**Do I need an internship? Video transcript**

One of the things we get asked about most by international students is finding an internship in the UK. You know that competition in the UK for jobs can be high, and you also know that experience can develop the skills that UK employers look for. However, there can be some confusion too, because internships in the UK may not be quite the same as internships in your home country.

So, what do we mean by an internship in the UK? Internships are generally a structured experience for a fixed time within a company, usually over the summer vacation period. So, it might be a 3-month internship in the Summer vacation from June- Sept.

Internships within commercial, business fields are usually paid and advertised widely in a similar way to other jobs. In some other industries internships can be more casual and may be unpaid. This is more common in areas like charities, creative industries, and environmental organisations.

UK internships are generally created with undergraduates (bachelors students) in mind, to do in the summer vacation between the stages of their degree programme. They often don’t work that well for master’s students as you will have different term dates and may still be timetabled to attend lectures over the summer months.

If you want to apply for an internship, you will need to start searching and applying for them in the autumn term, as many employers advertise them well before the summer.

However, it is really important to realise that although employers like internships, they also value many other types of experiences as long as they demonstrate your skills. Employers value volunteering, belonging to a student society, playing a sport, pursuing other hobbies – the whole variety of activities that you can take part in outside of your studies.

This study by Bright Network shows that many students believe that employers are looking for relevant work experience or an internship plus top grades. However, employers say that they are more impressed by passion and enthusiasm and soft skills. You can see here that related industry experience and grades actually come quite low in the list of things that employers look for.

Internships are great ways to demonstrate your skills but there are many other things you can do. Many students are not successful in finding internships, or simply cannot fit them into their schedules, or perhaps they don’t fit with your course dates- so what can you do if you don’t get an internship?

A strategic approach is to start by working out what skills you will need for your chosen career and which you are missing. You can do this by looking at [job profiles on Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles) that interest you. Find the skills section of the profile and write them down on a piece of paper. Beside each skill that you have written down, add as many examples from your own experiences where you have used that skill. Remember they can come from sports, hobbies, and volunteering as well as any work experience. Any skills developed in your home country are still valid in the UK so include those too. Are there any skills in the job profile that you don’t have good examples for? If so, these would be good to focus on when thinking about which activities to do whilst you’re in the UK.

Now you can look at all the great societies, sports, projects and programmes available at Exeter and find some that you will really enjoy at the same time as building up those skills you need. And remember- you don’t need to do everything! Just one or two activities are fine- unless you want to do more of course!