

## Finding an Internship that Works for You

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Hi, everyone. My name's Leanne Ralstin, and I'm with the Carson College of Business over here on the Pullman campus. And we're going to be talking about finding an internship that works for you. If you have any questions, type them in the chat area, and we will address them before the seminar is over. So let me just share my screen here.

So why are you interested in an internship? Maybe some of it, you can talk about it a little bit. Some people wanted to just explore their major. Let's say you're in advertising. Maybe you want to explore what advertising is all about. You're not sure you want to do it.

Maybe it's a requirement of your major. Maybe you just want to build up your resume, get some experiences to build that resume so that you can get that job when you are ready. Or you just want to gain some extra skills and knowledge. Maybe that's what it's about for you. You just want the experience.

But really, it's-- a lot of it's about making connections. So one of the things that I like to talk about a lot, before you even get into what kind of internship and finding it, is what are your goals? Why do you want the internship? If it's to gain experiences, what kind of experiences? What are your overall career goals?

And where do you want to get this experience? What location do you want to be in? Do you need to be near your home? What company? Do you want to work for a big company, a small company? What kind of experience do you want?

There's a lot to be said for working for a very large company like Boeing or Amazon, but there's quite a bit to be said for working for a mom and pop shop as well. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. What do you need? When you think about your goals, what are your overall career ambitions?

What are you missing? And also do you need to be paid? Some internships are paid and some are not. So do you need money? What do you want?

Going back to those experiences, what kind of experiences do you want? Do you want people experiences or hands-on experiences? And also thinking about what steps are needed.

If you decide to, let's say, move to another city for an internship for a short term, what steps are needed? How are you going to arrange housing and things like that? These are all things that you should consider when you're setting your goals.

Next thing you need to do is gather some information. And by that, I mean talk to people. Talk to people that you know here at the college.

Talk to your professors. Talk to your classmates. Who do you know? And start building that network, because honestly, a lot of internships are found through networking.

Go to career fairs and career expos. The Pullman campus has a major career expo the first week of October this fall, and then they always have another one in the spring. But the fall one is the big one.

And I'll just tell you right up, most companies are recruiting for interns in the fall more than in the spring. There'll still be some in the spring, but not as many.

Talk to people that are in the field. If you want to go into, let's say, accounting, talk to the accountants because they might know of internships. They might know of good places to go for an internship. And also, on the other side, the bad places. Don't go here for an internship.

Go to info sessions. Now, I know a lot of you on the Global Campuses aren't here on campus, but on campus, we have a lot of info sessions. Companies will come and just talk about what they do and what they're hiring for. But some of these can be recorded for you or broadcast live, like what we're doing now, if you have a desire to do that.

And also, you can go directly to the companies if they have info sessions. Go to conferences in your field. A lot of associations have student discounts if you join their association. And go to their conferences. You'd be amazed at the people that you can network with there.

LinkedIn-- if you don't have a LinkedIn account yet, I highly recommend that you explore LinkedIn. Because LinkedIn is a terrific tool. It's professional networking, and their job boards are fantastic. You can find all kinds of internships on there, as well as jobs for later. It's a great job search tool.

And I mentioned the professional organizations earlier. Just go directly to the websites. If you want to work for a big company, they're bound to have a terrific website.

I was just looking today at the Amazon website and the Boeing website, and they both have whole sections devoted to internships in their companies. So those are great places. If you know the company that you want to do, that's a good place to go.

So any questions so far?

**SPEAKER 1:** No questions quite yet, Leanne.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK. There's different types of internships, and you might want to be aware because some companies might call it by a different name. And some of these, they're slightly different in how they're arranged and set up, but they could be called a co-op or field experience or a practicum, sometimes service learning.

All of these are different, but they could be great experiences just as well. They could be called an externship or an apprenticeship. All of these are great ways to get those experiences that you desire in your field. So don't be turned off by the different names.

There's paid internships and there's unpaid internships. Now, you need to decide, do you need to be paid? If so, you want to just look at those opportunities that are paid. Maybe it doesn't matter to you if you're paid or not. It just depends on your field.

