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| Career Center

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INTERNSHIP ORIENTATION GUIDE

This document includes information about the following topics:

- Your First Day
- Academic Credit for Internships
- Summer Internship Subsidy
- Attire & Etiquette
- Workplace and Sexual Harassment

OVERVIEW

This orientation is designed to help prepare you for your internship so you can make the most of your experience! After reading the guide, you'll have an understanding of the following topics:

- What an internship is intended for
- Before your internship starts
- Appropriate attire & etiquette
- Your first day on the job
- Receiving academic credit for internships
- Summer Internship Subsidy
- Workplace and sexual harassment

After reviewing this orientation, if you are applying for the Summer Internship Subsidy, you will take a quiz over the material covered (there is a link to the quiz on the last page). You must achieve an 8 out of 10 in order to be eligible for the internship subsidy. For additional information on any of the topics covered above, visit our [Commodore Exchange](#).

INTRODUCTION

Understanding what an internship is and how you can be successful as an intern are important in leveraging this experience in the future.

What is an internship?

We define an internship as:

a paid or unpaid position taken for the purpose of exploring a given career field or preparing for future studies or employment.

Approach your internship as a summer-long learning opportunity and interview!

Your performance during the internship will reflect your potential to future employers, impact future prospects, and strengthen Vanderbilt's visibility in the marketplace. Take the experience seriously. Ultimately, the success of the internship is up to you.

CHECKLIST 1: BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP

- Research the organization.
 - Who are the key players?
 - What is the latest news with the organization?
- Ask about appropriate attire for the office. Confirm who, when, and where you should meet on your first day.
- Read all the information Human Resources sends you carefully and check to see what you need to bring with you.
- Take a practice trip to your internship site. You may be surprised at the amount of time your commute takes.
- If you're receiving academic credit, you'll want to communicate with your faculty supervisor before your internship begins about the learning goals for the summer. Internships are an academic-related experience and regular communication with your faculty supervisor will help you fully benefit from this experiential learning opportunity.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Many internship programs require you to apply for and receive academic credit. To begin the process of applying and receiving academic credit, contact the Associate Dean of your college/school. You can receive academic credit & payment from the same internship.

SUMMER INTERNSHIP SUBSIDY

Vanderbilt provides a subsidy to waive the cost associated with the academic credit required for internships. Here are the highlights of the subsidy program:

- Open to any VU undergraduate who is required by an employer or by immigration regulations to earn academic credit.
- Designed to cover/waive the majority of tuition and fees for the academic component of a one-credit summer internship.
- The subsidy is processed through your college or school while course registration may be through any of the four undergraduate schools.
- Student fee to enroll in one-credit summer course required for an internship is currently \$200 plus applicable summer fees.

The necessary steps to complete this process can be found using our [Summer Internship Page](#).

SUMMER INTERNSHIP SUBSIDY FAQ'S

How long does the process take?

It varies. You need various forms filled-out with appropriate signatures and must identify a faculty supervisor. The sooner you get started, the better.

Where do I find the internship approval form?

You can start on our [Summer Internship Page](#). Be sure to check-in with your Associate Dean's office for further instruction.

How do I identify a faculty supervisor?

Contact your school's Associate Dean's office for assistance in obtaining a faculty supervisor if you are uncertain about who should serve in this capacity or where the course might best be placed from an academic point of view. Your Associate Dean can help you determine the best academic match. You will identify learning goals for your summer internship in consultation with your faculty supervisor; these goals will be outlined on the internship approval form.

CHECKLIST 2: YOUR FIRST DAY

- Show up on time and every day thereafter.
- Ask about organizational policies and procedures.
 - Are there HR policies you should review?
 - Who should you communicate with if you are sick or an emergency arises that prevents you from coming to work?
 - If you are full time, what is the organization's policy regarding lunch breaks? Do they have a refrigerator if you bring lunch, etc.
- Review your internship goals and your supervisor's expectations.
- Make sure you understand the on-boarding/training schedule.
- Write down the names of the people you meet and their title/roles within the organization.

BUSINESS BEHAVIOR

Ask questions to help understand the details of a task, assignment, or project so that you save yourself time and energy doing it right the first time. Take notes.

Pay attention to details.

Be open and listen to constructive feedback. View constructive feedback as a unique opportunity to enhance your skills. Don't make excuses.

Exhibit maturity and professionalism by avoiding office politics and gossip.

Keep confidential information confidential.

Although you may not get along with everyone, focus on improving your working relationships. Remember to remain respectful at all times.

ATTIRE

Do not confuse Business Casual with Casual!

