Preparing To Go On an Internship or Co-Op

Report your Internship!
Regardless of the type of internship you have accepted, summer or semester long, you must report your internship. Stop by 114 BB to report your internship.

Registering For Required Credit
If you take a Spring, Spring/Summer, Summer/Fall, or Fall internship, you can register for a course through the Internship Program office. This "course" is called BA395A. It is a one-credit course that counts as an elective on the degree audit. There is no actual “class” to attend, no coursework or materials; however, there will be forms (a Student Evaluation of Internship Experience & a Supervisor Evaluation of Student) that will need to be completed and returned to the Internship Program office by the end of your internship. Your internship is considered your "class". Students MUST be registered for this course in order to maintain continuous enrollment status. This course may be taken more than once for multiple internships. However, it only counts once toward graduation requirements.

This course can also be taken in the summer. In fact, some companies will require you to earn a credit for your internship in lieu of payment. Then, you will have to register BA395A for your summer internship. You may also want to register for BA395A during the summer if you need a credit to graduate or if you would like a written record of your internship on your transcript. But, BA395A is not a requirement for a summer internship.

You must register for this course BEFORE you go on your internship. You may not register for this course AFTER your internship, as many unfortunate students, short a credit for graduation, have discovered. The only way to register for this course is to complete the "Internship Acceptance Form" which can be picked up at our office or obtained on the student exchange website. You will not be able to register for this course through the standard university on-line or phone credit registration process through the Registrars Office. Students who are doing a Spring, Spring/Summer, Summer/Fall, or Fall internship will automatically be registered by the Internship Program after completing the "Internship Acceptance Form". Registration for Summer-only internships is accomplished by checking “I Need Credit” on the “Internship Acceptance Form”.

Benefits to registering for BA395A include:
- You are considered an active, continuously enrolled student through Penn State.
- You only have to pay for one credit vs. full tuition for the semester [http://www.tuition.psu.edu/](http://www.tuition.psu.edu/).
- You are still able to be maintained on the health insurance policy of your parent or guardian.
- You will not have to begin paying back student loans already received, thus continuing your loan deferment.
- You may live in Penn State housing if your internship is local to any Penn State campus.
- Your internship will be recorded on your transcript.
- You will receive a written evaluation of your experience from your supervisor that can be used as a reference of your work performance for future employment opportunities.
- You will have access to all Penn State electronic systems such as email and on-line registration, etc.
Paying Tuition, Filing your Bill, and Dropping your Classes

You will receive an e-mail message to your Penn State e-mail account notifying you that your semester tuition bill is available online via eLion to view and/or pay. This tuition bill will be for full-time tuition. Penn State assumes all students will be enrolled full-time even though you are only going to take and pay for one credit.

It is critical for you to forward the tuition bill to your parent/guardian to pay for BA395A as soon as possible. You cannot ignore this bill! Penn State will not automatically reduce your tuition bill to the one-credit tuition level. Once you access your semester tuition bill on eLion, please select “make changes to my bill”. On the next screen, select “other” and complete the box with “enrolled for a 1-credit internship”. At the bottom of this screen, complete the amount of tuition & fees owed. Use the following method to calculate the amount owed:

- Determine the cost of one credit (http://www.tuition.psu.edu). This information will be provided to you at the Preparing to go on an Internship Meeting. The amount will differ depending on your semester standing and your residency status.
- Calculate the associated fees (activity and information technology fees). This will also be provided for you at the meeting.
- Add the one credit tuition cost and the fees to arrive at the total amount owed for the semester.

Enter the calculated amount owed in the box that says, “I expect the adjusted semester charges to be:” and select a payment option.

You or your parents are encouraged to pay your tuition & fees online. You can use a credit card (MasterCard or Discover) with a 2% convenience fee. Or, you can use an eCheck with no extra fee. Penn State will also accept a personal check for the tuition payment.

If you plan to pay your tuition online, enter the appropriate information from your check or credit card. If you want to mail a personal check, please print a payment voucher to accompany your payment.

If your tuition bill is not paid, your registration will not be considered complete. You will not be considered a Penn State student and will be unable to access any Penn State system as a student. It is your responsibility to make certain the tuition bill is paid promptly to avoid your loss of privileges as a Penn State student.

Note: If you are registering for the summer session of BA395A, your online tuition bill will include tuition & fees for one credit. Just pay this bill as you normally would. Make sure it is paid by the last day of classes or BA395A will not appear on your transcript.

Finally, you are responsible for dropping any classes for which you have registered before you know you had an internship.

