



SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS: PLANNING FOR YOUR SUMMER EXPERIENCE

As a UChicago student, you have access to thousands of substantive summer opportunities, including internships, research assistantships, summer courses, and more! As you explore which opportunities match best with your academic and professional goals, you should also dedicate time to planning out the logistics of your summer experience.

Students are responsible for arranging and funding their own summer experience logistics. This guide will outline some best practices and specific items you should consider as you make your summer plans.

If you have any questions or concerns about summer experiences, please [schedule an appointment with a career adviser](#) for personalized support!

GETTING STARTED

Start Early!

- In general, Career Advancement recommends that students begin exploring and applying for summer opportunities during Winter Break—starting in the Winter gives you more and time and flexibility to plan a successful experience
- Some opportunities (e.g., government internships that require security clearances) may require earlier planning; students are encouraged to consult with a career adviser to discuss the application timeline for their desired summer experience

Identify Your Goals

- Setting specific, concrete goals for your summer experience will help you identify the opportunities that are the best fit for you
- Some potential goals to consider include:
 - Gaining experience
 - Earning money
 - Learning new skills
 - Expanding your professional network
 - Breaking into a particular industry
 - Preparing for graduate or professional school
 - Taking required courses
- Once you've identified your goals, rank them in order of priority
- For example, is it most important for you to earn a certain amount of money? Live in a particular location? Have an internship in a certain industry?



BEFORE YOU ACCEPT AN OFFER: EVALUATING SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Experience Content

- Does the experience provide substantive projects or assignments that will advance your career or academic goals?
- Will you have an opportunity to learn new skills?

Work Environment

- Are you a good match for this organization's culture and work style?
- Does the organization's mission align with your values and preferences?

Location

- Is the experience located somewhere you feel comfortable living?
- Does the location fit your needs for cost of living, transportation, proximity to family, etc.?

Funding

- Based on your expected salary or program fees, will you be able to fund your summer living costs and support your other financial goals?
- If not, are there alternative strategies (e.g., living with family, applying for grants) that you could consider to reduce living costs or increase your earnings?
- Would your employer be open to a shorter summer experience (e.g., changing a 10-week internship to 8 weeks) to reduce the time you need to live away from home?

PLANNING LOGISTICS

For advice on planning logistics in specific cities, please consult [Career Advancement's city guides](#) and the [U.S. and international city guides available on GoInGlobal](#).

Housing

- Factors to consider when searching for housing include:
 - Cost
 - Proximity to:
 - workplace/classes
 - transportation
 - key services such as grocery stores, healthcare facilities, etc.
 - cultural and social attractions
 - Parking availability
 - Crime and security
 - Utilities and amenities (kitchen, laundry facilities, etc.)
- You can identify housing opportunities by:
 - Browsing online rental listings
 - Speaking to UChicago students who have previously interned in the city
 - Asking your employer or host organization for recommendations on where to live or find housing



- Researching student housing organizations: local universities or hostels sometimes offer dorm-style summer housing
- Resources for finding apartments (**Note: these links are provided for informational purposes only. Career Advancement does not endorse or guarantee any of the information provided by these organizations. Students should exercise their own discretion when searching for housing.*)
 - [Advice for avoiding rental scams](#)
 - [Apartments.com](#)
 - [Craiglist](#)
 - [Hotpads](#)
 - [Trulia](#)
 - [Zillow](#)
- You can potentially reduce housing costs by:
 - Finding a roommate: when possible, Career Advancement is happy to connect you with other students who will be working in the same city as you
 - Negotiating your start and end dates with your employer or host organization to align with lease beginning and end dates
 - Living with friends and family
 - Targeting programs that provide summer housing

Transportation and Commute

- Before your summer begins, research costs and options for:
 - Your transportation to and from your summer destination
 - On-the-ground transit during your summer experience
- Once you've found housing, plan out your daily commute
- You may wish to research routes for:
 - Buses
 - Cars – if driving, be sure to consider the cost of any tolls and parking fees
 - Commuter rail
 - Subway trains
 - Walking
- If possible, do a “test run” of your commute before your first day to determine how long it will take you

Food

- Food costs will vary depending on your location, dietary needs, and preferences
- In general, however, you can reduce costs by:
 - Cooking at home if you have access to a kitchen
 - Buying ingredients in bulk
 - Limiting meals out

Money and Taxes

- If your experience is paid, identify how often you will be paid during the summer: depending on your specific opportunity, you may be paid biweekly, monthly, or in one lump sum
- Map out due dates for rent, utility bills, etc. and compare them with your pay schedule



- If you anticipate needing more funding for your experience, consider:
 - [Applying for UChicago grants](#)
 - Targeting opportunities in locations where you can live with family or friends
 - Working in an [on-campus student employment position](#) during the academic year
 - Taking on a part-time job alongside your internship or research opportunity
- Taxes may be withheld from your wages depending on the payment method and your residency status
 - For U.S. opportunities, you can use the [IRS withholding tables](#) to estimate how federal withholding for income tax and Medicare/Social Security taxes will impact your take-home pay
 - Depending on where in the U.S. your internship is located, state or local taxes may also be withheld from your wages; to find withholding information, consult the state or local department of revenue (e.g., [Illinois Department of Revenue withholding tables](#))
 - If you have an employer-paid internship outside of the United States, your destination country may also withhold taxes from your wages
- In general, funds that you receive from the University for internships and research are taxable income and must be reported on your annual tax return
- If you have questions about your specific tax situation, please consult a tax professional

Special Considerations for Internships outside of the U.S.

- Passport: plan to apply for or renew your passport (if needed) well in advance of your internship
 - Some countries will require you to have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the dates of your visit
- Visas: unless you are authorized to work in the country where your internship is taking place, it is very likely that you will need to apply for a visa
 - The best way to begin this process is to contact the local consulate of your destination country
- Vaccinations: some countries may recommend or require vaccinations for foreigners; in some cases, the U.S. government strongly encourages travelers to certain countries to vaccinate against specific diseases
 - The most reliable source for a list of updated vaccination information by country is the [Centers for Disease Control and Travelers Health](#) website.
 - If you have any questions about vaccinations, please reach out to the [Student Health Service](#) at UChicago.
- Health insurance: contact your health insurance provider to verify which services will and will not be covered while you are abroad
 - There may be cases in which you will prefer to secure additional coverage or short-term travel insurance
- UChicago Traveler: all Metcalf interns traveling internationally are required to register your travel plans with [UChicago Traveler](#), which will allow the University to contact you in the event of an emergency