

Carnegie
Mellon
University
English



INTERNSHIP INSIDER

 2019-2020



Anna Anderson

B.A. in Creative Writing (May '21)

Hometown: Twinsburg, OH

Internship Type:

- paid
 unpaid

Applied By:

April 2020

Accepted By:

April 2020

Completed Internship:

Summer 2020

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
 Consulting & Marketing
 Data Science
 Finance & Business
 Government
 Non-Profit or Research
 Technology
 Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

Writing news articles for my high school and taking 76-372 *News Writing* in the Department of English.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

I applied on Handshake, and then I got interviewed.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

- Pitched news articles
- Conducted interviews
- Wrote stories

What did you enjoy about your internship?

Writing about news that interested me and seeing my work get published.

What was challenging about your internship?

Setting up interviews with some of my sources.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

I would tell them to **keep track of time** because there is more room to procrastinate, since there weren't daily meetings or anyone constantly keeping tabs on me.



Madeline Anthony

B.S. in Technical Writing (Dec. '20)

Hometown: Erie, PA

Internship Type:

- paid
- unpaid

Applied By:
September 2019

Accepted By:
October 2019

Completed Internship:
Summer 2020

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
- Consulting & Marketing
- Data Science
- Finance & Business
- Government
- Non-Profit or Research
- Technology
- Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

Knowing how to write code, since it gave my interviewer confidence that I can understand and explain complex tech. Being able to work with a team, so they knew I wouldn't have trouble communicating with other writers and experts. Tech Writing in general helped me craft a professional-looking resume and give proof of my skills in a portfolio.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

Salesforce was visiting campus, so I decided to apply on a whim. Edited one of my resumes real quick and sent it to the recruiter requesting an interview. He liked me, so I had another interview a few weeks later over a video call. The brunt of the work was really already done for me, since Salesforce was here. Plus, I already have a full polished resume that lists everything under my belt ever, which I usually just edit down to be relevant for whatever I apply to.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

[T]here were so many (in a good way). My job was primarily writing *Help* documentation for the Salesforce site. That included:

- Reading pages on pages of technical functionalities about the tech I need to write about
- Creating outlines, working with peer writers to determine standardized structure
- Interviewing subject matter experts
- Writing content
- Converting content to XML with oXygen
- Meetings. Just so many meetings
- Uploading XML to the company server for publishing
- Creating presentations on my finished content

What did you enjoy about your internship?

Lots of great people. Everyone I worked with was so kind, understanding, and fun! I also didn't feel choked by work - my manager constantly asked if my workload was fair, encouraged me to take breaks and fully walk away from work after I clocked out, and assured me that people would help me finish a project if I found myself pressed for time.

What was challenging about your internship?

Everyone was adjusting to being remote - 20+ people in 30min meetings can be rough, and just isn't as cool as being in a huge tower on the San Francisco bay. I was also coming on to a lot of projects that started long before I started at the company, so I had to learn the basics of each project, and they didn't always have a cut-and-dry task for me to complete. Sometimes it was just helping where I could with what I knew.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

Emphasize your strengths in working with teams and interpersonal interactions. Everyone applying can write and expects to write, but 80% of technical writing is talking to other people about what needs to get done, making sure you understand the material, discussing what works or what doesn't, talking about timelines, requesting work from people in other departments who don't understand what you do. 15% is writing, 5% is tech, but those can be taught on the job. **Your biggest asset is your communication skills.**



Matilda McDougall

B.A. in Creative Writing (May '22)

Hometown: South Orange, NJ

Internship Type:

- paid
- unpaid
- part of the Pittsburgh Summer Internship Program (PSIP)

Applied By:

March 2020

Accepted By:

March 2020

Completed Internship:

Summer 2020

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
- Consulting & Marketing
- Data Science
- Finance & Business
- Government
- Non-Profit or Research
- Technology
- Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

Definitely people skills. In the marketing world a lot hinges on networking and creating professional relationships so if you can get along with people you've carved out a good chunk of the job. Also industriousness is a must. Being able to hustle and muscle through hard tasks will help distinguish you from other people and build your reputation as a worker.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

The Pittsburgh Summer Internship Program (PSIP) took care of a lot of it, but on my end it was a lot of talking to Deeplocal even after the interview. Whether it was a follow up thank you email, or calling to ask some more questions, I just made sure that they knew I was genuinely interested in the job and the company.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

A lot of copy writing. Also a lot of research for larger projects. I also did website design here and there. It was a pretty unique mish mosh of tasks that were sent my way and Deeplocal was always really good with showing me different aspects of the company and making sure that my work wasn't monotonous.

