

HOW TO:

BE A MODERN ~~SLAVE~~ LEARNER

A Blind Mice Guide to Internship

BY



with JHY

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought it sounds unreasonable to commit to a job without knowing what the career actually looks like? As polytechnic students, we are all stuck with an internship opportunity for at least six months to a year — whether we like it or not. So how can you ensure that you get the most out of it ~~instead of up making coffee and photocopying stuff for most of your work hours?~~

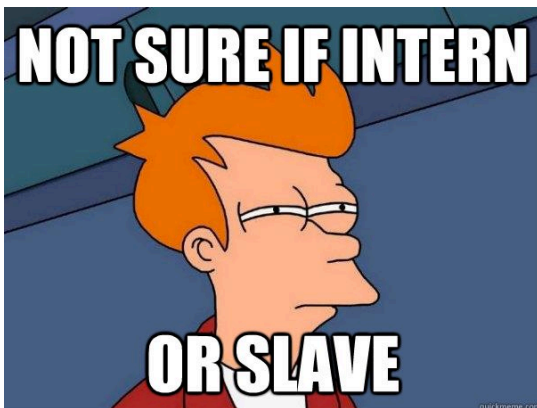


Figure 1 and 2: Some lame-ass memes

Self-sourced internships are one way to remedy these dilemmas. Interning during semester holidays is a good trial and error way to get a 'feel' of the kind of company you want to work in during your official internship. Furthermore, you also get the autonomy to explore and pursue opportunities that you are interested in that the school may not provide. And if it turns out not to be your cup of tea, at least the commitment will only be for a month rather than half a year.

Given that all polytechnic students will be interns at some point, having additional internship experience can show your future schools/employers that you have a specific interest in that career field, and that you have the drive and initiative to seek out concrete experience. At a more fundamental level, an internship also gives you valuable insight into whether a workspace or a professional field is as you imagined it to be, which can be a meaningful form of self-discovery.

Keep in mind that while it can boost your resume and give you a great learning experience, an internship is by no means required to get into a university. Not every student has the financial means to spend time on an unpaid or low-paying internship. It is completely up to you if you want to take a paid position in the service industry or as a tutor instead of an impressive-sounding internship. **The bottomline is how you make use of the experience and BS-illustrate how it has been relevant to making you a better person.**

Consider the following example:

I worked in a MNC to gain firsthand experience about its internal operations and growth. Was also involved in customer service and learnt about customer retention and relationship management. So did I work as a cashier in McDonald's or as a Customer Service intern in a hotel?

Definitely not saying that you should exaggerate or misrepresent your experience in your resume. Just trying to show that there is always something to learn from an internship ~~(or at least try to make it seem so).~~

Identifying Your Ideal Internship

First of all, identify your goals and interests. An internship is primarily meant to offer you constructive experience, so if you are not genuinely invested in learning more about the field, there is little reason to apply for the position. Brainstorm a list of roles and organisations that might be relevant to your goals, and identify what skills you can offer them.

If your school has a career centre or a recruiting platform (e.g. glints, ECG or your lecturers), this is a great way to find opportunities that are pre-vetted for quality. You might also want to rely on your network—ask peers and trusted adults if they know about any opportunities, and if not, you can always simply ask to hear more about their own personal experiences. There might also be workshops or networking events organised by student chapters or your school, where you could potentially introduce yourself to someone in the field and have a genuine, friendly conversation that may end in an opportunity.

Another option is to turn to the internet for opportunities (e.g. LinkedIn or [Mycareersfuture.gov](https://www.mycareersfuture.gov)). Look through online listings of internships in your area, and see if they might consider your application. Make sure you have a polished resume, even if you're not confident about its contents. If you're okay with taking more initiative, you can "cold-email" companies and organisations. This means you email them with your interest in their mission as well as what you could bring to the table, and politely ask if they are open to hiring any interns. Clarify whether you are looking for a paid position. You don't have to feel shy or doubtful about cold-emailing for opportunities—if they turn you down, there's nothing to lose. Maybe they are not looking for interns, but willing to have a conversation about the industry or add you to a mailing list. **At the very least, you would be practicing how to interact professionally and market yourself.**

Maximising Your Internship Experience (Both School and Self-sourced)

Once you confirm an opportunity, make sure you are fully prepared for the first day. This includes reviewing all materials and resources about your employer, knowing who to report to, and setting goals for yourself throughout the internship experience.

The most important thing to keep in mind throughout the internship is to stay proactive. Feeling out of your comfort zone is common as an intern, and that is most likely a sign that you are growing. Don't be afraid to ask for questions or guidance from your supervisor, and even to ask if you could get involved in a certain project that interests you or try out a different idea. Be willing to try anything and take any opportunity that surfaces. Actively ask for and incorporate feedback.

Another important method to maximise your internship is to network. While this may feel awkward at first, it will eventually develop your communication skills. Invite people to coffee, get involved in workplace activities, and build relationships with your peers, colleagues, and supervisors. Who knows what kind of tea you will be able to learn from them

At the conclusion of your internship, thank your supervisors and ask if they would be willing to be references for you in the future. If they give you permission to take some of the work with you, you can compile a portfolio of the tangible accomplishments you made over the course of the internship. Finally, keep in touch with your mentors and colleagues! You never know when you will be brought back together in life.

