online hub for career resources. Here you can search internship postings from employers who are looking for BU students. You will find internships for the Boston area, throughout the United States, and even some which are international. Be sure to check BU CareerLink regularly; new internships are posted daily.

- Access BU CareerLink at bu.edu/careers/bu-careerlink.
- To log in to BU CareerLink:
  - Your user name is your BU email address.
  - If you do not know your password, use the “forgot password” button.
- To begin searching, click on JOBS.
  - To view specific position types (such as internships), select an option from the POSITION TYPE drop-down menu.
  - To narrow your search, use the ADVANCED SEARCH tab. We recommend filling out only a few fields. At a minimum, include POSITION TYPE (full-time, part-time, internship, etc.) and STATE. Click SUBMIT to view the listings.

**CAREER EXPOS**

The CCD hosts a career expo or fair at least once a semester. Organizations in attendance seek students from many majors for internship opportunities. Students attending can:

- Learn more about career paths/positions (advance research is strongly recommended)
- Meet and network with employers
- Collect literature from organizations
- Submit a resume (to the organizations that are accepting them)

In addition to those hosted by the CCD, there are additional fairs held on campus as well as in the Boston area. To learn about upcoming events, visit bu.edu/careers and click on UPCOMING EVENTS from the homepage.

**EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS, MEET & GREETs, AND MORE**

Throughout the academic year, recruiters come to campus to discuss their organizations and open positions. For a list of sessions, visit bu.edu/careers, click on UPCOMING EVENTS in the center of the page, then click on INFORMATION SESSIONS from the list on the right. We highly recommend that you RSVP in advance on
ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Each semester, recruiters come to BU to interview selected students who applied for their internships and full-time positions posted in BU CareerLink. We publicize these on our website calendar. Apply to the position through BU CareerLink and if the employer selects you, you’ll be able to schedule an interview that will be held at the CCD. The recruiting season typically begins in October and runs through April. There are exceptions, however, so look for announcements of events happening off season.

To search and apply for on-campus interview positions:

• Log into BU CareerLink, and click on JOBS
• From the SHOW ME drop-down box, select ALL INTERVIEWS and click search

NEWSLETTERS

The CCD shares information about upcoming events and programs, featured internships and jobs, and helpful tips through weekly e-newsletters.

The CCD Corner, which highlights programs, events, campus recruiting dates, workshops, career tips, articles, and more, is sent to all undergraduate students each Sunday throughout the fall and spring semesters. The CCD also sends Campus Recruiting emails to undergraduate students each Wednesday throughout the academic year. Check this email each week to see which employers are recruiting for internship and job opportunities at BU, as well as which employers will be coming to campus for interviews, information sessions, panels, and more. Please note: students must subscribe to receive Campus Recruiting emails.

Learn more and subscribe to our newsletters: bu.edu/careers/subscribe

ONLINE JOB BOARDS

There are many large databases available online, and most include internship opportunities. Each will have hundreds of postings organized by industry or location. A few popular ones include:

• internhub.internships.com
• internmatch.com
• idealist.org
• college.monster.com
• indeed.com

For more internship resources, see our website: bu.edu/careers/resources/resources-internships.

NICHE WEBSITES

Many sites are geared to specific industries or career fields. To find ones for your area of interest, visit the resources section of our website: bu.edu/careers/resources. Locate an industry of interest under RESOURCES BY MAJOR OR FIELD.

CAUTION: FRAUDULENT POSTINGS

The CCD carefully screens every employer and internship/job posting in BU CareerLink to ensure legitimacy. Occasionally employment scams occur. Students should be vigilant and are urged to help identify scams. If you receive a suspicious email from an employer (even if they say it is from your University Career Services office), please do not respond to the email and contact our office immediately at bucareer@bu.edu.

Here are some good indicators that the position is more than likely a scam:

• You are asked to give your credit card or bank account numbers or copies of personal documents, but you get nothing in writing.
• You are asked to send a payment by wire service or courier.
• You are offered a large payment or reward in exchange for the use of your bank account, often for
depositing checks or transferring money.

• You receive an unexpectedly large check. This is the biggest and most costly scam. If you receive a check in the postal mail from an employer, DO NOT cash it or pursue the offer. Please turn everything into the BU Police Department. The check may look real but it is not. You will be responsible for the entire amount of the check, plus any fees incurred by the bank when they process it and discover that the check is fraudulent.

If you have any questions or doubts regarding an internship, please do not hesitate to contact bucareer@bu.edu.

