

# JACK KENT COOKE



## FOUNDATION

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### Steps to Finding Internships

#### **Identify why you want to apply for an internship.**

Before you begin searching for an internship, think carefully about your goals for your internship experience. Setting goals will help you evaluate the opportunities you find and guide you to the best experience for you.

- What do you want to learn or gain from an internship? Do you want to explore career options? Get the inside scoop on a particular industry or company? Learn a new skill set or apply a particular skill you've learned in school? Network?
- What are your career interests? What industry would be the best fit for your skills and interests? If you are interested in several career paths, consider focusing on one for your first internship with plans to explore another path with a different internship in the future.
- What kind of organization do you want to work for? A large corporation or a small family business? A for-profit or a non-profit company?

#### **Explore the fields of interest, careers, or organizations where you might intern.**

Learn what types of careers are available in your field of study and explore the possibility of securing a summer internship to explore those careers. Resources you can use include:

- **The Career Center** on your college campus.
  - Schedule an appointment with a career adviser to discuss your goals and options.
  - Take a career assessment if it's available.
  - Review the Career Center's website. Most schools use their websites to promote internship opportunities and resources.
- **Cooke Foundation professional resources**
  - [Visit your canvas course](#) to view a list of internship opportunities sponsored by Cooke Alums at their places of employment.
  - We will post other internship opportunities in the [Cooke Scholars & Alumni LinkedIn group](#).
- **Online searches** for internships will bring up a myriad of resources. Some helpful websites include:
  - <https://www.idealists.org/en/> (nonprofits)
  - <https://www.dice.com/> (tech jobs)
  - <https://www.collegegrad.com/topemployers>
  - <https://www.state.gov/students/>
  - <https://www.goabroad.com/intern-abroad>
  - <https://blog.collegevine.com/research-opportunities-high-school/> (internships for high school seniors)
  - <https://www.intelligencecareers.gov/nsa/nsastudents.html>
  - <https://scholarships360.org/careers/internship-for-high-school-students/>
  - <https://www.usajobs.gov/Search/Results?k=internship>

- <https://airandspace.si.edu/support/get-involved/internships/summer-internship-program#apply>
- <https://latino.cornell.edu/scholarship-internship-resources>
- <https://undoc.ucmerced.edu/academic-support/internship-opportunities> (undocumented students)
- **Networking** may be one of your best sources for inside information. Talk to everyone you know and let them know that you are looking for an internship. Ask about each person's career path and set up informational interviews with those who are working in industries that interest you.
  - A useful guide to networking can be found at: <https://www.northwestern.edu/careers/jobs-internships/networking/index.html>
  - People to talk to include:
    - Cooke Scholars and Alums in the [Cooke Scholars & Alumni group on LinkedIn](#).
    - Your college department chairs, professors, and office staff.
    - Alumni of your college. Your school has an alumni office that can help connect you with alumni who are in your field.
    - Family, friends, and friends of friends.
- **Libraries and local bookstores** have many publications on internships and how to successfully apply for one. Some useful guidebooks are:
  - *Vault Guide to Top Internships*
  - *How to Land Your Dream Internship* by Tam Pham
  - *Princeton Review's The Best Top 109 Internships*
  - *The Student's Federal Career Guide* by Kathryn Kraemer Troutman and Emily K. Troutman

## **Things to Consider**

Once you've started searching for the perfect internship, here are some things to consider:

- Application deadline
  - Deadlines vary, but many internship opportunities for summer positions are posted in mid- to late-fall with deadlines in early to mid-spring.
  - Some programs have rolling deadlines but getting your application in earlier rather than later is recommended.
- Compensation
  - Consider whether the program you are considering offers a salary or stipend or, conversely, has fees you need to pay in order to participate.
  - Consider other practical benefits such as housing, public transportation passes, group events with other interns, or seminars with management or other field experts.
  - Research other perks the company can provide such as tickets to events or travel opportunities.
  - Note that, in general, paid internships are most common in healthcare and related research, architecture, science, engineering, law, business (especially accounting and finance), technology, and advertising. Unpaid internships are common at nonprofit organizations and in government agencies as well as in the fields of journalism and the arts such as museums and theatres.
- Length of internship
  - Determine if the internship coincides with your summer break schedule (or winter break schedule for an externship).

- If you have a scheduling conflict, ask whether the program could be flexible with the start and end dates for participation.
- Location
  - Some internships are virtual, some require you to be on site, and others offer a hybrid situation. It's important to decide if you are able to relocate for the summer or if you need to limit your search to local and virtual opportunities.
  - Determine whether you will enjoy living and working in the city or community where the program is located. Also check to see if housing is arranged by the program or if the company will help you find housing or roommates.
  - If the internship is not near your home or school, determine whether expenses such as travel and rent are included or if you will need to cover those.
    - Consider whether the cost of living at the internship site is feasible based on the compensation.
- Academic credit available for the internship
  - Does the internship require that you receive academic credit for the internship?
  - Does your school or major require an internship as part of your coursework?
  - What are the requirements to receive credit, and how much is tuition for those credits?
- Background check
  - If you are seeking a position with some government agencies or defense contractors dealing with sensitive material, you may be asked to undergo a background check as well as drug testing.

