

Summer Jobs and Internships

What is the difference between a summer job and a summer internship?

Summer jobs are always paid and don't necessarily have anything to do with your major field of study or your career interests. Internships can be paid or unpaid and are linked to your major field of study or career interest.

What if I have to make money?

All experience is good experience. Many students need to make money during the summer. Because internships, particularly in certain fields, are often unpaid, students who need to make money assume they have no choice but to take a summer job. You can do both. Take a job that gives you some hours available during the workweek and carve out anywhere from 10 - 20 hours that you can devote to an unpaid internship. You've got the best of both worlds -- a paycheck plus some meaningful experience and exposure that will help you further clarify your career direction.

Summer Jobs:

How can I find a summer job?

If you plan on living at home during the summer, then consider the employers in your geographic area. Students have worked in restaurants, retail stores, summer recreational programs for children, day camps, labs, offices (often as a temp), banks, lawn care, child care, and libraries. Contact these places directly and ask if they hire for the summer and how can you apply. It is likely you will not secure the job prior to

summer break, but you can do a lot of advanced leg work to ensure you land a job quickly once you arrive at home.

Restaurant and Retail jobs

Most of these positions require that you apply in person. Dress in appropriate attire. You probably won't need to wear a suit, but you should be a little more dressed up than usual. Frequently you will be asked to fill out an employment application. Come prepared with the dates, names and contact information from your previous employment experiences. You may or may not need to submit a resume, but it doesn't hurt to bring one along, just in case.

Temp agencies

If there are temp agencies in your community, you may want to start contacting them before you arrive home for the summer to see what kinds of placements they usually make. In most cases, though, you'll need to go to their office in person in order to begin the application process.

Classified Ads

Many newspaper classified sections start running summer job postings in the spring. It's easy to search most classified sections online. Just do a search for the newspapers in your area, and then look for their summer listings.

Summer Camps

Don't discount summer camps as a summer job option. Camps frequently have the benefit of providing free room and board. This can save a lot of money if you're not planning to live at home for the summer. Camps are also a great resume builder for people interested in teaching. Many private schools

look very favorably upon camp employment when hiring entry-level teachers.

Internet Sources

There are many places to look online for summer jobs. A good place to start is the Career Services web page at www.oberlin.edu/career. You'll find links to a variety of interesting summer job databases. Other places you might look include:

Craigslist. www.craigslist.org
Choose your city of interest. Go to the Classifieds section, and type "summer" into the keyword search.

Federal government jobs.

www.usajobs.opm.gov The federal government hires a number of summer student workers in positions ranging from data entry and food service to financial planning. Go to their job search section and type "summer" into the keyword search.

Peterson's Summer Programs

www.petersons.com/summerop/code/ssector.asp Search for summer camps or programs that interest you, then visit their websites for application info.

Internships:

What is an internship?

An internship is a fun and exciting way to put your liberal arts skills into action. Internships are a form of experiential learning; you learn about a career that interests you through direct experience in that field. Internships are similar to summer or part-time jobs in some ways; you work for an employer in a professional setting. However, internships are usually more substantial than part-time or summer jobs, and focus on the learning that takes place as a result of the work you're doing. Oberlin students can do internships throughout the year.

Some internships are paid, but many are not. Internships can be full-time or part-time. The variety of internships available is enormous.

What are the benefits?

Internships are a valuable supplement to your liberal arts education, allowing you to enhance your skills and apply classroom knowledge to a professional environment. Career Services encourages all students to complete at least one internship during their time at Oberlin.

Internships help you:

- Identify and explore career areas of interest
- Gain new skills
- Build your resume
- Develop a network of professionals in your fields of interest

When can you do internships?

Oberlin students most commonly do internships during the summer. However, some students are able to arrange part-time internships during the semester. Winter term is also a very popular time for internships. Career Services coordinates many unique and exciting winter term internships across the country. Students from all class years are strongly encouraged to apply for a winter term internship. (See more details below)

Finding an Internship

Looking for an internship is very similar to looking for a job. The skills you learn and the resources you discover in your internship search will help you down the road when you apply for jobs after graduation.

There are several different strategies you can use for finding an internship. You might:

- Look for internship listings on websites and in newspapers and directories
- Identify prospective employers and contact them to ask about internship opportunities

- Network to find out about hidden opportunities

It's a good idea to use a combination of these methods, rather than just relying on one of them.

Internship Listings

Internship listings received by Career Services are entered into our ObieOpps internship database. We also provide students with access to the UCAN and LACN databases, which are shared by consortia of selective colleges and universities. The ObieOpps, LACN, and UCAN databases are the first places to look for internships.