P.S. In the unfortunate scenario where you find yourself mainly doing menial work and that you are not learning much, it is advisable to bring this up with your direct supervisor rather than just suck it up in quiet resentment. Discussing about your learning objectives and what you hope to gain out of the internship can

help your supervisors better tailor your job scope and responsibilities. You can also consider bringing this up with your school lecturer if it is a school internship. If it is a self-sourced internship and things do not get better after the talk... rip, at least it is only a month or so...

Supplemental Tip: Creating a LinkedIn profile


Having a LinkedIn profile is really useful if you are looking for potential internship or networking opportunities. Its also a great way to stay connected with your colleagues after you leave. Here are a few concise resources on how you can get your LinkedIn profile started

- 1) <https://collegeinfo geek.com/linkedin-summary-examples-for-students/>
- 2) https://university.linkedin.com/content/dam/university/global/en_US/site/pdf/LinkedIn%20Profile%20Checklist%20-%20College%20Students.pdf

Additional Resources

If you are interested in reading more about how to maximise your internships, you should definitely check out these two comprehensive guides written by [gradsingapore](#). Hyperlink on the titles.

Internship Guide 2020

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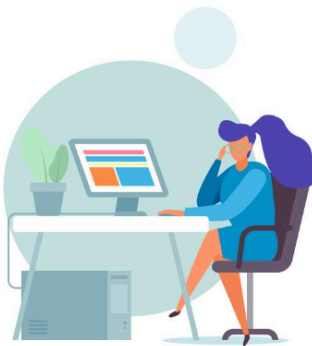
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No matter what you may hear, graduate jobs are available in the middle of an economic slowdown. Find out how to find them on page **20**

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you are looking for holiday internships and don't know where to start, we have compiled a list of organisations for you in the subsequent pages!

The list is split into the following categories:

1. Social Services
2. Non-Profit Organisations
3. Government Related

The list is not meant to be comprehensive and should only be used as a starting guide. **You can also consider finding internships throughout [glints](#) or your school and ECG lecturers.**

1. Social Services

Company / Organization	Responsibilities	Duration	How to Apply
Rainbow Centre (Internship)	<p>During the internship, you will be exposed to various activities and projects under the guidance of their experienced supervisors. Your work will be far from mundane, as you experience first-hand the dynamic nature of work in a social service organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Intervention• Psychology• Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy/Speech Therapy• Corporate Services <p>Diploma students and undergraduates welcome.</p>	Unspecified	<p>Please submit your application to careers@rainbowcentre.org.sg together with the following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed job application form• CV• All educational/ professional certificates and current transcripts• CCA records/reports• Testimonials

2. Non-Profit Organisations

Company / Organization	Responsibilities	Duration	How to Apply
Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (Internship)	<p>Not mentioned.</p> <p>SCWO accepts applications from dedicated and talented students who want to intern with us during school breaks.</p> <p>You will be treated as a full-time employee and you will certainly have a rewarding experience.</p>	You will be required to commit to a minimum of THREE full months of service.	To apply, email your CV to the following address: HR@scwo.org.sg
AWARE (Internship)	<p>Typically, interns work on some of the activities listed below, though this varies based on office needs and your particular interests and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to put together their newsletter, update their website and create content for their social media platforms • Developing and designing presentations or marketing materials for various departments • Organising and managing AWARE events • Taking notes and photographs at events for online recaps • Assisting with volunteer management • Assisting with research; managing and analysing data • Advancing AWARE's advocacy goals with special projects and campaigns • Supporting their corporate training arm, Catalyse Consulting • Assisting with general administration, including office reception duties <p>\$500 per month allowance, with one day of leave per month</p>	Minimum of 3 months, full-time, 40 hours per week, Mon-Fri. (Exceptions to this are made on a case-by-case basis.)	<p>Seeks interns all year round.</p> <p>Please write a short answer (in no more than 500 words) to either one of the questions below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does gender inequality interact with or relate to other forms of social inequalities (eg. poverty, racial inequality...)? 2. Comment on one issue, law, policy or social trend and relate it to gender (in)equality in Singapore. (eg. marital immunity in rape law, pro-fertility policies, local media's portrayal of women...) <p>Submit application here or email internships@aware.org.sg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the department(s) you are interested to intern with: • Advocacy, Research & Communications (ARC) • Women's Care Centre (WCC) & Sexual Assault Care Centre (SACC) • Secretariat Department • Catalyse Consulting

