

Guide To

The Internship and Summer Job Search

*Career
Center*

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Explore your next adventure...

Look ahead a few years and think about these questions:

- How will your various internship and summer job experiences look on your resume?
- What will employers or graduate school representatives think about these experiences?
- What types of experiences and skills are employers and graduate schools looking for within your career field?

For many employers and graduate schools, just having a bachelor's degree is not enough. They want to see demonstrated skills and abilities, real world experiences, and examples of how you have challenged yourself. This guide focuses on finding an internship or summer job that will help you develop these areas and that might also help you develop plans and contacts for life after graduation. We encourage all Colorado College students to consider the following key areas when searching for an internship or summer job:

- Skill development
- An opportunity to take what is learned in the classroom and put it into practice
- An understanding of various organizations and work environments
- Insights about specific career fields
- Personal growth
- Income
- Work references
- Making contacts in a field of interest

Internship or summer job: is there a difference?

The distinction between an internship and summer job has become somewhat blurred. The primary difference between the two involves the degree to which learning expectations are established. While you will learn something in any summer job; in an internship, learning objectives are developed before you begin. Internships can be paid or unpaid and usually last a defined period of time. Many organizations develop structured, organized internship programs and will advertise to find candidates for these programs. Other organizations do not have structured internship programs but might consider an individualized program if approached.

Some questions to consider

To help you focus on the type of internship or summer job you want, consider the following:

- How much time are you willing to spend looking for an internship or summer job? How much time CAN you spend?
- What are your skills, abilities, and interests?
- Do you have short-term and long-term goals? What are they and how will an internship or summer job help achieve those goals?
- What is your primary reason for looking for an internship or summer job—skill development? experience? testing out career interests? earning money?
- How much money do you have to make?
- Can you afford to take an unpaid internship or do volunteer work that might relate more directly to your career objective?
- How else will you spend your time during the summer?
- What skills do you want to develop?
- Will your summer internship or job relate to your major course of study?

Resumes and Cover letters: Who are you and what do you want to do?

The first step toward finding an internship or summer job involves figuring out what you have to offer and determining what you want to do. We often have a sense about what we want to do, but have a difficult time clearly articulating it and what we have to offer an employer. To present yourself well you'll need to be able to express your skills, interests, personality characteristics, and experiences. One of the most effective ways to start this process is to create a resume and general cover letter. In addition to assisting you in thinking about past experiences, skills, and interests, resumes and cover letters are essential tools in the internship or job search process. They are the first impression an employer will have of you as an individual and you want it to be a positive one. In the initial screening process, your resume may get as little as 10 to 15 seconds of consideration. For complete guidelines on how to write a resume, see the "Guide to Resume and Cover Letter Writing" packet, available in the Career Center or on our website. Time spent on developing a targeted resume is well worth the effort. Remember that resumes get you an interview and the interview gets you the job.

Career Center Staff are available to help you with this. Call for an appointment to have your draft resume reviewed.

What types of internships and summer jobs are available and how do I find them?

The number one question for most internship and summer job seekers is: "What's out there?" *To maximize your job search, utilize a large number of internship and summer job resources including:*

Websites: Websites are a good source for finding an internship or summer job. There are literally scores of sites focused on internships and many on summer jobs. The accessibility and vast amounts of information make the web a worthwhile resource. One method for finding good sites is to visit the Career Center's website:

www.coloradocollege.edu/careercenter/. Additionally, many of the websites devoted to full-time jobs also have links to internship listings. Be aware that website listings can easily become outdated and although the Career Center tries to keep these sites current and up-to-date, information can change rapidly.

Internship Directories: The Career Center has many Internship Directories available in our resource library. Some directories list opportunities in a variety of fields and some are specific to one field. Some of the directories are being put on-line. Come into the Career Center to browse through some of these resources.

Internship and Summer Job Listings: The Career Center receives many internship and summer job listings that are available in our library binders. These opportunities are sent to us from employers interested in CC students.

Jobs At CC: CC has a number of jobs available on campus during the summer. Faculty members hire research assistants, administrative offices seek summer help, and the physical plant and Marriott Food Service seek general laborers. Job listings can be found on the Financial Aid Office Website; financial aid eligibility is not required during the summer. Also, talk directly with administrative and academic departments that are of particular interest to you.

