

Internship Experience in an Accounting Firm: Learning and Growing

By: Jingjing Chen

ASU Today (White Sheet)

I am Jingjing Chen, a Business Administration student graduating this fall 2023 semester. This is my final semester and before graduating, and I had the opportunity to do an internship at Metro Tax & Financial Service Inc., an accounting firm. This was my first internship experience, and it was incredibly valuable.

Throughout the semester, I learned a lot at the accounting firm and was able to relate some of what I learned in school to my internship. I was also able to gain valuable hands-on experience in a professional setting. I thought I would share my journey and experience to motivate future students to get those learning experiences at internships.

During my internship, I encountered tasks that I hadn't previously learned about in my undergraduate studies, such as taxation which is really an important topic. This initially led to some confusion, but through thorough explanations from my supervisor, I gained valuable knowledge and a deeper understanding of the subject.

During my internship, my main tasks and responsibilities were to work closely with company executives on various projects related to human resources, marketing, tax processing, finance, and general administrative office tasks. One of my main responsibilities involved assisting accountants in organizing documents for faster retrieval. This included a new project aimed at consolidating information scattered across different software platforms, saving accountants significant time searching for relevant data. Additionally, the organization was undergoing website conversion to improve efficiency and data consistency. Previously, information was dispersed across various websites, leading to potential inconsistencies due to asynchronous updates. The new software centralized all information, ensuring its accuracy and accessibility, further enhancing team productivity. This responsibility taught me the importance of database management. Apart from it, I learned about SWOT, SMART goals, bookkeeping, handling clients' taxes, and using Excel effectively.

My external site supervisor at the CPA firm and I have learned a lot under her guidance to work effectively, and she is the person who introduced me to tax processing. My faculty mentor was Dr. Leepsa Madhabika for the OGL 484 internship course. I meet with my faculty mentor and discuss the internship at an external site, and she provides additional guidance on how to do well at the external internship site and required skills to improve.

Overall, this internship provided a valuable learning experience. Despite initially encountering unfamiliar aspects, I gained substantial knowledge and improved my ability to connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. This experience also broadened my knowledge base and helped me refine my future career aspirations. While having a predetermined direction is beneficial, internship experiences can provide insights that shape and solidify future goals. Experience in an internship can help students achieve the specific future direction they want. I think sometimes during the internship process, if you like this aspect, it can better help you determine your future direction. This way, you can gain a deeper, more detailed understanding of the industry and conduct more in-depth research.

