



# JOPWELL

## GUIDE TO CRUSHING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Jopwell is the leading career advancement platform for Black, Latinx, and Native American students and professionals. We refer students of color to jobs and internships at 80+ companies across industries. In addition, we offer career guidance, content, and events relevant to our community.

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on securing a summer internship! The Jopwell team is excited for you, and we want to make sure you're well-prepared for it.

If this is your first internship, you may feel a mixture of excitement and nervousness. That's why we're here to guide you through the experience. In this internship guide, you will learn what you don't know you don't know and get up to speed on what you can expect from your summer gig. If this isn't your first internship, you'll take away key actionable steps to make this internship a lasting experience. This guide will help you determine how your summer role might fit, or not, with your overall career development.

Why did we write this guide? Because we would have loved to have something like this when we were first starting out. We had to learn workplace dos and don'ts through trial and error, and, without this inside knowledge, we missed out on networking, mentorship, and even full-time opportunities! We don't want you to make these same mistakes, which is why we decided to arm you with all the tools and advice we wish we had received.

This guide will allow you to spend less time adjusting to the culture of your office and more time excelling.

Let's do this!

# WHY INTERN?

Before we share all our tips on how to have a successful internship, we should talk about why internships matter in the first place.

Internships make you competitive. During your senior year, you'll be competing for jobs with thousands of other students. While your GPA may be commendable, internship experiences are actual proof to employers that you're familiar with the working world.

**The 411:** For some industries, job recruitment starts as early as freshman or sophomore year. Start your search as early as possible and try to land internships at places you think you might want to work.

## **Internships introduce you to the two-way street that is the working world.**

Let's debunk the myth that your company holds all the power. Internships are a two-way street! Both you and your company are trying to assess whether this relationship is a good fit. By the end of the summer, make sure the following questions are answered:

### **For you --**

- Do I want to work here?
- Do I like this job role or industry?
- Do I see myself at this company full-time?
- What is the company culture, and do I like it?

### **For the company --**

- Does this intern have the skills to do the job?
- Are they professional?
- Do they fit in with the team?
- Do they embody our company values?

# PRE-INTERNSHIP

Start your first day prepared to jump into the work. Internships go by very quickly, so you will need to make the most of every moment. The more you know about your industry, employer, and team, the better prepared you will be to ask meaningful questions and hold strong conversations.

## Research

In the days leading up to your first day, research like it's your job. While you're not expected to know everything at the start, it is important to arm yourself with some basic information.

- **Familiarize yourself with the industry**
  - Review industry news outlets: There is an abundance of information at your fingertips, so use it to your advantage. Do a quick search with the name of your industry then add "news outlets." (Think: "tech news outlets," or "finance news outlets.")
  - Set Google Alerts and subscribe to newsletters: Set an alert for key industry words and phrases. For example, if you were to intern with Jopwell, you'd set an alert for "Jopwell" and "diversity recruiting" to receive an email digest with relevant articles. To compliment Google Alerts, subscribe to newsletters related to your industry or job role to stay updated on breaking news and hear from thought leaders in your field.

### **The 411:**

Tech: TechCrunch, Recode, The Verge and WIRED

Finance: Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, Financial Times and MarketWatch.

Political: The New York Times, The Hill, The Washington Post, and Foreign Policy

# PRE-INTERNSHIP

- **Know the ins and outs of your company**

- Mission: A company's mission will give you a glimpse of what they value in an employee.
- Team: Familiarize yourself with the staff before you step foot into the office. Reviewing names and faces beforehand (and looking them up on LinkedIn) will save you time trying to remember who everyone is and what they do.

## Logistics

Before your first day, know who, what, where, and when.

- **Confirm Details**

- Know when and where you'll report on your first day and who you are meeting with. If you're part of a large internship program, chances are you've already received an email from the program administrator with all important details. If not, check your spam folder or follow up with your supervisor to confirm.

- **Dress to impress**

- Be clear on the office dress code. Even if you're told to dress casually, you don't want to show up in athleisure wear. Since it's your first day, err on the formal side then modify after you get a sense of what everyone else usually wears to work.
- Lay out your clothes ahead of time. Unlike unexpected traffic, your outfit is in your control, so save energy on your first morning and pick out your clothes in advance!

**Real Talk:** You may be on a budget before that first check hits your account, which means finding deals on business attire is a must. Don't underestimate thrift stores. If that's not your thing, there are many low-cost options. Take advantage of sales at Banana Republic, J.Crew Factory, Marshalls, and TJ Maxx.