A lot of internships in the for-profit world, like in the business world for instance, most of those internships will be paid. But if you're working for a nonprofit or any sort of organization that is maybe government-oriented, a lot of those are unpaid.

Now, you can still gain terrific expenses, even if you're unpaid. But you need to consider that. What kind of internship is it? A lot of government internships will also pay very well, so you just kind of got to look and see what it is. But do ask the question if it's not clear in the job description.

And then there's the credit versus no credit. A lot of times, even if you have an unpaid internship, you can take the internship for credit. And maybe that credit gets applied to your major. And that's a terrific advantage because a lot of majors require you to have a certain amount of internship credits.

Other times, it doesn't matter. This is something you want to check with your academic advisor on to see if it's a benefit for you. And especially if it's unpaid, you might want to consider getting the credit at least for it.

You want to consider also the length of the internship. Some internships will go like a year, and others, it's just a few weeks.

What time of year is it? Is it in the summer? Is it in the winter, spring? Is it over Christmas break? What time of year is it? Those are all things to consider.

One company could have different kinds of internships depending on the time of year, and you need to figure out which one of them benefits you the most. And again, you need to consider the location and the company. Like I said, these bigger companies, they have lots of internship opportunities. But an internship in say, Seattle, may be different than an internship in say, St. Louis. So think about what's involved and the location also.

So starting to search-- I see there's a question here-- differences between an internship and externship. It kind of depends on the company. You don't hear the term externship that often, but internship is more common.

The both give you experiences, it's just how they're set up behind the scenes more than anything.

OK. So starting to search-- a few places that you can start searching for internships. Like I said before, start talking to people. Start building your network. That's the number one place.

And networking can include face-to-face time with people that you know. I mean even Facebook. I don't really recommend that you post your resume necessarily on Facebook, but you can certainly post your education and experiences and such on LinkedIn.

These are great places to just start. Figure out who has the internships. General job boards-- yeah, you can look at these, but I'm going to warn you, a lot of these big job boards, like monster.com and indeed.com, can feel like a big black hole.

Sometimes people find great opportunities there, but a lot of times, they don't. But they're a good place to figure out what's out there. For instance, if you go on indeed.com, and you find, oh, there's a lot of internship opportunities in the Sacramento, California area. Well, then you know to go to those companies and look at it. I wouldn't necessarily apply on these big job boards, but they're a good place to get you started to figure out where things are.

You can look at these internship-specific websites, like internships.com internmatch.com. These are pretty good, but again, they're pretty big job boards, but they can give you an idea of what's out there.

If you want to work in the nonprofit or government area, these are two great sites, idealist.org usajobs.gov. Fantastic web sites, I recommend them. They also are both very big, but you have a really good chance.

The only way you're going to get a job with the government, almost every time, is if you apply on usajobs.gov. Idealist is one of those really large job boards, but it still gives you a good idea of what kind of nonprofits are out there and who's hiring.

And like I mentioned before, go directly to the company website. Some of the big ones in Washington state include Boeing, Amazon, Microsoft, Schweitzer. Those are just a few off the top of my head. Go directly to their websites.

And like I said, I was just on the website for Boeing and Amazon today, and they have fantastic areas showing all kinds of possible internships for students or new graduates. And of course, there's the WSU resources. Don't forget about these.

Go directly to the department you might be interested in. If you're interested in interning for whatever entity related to WSU, go on the WSU HR job boards site, and find out what's happening there. You might be able to find something pretty cool.

And WSU has a new-- we no longer have couglink. We have what's called handshake. It's just a new platform for the job board for students. I highly recommend that you go in there. Check it out.

If you go to the ASCC website, you can find it there. It's a terrific resource. I highly recommend it for job or internship search.

Let's see.

Yeah, sometimes deadlines pass pretty quick. You want to make sure that you get in there and find those internships. I was just alerted today that the State Department is looking for interns, and it looked pretty interesting if you're interested in government work. So if you go to USA-- no, it's the State Department. Go directly to the State Department website, and you should be able to find some interesting opportunities there.

