

## **INTERNSHIP ADVICE**

Your internship is not just about providing assistance to your organization. Your personal learning experience should also be on your mind every day. You'll find that you learn more if you are proactive in seeking ways to make the most of your time on the job. Below are 5 helpful tips to make the most out of your daily internship experience.

### **1. Observe and Report**

Everyday your working with your internship site, make sure you are observing the structure and culture of the organization. *Who seems to be important? What kinds of tasks seem to be prioritized? Where do people congregate? When are the crunch times? How do decisions get made? What are the unwritten rules of the workplace?* Make notes of your observations and see how well you can figure out the organization as a whole.

### **2. Ask More**

Make it a goal to yourself to do more than the typical intern. When you have completed your tasks, seek out new tasks rather than heading home early. Volunteer when new opportunities arise. Take on jobs that no one else wants to do or anticipate tasks that might need to be done (i.e., refilling the paper tray in the copy machine). This does not mean that you should allow your employer to take advantage of your good nature, or that you should do your assigned tasks sloppily in order to get on to other tasks, but that you should make the most of your opportunity and learn as much as you can about its components.

### **3. Keep Track of your Work Product**

If you are producing work for your employer that you can keep copies of, select the best work and (*with your employer's approval*) compile a portfolio. If not, or if your work is not easily copied, keep an informational log of the kinds of tasks you're performing, the kinds of systems and methods you're using, and the kind of assignments you complete. Like a master list that you can refer back to as you edit and customize your resume to include specific tasks. Additionally, if you interview in the field (or in a related field) later, you'll benefit from being able to review your work before the interview, so that you can accurately explain your area of experience.

### **4. Ask Questions**

Don't be afraid to ask questions! Ask others about their tasks, about the organization, about the field generally. You don't want to project the sense that you're seeking gossip, or proprietary secrets, but demonstrating curiosity about the field will not only provide more opportunities for learning but will mark you as intelligent and motivated. It doesn't hurt to research the organization as much as you can beforehand so that you can ask good questions.

### **5. Network**

Meet as many people as you can. Look for tasks that require that you interact with other offices or different sections of the organization. In highly regimented offices, you might ask your supervisor for permission to interview co-workers in different divisions. In more informal organizations, you might be required to interact with everyone in the office, and you can make the most of these interactions by introducing yourself and explaining your position. Get to know your fellow interns. Introduce yourself to co-workers in the elevator. Make friends with administrative assistants. You don't want to be seen as a social butterfly who spends all their time socializing, but a little friendliness can result in long time contacts. When you leave, keep track of email addresses, and send follow up emails to particularly close contacts.