

SAN DIEGO  
**MESA COLLEGE**  
Career Center  
Work-Based Learning



# **INTERNSHIP Handbook**

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CREATE YOUR FUTURE

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# What is an Internship?



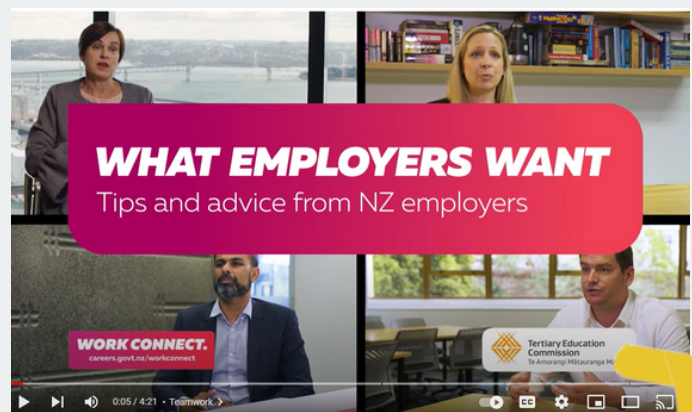
An **internship** is a form of experiential learning that gives students the opportunity to gain valuable, applicable experience and form connections within the professional fields that they are considering for career paths.

When hiring, employers consistently show a preference for candidates who have completed an internship because it demonstrates that the candidate has gained real-world experience where they've applied their academic and professional skills.

## THE BENEFITS

- Gives you an opportunity for professional development.
- Gives you an opportunity to “try out” a job in your field of study.
- Builds networks with professionals in the field.
- Develop and refine career readiness competencies.
- Great resume builder!

Watch this [video](#) to see what employers are looking for in interns.



# Recognize the Differences



## INTERNSHIPS



An Internship opportunity focuses on providing valuable meaningful field experience that is structured around a specific major or field of study and directly complements a student's classroom learning. It may be used towards degree credits, varies in length, and can either be paid or nonpaid.

## VOLUNTEER



Volunteer work is usually done for personal fulfillment relating to individual interests and skills. They can also be a great resume builder. There is usually no pay or college credit involved and can occur on an ongoing basis or short-term projects. Many volunteer opportunities occur within nonprofit or city agencies.

## SERVICE LEARNING



Service learning integrates community service with classroom instruction and reflection to enrich classroom learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Students taking classes that include service learning are required to connect experiences to course content through reading, writing, and dialogue.



# Types of Internship

## 1 PAID INTERNSHIPS

Paid internships are either run through an hourly wage model or a fixed stipend model. An hourly wage model takes into account federal or state minimum wage and pays you for your hours of service. Whereas a stipend model doesn't take into account the hours worked but rather has a fixed weekly, monthly, or quarterly amount awarded that is not subject to [Fair Labor Standard Act](#) minimum wage requirements.

## 2 UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

The [US Department of Labor has specific criteria](#) to determine if an internship doesn't have to be paid. Take a look at these five factors that should be present:

- Training is similar to that which would be given in an educational environment
- Training is for the benefit of the student and not the employer
- Internship position should not displace regular employees
- Employer provides training with no immediate advantage from intern's activities
- Student is not entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship

## 3 COLLEGE CREDIT

[Work Experience](#) allows students to earn academic credit for a job, internship, or volunteer position. Placements may be paid or unpaid and may be related to a student's career path/major or an opportunity to explore career options. Work Experience enrollment may be required by a student's academic program or taken as an elective based on student or employer choice. Students are supported by Mesa College faculty as they explore career pathways, learn professional skills, and gain real-world training in the workplace through this non-traditional class. Complete the steps to enroll in Work Experience at [www.sdmesa.edu/work-exp](http://www.sdmesa.edu/work-exp).

# Preparing to Search

*TIP: Start preparing for your internship search 3-6 months in advance*



## REFLECT ON YOUR INTERNSHIP GOALS

- What are your specific career interests?
- What do you hope to gain from an internship?
- What organization(s) would be best for your needs?
- How much time do you have for your internship?
- Will you consider both paid and nonpaid internships?
- Do you want college credit for the internship?