OK, there is a slight difference between internships and job search. If any of you-- oh, I see a question. Just a second. Does handshake cover outside Washington State? As long as you're a WSU student, you can use handshake. But go to the WSU website to find the handshake, otherwise you're just looking at a generic handshake website. You want to make sure you use the WSU one, and then it'll ask you to login with your student credentials.

OK, back to internships versus job search. I'm sure a lot of you have held jobs at some point or another, but there is a little bit of difference between the internship job search and the job search. With internships, you need to be more proactive. Networking is everything in finding a good job, as well as a good internship.

But with internships they're not-- especially with the mom and pop shops, they're not necessarily advertised, so you need to get out there and talk to people and figure out where the opportunities might lie. You know, like I said, they're often not posted online. So talking to people is huge.

Sometimes you want to directly contact the company. If there is a company you're really excited about and you don't see on their website that they've posted anything about internships, if you get to networking with people that work there, maybe you can find out, maybe you can create your own internship. Sometimes that happens.

I would suggest just directly contacting the company if you think there's a possibility or if you just really love that company. Word of mouth-- again, going back to the networking. A lot of these internships, people are just saying, hey, refer people to us. We need interns.

And start early. I can't stress this enough. If you want an internship for, say, next summer, you need to start searching now. You need to start getting your stuff together now. Because this is the recruiting season. Like I mentioned, the fall is when a lot of these companies are recruiting heavily for interns. So it's not too early to start for next summer.

It's not to say that you couldn't find an internship that starts sooner or that you can start later and still get an internship. That happens, but this is, like I said, the big recruiting season. I would start right away.

OK. So if you are going to start applying, here are some of the things that you need to keep in mind here. Look at the description of the internship and study it like you do a text book. Get your highlighter out, highlight the keywords, analyze the language, determine the important points.

Think about what's important to the company, and what do they need? They need someone who at least has a little bit of background in say, Microsoft Office. OK, they need that. What can you contribute? Well, maybe you're pretty good at Excel, so you can contribute your skills in Excel to them.

And why do you want this opportunity? Now that is the one thing that's really different between job search and internship search-- why? You need to figure that out. Going back to setting your goals, why do you want this opportunity? What's it going to do for you?

How is it going to help you in your future career? In fact, a lot of applications for internships are a little bit different in that they'll ask you something along these lines. Why do you want this opportunity? What's it going to do for you? And so you need to be able to articulate that.

So if you think up front about what your goals are, then by the time you're applying and they're asking you, why do you want this, you can say it with some ease and have it flow right out of you. Hey, I want this opportunity because it's going to help me with XYZ, and that's going to help me in my future career goals. So think about that all through the process here.

Some of the things that they might want, the company, is a certain level in college. Like maybe they don't want anyone below a sophomore level in college. Typical internships, students are usually sophomore, junior level. Some freshmen get internships, and certainly some seniors get internships. It depends on your field.

But it's most common right in the middle area. And a lot of employers want, you know, what they consider at least a year of college under the belt of their interns. I think that's part of the reason. They want you to show an interest in the field.

If you're not interested in aeronautics, maybe Boeing isn't the right place for you. If you're not interested in technology, maybe Amazon isn't the right place for you. They want you to be willing to learn, because that's what internships really are about. It's a learning experience.

It's-- yeah, it should be hands on, but what it boils down to is it's learning outside the classroom, really. They also want to know your motivation. Going back to your goals, why do you want this? What's your motivation for this?

They don't want people that are in there just to waste a summer or their time. They want people that are motivated. Hey, I want this goal, so I'm going to do this. So you need to be asking yourself, is it a good fit for me? Am I motivated in this area? Am I interested in it?

Is the internships substantial? You don't want an internship where all you're doing is making copies. I mean, that doesn't help anybody. Well, it maybe helps the person who needs the copies, but it's not really helping you. The internship, like I said-- and I can't stress enough-- it should be a learning experience, where you're learning more about your field, more about the skills needed in your field.

And you need to think about-- again, I keep going back to this goal setting, but how is this experience going to contribute to your goals? And if it's not, if it's kind of a sideline thing, you need to ask yourself, why am I willing to do this sideline thing? Am I really not interested in my current path? So do some self-reflection and think about these things.