What did you enjoy about your internship?

The relationships have to be the number one thing I enjoyed. I loved the people I worked with. They had great energy and great attitudes all the time and it made it a really nice place to be around. I also enjoyed how creative I was allowed to be, especially considering I was an intern. They let me have a lot of creative liberties in the work I was given.

What was challenging about your internship?

Learning the specific brand language of the company was definitely my longest battle. Since I was copy writing I had to keep it consistent with what already existed from Deeplocal so I had to do a lot of research and endure a lot of critiques before I was able to really get it right.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

NETWORK. Even if it is just a silly lunch or zoom call where you talk about nothing professional, the best thing you can do is build relationships around the company and industry of your choice. I know it can seem hard especially if you aren't a socially confident person, but just choose the chattiest people around and they'll do all the talking leg work for you and then you get the connection anyways.



Olivia Olshevski

B.S. in Technical Writing & B.S in Chemical Engineering (May '21)

Hometown: Princeton, NJ

Internship Type:

- paid
- internship for credit

Applied By:

September 2018

Accepted By:

September 2018

Completed Internship:

Spring 2019

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
- Consulting & Marketing
- Data Science
- Finance & Business
- Government
- Non-Profit or Research
- Technology
- Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

In addition to being a Technical Writing major, I am also a dual degree student in CIT (chemical engineering and biomedical engineering). Because of this hands-on experience with engineering, I came into the internship with a deeper understanding of the subject matter I was writing about and had a better idea of what research I might need to do in order to bring myself up to speed. I had been formally trained in a number of communication strategies (tone, diction, sentence structure, rhetoric, voice) and had previous experience writing technical reports for my engineering degree. I also came to the internship with experience writing for varied audiences: primary investigators, professors, peers, K-12 students, and a general adult readership. I had also previously served as an editor for a chemical engineering textbook and therefore understood current style practices in published writing.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

I learned about the internship through the English Undergraduate Programs general e-mail. To apply, I submitted a cover letter, a resume, and three writing samples (an abstract for my research in cardiac tissue engineering, a poster presentation for a biomedical engineering lab class, and a website teaching stem cell engineering basics to a K-12 audience). I was offered an interview (~30 minutes in length) 3 days later, and a week after the interview, I received a formal offer for the position.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

Primary responsibilities included writing feature stories and other content for the CIT and individual engineering department websites. Though I wrote for all engineering departments, my focus was on electrical & computer engineering. Additionally, I drafted social media content for most platforms (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram). I also helped edit various web pages and developed directories and "Meet the Team" pages.

What did you enjoy about your internship?

The internship was a great opportunity to delve deep into my lifelong goal of making science as accessible as possible through carefully considered writing. Though I'm already had plenty of experience writing technically for fellow engineers, I wanted an opportunity to translate this exciting research into writing that invited a general audience to learn more. I particularly enjoyed my position at the bridge between technical and general audiences. I would spend a week researching as much of the technical content as possible (reading through academic journals, relearning physics concepts, familiarizing myself with the status quo in the field) in order to prepare for interviews with the researchers. Then I would spend the next few weeks identifying which information was most important and dreaming up ways to make all of it more accessible to an audience so that they wouldn't have to do all of the technical research like myself. Comparing the primary research source (for example, the academic article) to my finished article was so satisfying, as both presented the same information for very different audiences.

What was challenging about your internship?

My engineering interests fall within the biomedical and chemical engineering fields; specifically, I'm interesting in biomaterials and tissue engineering and stem cell research. Although I did get to write

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Pittsburgh, PA

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Writing & Communications Intern

Olivia Olshevski

B.S. in Technical Writing & B.S in Chemical Engineering (May '21)

Hometown: Princeton, NJ

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a few articles on this subject matter, I was assigned electrical & computer engineering as my primary department. As a result, I spent lots of time reading about the very physics and coding concepts that I so desperately tried to avoid in a classroom setting! Grappling with all of the technical information that I'd previously sworn off as impossible to understand was rewarding: reminding myself how wavelengths worked and learning what the heck bitcoin even was required a lot of intense focus on my part, but it also meant that I was even closer to being in the audience's shoes. In a way, not knowing much about the articles I was writing about made it easier to ask the right questions!