PROACTIVE SEARCH METHODS

A proactive search means taking the time to research and target organizations of interest rather than waiting for openings to be publicized. There are many ways to take a proactive approach to finding an internship, including leveraging your personal network, reaching out to BU alumni, joining professional associations, and connecting with potential employers on social networks.

NETWORKING

Networking involves talking about your career goals, seeking advice, and spreading the word about yourself and your interests, skills, and experience. Begin building your professional network with people you already know (e.g., family, neighbors, friends, BU alumni, professors, etc.). Networking can help you find a great internship opportunity that may not be posted online.

• Initiating Contact
  • Don’t be shy about asking for help. People generally like helping others.
  • Before you reach out determine your goals: Are you seeking advice, an informational interview, feedback?
  • When you reach out, clearly identify yourself and name the person who referred you or how you found them (e.g., Career Advisory Network, LinkedIn, family member, etc.).
  • Be specific about why you are contacting them and how they can help.
  • Remember, networking is not the place to ask for a position, but rather to seek advice, feedback, and referrals (which hopefully will lead to an internship interview down the road).

• Remember To Follow Up
  • ALWAYS send a thank-you note or email. You want to be remembered.
  • Reference something that was discussed. For example: Your suggestion to... was very helpful; or I took your advice to...
  • After you speak with your contact, ask for additional contacts.
  • With your note, consider including your resume. For example: I’ve enclosed a copy of my resume. Please feel free to pass it along if you hear of any internship openings.

For more tips on networking, see our website: bu.edu/careers/networking-interviews.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Use social media to increase your opportunities for networking and finding an internship.

• LinkedIn: LinkedIn connects you to people you know and lets you view their connections, greatly increasing potential networking contacts and internship leads. Join the BUAA Official LinkedIn Group (linkd.in/BUalumni). This can be helpful not only for researching industries as mentioned above, but also for speaking directly with alumni about their career paths and specific internship experiences.

• Twitter: Follow organizations, prominent employees, professional associations, and industry thought leaders. Re-tweet them, tweet articles at them, etc. This is a great way to network professionally. Additionally, many organizations post internship and job opportunities directly to the site and some even
have career-specific handles.

• Facebook: Organizations of all kinds have fan pages, as do prominent employees and industry leaders. As with Twitter, interact with them and share their posts and articles on your page. “Like” the pages of organizations of interest to keep an eye out for internship opportunities they may post.

**CAUTION: Remember that posting information on any website means it is viewable by others.** Even with very secure privacy settings there is potential for your information to be seen. Many employers will search the web and view your social networking profiles. Think about what you post and the image that you are creating. A good guideline is if you wouldn’t show it to your family members or professor then don’t post it.

For more tips on networking online, see our website: bu.edu/careers/networking-virtually.

**TARGETING EMPLOYERS**

Another way to find internships is to start with the organization.

• Identify specific organizations that match your selected industry, field, or position choice.
• Visit these organizations’ websites to look for internship postings.
• Seek contacts within these organizations for informational interviews (use your network).

**STEPS FOR CONTACTING ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY**

We also recommend that you target employers of interest by reaching out to them directly.

• Identify the contacts within these organizations by calling the main number and asking the receptionist for the name and title of the hiring manager and/or internship coordinator for the department in which you are interested. You may also find this information by researching the organization online, networking with family, friends, and alumni, and looking up the organization’s page on LinkedIn.
• Develop a targeted cover letter that includes the skills and experiences that you can bring to the organization.
• In approximately 1.5 weeks follow up by phone, asking for the person you contacted initially. If the person is not open to discussing internship possibilities, you may want to ask for an informational interview instead to gain further insight into the field. You may also ask to speak with one of their colleagues.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

A professional association is an organization formed to unite people who work in the same industry, but for different organizations. They provide opportunities to meet and talk with those who share your professional interests. Plus, many associations have reduced student fees.

• **Reasons to Join:**
  • Meet professionals who work for a variety of organizations in a range of positions
  • Access member-only internship (and job) postings
  • Shows commitment to your field and looks great on your resume
  • Stay up-to-date on issues and trends in your field
  • Learn about and attend conferences and meetings

• **How To Find the Best Professional Association for You:**
  • Ask professors or professionals for recommendations
  • Look in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh) under the “Contacts for More Info” tab of each occupational listing
  • Look on our website (bu.edu/careers/resources)
  • Refer to a directory of professional associations organized by category at weddles.com/associations/index.cfm
APPLYING

Begin searching for internships as soon as you know you want one. Before you apply, do your homework—learn about the organization’s needs, mission, and goals to discover how your skills and background connect. It’s important to know as much as possible about the organization, as well as the position to which you are applying. This research will help you write a more targeted and informed resume and cover letter.

