



Alternative Ways to Gain Professional Experience

(beyond a traditional internship)



While internships are the most well-known avenue for gaining professional experience, there are other options for students to build important skills and make themselves stand out.

Here are five alternatives to traditional internships that will help you build a bridge to your career!

1

LEVERAGE YOUR CURRENT JOB

If you're currently working, keep in mind that many employers are open-minded about staff taking on new skills-based projects, shadowing other teams within the organization, or providing assistance with tasks outside of your current role's function. Building new skills in an existing role can be a time-efficient way to get relevant experience. Plus, it builds your brand at work!

2

MICRO-INTERNSHIPS

Micro-internships are project-based or short-term engagements that help you build skills, explore different career paths, gain experience, and build your network. They can be remote and are often paid. These opportunities can be posted on job boards, like Parker Dewey, or they can be arranged by networking with employers or organizations.

3

CREATE YOUR OWN INTERNSHIP

If you are having trouble landing an internship or can't find one that interests you, why not create your own? The tips below highlight the content for an email you might submit to an organization where you would like to intern. It can be addressed to a particular staff member, an internship coordinator, or to the "info@" email address.

- ✓ Identify yourself and indicate that you are seeking an internship host.
- ✓ Describe what kind of projects you are both equipped and interested in taking on.
- ✓ Provide evidence of your capacity to perform these projects.
- ✓ Indicate your interest and passion for the specific organization.
- ✓ Attach your resume.
- ✓ Conclude with an offer of more information and request an opportunity to speak further.

4

PASSION PROJECTS OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Self-driven projects are a great way to build skills and add to your portfolio! You might take on a creative project you've been thinking about for a while or offer a specific service to a community organization, like developing a logo for a non-profit. Tap into the things you care about or the communities you are a part of to generate project ideas. Keep yourself accountable and fuel your passions by collaborating or sharing your work on social media!

5

LEARN SOME NEW SKILLS

Conduct research to get an idea of the kinds of skills that would make you more competitive for a future job. Acquiring these new skills will give you an edge in the job market and shows your dedication to learning new things.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR UPSKILLING:

- LinkedIn Learning
- Professional Organizations
- Webinars
- Codecademy
- YouTube
- Coursera
- EdX
- Udemy
- Google
- Khan Academy

DePaul students can log in to LinkedIn Learning for unlimited free access to a vast online library of instructional videos covering the latest software, creative, business, and technical skills.