

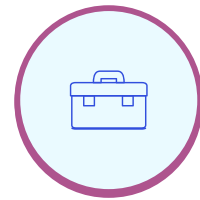


THE TOOLKIT

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women and non-binary undergraduate students.

First Impressions as an Intern

You've just accepted your first internship as a college student and you're about to walk through the front door (or join your first Zoom meeting) - what do you need to do to start off on the right foot? Your first impression can have a frustratingly large impact on how well or poorly your summer internship can go. A good first impression can mean getting the benefit of the doubt down the road if you fall behind while a poor first impression can sour all of the good work you do following. Every experience and environment will be different, meaning it can be difficult to know what to do to make a good first impression. This issue of The Toolkit will provide you with a few general tips on how to make the best impression you can in any environment.



"THE FIRST 'INTERNSHIP' I HAD WAS AS A GRADUATE STUDENT. MY SUPERVISOR HIRED ME SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE I WAS NOT ONLY QUALIFIED BUT BECAUSE I ASKED INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS ABOUT A POSITION THAT MOST OTHER CANDIDATES ONLY HAD A VAGUE INTEREST IN. I CONTINUED TO ASK QUESTIONS & TAKE ON MORE WORK SO I WAS QUICKLY BROUGHT ON FULL TIME WHEN I FINISHED SCHOOL."
- CLASSICS MAJOR

Tips & Tools

1

Be professional. This is a vague and yet all encompassing piece of advice. Each company or research team has their own etiquette and culture that you'll learn overtime but it can be difficult to know what is and is not acceptable before you start. To ensure you make the best impression you can no matter the environment be sure to dress professionally and be timely.

- Professional dress can vary and is often overly scrutinized for women so our advice is to always ask. If you can, try to ask a woman you'll be working with what she wears so you can get a good idea otherwise wear what you feel most comfortable in.
- If you're working in person, being on time means ensuring you know where you're going well in advance so you can be a few minutes early. When possible, ask a colleague to walk with you so you don't get lost.
- An additional note for remote workers - practice good meeting etiquette. Until you have a good handle on workplace culture, keep your camera on to show you are giving the meeting your full attention. Also be sure your background is neutral and won't have folks walking behind you if possible, otherwise ensure you have a good virtual background. Lastly, try and mute yourself when you're not speaking to avoid background noise and potential feedback.

3

Take initiative. Yes, you're at an internship to learn and yes, you have less experience than your colleagues, but you received this internship for a reason. You have the skills, perspective and drive to not only do the minimum of what is expected of you but to genuinely add value to the company or team you're working with.

- Ask questions. It may sound like a broken record at this point, but this skill is what will separate you from all other interns. You will not only learn faster and better if you clarify and dig deeper into the information you're provided, you will see openings for you to add value.
- Seek feedback. If you're participating in an existing internship program it's likely that they will have a prepared method for providing you feedback on your performance. While helpful, this is not enough. Be sure to ask for feedback as often as possible and from as many folks as possible. This will both give you a lot of information to work with to improve, you will demonstrate that you are willing to learn and grow as a professional.

2

Be prepared. This piece of advice may seem difficult because it's difficult to be prepared for something you're entirely unfamiliar with, but there are a few things you can do to give the impression you're ready to get to work. Before starting an internship be sure to ask questions, do your research and be ready to take notes.

- The best way to know how to prepare for a new position is to simply ask somebody the best way to get ready. This can be your hiring manager, your new supervisor or even just a future colleague you've connected with. It's always better to ask the question than not to ask at all even if they end up saying there is nothing you need to do to prepare.
- You've likely done some research before interviewing for this position but it's important to do the research again and more in depth. While employers don't expect new hires to know everything about the company, you should have a basic understanding. Any additional understanding you bring in with you will show your supervisor and colleagues that you are hard working and willing to take the initiative to learn.
- Bring a pen and paper - yes this may seem obvious to some but it's important you demonstrate your willingness and readiness to learn.

Tips inspired by - "[How to Make a Good Impression During a Remote Internship](#)" by Madeline Burry | The Balance Careers

Further Reading

"[Internships](#)" A Collection of Resources | The Balance Careers

"[How to Make a Great First Impression](#)" by Rebecca Knight | Harvard Business Review

A note from the author

If you take one thing away from this resource I hope it is to not be afraid to ask questions. It may take some practice and courage but it will be worth it for your overall professional success. You got this! - Sam Collins, M.A.