Gender specific & neutral options to consider:

- Khaki, corduroy, twill or cotton pants or skirts, neatly pressed
- Sweaters & cardigans
- Nice jeans (if permitted), no holes or fray
- Cotton long-sleeved button-down shirts, pressed
- Polo shirts or knit shirts with a collar
- Tailored blouses in cotton, silk, or blends

- Suit jackets, solid or patterned
- Tie optional
- Closed toe loafers, boots, flats, pumps

Flip flops, tank tops, slippers, and pajamas are generally not appropriate for the office. Avoid tight or baggy clothing.

Every office has its own culture, so pay attention to what others are wearing. A good rule is to dress one level better than what is expected.

Additional information can be found on our [Commodore Exchange](#) and our [Pinterest page](#).

PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ETIQUETTE

It is very important that you practice professional business email etiquette. Make sure you use proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure when sending emails within the company.

Keep your message short and to the point, but do not use texting abbreviations or language.

Be careful when using the “REPLY ALL” response. Make sure your subject line is succinct and accurate and use an appropriate salutation.

Check your email frequently and only send work-related emails from your work account.

If the email account has a signature feature, use it. It gives your message a professional look.

UNPLUG

Unless your job requires you to be on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or a blog site, you should keep your cell phone and personal laptop in your bag/out of sight.

Turn off your personal cell phone in meetings.

Use the computer only for completing your internship projects.

While search engines can be a vital research tool, sometimes using the phone to ask your colleague or supervisor a question can be more accurate and faster.

MAXIMIZE YOUR INTERNSHIP

Take advantage of networking opportunities such as company meetings, trainings, or other extracurricular activities.

Introduce yourself to others in the office and make an effort to get to know something about each of them.

Learn about the “big picture.” How does your department, role, or project fit within the big picture of the organization's success?

Be proactive. If you have free time, ask for projects or tasks you can do that will make a difference.

Smile & be friendly to everyone.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

We want you to be prepared to identify harassment and know what to do in the event you feel you are being harassed.

Workplace harassment is a form of employment discrimination.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the government agency responsible for enforcing Federal discrimination laws), workplace harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For more information, visit the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#).

Harassment becomes unlawful when:

- Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or
- The conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to: offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment is a form of workplace harassment and can resemble anything from being touched or propositioned to being addressed with inappropriate names in the workplace. For more information about sexual harassment, visit Vanderbilt's [Sexual Harassment page](#).

The EEOC guidelines describe sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals, or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. (29 C.F.R. § 1604.11 [1980])

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

WHAT IF I AM BEING HARASSED?

- Tell your faculty supervisor and/or Associate Dean. They need to know about these incidents and can help you decide what you should do about the situation.
- Document what happened. It is important to have a written account if you decide to pursue a complaint. While it may be hard or even painful, try to write an objective description of what happened. You should include: what happened, where, and when; names of all parties involved, including witnesses (if any); supporting documentation (if any); and contact information.
- Students can also report any type of discrimination or harassment to the Title IX and Student Discrimination Office, as well as the HR office of their internship.
- Faculty and Deans are considered mandatory reporters and are obligated to report instances of discrimination and harassment to the Title IX and Student Discrimination Office.
- Look at the [Vanderbilt's Sexual Assault Support and Resource Information](#).

Vanderbilt encourages anyone who has witnessed, experienced, or has information about possible sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct to take reasonable actions to prevent or stop such actions, even if some or all information is unavailable or cannot be provided.

STAYING SAFE

Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.

Stand tall and walk confidently.

Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave right away and get help if necessary.

Try not to walk or jog alone in secluded places.

Choose busy streets and avoid going through vacant lots, alleys, or other deserted areas. At night, walk in well-lit areas whenever possible.

Get to know the neighborhoods and neighbors where you live and intern.

Be especially alert when using enclosed parking garages.

Don't walk into an area if you feel uncomfortable.

CHECKLIST 3: END OF YOUR INTERNSHIP

- Ensure any project work assigned to you is completed.
- Turn in all necessary materials to your faculty supervisor to receive your grade.
- Send a thank you note to your employer for the experience/opportunity, and to anyone who assisted you during your internship.
- Ask your employer for a letter of recommendation or a commitment to be a reference for future employment.
- Update your resume and consider asking your supervisor to review it and make suggestions.
- Stay in touch with the network you developed as an intern.

QUIZ

If you are applying for the Summer Internship Subsidy, thoroughly review the information in this orientation. When you're ready, use the [Summer Internship Subsidy Quiz](#) to proceed to the quiz.

The passing score for this quiz is 8 correct answers out of 10. Upon completion, your total points will be displayed at the top of the page. You are required to print a copy of this page and attach it to your internship approval form before submitting it to your Associate Dean's Office.

If you do not score 8 correct answers, you will need to meet with a coach to complete your orientation in person.