OK, some additional tips-- don't wait too long. Again, apply early. All of your documents should be tailored to the position. They should not be the same cookie cutter resume given out to everybody. Tailor them a little bit.

And don't just apply to one place. Apply to several. The old saying, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Follow the directions. This is your first test. If you don't follow the directions and give them what they need, they probably won't even look at your application.

And one thing that I highly recommend is that you follow up. If you apply for an internship and then forget about it, you don't even follow up with finding out if they had everything that they needed or assuring them of your interest in it, maybe they won't be that interested in you.

Going directly to the next point, which is show excitement in your cover letters, in interview situations. Show that you're excited about this opportunity, and this is something that you think will help you with your goals, as well as a learning experience for you.

OK, few more things-- application documents. They're not-- they're your advertisement to get the interview. They're your foot in the door. They are not your biography. You don't need to tell them every single thing you've ever done.

It's not your biography, and it should be tailored to each position. If your resume and cover letter get you in the door for an interview, they've done their job. But you don't need to tell them everything, just your skills and experiences that are relevant to the position.

And keep in mind too that internships are learning experiences. So you don't have to have all the skills necessary to be in a career position yet. That's why you're doing an internship. But it's giving you some of those experiences you will need to apply for those career positions. So don't be too worried if you don't have everything that they're looking for, because they'll teach you. They'll teach you a lot of that stuff.

It should be relevant though. You don't need to tell them about your interest in hiking the backwoods if the position has nothing to do with hiking in the backwoods. Yeah, it's interesting. I like hiking in the backwoods, but is it relevant?

You need to think about that. And it should be just a summary of your relevant skills and experiences that are applicable to the job. Remember how I said to highlight the key words in the job description? Those are the things you need to talk about in your application.

So you got the internship. Congratulations. How are you going to be successful at it? Number one, always be professional. Always put yourself across as professional. Does that mean be, you know, really like a stuffed shirt? No, not necessarily. Have fun with it, but, you know, know what's appropriate in the right circumstances.

Avoid all those inappropriate jokes and things like that. Always be professional. Dress appropriately. The whole bit. And I'm going back to the goals again. Set goals for internship. Set them with your supervisor. Together, set the goals. OK, what do you want to get out of this? And how are you going to get there?

And oh, I should have learn as number one. That is the main thing that you're there for, is just learn. Soak it all in. Try to always be positive and enthusiastic. This is a fantastic opportunity for you.

What you do with it's kind up to you, but if you have that positive attitude, it goes a long ways. If you can, find a mentor if one is not assigned for you at the internship. I mean, someone maybe besides your supervisor. It could be your supervisor who ends up being your mentor, but if you could get a mentor in the same field, that's fantastic too because that mentor can take time to sit down and talk to you about, hey, this is where you need to work on, different things like that. And it could be the supervisor, but it could be someone else as well.

This is a great opportunity to develop your professional network. Remember how I talked about talking with all those people when you're exploring, finding an internship? But here you can expand it by finding people that are actually in your field, who are professionals in your field that you can add to your professional network. And it's just going to help you in the long term.

And another thing that people don't think about, reflect often, like at least once a week. Maybe get a notebook where you think about, OK, so what have I learned? What do I wish I was learning? Am I making steps towards the goals that I set?

Do those actual reflections. Sometimes if you're doing an internship for credit, they might require a reflection paper at the end. So it would serve you well to maybe keep little notes all during the internship of pluses, minuses, ways to improve things. Any sort of notes that you can think about might be useful.

And in the long term too, you can think about, OK, so I learned X, Y, and Z at this internship, but I still need to learn a little bit more about A, B, and C. So all of those things could be useful for you in the long term.

OK, time for questions.

**SPEAKER 1:** Hi, Leanne. We do have a few questions. One asks, do you know how to contact or find Washington state internships?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, offhand I couldn't tell you the website. But I think if you just did a Google search and just look for state of Washington, not just Washington, but state of Washington jobs, you'd probably be able to find it I would think. And I'm sorry I don't know that website off the top of my head.