3. Government Related

Company / Organization	Responsibilities	Duration	How to Apply
<p>Ministry of Social and Family Development (Student Internship Programme)</p>	<p>Their vacant internship roles and the application will be available at the link during their open application period.</p>	<p>Eight-week structured internships in the following periods of the year:</p> <p>1) January – March</p> <p>2) May – July</p> <p>Depending on the project requirements and availability of the intern, the internship duration may exceed 8 weeks (capped at 12 weeks).</p>	<p>There are three parts to the application process:</p> <p>1) Application If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to attend an interview.</p> <p>2) Interview The interview session is a great opportunity for you to understand more about MSF, and also a time for us to discover your strengths and potential.</p> <p>3) Assessment You will be assessed according to the suitability of your skills and knowledge to the project you applied for, as well as your organisational fit. You will receive an email confirmation only if you have been selected for our programme.</p> <p>When to Apply: January - March Internships: Applications will commence in September every year.</p> <p>May - July Internships: Applications will commence in February every year.</p>

<p>National Environment Agency (NEA) (Internship)</p>	<p>Depending on your course of study, you will intern in one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution Control • Waste Management • Energy Efficiency • Data Analytic • Service Excellence • Research and Surveillance of Vector-borne Diseases • Public Health and Cleanliness • Environmental Hygiene • Management of Hawker Centres • Meteorological Services and Climate Research • 3P (People, Public, and Private) Partnership • Corporate Services <p>Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time University undergraduate or Polytechnic student • International students who are currently studying full-time in Singapore are welcome to apply 	<p>Up to you to specify</p>	<p>Internship opportunities are available throughout the year.</p> <p>The website said to apply on Careers@Gov but the page isn't available so I would suggest emailing internship@nea.gov.sg to check before applying.</p> <p>Please send in your application 2-3 months before your preferred internship period.</p> <p>Please provide the following in your application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume • Cover Letter (optional) • Academic results / Transcripts (optional) • Any other relevant documents • Available period for internship (dd/mm/yy to dd/mm/yy)
<p>Public Utilities Board (PUB) Internship</p>	<p>Open to undergraduates in the penultimate/final year of studies with good academic results and passion to work in the water industry.</p>	<p>Typically 8 weeks or more.</p>	<p>You may forward your resume to pub_hr@pub.gov.sg and indicate your intended period of your internship for their consideration.</p>
<p>Government</p>	<p>You can find government-related internships in this portal.</p>		

INTERNSHIPS

A. BEFORE JUMPING IN

BEFORE accepting any internship opportunities, use the following questions to determine whether it is actually worthwhile to pursue it.



- What are you hoping to get out of the internship?

Define your goal so that you know exactly what kind of opportunity to look for.

- Is it an established company/organisation?

Given that the skillsets and experience gained in MNCs or SMEs are quite different, your decision really depends on what you are hoping to achieve through the internship.

- Will you gain skills and experience important to you?

You can do some online research, read through forums and ask your interviewer or other relevant contacts to find out if your potential job scope is aligned with your goals.

- Who would you be reporting to and is this someone you can learn from?

If your interviewer is going to be your potential boss, it is advisable to discuss with them about what you are hoping to learn from the internship. Their reception to it can be a good indicator of how willing they are to mentor or nurture you instead of solely using you as cheap labour.

B. FIGHTING THE BOSS

DURING your internship, use the following questions to evaluate your performance and determine how to maximise your growth and experience.



- Are there any other ways you can value-add your team?

This can include workflows that can be improved upon or other services that you can offer to help your colleague with their work.

- Have you received any feedback on your work?

Feedback from others is essential as this can help you determine the skills that you are competent in and identify areas for improvements.

- Have you made any new connections?

Networking with your people from various departments can provide insights on various career pathways, job scopes and perhaps even future job opportunities.

- Who are the people you feel comfortable listing as a reference moving forward, or asking for a recommendation letter from?

Basically ~~suck up~~ to find someone who understands and appreciate your work

- What have you accomplished or are planning to accomplish?

A midpoint reflection on your work and how you can further grow during your internship.



[Click here to view the final part of the checklist once you have defeated the boss!](#)



C. UNLOCKING ACHIEVEMENTS & EXP

CONGRATS on making it this far! The journey to defeating the boss (completing the opportunity) may not be an easy one, but it is definitely worth your time and effort. However, the adventure is not over.

To fully maximise your experience, you should have a final evaluation and reflection on the lessons learnt. Below are some guiding questions to ask yourself:

Evaluating the Experience

- Are you proud of your final deliverables (products, results, outcomes etc)?
 - If yes, what's so good about them?
 - If no, what's wrong with them?
- How did you respond to challenges? Would you do anything different next time?
- Which of your methods or processes worked particularly well?
- Which of your methods or processes were difficult or frustrating to use?

Reflecting on Lessons Learnt

- What was your most interesting insight?
- How did your involvement and participation fit into your broader goals of developing yourself?
- What would you want to improve on?
- What did you realise about yourself?
 - Did this give you a new perspective,
 - challenge your point of view,
 - Introduce you to new techniques, skills, processes?

Additional Questions (for SLIs and Leadership Positions)

- How accurate were our original estimates of the size and effort of our project? What did we over or underestimate?
- What can be improved on?
- Did you have the right people assigned to all project roles?
- Were roles and responsibilities of team/stakeholder clearly delineated and communicated?
 - If no, how could things be improved?
- If given a chance to do it again, what would you have done differently