Alumni Career Referral Network: The Alumni Career Referral Network contains the names and contact information of over 4,300 CC alumni who have volunteered to be contacts for information about jobs and careers. This notebook system located in the Career Center is cross-indexed alphabetically, geographically, and by occupations. Alumni/ae can be a great resource for identifying internships and summer jobs.

Personal Contacts: Networking is a very important part of any internship or summer job search. While the idea of networking makes many people feel uncomfortable, the Career Center encourages you to think about networking in the following way: It is not who you know, it is who knows about you! Therefore, before you start your internship or summer job search, make a list of those individuals who belong to your network. Don't just think of individuals who are in the career fields you are interested in, but also identify those who are not in a related field. Chances are, these contacts know someone who is in the field of your interest. You will also want to include as many people as possible including: family, friends, acquaintances, students in your classes, faculty, alumni/ae, past employers or supervisors, members of professional organizations you belong to, conference attendees and speakers, authors of articles you like, etc. Then, make sure they know you are looking for a challenging, interesting, fun internship or summer experience.

Yellow Pages: Many individuals already have identified a city they want to live in and are now looking for opportunities in that area, or a specific type of company or organization in a city. The yellow pages (usually offered on-line) can be a good place to start.

Chamber of Commerce: Most cities have a Chamber of Commerce, an organization that supports businesses in the community. Free directories and lists of employers are often available while others can be purchased for a small fee. Often, the reference section of the local library has a Chamber of Commerce directory or other types of directories that will identify organizations and companies. Ask a Reference Librarian for information.

Newspaper Classifieds: If you are looking in a specific city for a summer job, consider subscribing to the local Sunday newspaper or checking the classifieds on-line. Daily and weekend newspapers can often be found in the local libraries as well.

Summer Job Employer Directories: There are many directories that list employers from a particular region or the entire country, with geographical cross-indexes. The names, addresses, phone numbers and a paragraph description about the organizations or companies are usually provided. The Career Center has several of these directories.

Information Tables: Representatives from hiring organizations often staff tables in the Worner Center. They provide information about their organizations and distribute applications. Check with the Career Center for a listing and schedule of organizations recruiting on campus. Although many may be on campus looking for full-time, permanent employees, they may also have information on internships and summer opportunities.

Organizing Your Search

Once you have a general idea of the type of experience you want or need, the next step is to identify contacts and resources. You are then ready to begin your search in earnest. Most effective job searches include three components:

- Networking (letting people know you are looking)
- Contacting employers and organizations directly
- Responding to posted advertisements

START EARLY! Most summer internships and jobs are filled in the early spring. Some competitive internships have deadlines as early as November or December. You should begin as early as possible. The winter break affords time to network and begin making contacts for those opportunities with deadlines after January 1st.

Utilize productive search strategies. Don't stop your search because you are waiting to hear about one opportunity.

There is no 'one-way' to locate and land the perfect internship or summer job. To increase your chances, use a variety of strategies and resources. This might include spending 10% of the time you can devote to your search surfing the web, 50% networking, 25% developing a resume and cover letter, and 15% using the notebooks and binders in the Career Center. Regardless of your strategy, one of the most common mistakes people make in any job search process is stopping because they are 'waiting to hear' from a company or organization after submitting an application or resume. You can always turn down offers, but it is very difficult to make up for lost time.

Networking

For your internship or summer job search to be effective, you will want to spend the majority of your time networking. Indeed, in the hidden job market, almost every job is discussed in some way with friends or associates before it is advertised. Your task is to discover this information from one of these individuals and present your qualifications and experience before the job is announced outside the company or organization.

The first part of your networking strategy will be to arrange informational interviews with the people you have already targeted as being part of your personal network. The second part will be to add new people you meet to your network as you go through the job search process.

For in-depth guidelines on how to network and conduct an effective job search, see the "Guide to Job Search Strategies," available in the Career Center or on our website.

Applications

Many internships and summer jobs require you to fill out an application. Employers evaluate how well you complete the application. Along with a resume and cover letter, this is their first impression of you. Here are a few tips:

- Submit all materials before the stated deadlines.
- Applications must be neat and legible.
- Do not simply put lines through the sections and tell them to "see resume." Fill out each section of the application neatly and completely!

Persistence

Finding a great internship or summer job usually takes substantial time and energy. It also usually involves getting rejected from some opportunities. The key is to be persistent. Good luck!