**SPEAKER 1:** And our next question asks, I'm currently in an internship placement course for spring 2018. It sounds like I have a late start only being one semester ahead of time. Do you have any tips for this person?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** What's your major?

**SPEAKER 1:** They're human development.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Human development, OK. Well again, I would go back to the goal setting. What do you want out of it? What do you need? And evaluate that. And where do you need to be? And just start setting those goals for yourself, and think about where you'd like the internship.

And then maybe start making some initial contacts with that organization. Do you know where you would like to be? Maybe start there.

**SPEAKER 1:** Thanks, Leanne. And our next question asks, what are the best ways to stand out from other applicants when applying to a large company?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Follow the directions, for one. Show enthusiasm, for another one. And your documents should be as professional as possible. You have resources, myself as well as the Global Campus career advisor, Chris. Is Chris his name?

**SPEAKER 1:** Yes, Chris Miller is the dedicated Global Campus career advisor.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, and, you know, your resources, like us, are here to help you polish those resumes, look over your applications, make sure you don't have silly misspellings or things like that. We can be a second pair of eyes for you. Professional documents would make you stand out as well, and giving them what they want.

If they want a one page paper saying why you want this internship, give them a one page paper about why you want the internship. Don't give them half a page. Don't give them three pages. Give them what they ask for. Following directions is huge. And that enthusiasm, again.

**SPEAKER 1:** Thanks, Leanne. And the next question asks, do you know of any-- of any other internships sites offering online internships?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Online internships--

**SPEAKER 1:** That may end up being more of a question for Chris. I can put his email in the chat box.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** You can certainly-- it seems that I saw something recently. And it seems like I saw it in handshake. What was I looking at today? You might check handshake, you know the WSU handshake that you can access through the ASCC WSU website. Look in there. There might be opportunities for online there.

It depends on what you want to do. I know the online internships are maybe not as common, but, you know, Chris might have a handle on more opportunities since he's online.

**SPEAKER 1:** Thanks, Leanne. And if anyone else has-- oh, never mind. I just saw the question from Allison. She asks, is there a good place to find international internships?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Oh, international internships, that's a whole other consideration. Yes, there's quite a few out there. And there's a lot of different companies that sponsor-- you know, they're acquainted with study abroad. They also have internships.

Again, it depends on where you want to go. Let's say you want to go to Ireland. What kind of opportunities are available in Ireland or Italy or wherever it is that you want to go? One thing to consider is if you're an international student, you probably won't get paid because of visa regulations. So if you're looking for an internship where you need to be paid, stay in the states.

But if that doesn't matter. If you want to go abroad to do an internship, there's tons of opportunities. I would get in touch with the study abroad office right here at WSU. And they could point you in the area of a lot of different resources.

We just had a study abroad-- or not study abroad. I forget with they called it. Global Learning fair, where a lot of these different companies that sponsor these trips were there. And I talked to probably six or eight of them that told me about these fantastic internship opportunities abroad. They're not cheap, and you usually do them for credit.

But you want to double check with your academic adviser to make sure those credits can apply to your major. And if they don't, you know, you can still go, but yeah, it just depends on what you want, where you want to go. But there's lots of opportunities out there. Just get a hold of the study abroad office here.

**SPEAKER 1:** Thanks, Leanne. Our next question from Emily asks, should you still apply for internships if you do not reach all the requirements, such as the GPA requirement?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** You know, that might be a question that you ask the company. It depends upon the company. Some companies are pretty big on the GPA. For instance, some of the more competitive internships, like Boeing for instance, they're pretty stuck on their minimum GPA. But there's others, they don't care as much.

It just depends upon your field and what you want to do and where you want to do it. That GPA, if it's really close, they might make an exception if you have other experiences that they like and you show a lot of enthusiasm. But if it's significantly different than their minimum GPA, I don't know how far you'll get.

But what you could do is make an initial contact with the company and ask them how much weight they put on the GPA. And if they act like it's not all that big of a deal, then you'll know it's OK. But if they're like, no, that's our first line of elimination for candidates, then that might not be the place for you. So it just depends.