

CAREER DESIGN-MAKING

Step 5: Trying Out Your Career

Decide carefully, exactly what you want in life, then work like mad to make sure you get it!

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INTERNSHIPS AND CO-OPS

Internships and co-ops, otherwise known as experiential education are a window into the world of professional work, the chance to take a risk-free career test drive, and an opportunity to explore your career choices. In a recent national survey of employers, they reported that over 65% of their new college hires had some sort of internship or co-op experience. This survey also reported that students with internship and co-op experience have higher starting salaries than those without experience; sometimes as much as 20% more.

At the University of Evansville, Experiential Education opportunities abound. Like any employment activity, it takes planning, professionalism and a significant amount of effort to secure the right experience. Start early, do your research, utilize your faculty and the office of Career Services and Cooperative Education. UE offers a preparation course for internship and co-op experiences. Some academic programs require that their students complete this course before being eligible to complete a credit-bearing experience. *Talk to your academic advisor about the preparation course, EXED 090- Building Your Professional Image.*

Benefits Of Internships And Co-Ops

Employment; an internship can help you extricate yourself from the "can't get job without experience, can't get experience without a job" double bind.

Take Charge of Your Learning; design your own learning curriculum; you can decide what you want to learn, how you intend to learn it, and how you will evaluate it.

Theory into Practice; apply theories learned in class to "real life" situations. Find out if the world as described in your sociology course really exists.

Awareness Through Increased Community Involvement; develop an awareness of other's needs and a greater understanding of your role and potential contributions to society.

Personal Growth; yes, you will grow from this experience. It won't transform you into a mature, responsible adult overnight, but having to solve problems in unfamiliar situations can bolster your self-confidence and personal awareness.

Helping Hand; it is nice to help yourself but helping others increase their capacities is also a benefit and a goal of an internship. Don't underestimate your potential contributions and the difference they can make.

New Environment; introduce yourself to a new environment and the challenges and problems of a work setting. You'll also learn the meaning of teamwork.

Research; it is an opportunity for experimentation and exploration of new and old academic and career interests.

Resources For Finding An Internship Or Co-Op

UE Job Link www.careerservices.evansville.edu

Faculty/Academic Department

Local resources such as the Chamber of Commerce

Network (family and friend connections)

Career Services and Cooperative Education: Career Fairs and electronic and paper resources and guides

ADDITIONAL WAY TO GAIN RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

Undergraduate Research; ask faculty and academic department for research opportunities. Employers and Graduate Schools value this experience in potential candidates

Volunteer/Community Involvement, many opportunities exist for students to put into practice the theories you have learned in the classroom and provide a valuable service to the community at the same time

Are You Getting the Most Out of Your Internship?

Q: How do I know if I am getting the most out of my internship?

A: Take this quiz! Grab a pen and paper and rate yourself using the scale below. When you're done, add up your points and read the interpretation of your internship success.

Very true = 3 points Mostly true = 2 points Somewhat true = 1 point Not true = 0 point

- ___ 1. I get along with others at work and I know they like having me around.
- ___ 2. My hard work and effort has been recognized by many.
- ___ 3. I am volunteering to take on several extra tasks.
- ___ 4. I set goals at the beginning of my internship and I am making sure they are met.
- ___ 5. I have enjoyed the projects I have taken on.
- ___ 6. I am employing my strengths and strengthening my weaknesses.
- ___ 7. I am developing many new skills
- ___ 8. There are several people for me to ask to write a recommendation for my file.
- ___ 9. I keep up on the latest news and information in the field I am working in.
- ___ 10. I arrive to work on time and stay as late as needed in order to accomplish my daily goals.
- ___ 11. I attend meetings and conferences not required by my internship.
- ___ 12. I take home unfinished projects in order to meet my deadlines and/or get ahead.
- ___ 13. I have developed network contacts.
- ___ 14. I welcome constructive criticism.
- ___ 15. I believe, thus far, that my internship has been a great, successful venture, and I am looking forward to what the rest has to offer.

31-45: A Successful Journey

You are on the right path. As there are always more paths to travel, continue your hard work (don't begin to slack now!) and remember the old saying: You learn something new every day. Share your success with your supervisor, remain open to constructive criticism, and chalk this up as one great event in your professional life.

16-30: Work in Progress

What exactly is keeping you from getting the most out of your internship? You are doing some things well but are still weak in other areas. Make your internship a success by reviewing what needs to be fixed. Meet with your supervisor and ask for feedback. Work every day on becoming a more productive and reliable co-worker by setting daily goals and reaching them.

0-15: Salvage What's Left

Now is the time to look at your experience and evaluate what is not working for you. This may mean getting together with a supervisor and discussing how you feel your internship has either benefited or hindered you. Be open to constructive criticism. Don't make the mistake of giving up just because you see it as a disaster. There may still be an opportunity for you to salvage a positive experience from this internship.