

Questions and Answers from OPCD P'23 Session 10/19

For more information and to learn about all of the resources provided by the OPCD, please visit opcd.wfu.edu.

- **Q: How important is it that the internship is on a demonstrable path (e.g. in banking if the student wants to be a banker or design if they want to be an architect) for sophomore to junior summer? Or do they just need something? How long does it need to be?**

A: There is no such thing as a bad internship. Every internship will help to either validate or contradict a student's level of interest. It will also enable them to develop work-related skills and connections. Also, the length of time for the experience is not that important. What's most important is what's learned during that time. Certainly if you want an entry-level job in that field, looking for an internship with a firm that uses their internship program as a feeder to an entry-level role is ideal - for juniors. However, this is most likely to occur at banks, consulting firms and large corporations - which are very competitive - and not necessarily what every student really wants to do.

- **Q: What is the value of a virtual experience vs. an opportunity to study abroad during the summer, or potentially doing something that is more hands-on domestically but not necessarily related to a major.**

At this point, it feels like ANY experience that doesn't involve sitting in a bedroom on a screen feels more exciting!
A: One of the following four types of experiences would be ideal: 1) volunteer/service-learning project, 2) study abroad, 3) undergraduate research or 3) internship, job or work-related projects. Some employers prefer to hire students for internships during the summer after junior year. We suggest trying to study abroad at any time other than during the fall of junior year as that's when most junior summer internship recruiting occurs. A service-learning project would be great during the first years summer if the other experiences are not possible. A virtual experience can work well and be very beneficial if it provides an opportunity for learning and connecting with new professionals.

- **Q: Given that business students have only taken ~2 business courses in their sophomore year, what types of companies are interested in internships at that early point in the students' college career?**

A: Juniors are more attractive to employers because they can be converted easier and start working for the firm sooner. However, that does not mean there are not firms that won't take sophomores. Government agencies as well as many businesses are usually open to underclassmen. Also, firms in some industries (for example, accounting) have leadership or externship programs that feed into their intern program. Some firms also have these types of programs for candidates with diverse backgrounds.

- **Q: For students interested in attending medical school after graduation, what types of internships or experiences should they be pursuing?**

A: Working at a hospital or in a medical environment is most useful to help the student confirm that this path is truly of interest. Plus, they can meet and network with many professionals to learn about various other careers related to medicine and healthcare. For Winter Break 2020-21, consider taking one of the new [“Careers In Medicine” online courses](#).

- **Q: My daughter is pursuing a Biology/pre-Vet curriculum. For this or any other applied curriculum, can students contact the Alumni office and be provided with contact information of WFU grads in the country in a field of study who might take on a summer intern or provide summer opportunities, such as shadowing a Veterinarian, for example?**

A: By meeting with a career coach in the OPCD, your daughter can be given guidance on how to be CareerReady, use other STEM-related resources, and how to utilize the alumni directory and LinkedIn to find alumni to network with to secure an internship or job shadow opportunities. We would recommend working with the OPCD, not the Alumni Office.

- **Q: What is the status of going abroad for Fall/Spring and how that will affect getting employment?**

A: Some industries recruit heavily in the Fall, particularly consulting, financial services, and larger corporations. Students can prepare for their interviews virtually with support from the OPCD. In the past, the occasional company was not prepared for the online recruiting experience. Now things have changed and all employers have transitioned to online recruiting which will level the playing field for all students, including students who are abroad. Regarding study abroad, this [link](#) can take you to the Center for Global Studies and Programs which will have the most updated information on study abroad programs.

- **Q: Are there any online internships available?**

A: Yes. Many employers have altered their internship programs to create “remote” or virtual positions for interns. So students can still gain valuable skills, get insight on careers and industries of interest, and build relationships with colleagues - while working from home. And for those looking for shorter-term experiences, consider having your student look at [ParkerDewey](#) - an online platform that hosts “micro-internships” or short-term projects for a variety of employers.

- **Q: You spoke of "career coaches". How can my sophomore get a career coach? Do you have career coaches assigned to specific geographic areas for internships?**

A: Students are able to meet with a career coach through Zoom by requesting an appointment in [Handshake](#), emailing careers@wfu.edu, or calling 336-758-5902. Our coaches are assigned to specific academic areas to liaise and partner with those departments as well as support students majoring in those disciplines. Students are able

to review the coaches' academic focus areas in Handshake when requesting an appointment.