I love this question because I wrote a series of fake weekly blog posts throughout my internship. To organize each post, I chose a different lesson that I had learned and gave tips on how to deal with each circumstance.

My first week was all about keeping myself **organized and motivated**. To do this, I came up with 3 different ways of tracking what I had done and what I still had to do: I kept a notebook with a list of very specific to-dos, wrote a list of all current project titles (along with their primary contacts) on a whiteboard, and used Toggl (a website that lets you see how much time you've spent on each project) to keep track of how much time I was dedicating to each project. Additionally, I found that choosing one "focus project" for the week (usually the one closest to the deadline) made it easier to choose where to focus my attention week-by-week.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

I also wrote specific guides on how to perform thorough background research, how to deal with large monotonous tasks (like making biography pages for every CIT faculty member), how to approach editing, how to write a story when you don't understand the topic, how to effectively interview, how to write social media posts, and how to deal with long-term projects (especially when your primary point of contact isn't responsive).

I also wrote a whole post where I just emphasized that your **friends and colleagues are fantastic support for when you're stuck or uninspired or otherwise uninterested in the work** you're doing. You can get burned out while working on a project, and these are the people that will help you work past the exhaustion to produce a kick-ass article! Bosses, colleagues, peers, family, non-technical friends: they all help! **When in doubt, talk it out**, and you'll find that things probably aren't so bad!

I'm more than happy to share each of these posts with you if you'd like to grab some more in-depth examples!



Cristina Pullen

B.A. in Professional Writing (May '21)

Hometown: Brownsville, TX

Internship Type:

- paid
 unpaid

Applied By:

September 2018

Accepted By:

October 2018

Completed Internship:

Summer 2019

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
 Consulting & Marketing
 Data Science
 Finance & Business
 Government
 Non-Profit or Research
 Technology
 Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

By taking advanced writing courses my Sophomore year, I was able to strongly develop my writing skills early on. I had an organized and peer-reviewed portfolio, a style and voice/tone guide under my belt, and experience writing technical and rhetoric documents for class. In addition, I am involved in many organizations across campus that gave me out-of-class invaluable skills such as interpersonal communication and leadership abilities.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

I did my research and practiced common interview questions. Most importantly, I learned to talk about everything on my resume without looking at it; everything I had on there mattered, and I could expand on any given subject. As for the unpredictable questions - I took a minute to think about them (without panicking) and answered them as honestly as I could. I also made sure the interviewers knew how much I valued the company, and tried my best to show them the sort of value I would bring. At the end of it all, I sent both the recruiter and interviewer a "thank you" email, and received my offer in the following month.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

I took many roles during my internship - and some of them you really just have to take. I had my own scrum team and helped engineers document their products and write their interface texts. I also wrote help content for my own product, along with video scripts and product guides. Also, I started to write content on the side during my free time, and some of that work was actually published on the official blog; so in essence, I also became a marketing writer.

What did you enjoy about your internship?

My favorite part about my internship was being able to produce work that mattered. When you take a lot of notes and pay close attention to what leaders in your workplace are doing, others will start to notice. And no one ever minded me asking questions or voicing my opinions during project reviews. I felt a sense of empowerment, mostly because I felt that people respected the work I did along with who I was as a person. Eventually, I saw my work live in our product and published in places, and that was super neat.

What was challenging about your internship?

Learning to communicate with people across disciplines is vital to succeeding in a technical writing position. You have to learn to understand the way engineers, designers, sales reps, and support people think - and they each think very differently. The biggest challenge was building that bridge where communication could flow easily through the many departments. However, accomplishing this made my writing that much better.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

You don't have to know the in's and out's of the company, but you have to **understand their values**. You learn about the company on the job, and embrace the values inherently because that's what will ultimately land you the job. Companies want people like them, people who will work well with others already on their team, and want people who will listen and learn over time. I did my research, and went into the interview incredibly transparent with who I was, and I think that made all the difference.