## UPDATE PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Update your resume with clearly outlined objective, relevant experience, course work, and skills
- Make sure you have an email address that is up-to-date and appropriate to use in a professional setting
- Gather all information necessary to complete the application with accuracy
- Prepare your cover letter, with examples that display your interest, relevant skills, and experience

## ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- Confirm you are enrolled in an accredited higher education institution

## WAYS TO STAND OUT TO EMPLOYERS

- Be in good academic and progress standing
- Have a strong GPA\* (\*requirements vary by internship)
- Boost your online presence with an up-to-date professional [LinkedIn](#) profile

# Searching & Applying

## *Online Internship Boards and Listings*



### TIPS TO KNOW

- Avoid any sites that require you to pay for an internship contact
- Many employers will list internship programs on their website
- Only post your resume on legitimate sites that offer internships

## 1. Networking

- Networking is interacting with others to develop professional and/or social contacts which accounts for over 80% of obtained jobs
- Informing everyone you know at school, work, or professional organizations that you are internship searching is a form of networking.
- Just as with job-hunting, networking may be one of your best sources for internships especially for competitive opportunities

## 2. Handshake



SDCCD is excited to announce our NEW & IMPROVED, district-wide student & alumni online job board, Handshake, as a free one-stop-shop for kick-starting careers.



## 3. LinkedIn

- LinkedIn is a business and employment-focused social media platform
- Create a strong profile and upload your resume to stand out
- Connect with past employers, coworkers, family and friends
- Apply for internship opportunities through the "Jobs" section of the site



# Searching & Applying



## Other Ways to Search

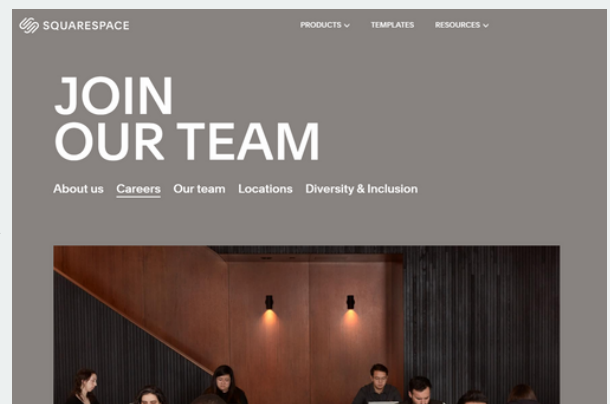
- **Career Events & Workshop**

Attending Mesa College career events, workshops, and fairs is a great way to increase your contacts and gain insight that will help your internship search.



- **Employer's Website and Social Media**

Not all employers will advertise their internships via job boards, so it is important to check their websites regularly for opportunities.



## TAKE YOUR OWN ACTION!

If you have identified a specific company or organization where you would like to intern, but they do not have a formal internship program or positions listed on their site, contact them and possibly create your own internship.

Here are some suggestions:

- Contact the human resources department directly via phone call or email.
- Indicate that: *"I am a Mesa College student, majoring in XXX, and I would like to intern in your organization."*
- Go one step further and tell them what you would like to do and the skills you can bring.
- If they do not have internships, they might know a person/department who is in need of an intern.
- Be ready to submit your resume right away.
- If they don't have any opportunities, ask if you can still email your resume for a future opportunity.
- Don't be afraid to be assertive and sell yourself as a great addition to their organization.



# 3 Steps to Prepare for an Interview



## 1 PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

- Practice a mock interview with a friend, family member or schedule an appointment with a Mesa Career Counselor
- Use [Big Interview](#) to practice on your own. Get started by creating your account with your student ID # [here!](#)
- Be prepared to market yourself; know your strengths and what differentiates yourself from others
- Send a thank you letter to any employer who gives you an opportunity to interview

## 2 THINGS TO RESEARCH ABOUT YOUR INTERNSHIP

- Is the internship paid or unpaid?
- How long does the internship last?
- Is there a dress code you need to follow?
- What reporting structures and work spaces are set up for interns?
- If there are other interns at this site, will you be working as a team?
- Does the company provide orientations, certifications, training or in-service opportunities?
- Will you be in a specific area or work on a particular project?
- Will you be learning different aspects of this organization by interning in more than one department?