Financial Aid
All financial aid packages are different and each is tailored to the individual student. Therefore, while you are on your internship, you might not qualify for financial aid. This may include state and federal aid, as well as grants and scholarships. Most of the internships through our program are paid internships with students making $600-$900 per week. Many students, who currently receive financial aid, use this earned income to help offset future educational expenses.

If you have questions or concerns about your grants or scholarships, you may need to contact the grantor. The Internship Program staff is not qualified to answer your financial aid questions.

Financial aid specifics:

• All students on internships are able to continue to defer student loan repayment. Any student who receives notification of repayment while on an internship should contact the Financial Aid liaison to the Internship Program. Contact our office in 114 BB for this information.

• In most cases, financial aid allocations are applied to future, full-time semesters.

• Internship students apply for financial aid at the same time they normally would. Students are required to acquire and complete their own financial aid applications. Our office will not handle these.

• A minimum of six credits, including BA395A, must be taken to qualify for a portion of your financial aid package during an internship semester. Students may wish to register for a class at a nearby campus if desired.

• If you have been awarded a Smeal scholarship for both academic semesters but are registered for less than 12 total credits during your co-op semester, your scholarship funds for that semester will be forfeited and awarded to another deserving student. You can continue to be considered for scholarships in future semesters, but you will need to submit a new application during the spring semester. This is a web-based application that is easy to complete. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Janet Spearly at jms23@psu.edu.

• Wages earned while on an internship will be applied as additional family income when determining a student's financial aid package. Please note that this may lower future financial aid disbursements.

Dorms at Penn State
You are responsible for contacting the Housing Office in 101 Shields to cancel your dorm contract and to arrange to get back into the dorms. The Housing Office will make every effort to house you in the same area, but cannot promise to give you the same room or roommates. To get back into the dorms, you will need to complete a request card and turn it in BEFORE you leave. Once you complete an "Internship Acceptance Form", we will send a letter to the Housing Office confirming that you are on an internship.

Remember, the Internship Program has no authority in private apartment matters.

Relocation and Housing
Most likely, you will be relocating for your internship. Most employers will pay for car mileage, meals, or motel expenses incurred during your relocation. Make sure you understand what will be
covered before you go and remember not to be extravagant using company money to splurge on expensive meals or hotel amenities.

Assistance with housing during the internship varies widely among our employers. Be sure to read the job description carefully before applying if housing is an issue for you. Housing information is usually provided in the job description. Luckily, as we continue to work with employers to help them design state-of-the-art internship programs, more of them are offering some kind of assistance with housing. Currently, almost 65% of the companies with whom we work offer some kind of housing assistance for interns.

If the company does not provide assistance, you may be responsible for finding your own place to live and paying for it on your own. Most employers are happy to point you in the right direction. Other things you can do include:

- Contact current interns to see what they did or if you can take over a lease. Past interns may be able to provide information, too. The Internship Program can provide these names.
- Log onto Smeal Career Services Facebook page and look under housing on the left side for other students looking for roommates.
- Ask the company if there are any employees who rent apartments or rooms.
- Check the local newspapers.
- Contact the local real estate agencies.
- Check into living at a local university or commonwealth campus if nearby.

Here are few web sites geared toward finding housing:

- www.subletswap.com
- www.law.nyu.edu/depts/housing/index.html
- www.american.edu/other.depts/reslife/
- www.corporatechoices.com

**Before you Start Work**

Make sure you know the dress code. Give yourself enough time to drive to work so that you can be there on time. Try the drive a few times, if possible, during rush hour so you know what to expect. Know what time you are to report, where you are supposed to park, and where you should go once inside. Know what documents, if any, you are supposed to bring. You will likely need your driver's license and social security card to process employment forms.

**What to Expect the First Day**

The majority of your first day will probably involve handling administrative details pertaining to being employed, getting paid, etc. You may have to report for a drug screening if that is required. Find out if you will need to get linked into any systems or need special identification of some sort to be able to access information or resources.

When you get to your workspace, it will probably already be set up for you including a desk, computer, phone, etc. Remember, these items are there for you to use for work purposes only and not to surf the Internet, shop on-line, stay in touch with your friends and family. This kind of abuse
of company time and equipment is often cited as the reason students get fired (yes, it happens) from internships. Don't let this be the case with you!

Expect to be shown around and introduced. Knowing where to find things like the cafeteria, fax and copy machine, office supplies, restroom locations, etc., can be very helpful in becoming acclimated and feeling comfortable in your new surroundings.