- **Q: What about internships in DC - government, public affairs, policy - as opposed to business internships?**

A: While the number of internships in and around DC changed in the summer of 2020 as every organization re-assessed their needs, we've seen the number of internships increase since then. In fact, during the fall of 2020, there are 5 students in the Wake Washington study-away program and each student has secured an internship. Lobbying firms, think tanks, and advocacy groups - smaller organizations who have been able to adapt to the pandemic fairly quickly - are all offering internships right now.

- **Q: Beyond business and finance internships, what are opportunities for politics or biology majors?**

A: Many Wake Forest students land internships in politics, nonprofits, and other "non-business" settings. Students in the sciences secure internships in their fields of interest as well as seeking out and landing relevant research and clinical practice experiences. Students interested in politically-oriented summer internships will likely see the number of opportunities and deadlines increase early in the spring semester (January to March) - traditionally the busiest time of year for summer internship deadlines. And if your student is interested in the sciences, consider pointing them to [this site](#), managed by a professor at RIT, which lists an abundance of research options.

- **Q: What support does Wake Forest provide in terms of on campus recruiting or introductions for sophomores?**

A: We host two career fairs a year, numerous employer information sessions, and industry panels each year. In most cases, we encourage sophomores to attend these sessions - because it's best to start early to learn about opportunities and career pathways, and to begin building relationships with employers of interest. In some cases, these same employers are seeking students for sophomore "leadership programs" - short-term learning experiences that help employers identify students they may want to recruit later in their college career. Students can find specific information about these events on the Handshake platform.

- **Q: What should pre-med students do as far as interning or getting jobs right now?**

A: The first thing your student should do is begin a relationship with the [Pre-Health Committee](#) on campus and schedule a meeting with our STEM coach Brian Mendenhall via [Handshake](#) or email (careers@wfu.edu) or phone (336-758-5902). In general, medical schools are looking for very strong academic performance, research experience, service to the community, and exposure to the health care sector. If access to health care facilities is limited, try to pursue research opportunities on the Wake Forest campus. Health Professions Advisors have put these timely resources and ideas together here: <https://bit.ly/NAAHP-COVID19>

- **Q: What are these desirable skills you mentioned?**

A: WF students have the core professional, critical thinking, interpersonal and communication skills to be a great worker and employee. Most need help to translate them into “work” language so that they can interview confidently. Working with a career coach can make that happen. Depending on the job they are pursuing, there are various required technical knowledge and skills. Some that are important for almost any job are Excel, database management, data analytics and visualization, and project management. For students who want to gain or polish skills outside of class, Wake Forest provides all students with a free subscription to [LinkedIn Learning](#), which offers 9,000+ digital courses, taught by industry experts and covering a wide range of business, creative and technical topics.

- **Q: How do you deal with incorporating new majors, such as Environmental Science, into your programs?**

A: Our STEM Career Coach, Brian Mendenhall, has always had an interest in environmental and sustainability issues and frequently works with students in these majors. And the OPCD is always seeking partnerships with faculty members to share ideas and opportunities of interest to our students. Our Center for Environmental Sustainability also has a strong track record of supporting students with connections and internship opportunities. A lot of our WFU STEM majors have a strong interest in the environment and often gravitate toward research and work that goes hand-in-hand with majors like Environmental Science.

- **Q: What is Parker Dewey? Is it something through Wake or stand-alone?**

A: Parker Dewey is a stand-alone business that acts as a platform for employers to share opportunities - "micro-internships" - with students. The projects are from a variety of industries and disciplines, and the student gets paid for their work. You can learn more about them at <https://www.parkerdewey.com/>.

- **Q: What's the typical application period for summer internships? Can you be too early? Where are some places that kids can look for internships? How about in NY?**

A: Many employers seeking current and recently graduated college students utilize the Handshake platform to post opportunities. And if an employer contacts us and says "We want to hire a WFU student," that opportunity will be posted in Handshake. Two other online resources that deserve a look are the jobs section of [LinkedIn](#) (because you can leverage the Wake Forest network) and [Indeed](#), which functions as a search engine for jobs and internships across many jobs sites. Application deadlines vary by industry - with large, for-profit employers who can project their future hiring needs typically seek applications in the Fall for internships to take place the following summer. Many organizations have application deadlines in the early part of spring semester (January to March), but there will continue to be opportunities posted and secured via networking all the way through early-June. Starting to look for opportunities to gain experience as soon

as possible with the goal of meeting early application deadlines and applying regularly over Winter break would be wise for most students.