

Evaluating Student Resumes

Students look towards internships to provide them with their first professional experience. Resumes submitted for internship opportunities may not contain prior experience working in a career field; rather, they may comprise part-time employment, academic achievements or campus involvement. For this reason, employers must search for evidence of skills using other strategies.

Campus Involvement

Students who have taken the time to get involved in campus organizations and activities have usually developed strong time management and organization skills, as well as the ability to work within teams and groups.

A resume that highlights a great deal of campus involvement is also a great indicator of a student's pride and loyalty to their institution. Students who take the time to get involved on campus are invested in their institution in the same way an employee is invested in a company.

Leadership Roles

For many students, taking on a leadership role is practice for leadership in the workplace. Students who have served as orientation leaders, campus tour guides, student government representatives or mentors have developed the skills necessary to lead others and communicate ideas effectively. Look for positions within organizations as well, such as chair of a committee or vice-president of a group or organization. These positions show responsibility and require a certain level of professionalism.

Academic Performance and Coursework

A high grade point average (GPA) does not always indicate a good internship candidate, but it does show that the student finds value in knowledge and education. GPA is also a good indicator of a student's work ethic and organization.

When searching for an intern, make sure that the potential candidate has completed any coursework that may be necessary to successfully work within the professional setting. If your industry requires background knowledge in a particular subject area, make sure the student has achieved that level before hiring them to fill an intern position.

Always keep in mind that although GPA is an important factor in screening candidates, it is only one piece of the puzzle. Make sure a student also possesses the other qualities you are looking for in an intern.

A word about GPA...

GPA's vary between institutions. A student in a more difficult academic program may have a GPA that is lower than his or her peers.

Many of today's students are juggling external responsibilities along with going to college. A student who does not have a high GPA may be working during the semester to pay for school.

GPA's take time to improve. A student who struggled early on may have had difficulty bringing up his or her GPA, even when performing well.

High GPAs are more difficult to achieve in college than in high school. Average GPAs vary by institution, but generally only a small fraction of students carry a 3.5 GPA or higher.

Prior Work Experience

Obviously, most students applying for internships do not have resumes full of professional work experience. However, the jobs a student has worked can tell you a little something about his or her work ethic, dedication and skill set. In addition, working any type of job requires punctuality and responsibility—two qualities any employer would want in an intern.

Fast food, retail, summer camps—these are just some of the jobs seen most frequently on college student resumes. **Look beyond the job title and think about what skills and knowledge the student had to possess to succeed in a particular environment.** The student probably developed communication skills while working with the public, trustworthiness while handling money transactions, patience while working with children, etc.

Athletic Involvement

Students who have participated in college athletic programs typically possess a great deal of personal discipline because they have had to **balance demanding practice schedules with coursework and classes.** Athletes are also accustomed to working as members of a team, and those skills can transfer easily into the workplace.