



# INTERNSHIP SEARCH STRATEGIES

Employers report that the most influential factor for a full-time hiring decision is whether the candidate completed a related internship (NACE 2018). Start planning your internship search with the tips and resources below.

## Before You Start

*Define Your Interests:*

- What type of job function or work environment would you like to try? Take 15 minutes to complete a self-inventory on [FOCUS2](#) to gain insights on your preferred work settings, interests and values.
- What skills do you have to contribute? Are there skills you would like to gain? Complete this [skills checklist](#) to discover your baseline.
- Gain inspiration by reviewing "[Where BSOS students interned](#)".

*Identify Your Needs:*

- What are you trying to get out of the internship?
- Will you be pursuing academic credit for the internship?
- Do you prefer to register for a course where internship searching is built in or locate an internship of your choice and then apply for academic credit?
- Do you have time in your schedule during the spring, fall or summer (Note: summer tends to be most competitive)?
- Can you take an unpaid internship if the experience meets your needs?
- Do you have a target organization in mind to work at full time? Review the internship opportunities at that organization, as many organizations have over a 60% conversation rate for intern to full-time job positions.

## Start Your Search: Get Organized

- [Attend a How to Find an Internship workshop](#) offered in the fall and spring by the University Career Center.
- [Make an appointment](#) with the University Career Center to learn about internship resources and craft a plan.
- [Register for EDCP108!](#): Academic Transition into Internships – a one-credit, seven week online class preparing students for successfully landing an internship and how to reflect on the experience.
- Save time by scheduling email alerts for some of the listing resources below.
- [Prepare your application](#) materials so you are ready when opportunities pop up.

## Choose a Search Strategy

### 1. Share your interests

Fifty to eighty percent of internship positions are filled through people you know (e.g. referral). So the most effective strategy is talking with everyone you know about your internship search. Start with faculty, family, friends, previous teachers, and continue to expand your network with UMD alumni through [Terrapins Connect](#), [LinkedIn](#), or by attending [University Career Center events](#).

Conversation starters

#### Initial Ask

*I am researching the field of... I am searching for a professional currently working in the field that I could talk with to gain more information about career path options. Could we schedule a 15-20 minute meeting? I would love to get your take on the field and hear about your career path story, if you have a couple of moments to spare.*

#### Ask for referrals

*Thank you so much for the information (or I understand you don't work in ...field). Do you know anyone currently working in the .... field? I am trying to learn more about the skills required in the field and I would like to talk with someone who has firsthand knowledge.*

#### During the conversation

*Thank you for chatting with me today I only have a couple of [questions](#) (i.e. really you have at least ten prepared to ask, but depending on time you may only get to three).... *What skills do you think are crucial for entry level professionals to possess in this field? The information you have shared with me today has been so interesting.**

#### End of conversation or follow-up

*Thank you for sharing your experiences with.....The organization sounds amazing. I would be interested to find out about internship opportunities. Do you have any suggestions on where I might look?"*

### 2. Target organizations of interest

Search for organizations working with the population, industry, or area of interest. Review their website to search for an established internship program and examine the application process. Consider following the organization on social media to gain insight into the organization and learn of openings. Don't wait for an opening to be posted! Contact the supervisor in the department of interest, share your skills and ask about internship openings.



Conversation

**Reach out and ask about the recruiting timeline**

*I am a current student at the University of Maryland majoring in economics with an interest in financial analysis. I have been following your organization and would be interested in working with you in the future. I reviewed your internship program online, but I didn't see the application deadline. When do you expect to recruit for the next internship opening in your department?*

**Ask for an opportunity: Create your own internship**

*I am a junior at the University of Maryland with a specific interest in -- I am interested in working with -- and I was delighted to read more about your organization recently. I didn't see a formal internship program advertised on your website, so I am reaching out today to ask if you have ever hosted an intern in the past. I could bring excellent organizational, analytical and research skills as an intern and I think I could contribute value to your organization. Could we talk more about how I could add to your ongoing projects?*

**3. Apply for posted openings: Listing resources**

Applying for posted positions is a less effective search strategy than networking, so don't spend all of your searching time on this strategy, but it could add variety if you spend 20-50% of your searching time on this strategy. Increase your odds by starting with the niche search engines and boards below and submit customized application materials for each opening.

- [Careers4Terps](#): houses 800+ Internship opportunities for UMD students
- [BSOS Undergraduate Blog](#): Internship listing for BSOS students
- [Review major specific internship resources](#): Managed by the majors in BSOS
- [Federal Government internships](#): Located in USAJobs and agency specific websites
- [Non-profit internships](#): Listed on Idealist.org
- All industries/aggregate search engines: [Indeed.com](#), [Internships.com](#) and industry-specific websites

**Apply for Internship Funding**

- [Bright Futures: Internship Scholarship](#), The University Career Center accepts scholarship applications for unpaid summer internships with nonprofit or governmental agencies.
- [BSOS Scholarships](#), BSOS offers a variety of scholarships, fellowships, and experience funds to academically talented and engaged students. Various campus resources are also available to assist with identifying additional financial support.

**Tips for Your Search**

You don't always need previous experience. Most employers are looking for soft skills when filling internship openings. Employers are looking for the qualities below in their interns (Career Trends 2017-2018). Tip: highlight these skills in your resume.

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Enthusiasm                        | Hardworking              |
| High quality and quantity of work | Professionalism          |
| Flexibility                       | Maturity                 |
| Independence                      | Relevant work experience |
| Communication skills              |                          |

Stand out to employers during the internship search:

- Display interest in the organization, not just the opening. Add a statement in your cover letter, for example.
- Apply for positions in the fall or spring. Competition is the highest for summer internships.
- Articulate how you will bring value to the position (e.g. during the informational interview, in your cover letter, in the interview, etc.).
- Use all of your resources to locate opportunities: professionals you know, career fair events, Careers4Terps openings, UMD networking events. Using several different strategies at once to locate internship opportunities, yields better results, more quickly.
- Start planning the semester before you would like to complete an internship. Some applications for federal internships can take up to a year to complete (e.g. intelligence agencies), so research the timeline early.
- BSOS students can complete as many internships as they would like without credit. All experiences gained adds to their candidacy and will enhance post-graduation opportunities!

**Integrate the search process into a course**

- [Federal Fellows](#) is open to all majors; year-long program combines a fall academic seminar with a spring internship.
- [Global Fellows](#) fall academic seminar on global leadership and policy and a spring internship experience.
- [Study abroad](#) for a week or a year and earn credit towards any major. Some programs include internships.

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