



PREPARING FOR YOUR SEMESTER

For most students the NYAP semester will be a significant departure from college routine. You will be managing your time and resources to a greater extent, balancing the requirements of your job and the program, and constructing a new social life. Intellectually, you will be challenged to take new leaps and make new connections that will help you uncover and put into action those skills you already possess. You will also acquire and define new skills, and develop new interests and perspectives.

Your initial conversations with your faculty advisor will focus on potential internships. This is the beginning of a dialogue that will continue throughout the semester as you bring your new experiences to seminars, formulate your independent project, and prepare to return to your home college or take your next steps in the world.

During these first conversations you may be presented with a variety of work possibilities to consider. If you have researched possibilities independently you must discuss these with your advisor so that the sponsor and the position can be vetted. Throughout this process, and during the New York semester it is important to be open to routes you may not have explored before - they are often the most rewarding.

In forming your expectations, it is important to remember that the objective of your internship is a rich learning opportunity not a "dream job". Your internship is, in effect your base of operations - an opportunity to explore your field from a particular vantage point, become part of your internship sponsor's professional world and develop skills. In addition, you will learn about yourself: how you handle opportunities and challenges independently, and assess your goals and progress in light of your experience.

NYAP works with an extensive and diverse network of highly respected artists, and cultural and media organizations to offer students an intimate and realistic view of professional life. Each internship incorporates specific **learning goals** set by the student in concert with the faculty advisor, and internship sponsor.

Some internships are full-time four or five days a week, others are one or two days a week. For this reason, it is possible to have more than one internship so that you get different kinds or work experiences.

It is important to remember that you will be in the same situation as most beginning job seekers in this economy. If your interview goes well and the position addresses your interests, *you should be ready to commit to the position if it is offered.* Some internship sponsors make the decision on the spot. Others might take a day or two. Stay in touch with your faculty advisor throughout this process.

Internships in the arts are very competitive. The NYAP's reputation and connections are a great advantage but it is important to your overall experience that you be well-prepared for the process of getting work as an intern.

Getting the Internship

Most internship sponsors require a **cover letter and resume**. Your faculty advisor will help prepare and may ask you to draft a cover letter, or revise your resume to review and discuss. All internships require an **interview**.

There are some general guidelines to keep in mind in preparing written materials:

- All materials should be legible and succinct. Try to keep cover letters and resumes to one page each. Do not use fancy fonts. Don't just spell-check proof-read carefully.
- Avoid exaggeration and padding, but do include specific accomplishments of yours.
- Avoid clichés and jargon. Write about your experience in more concrete terms. For example, instead of just saying you are a "self-starter" discuss something you initiated in response to a need. Instead of "people-person" talk how about your enjoyment of learning about or helping others supported your work.
- Do include relevant extracurricular activities, volunteer jobs and independent projects that have given you an opportunity to demonstrate technical skills, initiative and the ability to follow-through.
- Though you can develop a template for cover letters that describes your core skills, you should customize the cover letter to address the specific job. You may want to save a master copy in WORD so it can be updated. Electronic submissions should be as PDFs so that the layout remains as intended.

Interviews:

Interviews give you and the potential internship sponsor a chance to see if there is a good fit in terms of skills required, personality, presentation, and mutual goals. A few important points in preparation:

- Do your homework about the organization or individual.
- An increasing number of initial interviews are held via Skype or video conference. These can be challenging in terms of establishing rapport --even for more experienced job-seekers. Though most of us are used to Face-time as a casual means of communication, a video job interview can be a bit trickier. We recommend you practice with friends and your faculty advisor. Here's some useful advice from around the web about preparing for a video interview:

<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/video-interview/>

<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-preparation/prepare-for-a-video-interview/article.aspx>

- Be aware that you have one chance to make a first impression. Dress neatly and comfortably.

- Be on time.
- Informed questions demonstrate your interest in the job. Though you need to get a sense of how the work will serve your goals it is important to remember that employers are primarily interested in how you can support the work of the organization or individual to whom you will report. Potential employers are happy to answer your questions in this context, but do not want to feel as if you are interviewing them. You will learn a great deal about the internship if you ask questions about specific tasks and the role of your department in the relation to the work of the company. If the job the interviewer describes does not include something specific you're interested in you can ask if there would be an opportunity to explore that as your work progresses.
- You may also be asked to answer questions about yourself and your interests. For example: - How did you become interested in this kind of work? Why did you major in ...? Why are you interested in working here? Tell me about a time when you had to juggle at tasks?
- Be prepared and respectful and true to who you are.
- An important note about social media. Potential mentors do frequently google intern candidates or look them up via social media. Don't post interview details on your social media. Throughout your interview and the semester, you should practice care and discretion in terms of what you share on your social media.

Follow-up

After the interview, write a note thanking the interviewer for his or her time and reiterating your interest in the position (if this is the case). **Whether you want the job or not a thank you email is appropriate.**

When you have your internships set you will sign an an agreement with your internship sponsors, about learning goals hours and general duties. This document can be updated throughout the semester if needed.

Internships and Labor Rules:

Interns participating in an accredited educational program are not classed as employees by the Labor department and sponsors are not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in terms of benefits and compensation. In addition to the training in exchange for academic credit the FLSA exemption requires

assurance that the students do not displace regular employees, are not entitled to wages; and not eligible for unemployment benefits at the end of the internship.

Some corporate entities are required by their internal policies to provide some compensation to to interns but it is not a very wide-spread practice in the creative industries.