

## **Internships for Sociology Majors\***

### **Why internships are important for Sociology Majors**

Few occupations at the B.A. level will include "sociologist" in their title. That said, the sociological perspective is excellent preparation for a wide variety of occupations. Students who graduate with a B.A. in Sociology and enter the job market directly will find themselves competing with other liberal arts students, but with an advantage—a critical understanding of key social factors and structures, and a firm grasp on research design and methods (just to name a few.)

However, this advantage for the Sociology Major is only as good as s/he can translate them for a potential employer in terms of concrete skills acquired through actual work experiences. An internship is a great way to start developing these skills and experiences.

### **Reasons to do an internship:**

- Helps you to stand out in a competitive job market
- Helps with some graduate school applications
- Expands your resume
- Makes contacts for job references
- Internship may lead to a permanent position

### **Even better reasons to do an internship:**

- Enables you to explore a variety of career interests, occupations, and work environments
- Allows you to apply classroom knowledge
- Develops new skills and builds on your experience
- Develops professional relationships and mentors
- Increases self-confidence, leadership skills, and builds interpersonal and communication skills

### **What internships are the best?**

- Integrates your knowledge/theory in to practical application
- Develops relevant skills
- Is in a professional setting
- An experience that is supervised, mentored or guided

### **What internships are the worst?**

- Primarily clerical, unskilled labor (you can get paid to do this)
- An experience you gain nothing from
- A vague, undefined experience
- An unguided/unsupervised experience

### **Questions to ask yourself when looking for internship opportunities**

- What careers are you interesting in learning more about?
- What employers (companies or organizations)?
- What work-related activities or settings would you like to try out?
- What skills do you want to use, refine or develop?
- What are your goals for the internship?

\*(Adapted from the UW Career Center presentation: *Internships: What, Where, How & Why*)

### **The many variations of internships:**

- Paid/Unpaid
- Credit/No Credit
- Full-time/Part-time
- Before graduation/After graduation
- Seattle/U.S./The world

### **Sectors/Fields/Industries where you can find internships (to name a few)**

- |                    |                         |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Arts and Culture | • Healthcare            | • Philanthropy    |
| • Business         | • International NGOs    | • Politics        |
| • Criminal Justice | • Law/Legal Professions | • Social Services |
| • Education        | • Law Enforcement       | • Sports          |
| • Entertainment    | • Marketing             | • Technology      |
| • Environment      | • Non-profits           | • Tourism         |
| • Government       | • Research              |                   |

### **So, how do I get one?**

- Find existing Internships
- Create your own Internship

### **Find existing internships:**

- Sociology Department Blog: [asksoc.wordpress.com](http://asksoc.wordpress.com)
- Career Center: HuskyJobs (database of internships & jobs) [careers.uw.edu/HuskyJobs/Students](http://careers.uw.edu/HuskyJobs/Students)
- General Internship websites (ex. [internmatch.com](http://internmatch.com))
- Internet searching (ex. [indeed.com](http://indeed.com)/ [simplyhired.com](http://simplyhired.com))
- Job/internship boards (ex. [idealist.org](http://idealist.org))
- Company/organization websites (ex. [treehouse4kids.org](http://treehouse4kids.org))
- Professional association websites (ex. [smgs.org](http://smgs.org))

### **Create your own internship:**

- Think about & research what/where you'd like to intern
- Talk to people to get contacts at organizations
- Do informational interviews
- Ask friends, relatives, advisers, former employers for ideas/leads
- Is there an option for doing an internship where you now work or volunteer?
- Attend on & off campus events like career fairs or talks
- Create a proposal for this type of internship & present it to your contact at the organization where you'd like to intern.

*Example of a student created position:* a student wanted to learn more about being a legal advocate for victims of sexual abuse. She researched legal organizations that help victims, did an informational interview with a legal advocate, and then proposed to the organization what she wanted to do for them.

### **Getting credit for your internship**

Many students do internships without earning academic credit. But some internships require that interns receive credit. Also, some students are unable to handle an internship along with their full course load and “money” job. The Sociology department can help students with credit in two ways:

- SOC 494D
- SOC 399 (requires faculty sponsorship)
- To learn more about these, go to:  
[http://www.soc.washington.edu/academics/undergrad\\_program/internships.htm](http://www.soc.washington.edu/academics/undergrad_program/internships.htm)

### **How the Sociology Department can help YOU**

- Soc 494 Practica to help build relevant skills [depts.washington.edu/socprac](https://depts.washington.edu/socprac)
- Specialized internships offered as part of 494D [depts.washington.edu/socprac](https://depts.washington.edu/socprac)
- Workshops throughout the year (info sent out through socugrad listserve)
- One-on-one conversations with Gretchen Ludwig, Experiential Learning Coordinator ([gludwig@uw.edu](mailto:gludwig@uw.edu) to set up an appointment.)

### **Applying for Internships**

- Applications & materials vary
- Usually for posted position you submit a resume & cover letter; sometimes a position will require a letter of recommendation
- Present your education, skills, interests, relevant projects, work (paid and unpaid) as experience
- Usually require an interview, in person or over the phone
- Free online workshops for developing a resume and interviewing: [careers.uw.edu/Workshops](https://careers.uw.edu/Workshops)

### **Tips for ensuring a successful internship experience**

- Communication with supervisor is key
- Be professional, positive, productive
- Challenge yourself, but don't overextend
- Ask for what you need. Interact!
- Measure your progress, document your work
- Do your best work and learn from experience

### **Completing your internship (and beyond)**

- Thank your employer and colleagues
- Keep track of your duties and accomplishments
- Update your resume
- Nurture your connections (stay in touch)
- Ask employer to be a reference

### **Contact:**

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