Other places to look for internships include:

- Web databases: (see links at www.oberlin.edu/career)

- Internship Directories: some of the directories you'll find in the Career Services library include:

- Peterson's Guide to Internships
- Music and Entertainment Industry Internship Guide
- National Directory of Arts Internships
- Internship Bible

When you start applying for internships, take time to read the listing carefully, and then reply thoughtfully. Research the employer, and write a targeted cover letter explaining your interest in the organization and internship, and your specific skills and qualifications. Avoid rewriting the listing in your cover letter.

Most internship listings clearly outline the application materials they require, the deadlines for application, and the ways in which they would prefer to receive your application. You may be disqualified if you disregard these instructions.

ObieOpps

Oberlin specific opportunities are listed in the ObieOpps database. Search by type of internship, location, keyword, or employer name.

Log on at www.oberlin.edu/career/. Use your email as your username and your T number as the password. Click on the "Jobs & Internship" tab, and then on "Oberlin Jobs" to begin your search.

Identify Prospective Employers

Another internship search strategy is to identify prospective employers by field of interest and/or geographic area. Check the webpages of employers you're interested in, and click on the Jobs or Human Resources link if there is one.

After you've researched a particular organization, call to inquire about internship possibilities. Ask for the name of the person who should receive your resume. Write a targeted cover letter and resume, and follow up with a phone call a week later.

Networking

Networking is a very successful strategy for identifying internship opportunities. An effective networking approach is to conduct an informational interview with people who work in your field of interest. Ask general questions about the field, to learn as much as you can, and continue to evaluate whether this is a field in which you'd like to do an internship. Also ask for information about where you should look for internships. Are there other people you should talk to, publications you should read, email lists you should subscribe to? More information about successful networking is available on the Career Services website.

Sources for informational interviews can be family, friends, previous employers or coworkers, Oberlin alumni, and professional organizations.

OBIEweb

Oberlin's complete alumni database is available to students who wish to contact alumni for informational interviews and networking. Fields within OBIEweb allow you to search for alumni who have volunteered to mentor Oberlin students and to find alumni who may have housing available. For access to OBIEweb, make an appointment to meet with a career advisor.

Application deadlines

Application deadlines for internships vary greatly. The process of searching for internships and applying takes time. Don't miss out on great opportunities by waiting too long to get started. Some of the first deadlines for summer internships are as early as December, so it's a good idea to get started looking during fall semester.

Making it work: Housing

Finding short-term housing in a new city can be challenging. It may take resourcefulness and perseverance to find a place to live. The first step in your housing search is to make a list of all the people you know who have connections in the city where you'd like to live. Include long-lost relatives, friends of friends, even parents of your Oberlin friends who are from that city. Contact everyone on your list to see if they can put you up for awhile, or if they have ideas about where you could look for housing.

In addition to contacting everyone on your housing list, you may wish to use some online sources to widen your

search. Check the temporary housing links on the internship section of the Career Services webpage. You may also wish to look into housing options at universities in the city where you'll be living. Some universities rent out dorm rooms on a temporary basis, and some have housing offices that list sublet advertisements. You should also check the Oberlin online classifieds to see if any alumni have posted sublets in the city where you'll be.

Occasionally, an Oberlin alum will be willing to provide temporary housing for students. You can search for alumni who are willing to house students in the Obieweb database. Meet with a career advisor for more instructions about how to do this. The number of alumni who have housing available is typically quite low, so don't plan on this option as your only strategy.

Making it work: Money

Another challenge students sometimes face is that many internships are unpaid. Don't let your need to earn money over the summer deter you from looking at unpaid internships. If there's a great unpaid internship that you'd love to do, apply for it. Remember that many unpaid internships are flexible enough to allow for part-time work elsewhere. You may be able to work a couple of days per week at the internship site, and alternate with a few days per week at a paying job. This will make for a busy summer, but the experience you gain may well be worth the extra effort.

Credit

In some cases, it is possible to earn credit for your summer internship. In order to be eligible for credit, your

internship must meet the following requirements:

- The internship must be approved by Career Services. (Internships must be able to fit within an academic context. Not all internships will be approved for credit.)
- A faculty member must agree to sponsor the internship.
- You must complete all paperwork with Career Services before the internship begins. No retroactive credit will be granted.
- You must be at the internship site a minimum of 200 hours.
- Internships may not be paid.
- The internship site must require that you receive credit.

You are eligible to earn one academic credit for each internship completed. The credit will be applied as a general credit, and will not count toward fulfillment of major or distribution requirements. A maximum of two internship credits may be applied toward graduation. Internships will be graded on a CR/NE basis. The fee for a summer credit internship is \$50.

Winter term

Winter term offers a unique opportunity for Oberlin students to complete internships. The Office of Career Services coordinates many challenging and exciting winter term internships, primarily with alumni, at sites across the country. Students of all class years are encouraged to apply for these internships. Applications are due in early to mid-November. You can apply for these internships online through *ObieOpps* on the Career Services website. Visit the Winter Term Internship section of the website for more information.