The organization’s website and social media accounts are great places to start for this information, as is news coverage (articles, reviews, press releases) related to the organization and its activities. You may also talk to professors or people you know who are working in the field and may know about the organization’s reputation and latest achievements.

You can also learn more about organizations by using research resources including:

- Businessweek.com
- Hoovers.com
- Vault.com
- WetFeet.com

SUBMITTING APPLICATION MATERIALS

Once you’ve identified an internship you’re interested in, you’ll apply by submitting your resume and cover letter. Make sure you submit PDF files so that your formatting is preserved. There are several ways of sending these documents to potential employers:

- Directly through BU CareerLink, if it was posted there
- Through the organization’s website (online application system)
- By email, as attachments

If you apply by email, attach your cover letter along with your resume as a single document and write a short introduction for the body of the email. You could also include your resume as an attachment and paste your cover letter into the body of the email. In either case, ensure the subject line of your email clearly indicates the position for which you are applying.

INTERVIEWS

You’ll probably interview at least once for an internship. For some organizations, you’ll meet with someone from human resources as well as from the area or department where you’d be working, possibly with your future internship supervisor. These interviews might take place during the same visit or on separate days.

Additionally, you should always prepare questions to ask the employer. These questions will help you decide whether to accept the internship if it’s offered. Generally, your turn to ask questions will come toward the end of the interview. Not asking questions during the interview may be perceived as a lack of interest in or understanding of the position.

Be sure to listen and don’t ask something that has already been directly covered, or is available from information you already have. It’s okay to ask questions for clarification purposes, however, if you are unsure about something you read while preparing for the interview.

- **Examples of Questions To Ask:**
  - Please describe your ideal candidate.
  - What will my responsibilities and tasks entail?
  - Will I primarily be working on projects alone or with others?
  - I am very interested in working on... gaining experience with... Will I get a chance to do that here?
  - Will I be assigned to one department, or will I be working in various departments?
• What has been your experience with past interns? What has made them successful?
• Who will my supervisor(s) be? How often will we meet to review my work?

• **Examples of Questions NOT To Ask:**
  • What does this organization do? Make sure you do your research beforehand.
  • When can I take time off for vacation? If you have prior commitments, this question can be addressed after the internship is offered to you.
  • Did I get the internship? Instead, ask about next steps regarding the selection process.
  • How long is lunch?
  • Does this organization monitor email, social media, or Internet usage?
  • Do you do background checks?
  • Do I get my own office?

Following each interview, send the interviewer a thank-you note (by email or mail). Reiterate your interest in the internship, reference something from the discussion, and share how you can contribute to the internship or organization.

Need help practicing for your interview? Start with BU CareerLink’s Mock Interviews, a 24/7 online resource accessible under the resources tab in BU CareerLink. Additionally, our career counselors can help you sharpen your skills through a one-on-one mock interview.

**ACCEPTING AN OFFER**

Before you choose to accept, make sure you are considering your needs as well as all aspects of the offer. Remember, you don’t HAVE to accept an internship if it is offered to you.

  • **The position:** Does the work fit with your interests, values, and goals? What type of mentoring or supervision will you receive? Are there opportunities for professional development?
  • **The organization:** Do you like the atmosphere, the culture, the people, and the scope of work?
  • **The location:** What is the cost of living? Will you be able to afford the living expenses? Is the commute manageable for you?

A best practice for all applicants is to get an offer in writing. Your offer letter should include a position description, the name of your supervisor, and information about your compensation. Once you have received a written offer from an organization, determine how much time you have to evaluate it.

If you need more time, let your contact know you are flattered by their offer and need an extension in order to make an informed decision. Be sure you are excited about the offer and the organization before seeking an extension. **Remember, it is not appropriate or professional to accept a position and withdraw at a later date.** This behavior can burn bridges with organizations and professionals in the field.

Once you’ve made your decision, call the employer to verbally accept your offer and confirm the details of your offer in writing. Next, call all other organizations you have received offers from or have had interviews with to withdraw from their process or to turn down their offers.

Be professional and appreciative. Remember, you are not required to reveal any details about the offer you accepted.

If you have questions on how to accept or decline an internship offer, schedule an individual career counseling appointment on BU CareerLink: bu.edu/careers/bu-careerlink. Additional questions? Contact the CCD at future@bu.edu or 617-353-3590.
MAXIMIZING YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Congratulations on securing an internship! Before you start take some time to think about how to make the most of your experience.

BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP

Contact your supervisor to ask if there is anything you can do to prepare before you arrive. Are there materials you should review to strengthen your knowledge of the organization or position? Confirm the date, time, and location for your first day. Additionally, ask for the dress code to determine what to wear.

SET LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Prior to your start date, we suggest that you identify academic, professional, and personal learning objectives to have a well-rounded internship experience.

• **Academic learning objectives** are intended to allow you to further explore or implement, at the internship site, concepts you’ve learned in the classroom. For example, if you are interning in an educational setting, your objective might be to practice a specific teaching technique.

• **Professional learning objectives** are those related to your growth as a professional or to develop a better sense of the field in which you are interning. For example, your objective may be to conduct at least five informational interviews with various employees at your internship site to get a better sense of the opportunities within that field.

• **Personal learning objectives** are intended to help you develop skills for personal growth and enrichment. For example, your objective may be to learn how to manage your time more efficiently in order to balance school, your internship, and involvement in student groups.

While some internships are very structured, others are not. You should meet with your supervisor at the start of your internship to discuss your learning objectives, identify additional goals, and determine an action plan for achieving them.

DURING THE INTERNSHIP

Your internship will provide a chance to meet new contacts, gain knowledge, and develop your skills. Below are some tips to enhance your internship experience:

• **Meet with your supervisor regularly.** Make sure to have frequent meetings (perhaps weekly) where you can share experiences and lessons learned (both good and bad). Give progress reports, ask questions, get a sense of what work lies ahead, and receive feedback on work performance, including your strengths and areas needing growth and development. It is important to maintain an open channel of communication and address any concerns in a timely fashion. Be a good listener and learn as much as you can during these meetings.

• **Tackle all tasks with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.** Complete all of your work assignments with enthusiasm and professionalism, regardless of the assigned task.

• **Avoid negativity.** You are developing your professional reputation at this internship. Don’t complain, disrespect coworkers, arrive late, leave early, miss deadlines, wear improper attire, act unprofessionally, appear inflexible, and/or take part in office politics.

• **Learn more about the organization/industry.** Take every opportunity to attend organization/industry meetings, conferences, and events. These events can help you to increase your knowledge and build relationships.

• **Don’t be afraid to ask questions.** This is a learning experience. You are not expected to know everything. Seek advice and raise questions whenever you encounter something that is not familiar to you.
• **Take initiative.** Employers love interns who tackle tough problems and who think creatively to find solutions. Make sure you work with your supervisor(s) so you don’t overstep their authority.

• **Find a mentor.** A mentor is someone at a higher level in the organization who looks out for you and makes sure you are learning what you need to know and accomplishing what you need to do. A mentor can also shield you from office politics and be a good sounding board for you to discuss ideas, ask questions, and more. Your supervisor could be your mentor, but it could also be another person within the organization.

• **Network.** Build professional relationships with your supervisor and others in the organization. Speak with them to obtain advice and tips. Connect with staff by conducting informational interviews and job shadows. Take the opportunity to meet people outside of your department and to attend organizational social events. The more you are exposed to new ideas and new people, the more you’ll learn.

• **Leave your internship with tangible accomplishments.** One key goal for any internship is leaving it with some tangible results. Keep a record of the things you accomplished during your internship as well as new skills you gained, equipment or technology you mastered, feelings about your work (e.g., what tasks you liked the most and least, etc.), and more. Make note of job functions or areas of expertise you were exposed to through your observations, even if you didn’t do those things yourself. This will help as you update your resume for future opportunities. You can also document your experience by creating a portfolio, which could include copies of projects you’ve worked on, informal/formal evaluations, etc. (just be sure to get permission from your supervisor first).

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

At the beginning of your internship, your employer should orient you to the organization and provide information about the organization’s mission, structure, policies, and more. It is important to read through any orientation and organizational materials (e.g., HR handbook) and to ask questions as they arise.

**HOW TO NAVIGATE A DISAPPOINTMENT**

If you find that your internship isn’t as it was described, there might still be ways to improve the situation. Be aware that it might be a matter of timing; the supervisor could be planning to increase your responsibilities as you learn.

• Meet with your supervisor. Re-establish goals and be clear about what you both have agreed to regarding your role. Articulate what you have found that’s different from what you were expecting.

• Gradually ask for more responsibility and actively look for things to do. Clarify your tasks and obligations. Based on the skills you want to develop, suggest potential projects that will expose you to developing these skills.

• If there are other interns, develop relationships with them to serve as support.

Whether you stay with an unsatisfactory internship will depend on how far along you are as well as if you can address your concerns with your supervisor. If you feel the situation cannot improve and you decide to leave your internship, do so politely and diplomatically and make sure to give the customary two-week notice. No matter your feelings, always maintain a professional attitude.