# PRE-INTERNSHIP

- **Practice your commute**

- Plan to arrive 15 minutes before your start time to set yourself up for success. You can also avoid showing up late by calculating your commute beforehand, taking into account walking time, the wait for public transit, or time spent finding a parking spot. If you're in a major city with public transit, you'll want to download the city's transit app, follow them on social, or subscribe to email updates to help you make the most informed decision about your commute in the event of delays.

**The 411:** Pack a notebook and pen since you'll definitely want to take notes of all the information that comes your way. And bring a water bottle. There may not be a pantry readily accessible in your workplace, so come prepared.

# THE INTERNSHIP

The day is finally here! Here's how to prepare for a productive and meaningful experience.

## Get Acquainted

Begin with the end in mind. Carry these powerful questions with you:

Do I want to work here?

Do I like this job role or industry?

Do I see myself at this company full-time?

What is the company culture, and do I like it?

Your ability to evaluate your experience starts on day one. You will spend your first week adjusting to your new role, and understanding how the organization works.

By being intentional with your interactions and observations, you'll be able to determine how this internship fits into the career you think you want for yourself.

## What you need to know:

### Culture & Work Style

There are things that will be obvious about a company's culture from day one, like the dress code and lunch break norms. Things like empowerment and values that influence leadership's decision-making won't be as readily apparent. In order to gain a true sense of the culture, you must take note of communication and attitudes.



# THE INTERNSHIP

## Culture & Work Style

Ask Yourself:

- What are the email best practices?
- Is most communication done through email, instant messaging or in-person?
- What is the average amount of time employees stay at the company?
- How does leadership describe the future of the company?
- Do employees seem engaged or burned out?

## Priorities, Mission, Goals & Values

Each company has a set of core values and goals that drive its work. Core values are usually listed on the company website. If you're unsure of what they are, ask your manager. During your internship, you should take these values into consideration and reflect on them as you think about your future at the company.

## Compensation & Benefits

Compensation can vary significantly depending on the company and industry you choose. If you're a software engineer at a nonprofit, you probably won't make as much as if you worked at a large bank or tech company. However, salary is not the only form of compensation a company can offer.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## Culture & Work Style

Consider the benefits package like health insurance, 401k retirement savings and Paid Time Off (PTO). There are also untraditional benefits, such as flexible schedules, tuition reimbursement, and office snacks. These won't come up until you're considering a full-time offer, but it doesn't hurt to start thinking about how these things might affect where you want to work.

**The 411:** A popular new benefit companies and startups are offering is unlimited Paid Time Off (PTO). While this sounds like an invitation to take off for a month to backpack across Europe, you should ask how many days the average employee uses at one time. Unlimited PTO does not mean a free-for-all, so make sure you understand the parameters in advance.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## What you need to do:

### Take a Seat at the Table

Meetings are key indicators of a company's culture. And your voice will bring new perspectives and ideas to the table.

#### **Observe the following:**

- What is the structure of the meeting?
- How are decisions made?
- What are the roles and priorities?
- What are the interactions like?

If you want to contribute, do so. You never know who you will make an impression on with a thoughtful comment.

That being said, don't speak just to speak. Be mindful of the environment. If you're sitting in on a senior leadership meeting, wait until the meeting is over to share your thoughts with your supervisor. However, if you sit in on a brainstorm, come prepared to share your ideas.

### Attend Company Events

Your company may choose to host an event for employees or an open networking event for people in your industry. You should go! Events are a great way to break the ice and get to know your coworkers in a less formal setting.

Once you've networked, set up informational interviews to learn more about the people you've met and their roles at the company.

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**The 411:** You will be evaluated as an intern both in the workplace and in social settings. Remember that you don't have a job there yet! This means even if you're over 21, you should avoid the free alcohol.

## If something goes wrong...

**Real Talk:** Columbia professor Derald Sue first used the term "microaggression" to refer to "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color." These subtle forms of discrimination (questions like "no, but where are you really from?") are real, and can be tricky to handle in the workplace, especially when you're new. Here's what to do.

