

How to Have a Successful Internship

Before you start:

1. **Ask supervisor(s) about expectations, attire, times:** Contact your internship supervisor via email or phone a few days prior to your start date. Say you wanted to clarify your start time and ask about expectations of attire and if there is anything else that you should know before starting. This will help you ensure you are meeting the supervisors expectations and make a good first impression!
2. **Research the organization:** Understanding the organization's mission and function will allow you to hit the ground running and maximize your experience. Write down questions you may have and ask when appropriate. Not only will you learn more, but it shows the supervisor that you have initiative and care about the experience.

While on-site:

1. **Build your reputation:** Expectations of attire change based on the organization and type of work. The key thing to remember is that you are not just at the internship to learn, but to make professional connections. Even though you are a student you want to look like an employee, so put your best foot forward and dress professionally. Typically this means wearing a collared shirt or a modest top (no t-shirts), khakis, slacks, dress/skirt of an appropriate length and closed toed or dress shoes. Flip flops and sandals may not be deemed appropriate. Some, more specialized positions may require specific outfits such as scrubs, coveralls, or formal suits.
2. **Act the part:** Making a good impression requires professionalism and tact. Behave in a way that communicates that you are responsible, motivated, and attentive.
3. **Recognize boundaries between you and other staff:** Even though you will be on site and performing some work-related tasks, it is important to recognize that you are a guest at the organization and trying to make the best impression possible.
4. **Write down thoughts and questions:** A lot of information will come your way once you are on site. Carry a notebook with you and find time to write down your observations and any questions you may have. You can ask the questions when you have a free moment with a supervisor or other employee and use your observations to utilize in job application materials like resumes and cover letters.
5. **Track your work:** Keep a running log of the daily tasks and projects you are doing as you do them. This will help you note progress and make updating your resume easier.

Wrapping up the experience:

1. **Express gratitude:** Follow up your final day on site by sending an email, thank you card, or calling your supervisor and other employees that worked with you to thank them for dedicating their time and energy for you. Supervising an intern is far more work than it may seem and is typically outside of a person's assigned duties.
2. **Exchange contact information if appropriate:** Internships allow you to make professional connections. Ask your supervisor if it would be ok to exchange contact information and if they would be willing to serve as a reference or discuss job options when you reach that point.