If you have questions regarding a disappointing or challenging internship, schedule an individual career counseling appointment on BU CareerLink: bu.edu/careers/bu-careerlink. Please note, counseling appointments can take place in person or by phone. Additional questions? Contact the CCD at future@bu.edu or 617-353-3590.

**BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP ENDS**

An appropriate off-boarding process provides closure and helps conclude the internship experience. Before the internship concludes, you should:

• Confirm your last day
• Transfer any projects back to your supervisor
• Return any organizational property
• Thank your supervisor and other staff members for their role during your internship experience
• Ask your supervisor whether he/she would be willing to be a reference
• Stay in touch with individuals (e.g., supervisors, co-workers, other interns, etc.) after you leave. Connect with them on LinkedIn.
EVALUATING YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Reflecting on an internship can be as valuable as doing it in the first place. It’s important to evaluate your internship experience and determine if this is a career path you’d like to continue to follow.

Consider the following questions as you reflect on and evaluate your internship:

• What were your goals and learning objectives and did you accomplish them?
• What are the specific tasks or projects you completed?
• What skills did you gain or further develop?
• Did you have an opportunity to observe or speak directly to professionals in positions of interest? If not, identify people with whom you might speak.
• Do you think you would like to do the job you observed your supervisor or someone else doing?
• How did you like the work environment (i.e., the type of organization, location, atmosphere or culture)?
• What did you learn about your own personality as you dealt with coworkers and supervisors or with clients and customers, if applicable?
• What was the most important thing you learned from this experience?
• Is this a career option to consider or rule out?

If you have a bad experience, it’s best to look at it as a lesson. Ask yourself what the mismatch between you and the organization or internship taught you. You can use that information to help identify what’s important to you. For example, if the type of structure (or lack thereof) caused stress during your internship, this is probably an opportunity to reflect on the type of work environment that works best for you.

Internships, whether positive or negative, are instructive in helping you identify your needs in a work situation. If you leave feeling negative, be sure to work through these feelings before moving on so they don’t undermine your next opportunity.

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT INTERNSHIP

The skills and knowledge that you gained during your internship will help you to identify what opportunities you might want to explore next.

As previously mentioned, we recommend that you keep a record of the things you accomplished during your internship as well as new skills you gained, equipment or technology you mastered, and more. This will better enable you to update your resume, so that you are ready to apply to new internship opportunities as they are posted. You can have your resume reviewed during the CCD’s Resume and Cover Letter Review Hours (bu.edu/careers/resume-cover-letter-reviews/).

If you enjoyed the internship, look for ways to continue gaining experience in that area. Start searching and/or applying for another internship or part-time job in that field.

If you didn’t like the internship setting, the responsibilities, the field or industry as a whole, schedule an individual career counseling appointment with a member of the CCD staff to discuss alternative areas in that field or different career options to try out in your next internship. You may schedule an individual career counseling appointment on BU CareerLink: bu.edu/careers/bu-careerlink.

SHARING YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

At future interviews, you will be asked about your internship. Start preparing now by discussing your internship experience with others (e.g., friends, professors, CCD staff, etc.). This will help you to reflect further on your internship and clearly articulate what you learned and accomplished.

In addition to informal conversations, you can share your experience with other Terriers through two CCD
initiatives: the internship series and the Summer Experience Showcase.

**INTERNSHIP SERIES**

Your internship story could be featured on the CCD website. Visit our website to read about BU students’ internship experiences: bu.edu/careers/about-us/news/internship-series. If you are interested in sharing your story, contact us at future@bu.edu.

**SUMMER EXPERIENCE SHOWCASE**

The Summer Experience Showcase is an annual peer-to-peer event that takes place during the fall semester. Student participants share insight and information about their summer experience with their peers as well as practice their public speaking skills and network with other students.

To learn more or to volunteer as a participant, contact us at future@bu.edu.
RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL BU CAREER CENTERS
In addition to the CCD, several of BU’s schools and colleges have a career center. Students at these schools and colleges are welcome to use the CCD as well as their own career office.

View a full list of additional BU career centers:
bu.edu/careers/additional-boston-university-career-centers/

BU INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & SCHOLARS OFFICE (ISSO)
International students should contact the Boston University International Students & Scholars Office (ISSO) for information about work authorization.

Learn more about the International Students & Scholars Office: bu.edu/isko/

SOURCES

Hamline University
http://www.hamline.edu/cdc/

San Diego Mesa College
http://www.sdmesa.edu/students/services/career-center/internships