### **Applying for an Internship**

Now that you've sorted out which internships seem to be a good fit, there are a few steps to take and documents to prepare to successfully apply for the program.

#### **Create or update your résumé, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile**

- Look at examples online or in books at the Career Center, library, or local bookstore.
- Draft a résumé and request feedback from the Career Center or others in the field.
- Look at other LinkedIn profiles for examples. Ask your Career Center for feedback and suggestions.
- Be sure to note that you are a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholar.

#### **Strengthen your professional writing skills**

- Since many applications require short essays, consider drafting a few based on typical topics such as "How You Will Benefit from this Internship" and "What Your Career Goals Are."
- Request feedback on your essays or other writing samples from a professor, the Career Center, or the Writing Center at your school. You can also request feedback from family or friends.
  - Note that some of the science-related internships in research will require you to submit an outline of your proposed project. If you're interested in this field, be sure to start crafting a well-thought-out proposal and request feedback from your professors.
- Prepare thank you notes or letters to be sent immediately after phone or in-person interviews. You can find examples online to use for reference as you personalize the note, such as <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/samplethankyou.htm>.
- If you are corresponding via email, remember to remain professional with your writing. A good site to consult regarding how to email professionally is [http://www.businessemail etiquette.com/?page\\_id=276](http://www.businessemail etiquette.com/?page_id=276)

## **Practice interviewing**

Your interview for an internship is as important as having a good application. Be sure to think through possible interview scenarios beforehand so that you are best prepared to give thoughtful answers.

Practice both phone and in-person techniques.

- Memorize your résumé and be able to provide specific examples that exemplify your responsibilities or your character.
- Create a list of questions to ask that will help you decide whether the program or organization would be a good fit for you.
  - Always ask a few questions, even if you just ask about the hiring process. You can find examples online at <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest2.htm>.
  - Do your research on the organization to ask thoughtful questions for both an informational interview and an internship interview. You can tailor organization-specific questions based on your research.
    - Check online at the organization's website or request materials from the company. Also ask anyone in your Career Center, department, family, and friends about the company—you may be surprised to discover that someone works at the organization and can give you first-hand knowledge.
  - Similarly, if you know with whom you will be interviewing, see if you can find out some background information about the person online at the company website so you can connect on a personal level, especially if they are an alumnus of your school.
- Set up practice interviews with the Career Center or someone you know who can give you constructive feedback.
- Dress appropriately and review techniques on professional conduct. Information can be found online or in books about interviewing. One good site to consider is: [http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviews/Job\\_Interview\\_Tips.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviews/Job_Interview_Tips.htm).
- Remember that the in-person interview is your chance to make a good first impression.

## **Recommendations/References**

Identify at least two professionals who can write strong letters of recommendations on your behalf. Ask them if they would be willing to serve as a reference. Share your résumé and the internship job description.

- Confirm that you have the best contact information for the company to use – some people may prefer to use their cell phone instead of an office line, for example.
- Give your references advance notice that someone may be in touch, including the name of the company and internship coordinator if you have it.

## **Transcripts**

Be prepared to provide official transcripts for the internship if requested. These can usually be ordered for a nominal fee from your school's Registrar's office to be delivered within three to five business days. For an additional cost, many Registrars' offices can overnight a transcript. Transcripts can often be requested online, by mail, or in person.

## **During Your Internship**

Just a few recommendations for you to consider now that you have secured your internship:

- Create a learning agenda prior to starting your internship that outlines your academic, career, skill, or personal development, which will help you manage your experience. Share these with your supervisor, which could help set the tone by showing that you are serious about learning and interested in taking on real tasks during your internship.
- Be proactive and seek opportunities by demonstrating a willingness to learn. Ask good questions, be open minded, and take the initiative until you prove yourself to both your supervisor and colleagues. Give them the opportunity to provide you with good projects the first few weeks. If, however, you still want more interesting work, ask for a meeting with your supervisor, and seek more relevant projects. Start with a positive opening such as: “I’ve really enjoyed this internship so far” and then offer an idea of a project or learning experience you would like.
- Remember that you are being evaluated for your professional conduct, so act and dress appropriately. Be punctual, work hard, be responsible, and display a good attitude.
- Make good use of the networking opportunities at your organization and seek advice from those in positions that interest you. Seek out a mentor and develop a good relationship with him/her.
- Use technology for work purposes only and do not review or download programs from questionable or illegal websites.
- Adhere to company policy regarding work materials, particularly if you are working with confidential and sensitive material. Be sure to keep information locked if necessary.
- Consider creating a portfolio, which you can develop to serve as a marketing tool for future internships or positions. The portfolio could include items such as copies or summaries of complete projects and positive reviews from your colleagues and/or supervisor.

### **After Your Internship**

After your internship ends, be sure to do the following:

- Send a personalized thank you note to your supervisor and any other staff members who mentored you. Your note should indicate your appreciation for the experience and their assistance throughout the internship. In addition, you should identify a few things you have learned and how this information is supporting your goals.
- Stay in touch with your supervisor and other professionals you met during your internship after sending the thank you note by occasionally corresponding by email or phone. If you go to school near your internship site, you could possibly even arrange to meet for lunch every few months. These connections could provide additional support as you pursue another internship opportunity or later as you seek to find a job.