Kathryn Reilly

B.A. in Professional Writing (May '20)

Hometown: Scranton, PA

Internship Type:

- paid
 unpaid

Applied By:

March 2019

Accepted By:

April 2019

Completed Internship:

Summer 2019

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
 Consulting & Marketing
 Data Science
 Finance & Business
 Government
 Non-Profit or Research
 Technology
 Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

Ability to work quickly, write clearly and concisely and approach all tasks with enthusiasm.

What steps did you take to land your internship?

I first applied to the job on LinkedIn. Then I sent a mass number of emails to JLL recruiters, but with some luck one responded and set up an informal interview. She passed my resume along to my (future) boss who had me come to Philadelphia two days later for an interview. At the time of my interview (a Friday at 4:30pm before Easter) I had another offer which I had to decide on by Monday at noon. I mentioned this to my (future) boss who said her manager would be out until that Tuesday on vacation - I thought I was out of luck. We had connected really well - both interested in writing and architecture. By some magic, my boss was able to get in touch with her manager by that Monday and got me an offer by 10am. I accepted on the spot.

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

I brainstormed and crafted brand 'stories' for agency listings, which included research and copy writing. I managed an internal communications project, collecting information from interviews I organized between 15 interns and 46 brokers. I then wrote case studies and broker profiles from these interviews. I created a CRM list of over 650 brokers in the Philadelphia market. I also edited proposals and presentations, created scheduled social media posts for several weeks, sent out email drip campaigns, took calls (sometimes solo) with our PR agency, and helped out in any other ways I could.

What did you enjoy about your internship?

I loved my team -- a group of extremely nice and talented individuals. The 4 person team was very organized (shockingly not always typical for corporate marketing teams) and managed over 50 different projects at one time. I learned so much from them and was lucky to contribute to some of the biggest projects in office history.

What was challenging about your internship?

While I loved the project management aspect of my job, I had to deal with individuals outside of my team who did not get their work to me on time if at all. This can be a very common and challenging aspect of marketing jobs which require content from individuals outside of the team who are on different timelines.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

Networking is a huge part of the commercial real estate (CRE) industry. I would suggest **maintaining your contacts and trying to get to know everyone in the office even if they don't do anything you're interested in**--everyone knows someone else. Trying to be excited about everything I did and asking for more work even if I had things to do already was helpful because I got to know so many people and got brought onto projects I wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise.

Suzette Shultz

B.A. in Professional Writing (May '21)

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

Internship Type:

- paid
- unpaid
- part of the Pittsburgh Summer Internship Program (PSIP)

Applied By:

March 2020

Accepted By:

April 2020

Completed Internship:

Summer & Fall 2020

Internship Category:

- Arts & Entertainment
- Consulting & Marketing
- Data Science
- Finance & Business
- Government
- Non-Profit or Research
- Technology
- Writing & Communications

What skills do you have that you think gave you an advantage in securing this internship?

- Adaptability to new technology
- Eye for design
- Professional communication/simplifying concepts

What steps did you take to land your internship?

- Apply and get accepted into the Pittsburgh Summer Internship Program (PSIP)
- Spend a week applying to 10 different internships
- Zoom interviews
- Anxiously wait 3 weeks for interviews to wrap up and for employers to decide on people
- EXCITEMENT! SMARTFUTURES WANTS ME! CELEBRATE!

What were some of your responsibilities at your internship?

- Translate PA career ready guidelines into laymen terms
- Script those guidelines into educational, entertaining activities
- Magically finesse **Powtoon: Video Maker** and make/edit/create engaging animated video for said lessons
- Master PowerPoint and make interactive quizzes to followup lessons/or teach the lesson
- Do voice-overs for everyone's projects
- Clean up and finalize everyone's projects (i.e. be "the closer," according to SmartFutures Executive Director David Mosey)

What did you enjoy about your internship?

Powtoon is both the love and strife of my life. Editing and animating videos was so dang fun and equally frustrating.

What was challenging about your internship?

Powtoon was spicy to handle in the beginning. I did not expect so much intense video editing to be a part of this internship.

What kinds of "insider tips" would you give to a student who is thinking about applying for an internship similar to yours?

Be patient. Ask questions. And trust your gut when you feeling something strongly, because different viewpoints can be your greatest tool (especially when your supervisors are 2 generations older than you).

**Carnegie
Mellon
University**
English