

INTERNSHIPS AND THE ECONOMICS MAJOR

How do I find an internship?

Listings of established internship programs abound. A good place to start is with an internship directory like *The Internship Bible* that evaluates a wide variety of internships and gives you a sense of what you need to consider when choosing and applying for a program. Copies of *The Internship Bible* and other guides are available in the Econ Undergrad Office (7470 Social Science) and at L&S/Human Ecology Career Services (905 University Avenue).

When you have a general idea of the kind of internship you're interested in, you can search online. Both the Econ and L&S/Human Ecology Career Services web pages have links to job and internship information:

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/econ/undergrad/links/empindex.htm>
www.lssaa.wisc.edu/careers

L&S/Human Ecology Career Services also hosts internship fairs in fall and spring that let you meet recruiters—see the calendar of events at the website above.

If there's a particular firm or organization you're really interested in, you can investigate that way as well. Even if it doesn't offer an established internship program, an organization might be convinced to take you on as an intern if you show a well-informed interest in what it does, how you could contribute, and what you want to learn.

When should I be looking for an internship?

To give yourself ample search and inquiry time, begin looking for an internship well before the common application deadlines. Internships are available year-round, but summer programs are popular because they allow you more flexibility in scheduling and location. Application deadlines for summer internships tend to fall in March or April. For programs during the academic year, you're likely to encounter March application deadlines for fall semester internships and October deadlines for spring programs.

Can I earn credit for an internship?

Internships are sometimes offered for academic credit as an alternative to wages. Relatively few of the internships listed in *The Internship Bible* and *Peterson's Internships 2002* indicate that they require interns to earn college credit. (Academic credit is *available* for quite a few.) But Econ students have occasionally reported that they've been told they *must* earn academic credit in order to do the internship they want.

L&S students considering internships should be aware that **the College of Letters and Science does not allow credit for internships**. Current L&S policy states that *credit is earned in the College of Letters and Science by completing courses with academic content. L&S does not allow students to receive credit for internships*.

It is possible for L&S students to earn credit for academic work **related to** an internship, by arranging a directed (independent) study with a UW-Madison instructor. This entails devising an academic project to be done alongside the internship, finding a UW-Madison instructor willing to supervise the project, and registering for directed study credit.

Arranging to earn credit in order to do an internship entails significant planning, difficulty, and expense over and above the internship itself. Don't even attempt it unless you have a good working relationship with an instructor—faculty rarely agree to supervise directed study for students they don't know. Directed study done in any department counts as L&S degree credit, however, so you're not limited to instructors in the Econ department. To qualify for directed study in Econ, you need at least a 2.5 GPA; also, an Econ directed study should have substantive, advanced academic content.

Overall, for L&S students, it's better to search for internships that don't carry an expectation of credit. Consult the undergrad advisor well in advance if you are considering one that's available only for academic credit.

A note about transfer courses with an internship component: If you're interested in taking a course elsewhere that includes an internship component, consult an advisor in Undergraduate Admissions (3rd floor, Red Gym) **before** you register to learn whether credits will transfer to UW-Madison.

Internship alternatives

There's a lot of hype about internships suggesting that they're essential to getting a job after graduation. Internships can be a great way to explore career possibilities, gain marketable skills, get an insider's view of a particular organization, or begin developing a network of professional contacts. Sometimes they lead to offers of permanent employment. But internships aren't the only means of accomplishing these goals. Employers look for hands-on experience and involvement in activities that go beyond the classroom. Evidence that you're good at working on a team and have an interest in your community doesn't hurt, either. You can gain and demonstrate abilities by

Volunteering with a local organization: The Morgridge Center for Public Service (<http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/volunteer.html>) serves as a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities in and around UW-Madison. If existing opportunities don't allow for use of your econ-related talents, learn as much as you can about an organization that sparks your interest and propose ways that you might help while gaining relevant experience.

Creatively approaching part-time work: Consider the general skills you'll need when applying for your dream job. Will you need to show that you can work effectively on a team? That you have great customer-service skills? That you can work independently? That you can multi-task? Even in a part-time job only distantly related to your intended career you can gain useful experience if you think about what you're learning. In the summer, consider working for a temporary agency—temping can lead to long-term positions, and in the meantime gives you experience in a number of different work settings.

Being involved in student organizations: If you're active, you can gain leadership skills and experience with marketing, fund-raising and budget management, event coordinating, etc.—all while supporting a cause you believe in or enjoying an activity you love.

Exploring service learning: Fairly new to UW-Madison, service-learning classes incorporate real-world community projects into academic courses. Information about service-learning courses can be found at the Morgridge Center's website, <http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/servicelearning.html>.