

# The Step-By-Step to Getting an Internship in D.C.

## Step #1: Do Your Research

- Find out what internships are available in your career field of interest.
- Use the Internship section of the **UCDC website** at <http://ucdc.ucr.edu/intern/index.html> for hundreds of links.
- Use the Participants section of the **UCDC website** at <http://ucdc.ucr.edu/participants/index.html> to see where previous participants have interned according to major.
- Use the **UCDC Internship Binders** and the **Washington Representatives book** in the UCDC office.
- Use <http://www.idealists.org> and other internship search engines.
- Use the **Career Center**.

## Step #2: Develop a Prioritized List

- Consider how competitive the internships might be based by their popularity (ie. The White House, State Department, popular Senators, U.S. Attorneys Office, The Smithsonian Institution and other museums).
- Develop a list of 15-20 organizations you want to intern with and rank them according to your interest level.
- You should have a few that are your ideal or top choices, a few that you also want but are your second choices, and a few back up organizations.

## Step #3: Tailor Your Application Materials

- Cover Letter*
  - Revise and edit it to reflect the organizations to which you are applying, such as company name, what you know about them, and why you want to work for them.
  - Use the Virtual Career Center ([www.careers.ucr.edu](http://www.careers.ucr.edu)) to access samples and to construct your letter.
- Resume*
  - Tailor the objective to the career field, while also editing the skills and experience sections to reflect the field.

- Use Optimal Resume on the Virtual Career Center to construct your resume and then make an appointment or go to drop-in hours at the Career Center to have your resume critiqued and polished.
- Meet with Kathleen Sawa the Program Coordinator.
- ❑ *Include Additional Material*
  - If they ask for a writing sample, find out what they want. Most writing samples will be 2-3 pages long, either an article you've written or a piece of your best paper. You can also write something especially for the position.
  - They may also ask for your recommendation letters or transcripts or just a resume and cover letter. Follow instructions carefully!
  - To submit letters of recommendation and transcript (s) from your application file, use the electronic file that was sent to you from the UCDC office. Be sure to include the cover letter from the UCDC office that explains the UCDC program and that you had to apply to get in. The cover letter also explains why the letters are not specifically addressed to the organization.

#### **Step # 4: Send Your Application Materials**

- ❑ Follow an organization's instructions carefully about how to apply, ie. Via e-mail, regular mail, online on their web site, or by FAX.
- ❑ Properly address and stamp envelopes so your application doesn't get lost.
- ❑ Be sure you have the correct email address if emailing your application.
- ❑ Be aware of any deadlines to apply, some organizations may have earlier deadlines than others.

#### **Step #5: Contact the Organizations: FOLLOW UP!!**

- ❑ Allow a week or so for your application to arrive and for them to process it. (Longer if you have sent it through U.S. Mail.)
- ❑ Contact them via e-mail or phone to make sure it was received and to see where they are in the selection process. In many cases, you can find phone numbers and other information about the organizations by using Google.
- ❑ If you are having problems contacting them, let the UCDC program office know, as the staff might be able to find accurate contact information for you.

## Step #6: Prepare to Interview over the Phone

- Prepare by setting up an appointment with an Internship Counselor at the Career Center or use the Interview Stream function online at the Virtual Career Center [www.careers.ucr.edu](http://www.careers.ucr.edu).
- Refer to your Phone Interview Tip sheet from the first Orientation meeting.
- Attend an Internship workshop through the Career Center.
- Prepare questions for the employer that will help you decide if this is the best organization to work with. For example:
  - How much of my time will be spent on routine administrative tasks versus getting involved in more important projects?
  - How much training and supervision are your interns provided?
  - May I contact one of your current interns to ask about their experiences?
  - What is the dress code for your organization?
- If you've interviewed with organizations but haven't heard back from them in a while, contact them again to see where they are in the selection process.

## Step #7: Select the Internship that's Right for You

- Many students get offered multiple internships and have to decide which one to accept.
- Consider the type of organizations (ie. Government, non-profit, etc) and where you might like to work after graduation.
- Consider financial or other perks/benefits of each organization.
- Consider the time commitment required for each position and which fits your schedule best.
- Consider the location of the organization and your commute time.
- Refer back to your prioritized list (See Step 2).
- Once you make a selection and accept an internship offer, STOP the search process and notify any other pending sites that you have accepted an offer. *Do not apply to any more internship sites.*

## Step #8: What To Do When Your Options Run Out

***If you have:***

- ❑ Applied to 15-20 organizations, tried to contact them all about the receipt of your applications, but can't get a hold of anyone or haven't heard from any about an interview:

***Then you need to:***

1. Apply to a few more organizations to give yourself some more options.
2. Contact Kathleen Sawa ([kathleen.sawa@ucr.edu](mailto:kathleen.sawa@ucr.edu)), the UCDC peer coordinator ([UCRUCDC@ucr.edu](mailto:UCRUCDC@ucr.edu)), and Chantal Quintero ([chantalquintero@ucdc.edu](mailto:chantalquintero@ucdc.edu)) and let them know of your situation and the status of your applications. They may be able to help you with your applications.

***If you have:***

- ❑ Interviewed with some organizations but haven't been offered a position yet, and you don't have any more interviews lined up:

***Then you need to:***

1. Apply to a few more organizations to give yourself some more options.
2. Contact Kathleen Sawa, Chantal Quintero or the UCDC Peer Coordinator to explore their knowledge of internship positions that might suit your interests. Be prepared to provide a list of organizations to which you have submitted applications.

***If you have:***

- ❑ Contacted organizations and followed the instructions in the steps above, interviewed for some positions, and applied to more organizations, but still haven't secured an internship, and you are leaving for DC *right away*:

***Then you need to:***

1. Let Kathleen and Chantal know before you leave that you haven't secured an internship yet and you are still looking.
2. Review with them the status of the ones you've applied to and possibly interviewed with.
3. Tell Chantal that you'll be coming to see her when you arrive in DC about finding and internship.
4. Be prepared to spend all day every day in DC searching for, applying to, and interviewing for positions until you secure an internship.