

Self-sourcing Professional Internships: Tips and tricks

Self-sourcing by networking or cold contacting

1. Define your value proposition

You need to convince an organisation that you would add value to their project.

- Highlight your relevant knowledge and technical skills.
- Highlight your personal strengths. You can take inspiration from this [strength assessment](#) or this list of employability skills on [myfuture](#).
- You can also check out our [Skills & Preferences Learning Path](#) as a resource.

2. Access support

There are a variety of support resources available to you.

- Explore these websites to [find an internship](#) or [find an ethical internship](#).
- Other resources include [GradConnection's e-Learning Hub](#) and the [Australian Business to Business Directory](#).

3. Networking

Learn how to network professionally and effectively.

- Use this resource on [informational interviews](#) to build your networking approach.
- Identify people in your current network who may be able to help you reach industry professionals.
- Use LinkedIn to approach people of interest. Swinburne Alumni are often great contacts for networking or internship opportunities.
- Join a relevant professional association as a student member to get access to events and industry professionals.
- Remember that your networking efforts might not have an immediate impact but may pay dividends in future.

4. Direct approach (cold calling)

First, identify which organisations you would like to intern with, then gather a list of relevant names and contact details.

- Order this list of organisations from most preferred to least preferred. Then, research the organisations in this order.
- During your research, try to identify if an organisation has a department or team that may suit your discipline, knowledge and skills.
- Also try to identify the names and position titles of industry professionals who would be appropriate contacts.

5. Develop a pitch (verbal or written)

After this research, outline the following for each organisation.

- Why would I like to intern at this organisation and in what capacity?
- What could I offer as an intern?
- You can use your value proposition and our [Elevator Pitch Builder](#) for help here.
- Inform them of the start and finish dates for the relevant intake.
- Provide our [handout for organisations](#) that outlines the necessary guidelines and processes.
- Before making contact, practice your approach on friends and family.

You will also need to make sure that a satisfactory number of hours can be completed within the duration of the relevant semester. Please also make sure that you allow enough time to complete the entire self-sourcing process. Being realistic and flexible in your approach to self-sourcing is key.

Receiving an offer

As soon as you receive an offer, you will need to do the following.

- Download the [Project Description template](#) and send it to your potential host organisation for completion.
- Once it is complete, send the template and the contact details of your potential industry supervisor to profplacements@swin.edu.au.

Internship unit enrolment

You will be enrolled in the relevant internship unit by our team once your opportunity is confirmed. You can consider this as an official acknowledgement that your internship has been approved.

Please note that it is illegal to do an unpaid internship with a for-profit organisation.* There are severe penalties for companies who appoint someone in an unpaid position that is not sanctioned by an approved tertiary program.

The risks for you are also considerable if you choose to undertake an opportunity without approval from Swinburne. For example, if we are unaware of your internship, we may not be able to assist or support you as required should issues arise.

**An unpaid internship with a not-for-profit organisation may be possible. In this case, make sure you are registered as a volunteer with the organisation to ensure you are covered by their insurance.*