**Tips for Turning your Internship into a Job Offer**

More than 60% of interns are offered full-time positions. Many companies hire first from their internship pool before ever opening job opportunities to the outside. Now that you’ve landed the internship, it’s up to you to make a great impression and walk away with an offer in hand. A few simple pieces of advice:

- Be willing to work hard and be open to learning new things. Leave your classroom debating skills back “on-campus”.
- As your learning progresses, carefully observe and listen to your supervisor and fellow employees for cues on how to act in the workplace.
- Maintain a positive attitude, even if your first assignments are not that challenging. You may learn that this is not something you want to do forever, but you’ll also learn how to behave in the workplace and develop contacts and references which will be valuable to you in the future.
- Show a sincere interest in the firm. When there is a lot of work, come in early and stay late, just like the regular employees.
- Take every opportunity to talk to/schmooze/impress the senior people at your workplace. At most firms, it’s the senior people who have the most influence in making offers. This can be a double-edged sword so always be respectful of the fact that they have been at the company longer than you have. Be careful that your attempts to dazzle them with your unparalleled grasp of the industry don’t backfire. Simply express your opinion of the work that you’ve been doing, ask questions, and talk about something else besides work. Remembering you as the bright young intern who seemed so interested in their European operations and who liked to play soccer will give the senior employee two sets of positive information.
- Don’t ignore the junior people. Many workplaces ask a variety of employees for feedback on the interns, including alums. Ignoring potential future coworkers may taint you as a brown-noser and could ruin your chances of working at the company.
- Do your best to get an offer even if this internship wasn’t the one you wanted to turn into a permanent offer. When you interview for a full-time job, you’ll probably be asked if you were made an offer at your internship. Trying to explain away a “ding” by saying that you weren’t interested in returning can be very unimpressive.
- Attend the social events even if you don’t feel like it. These events are not just for fun. They are excellent opportunities to network with others in the organization and to find out about other opportunities or business units. Most people love talking about their work and their projects. Don’t ask for a contact’s number while the party is still going on. Wait until the person is on their way out and alone, then stop and ask for their permission to call.
- Be careful at sporting events to show that you are a good sport and a team player.
- Take advantage of as many employer-sponsored training events as possible and then seek opportunities at work to utilize your new skills. As soon as you master a skill, ask for lateral
movement to a new skill area. Be sure to leave extra time for learning things and don't be afraid to ask questions.

- Establish a mentor. If it's not your supervisor, study the example of an accomplished, experienced, and wise person whom you admire. This person can teach you so much about the work, the world, and about yourself. A good bet would be someone you would like to emulate.
- Always be on time. Plan up front to keep yourself on schedule, not only for work, but for project deadlines too.
- Promise less and deliver more. Always go the extra mile and get things done early.
- Always ask for feedback on your performance. Ask what you could do to improve in the future.
- Establish specific learning objectives for yourself and seek your manager's support. Go to your manager and ask what resources might be available to help you meet your goals.
- Avoid office politics and hasty alliances. Be a little curious about why certain people are pressing you into fast friendships. Wait before you start lining up with people. Check out the alliances that are already in place. It is much easier to make a good ally than to unmake an ill-timed alliance. Be friendly and supportive to people, but keep away from any relationship promised early on.
- Ask for more work if you feel you are under-challenged.
- Remember the chain of command in the office. If you are having problems, follow the chain of command. Never go over your supervisor's head with a complaint without first talking to a supervisor.

Problems on the Job
We are here to help you. That is the promise we make to you when you report your internship to the Program. If you have any problems or need guidance, call our office first. In this case, it may not be wise to call your parents for advice before calling us. We have established these relationships and your parents may not have the objectivity necessary to help resolve the problem in a way that does not damage our relationship with the company.

Don't ever hesitate to call us: there is no problem too small or too great. We would like you, whenever possible, to try to solve any work-related problems on your own first. We urge you to make every effort to resolve the problem at its inception. If you have done that and don't feel that you've been successful, we will certainly provide guidance and direction. In some cases, it may be necessary for us to discuss your situation with the company. We would only intervene with your permission. It wouldn't be fair to the company to lose a student because they were not made aware of a problem with their program.

To give you fair warning: if you decide on your own or with your parent's guidance to terminate your internship early without our knowledge or consultation, you will forfeit any future participation in the Internship Program, including registering for credit to maintain full-time student status for an internship you found on your own. Working with us is always the best approach.

Sexual Harassment
Please contact us immediately if during the job search, employment process, or internship you feel you have been sexually harassed. We will confidentially assist you in taking the appropriate steps including, if necessary, removing you from the situation.