1. Find allies. As you're networking and making connections with other interns and full-time employees, you'll want to build trusting relationships so you have someone to turn to when you find yourself in frustrating situations. Insiders can give you tips on the best ways to address these issues without alienating yourself or putting a full-time offer at risk. No matter what, keep a file of the offenses so you have adequate documentation if you need to back up your claims.
2. Speak up. If uncomfortable behavior from a colleague is persisting, or even if it's a one-time thing and you don't feel best equipped to manage the situation, consider scheduling a meeting with your manager (or HR, if your manager is the problem) to strategize how to address the issue.
3. Take care of yourself. Your mental and emotional health can be triggered when microaggressions come your way, so take a personal time-out when needed.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## Gain Work Experience

Your #1 priority as an intern is to produce the best work you can and make a positive impact on the team. How can you do this?

### Develop your technical skills

Go out of your way to learn how to master the software and programs used in your industry. For example, if you're using Excel, after you learn the basics that will support your responsibilities, practice more complicated functions, like pivot tables. If you're a software engineering intern, learn your company's tech stack, including web frameworks, programming language, and databases.

**The 411:** Learn new skills with free or low-cost online based classes like Coursera, Skillshare, and Lynda, which many public libraries will give you access to for free. And don't sleep on libraries! Plenty of free resources are right at your local library; check out books related to your industry.

### Practice professionalism

Professionalism looks different for every company but is always defined by presentation and communication. The working world is going to be different from your experience in school. Watch your non-intern team members' behavior and interactions.

### Set goals and meet them

During your first week, you will meet with your manager to discuss your projects. If you're working on long-term projects, make sure to set smaller goals for yourself to help you stay on track without getting overwhelmed.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## **Ask for help, get feedback, and course correct**

You'll know it's time to ask for help when you have been stalled for an extended period of time or unable to find a solution to a work issue. When you ask for help, make it clear to your manager that you've tried every possible alternative. Once you receive support, take notes and implement them to avoid having to ask about the same issue again.

Interns aren't expected to know everything, but they are expected to grow throughout the summer. Own this by asking for feedback. We know developmental feedback can be difficult to receive, but we challenge you to view it as a gift. In meetings with your manager, ask how you can better meet the team or company goals. After completing a project or presentation, ask for suggestions on how you can improve.

**Real Talk:** Volunteer for more projects if you don't think you're being challenged enough. Your internship should not exclusively consist of coffee runs and making copies. If you find yourself in this situation, speak to your manager about taking on more responsibility.

## **Learn from other teams**

While you were hired as an intern to work for one specific team, reach out to individuals from other teams for coffee. Learning what other teams are working on will help you do your job better and understand how your work is helping the company as a whole.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## Make Connections

### What you need to know

Use the internship to cultivate relationships with potential mentors and sponsors. It's crucial to your career success that you have both.

### The difference:

Mentors are...	Sponsors are...
...in a position with experience you desire.	...in senior-level positions and they're invested in your career success.
...there to support you through formal or informal discussions about how to build skills, qualities, and confidence. They will be the ones you turn to for candid advice.	...there to promote you directly using their influence and network. They're your advocates.
...able to help you craft your career goals.	...able to help you drive your career goals.
...willing to provide feedback and offer insight.	...willing to give you access to their network connections and make introductions for you.

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## What you need to do

### Refine your introduction

On your first day you will meet tons of people and they're going to ask you about yourself. If these introductions give you anxiety, we've created a template that you can use to give them all the information they are looking for.

#### *Sample Introduction*

*Hi! My name is {{Name}}, and I am a {{freshman/sophomore/junior/senior}} at {{college}} studying {{major}}. This summer I'm working with {{supervisor name}} on the {{team}} team. I'm looking forward to work on {{insert 1-2 sentences of what you'll be working on}}.*

### Show your best self

You will be evaluated throughout your internship experience. That's why taking control of your narrative is essential. Always produce your best work, and if your manager or other team members have complimented your work ethic, save those emails or messages. When it comes time to sit with your manager and go over your work progress, you'll want to have proof of your hard work and success.

Body language is key. Be aware of it at all times. If you're slouching, you might come off as unprofessional or timid, which could translate as uninterested. Instead, to exude confidence and professionalism, sit up straight.

**Real Talk:** The harsh reality is that there are relatively very few people of color in leadership positions. This means that as you're developing relationships with mentors and sponsors, they may not look like you, and that's okay. Think of the people you have in your corner as specialists who support you. One person may be a specialist in navigating white spaces as a Latinx man while another may be a specialist in developing a marketing career.



