

HOW TO APPLY FOR INTERNSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

The route to securing an internship/fellowship can be confusing and filled with pitfalls. However, it is often a journey worth taking because your future employment may depend upon the quality of your internship/fellowship experience. There are many considerations to explore when applying for an internship/fellowship; some of those considerations are covered below.

THE APPLICATION

The application is the first element that most organizations look at when you apply for a fellowship/internship. Therefore, you should give careful consideration to the application and always fill it out properly.

Deadlines

Consider the deadline date and send the application well in advance – Why? If individuals are reviewing applications as they arrive, your application will get more consideration early in the process as opposed to closer to the deadline when everyone else is sending their application. Remember, the most popular internships/fellowships have deadlines in the fall and winter months (Sept. through March)

Follow Instructions

Most applications have explicit instructions to follow. These instructions may sometimes seem arbitrary to you, but to the organization these instructions are crucial. They are expecting to receive applications in a certain way, with the proper information included. Some organizations throw away applications that are not in accordance with their application instructions.

Common Mistakes Include:

- *Sending more or less references/recommendations than asked for*
- *Attaching a CV or resume in lieu of filling out the application*
- *Not having transcripts sent directly from your previous school(s)*
- *Not placing recommendations in sealed envelopes*
- *Not including standardized test scores*

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Most organizations will generally ask for a Personal Statement (sometimes called a Goal Statement, etc). The statement is a way for the organization to review your interests and to determine your motivation for applying for the fellowship/internship. Also, the personal statement is the organization's first look at your writing skills and it should be written with clarity using excellent grammar and spelling.

Be Concise and Clear

A personal/goal statement should be clear and easy to read. The organization should be able to view a synopsis of your background and a summary of where you wish to be in the future. A personal/goal statement is not the time to tell your life story, but to highlight relevant career and academic interests and how the fellowship/internship opportunity aligns with your interests.

Highlight Your Skills...Don't Tell Them What They Can Do For You

A personal/goal statement should convey to the organization what you bring to the table. Don't spend a great deal of time writing about what the fellowship/internship will do for you, but show how you can make a contribution to the organization and/or the field of study. The personal/goal statement is your opportunity to sell your skills and abilities – take advantage of the opportunity.

Remember NOT to:

- Include personal discriminating information (such as marital status, sexual orientation, etc), unless the requirements specifically asked for it
- Use long sentences
- Overuse technical jargon
- Brag or fabricate
- Make mistakes with grammar and/or spelling

Remember to:

- Include your future goals and relevant research interests
- Answer the question: 'Why should you be accepted to the fellowship/internship program?'
- Highlight only your relevant skills and accomplishments
- Follow instructions with regards to the length of the personal/goal statement

NETWORKING FOR INTERNSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Calling or meeting people from the organization with whom you wish to have an internship or fellowship can increase your chances of being accepted to their program. Remember that most people want to hire someone with whom they are familiar. In addition, having a strong reference is an excellent way to increase your chances of being accepted to a fellowship/internship program. For example, if your advisor is well known, a call from him/her to the organization may work wonders. Contacting alumni who work for the organization can be an excellent means of advancing your application for the internship/fellowship.

If You Do Not Meet the Requirements

If you are interested in an internship/fellowship and you do not meet the requirements, you may still want to apply. Exceptions are made in some cases. If programs allow candidates to interview before the application deadline, you should visit and interview.

Why Do Employers Like Internships & Fellowships?

An internship/fellowship saves the employer money. It is a cost-effective hiring process and it is a preview of your skills and a chance for them to see what you're capable of. It can result in a job offer upon graduation, if they liked you. Also, as students, you bring in fresh ideas and you serve as a steady flow of new talent. If you have positive experiences at the organization, you can provide free advertising to other students that might be potential candidates.

Finding Fellowship Resources

A majority of fellowships are going to be government or foundation sponsored. Be sure to pay close attention to the unique requirements and qualifications required (i.e., citizenship requirements). It is probably a good idea to create a spreadsheet or organizational system to keep track of deadlines, etc. A good place to find a list of different fellowship sites in order to get an overview of what is out there is the Association of Schools of Public Health.

Finding Internship Resources

While some organizations might have established some internship programs, most do not. Approach prospective employers directly. Don't wait for an internship to be posted. Identify potential employers using directories and databases, word of mouth, and inquire about possibilities for an internship. Inquire as to whether an internship can be created for you. A majority of the time organizations will not discourage "free help", but you'll need to be sure to create a "win-win" situation for both yourself and the organization. Funding sources for internships can vary from organization to organization - some are scholarships and grants with amounts ranging from monthly to yearly stipends, hourly rates, or pay per project.

WINTER BREAK CHECKLIST

Take advantage of your winter break by reviewing and following up on career and job search activities. Here are a few things you can do to get your job search off the ground.

- **Network.** Identify and choose people to connect with. Begin with people you know...faculty, classmates, former employers and colleagues, family members, and alumni. Collect new contacts and develop relationships. Create advocates who can be vigilant for new opportunities on your behalf.
- **Research companies.** Know as much as possible about the organizations that interest you. You can find this information through company websites, JHSPHConnect (<http://jhsph.experience.com>), local newspapers, state industrial directories, and reference books available in public libraries.
- **Develop a strong resume and cover letter.** Have these reviewed and critiqued. Resources can be found on the Career Services website (<http://www.jhsph.edu/careers>)
- **Engage in informational interviews.** Contact alumni in the specific geographic area in which you seek employment (<http://alumni.jhu.edu/>). Treat the informational interview like any job interview. Wear appropriate attire, bring questions and resumes, and be prepared to talk about yourself and your skills.
- **Research salary ranges** in your specific field and geographic location(s) of interest. There are many informational sources on the Internet.

A TOOLKIT FOR CAREER SUCCESS

Each year's winter break, the Career Services Office provides "A Toolkit for Career Success," a course to assist students and alumni in their job search. The course consists of a comprehensive list of career development topics and a special alumni networking panel. The alumni networking panel usually consists of alums who are willing to share their on-the-job experiences and insights into the job market with you. Career development topics include: Resume/CV and Cover Letters, Job Search Strategies, Interviewing, Salary Negotiation, Networking, Successful Career Management, and more.