

Tips on Making Your Internship a Successful Experience

- Research the organization before you show up on the first day: what is their mission or purpose? Who are their partners or clients? Looking at their website and references to them on the web will give you a better understanding of what they do and who they are. When you begin volunteering there, you will be able to ask informed questions.
- In signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the organization agrees to provide the intern with an orientation, training, and supervision. If you don't receive an orientation or training at the beginning of your internship, or ongoing supervision, make sure to check in with your site supervisor about it. You can refer to the MOU as a reminder of their commitment to GWS. Another option is to talk with your professor and ask for support in making it happen.
- If it isn't covered in the orientation you receive, ask for specifics on the organization and the program you will be working with: what is the organization's history, mission, focus, projects? How does the work you will be doing fit into the larger picture of the organization?
- With your site supervisor, spend some time reviewing the written description of your position or project. It is important that you are clear on what your role is there, and that you and your supervisor have the same understanding about your responsibilities as an intern. If your work changes part way through your internship in a way that you are unhappy with, you can refer to the description when discussing your tasks with your supervisor.
- Communicate with your supervisor: make sure to ask questions when you don't understand an assignment, a concept, background history, etc. Also communicate challenges you are facing in doing your assigned responsibilities. The internship will go much better if you communicate any needs you have for support, clarification, information or other types of assistance.
- Make sure to show up on time, when expected, and for the full amount of time you agreed on. If you can't go in one day, make sure to communicate as soon as possible with your supervisor. Arriving late, leaving early, or missing a lot of work don't show commitment to the internship.
- As part of the course, you will be receiving a mid-term and final evaluation from your host organization. These evaluations will help you in both your personal and professional growth, and you can also use them in applying for other internships or jobs. If you wish, you can ask your supervisor for time to give input on what went well and what could have gone better from your perspective, to help them work more effectively with future interns.
- Ask your supervisor if you can request a letter of recommendation when applying for graduate school or future jobs or internships.

For more tips, go to:

- [UC Berkeley Career Center "Tips for Internship Success"](#)
- [About.com's "Top 10 Tips for Interns"](#)
- [Fast Web's "Top Tips for Internship Success"](#)