# THE INTERNSHIP

## **Schedule coffee chats**

Meet colleagues on other teams for coffee chats, also known as informational interviews. Keep in mind though, people are busy. The worst thing you can do is request time to speak with a professional and have nothing to say or offer. Come prepared with information about the person you're meeting and a few questions to dig deeper into their career trajectory. Ultimately, you want to leave the informational interview with a strong sense of what that person's role is in the company and the steps it took for them to successfully get there.

### *Sample Coffee Chat Email Request*

*Hi {{Name}},*

*My name is {{Name}}, and I am a {{freshman/sophomore/junior/senior}} at {{college}} studying {{major}}. This summer I'm working with {{Supervisor name}} on the {{team}} team.*

*I admire the work you're doing with {{insert a fact about something that shows you've looked them up}}. I'd love to learn more about your career path and your role at {{company}}. Do you have time to talk for 30 minutes over coffee in the next week?*

*Regards,  
{{Your Name}}*

## **Socialize with other interns**

You might think that you'll be fine if you only bond with full-time team members, but you'll miss out on opportunities that a network of your peers can provide. You and your peers are the leaders of tomorrow, so don't let social anxiety prevent you from growing your network.

# THE INTERNSHIP

## **Consider your future**

If you're interested in working at the company full-time, bring this up with your supervisor. Be prepared to talk about what your goals and interests are, whether it's in the same department or another. It might be helpful to have a particular position in mind.

**Real Talk:** There is a possibility that you might not vibe with the other interns or that you might not have much in common because they come from different backgrounds. Nevertheless, find a way to relate to them socially. Whether it be through a shared interest in a Netflix series or love for a particular basketball team, make it happen. When you start working you won't always be surrounded by people who share your same views—use this time to go outside your comfort zone.

# POST-INTERNSHIP

Once your internship comes to an end, you'll need to figure out what's next.

## **What you need to know**

Your internship should not end when you're no longer reporting to work. The contacts you made and the skills you developed should help guide your next steps.

## **What you need to do**

**You received a return offer.** Congratulations! You've shown the company that you are an excellent fit for the team. Now what?

- **Be clear on what the offer is** - When you receive the offer letter, review it to make sure you understand the role you are being offered as it may be different from your internship. If you are at a larger company you may receive an offer to join an organized entry-level program. If so, your salary will be standardized and you will join a cohort of other new grads. If you are at a smaller company, you may have room to negotiate your salary and benefits.
- **Be prompt** - Be mindful of response deadlines and adhere to them. If you need more time, communicate that with your point of contact.
- **Update your resume** - Within a week of your last day you should update your resume with your accomplishments from the summer.
- **Send your thank yous** - Show gratitude to people who helped you throughout the process in the form of an email or handwritten note. Don't forget your supervisor, people you've met through informational interviews, and people you've met at company events. If you're accepting an offer, let them know and thank anyone who helped make it happen. If you're moving on to another company (or simply returning to school), let them know what's next.

# POST-INTERNSHIP

## **You didn't receive a return offer.**

- **Update your resume** - Within a week of your last day you should update your resume with your accomplishments from the summer. If you feel comfortable, ask your manager if they will look over your resume bullets for the role and make any suggestions.
- **Keep in touch** - By the time you leave your internship, you will have a significantly larger network than when you started. Add everyone you met on LinkedIn. If your supervisor was someone you developed a strong relationship with, update them every 6 months with your career progress. Don't be someone who only reaches out when you need something. If you're always in contact, they will keep you in mind when opportunities arise.
- **Leverage your experience** - When you go on interviews for other internships and full-time jobs, use what you learned during your internship to paint a picture of what you have to offer as a candidate. When interviewing, focus on the skills you developed throughout the summer and highlight how your contribution fit into the big picture of the company.

# CONCLUSION

You're ready to crush your summer internship! We hope you feel empowered to take the lead and excel in all your future career goals.

Quick refresh?

- Research: Learn as much as you can about your company and industry before day one.
- Ask questions: Be curious about the people, business, and projects you're exposed to.
- Schedule coffee chats: Learn about different careers and experiences
- Network: Attend work and industry-related events

We wish you all the luck!

Found this helpful? Join us in our mission to have more Black, Latinx, and Native American students in the workplace and share the wealth of information with a friend who might need it!

We want to hear from you! Email us at [campuse@jopwell.com](mailto:campuse@jopwell.com) if you have any lingering thoughts, or comments after reading this guide!