

Most large companies offer internships, although they may not always be advertised. It is a good idea to network among your contacts to see if anyone knows of an upcoming internship opportunity. Students within the university system may have to seek the assistance of their placement and career services department to identify one for them. For those within the high school system, particularly technical high schools, your work-experience teacher is mandated to seek these opportunities for you.

Whether your internship is two weeks or two years, ensure you make great use of this career enhancing experience. Completing internships allows students to explore and experiment while gaining professional experience and exposure. Additionally, internships helps participants develop essential skills and build the confidence to secure a first job or graduate school opportunity.



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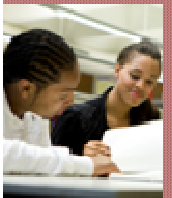
## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNSHIPS



Most university students and even high school students are aware of what is an internship. An internship can be defined as a paid or unpaid employment situation in which a student works in order to gain hands-on experience. For university students, internships usually occur during third or final year, while for some high school students, their internships, more popularly known as work-experience, occur in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11 grades.

Internships can last anywhere from 2 weeks to a couple of years.

While most students are aware of what an internship is, many do not know how participating in an internship can positively enhance their career. The following are some of the benefits:



☞ It will allow you to gain valuable work experience. This is especially recommended for those with no prior work experience, as an internship will help to bolster your resume, and prove to your potential employers that you do have the relevant work experience.

☞ It will give you exposure to office and work culture. Again, this is significant for those persons without any work experience. For these persons, participating in an internship programme will give them practical knowledge of the workplace and will allow them to see first hand the various personalities that exist within the workplace.

☞ It can help you determine if your chosen career is right for you. Internships are usually short-term, so you can test your future career without committing to it and find out if it is a career that will satisfy you.



☞ It is a great way to network in your field. An internship programme allows you to meet people

who might help you land a job later on and give you contacts in the industry you're trying to enter. In addition, references from people in the industry will really add weight to your application.

☞ It offers you the opportunity to apply the theory you learn in school to real-life situations. It is a chance to prove that your knowledge of your career goes beyond what you have gleaned from your textbooks.

☞ It can help you develop new skills. While it's good to have an area of strength - a focus for your career - more diverse skills in a variety of fields can make you more marketable to a potential employee.