## 3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

- Why do you want an internship with this organization?
- Why should they hire you for their internship program?
- How would you handle conflicts between your internship commitments and school schedule?
- How will this internship help you meet your career goals?

# During the Internship

## *Guidelines for a Successful Internship*

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Create a portfolio of work materials to keep track of your accomplishments



Keep all relationships within the organization professional and respectful



Be punctual for all assignments and meetings



Follow directions and ask questions if you are unsure about a task.



Be positive, motivated, and proactive!



Comply with company policies and procedures.



**Develop a network of professional contacts!**



# Mesa Impactship Program

*Make an Impact and Interning with a Purpose!*

The Mesa Impactship Program (MIP), supports students with exploring careers, developing professional skills, and compensating hands-on industry experiences through internships, volunteering, or Directed Clinical Practice (DCP). MIP is designed to promote workforce training & employment opportunities with focus on underserved student populations.

- Eligible Mesa students may receive a one-time \$1000 payment (stipend) OR hourly compensation for student workplace training & enrollment in a Work Experience or Directed Clinical Practice (DCP) course.
- Funding is intended to support students with reducing or eliminating out-of-pocket expenses such as childcare, equipment, fees, meals, professional attire, & more.
- MIP students will be part of a cohort community supported by Mesa faculty to help them prepare for career pathways. Make an impact & intern with a purpose!



**Complete the Mesa Impactship Program (MIP) Intake Form to check your eligibility!**

## **BENEFITS OF THE MESA IMPACTSHIP PROGRAM**

- Get paid for your workplace training (required or highly encouraged by many academic programs)
- Explore career pathways and companies to pursue
- Career development support by Mesa faculty to help you navigate the workplace
- Build your skills and experiences to stand out to employers!



# FAQs

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## 1. How do I find an internship?

There are many ways to begin your search for an internship:

- Schedule an appointment to meet our Internship Coordinator through our [Handshake](#) profile or via email: [pconsuegra@sdccd.edu](mailto:pconsuegra@sdccd.edu). For scheduling directions, click [here](#)!
  - Browse for internships through online job boards such as [Handshake](#)
  - Attend & participate in Mesa College Work-Based Learning and Career Center workshops, events, and fairs.
  - Network with friends, family, professors, co-workers, and anyone around you.
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## 2. Will I get paid?

Internships may or may not be paid, depending on the major and industry. However, the [Mesa Impactship Program\(MIP\)](#) and [Veterans Internship Program\(VIP\)](#) offer a one-time stipend OR hourly compensation for student workplace training & enrollment in a Work Experience or Directed Clinical Practice (DCP) course. Eligible students are also allowed to receive academic credit, in addition to being paid.

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## 3. How long do internships run?

The length of paid internships can be one academic semester/term, six months, or even up to an academic year. The duration should be agreed upon by both the student and the employer early in the process. Most internships are designed to follow the academic calendar and will involve working on a project that lasts throughout a semester/term, others may be designed to span the summer months when many students are not enrolled in classes.

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# Contact Us!

*Career Support is available for students and alumni.*

## Career Center



(619) 388-2777



mesacareer@sdccd.edu

### LOCATION

Student Services Building, 3rd floor  
I4-306



@sdmesacollegece



[bit.ly/SDMesaCareerCenter](https://bit.ly/SDMesaCareerCenter)

## Work-Based Learning



(619) 388-2701



mesawbl@sdccd.edu

### LOCATION

Business & Technology (BT)  
Building, BT-104



@sdmesawbl



[www.sdmesa.edu/WBL](http://www.sdmesa.edu/WBL)