

Internship Preparation

An internship is a powerful tool to prepare students for post-graduation success. An internship empowers you to integrate knowledge and theory learned in class with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Completing an internship provides opportunities to develop a professional network, gain related experience (and a competitive edge!), and assess your “fit” within a particular organization or industry.

The checklist will guide you in preparing for an internship in a strategic manner. The Career Center and the Career and Internship Coordinator stands ready to help!

Step 1 – Assess Yourself!

- _____ Meet with a Career Counselor to explore your values, interests, personality and skills to help identify potential areas of career interest.
- _____ Identify a career industry, geographic area, and time of year to help focus your search.
- _____ Make a list and begin researching potential career fields of interest.

[Not all students will begin with Step #1. If your internship search has a clear direction, begin with Step #2]

Step 2 – Get Your Tools Ready!

- _____ Start early! Some internships have deadlines as early as six months prior to the start date.
- _____ Attend the Career Center’s ***Jumpstart Your Future: Internship Success Series***.
- _____ Develop a ***LinkedIn profile*** and begin networking with FSC alumni and other professionals.
- _____ Demonstrate your skills, abilities, and leadership in a ***digital portfolio***. A great way to stand out!
- _____ Work with a Career Counselor to develop a professional resume using ***Optimal Resume***.
- _____ Work with a Career Counselor to write a persuasive cover letter.
- _____ Identify at least three professional or academic references (faculty member, academic advisor, employer, etc.). Create a ***“References”*** document to include names, addresses, and other contact information.
- _____ Make a great first impression with a professional email address and voicemail message.
- _____ Gather appropriate interview attire.

Step 3 – Start Your Search!

- _____ Communicate your internship interests with friends, family, and your departmental internship coordinator.
- _____ Search opportunities on the Career and Internship Coordinator Website.
- _____ Investigate internship opportunities via professional organizations (American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, LinkedIn, etc.).
- _____ Conduct research to identify companies of interest, as some internship positions are not posted. You can contact the organization’s Human Resource/Recruiting office to inquire about internship opportunities. You must understand the organization to “sell” your skills!
- _____ Create a system for tracking employer contacts and internship search activities.
- _____ Network, network, network! Attend the **FSC Career & Internship Expo** (spring semester) and the **CCFCC Career Expo** (spring semester at the University of Tampa) to connect with potential internship providers.

Step 4 - Finish Strong!

- _____ Practice delivering your 30 second “elevator pitch” to introduce yourself to employers.
- _____ Practice communicating how your education, experience, and campus/community involvement have prepared you for the position. Share the contributions you will make.
- _____ Organize a hard copy interview portfolio to provide evidence of your skills. Consider including documents which demonstrate writing, design, research, project management, and data organization skills. Make a lasting impression by leaving the portfolio with the interviewer.
- _____ Participate in **Moc Interview Day** to sharpen your interview skills.
- _____ Follow up after each interview with a handwritten, personalized thank you note within 24 hours.