

TIPS FROM FORMER CARDINAL QUARTER PARTICIPANTS

Preparation / Clarifying Expectations

“During spring quarter, stay in close contact with your supervisor. This way, you can both show interest in your job and also discuss what you hope to learn/accomplish during your summer. Don’t worry if you don’t know everything, and make sure to ask enough questions. Leading up to my internship and often during my internship I didn’t know exactly what was going on or what the expectations for my projects were. I quickly learned that it wasn’t productive to get a project and make an attempt at it without actually knowing what my manager was wanting from me. Even asking just a few clarifying questions can help direct your project, save time, and produce something useful for your team.”

“I would strongly encourage to over-prepare for day to day life in your area beforehand. I wasn't able to fully capitalize on some of the information I had been sent because I got caught up in my work and travel schedule, and ended up postponing many of the things I planned to do. I should have reached out to more people for work and social meetings before I arrived, and even things like setting up a blog would have been quite helpful.”

“Don't be afraid to set up that first meeting with your supervisor to discuss your management and communication styles. Be sure to learn how your supervisor likes to deal with communication requests and set up meetings as necessary to promote healthy dialogue.”

Communication / Networking

“Do not be afraid to ask as many questions as you'd like and ask for more work or more substantive work, if you have been doing a great job so far. Your internship is completely what you make of it, and Haas is here to help you, so don't be afraid to contact them as well. Take this opportunity and hone in on the professional skills you'll need for years to come.”

“Take initiative at your workplace! Suggest your own ideas, be proactive in completing tasks, and show that you are more engaged in the work than someone who simply finishes jobs assigned to them. You're going to make mistakes, do your best to correct them and learn from them but don't dwell on them.”

“I think that building relationships, inside the office and with other individuals from similar careers, is important. 'Networking' is a great thing to do as a college student, as people are happy to give career advice and chat with students interested in their career paths. Don't hesitate to ask people to coffee or use LinkedIn to find people that you want to try to meet with.”

Learning

“Ask for feedback, and do so with advance notice! Request a time to meet with your supervisor for the sole purpose of getting feedback on your work.”

“When working in an internship, it's incredibly important to find the balance between confidence and humility. The more successful you are at integrating both of these into your work, the more you will find fulfillment in your work and gain respect from those around you.”

“Revisit the learning plan in the middle of your internship. Generally, keep the big picture in mind while you're in the thick of things, and make sure to communicate your goals to your supervisors early on if it is not too presumptuous to do so. Make sure you're on the same page. Ask for clarification when you need it. Be open minded.”

“Think about the root causes of the problems your institution is addressing.”

Self-Care

“While you are preparing to have a fruitful fellowship experience, don't forget to have fun! Make a bucket list of things that you'd like to do for recreation—places to go, people to meet or food to eat—and make sure you do each of them!”

“Work hard, but make sure you take time for yourself outside of work to relax and recuperate in the way that's best for you. You're no help if you're not at the top of your game.”

International Experiences

“Read local papers before you go to another community/city/country! And if articles reference historical events, do background research to understand that history. It will help you feel more connected to the people with whom you work, and hopefully people will appreciate that you have done your homework. Send your hopes and goals for the summer to your manager before the fellowship starts so that the projects they assign you align with your interests.”

“First: Breathe, be patient, and be kind to yourself. Since fellowships are so short, it's easy to feel pressured to adapt quickly, to finish projects fast, to see everything in the city/country you're in, to fit in immediately with your host organization. But change and adaptation takes time, and sometimes it's okay to go slowly. Also remember that you have the rest of your life to return to this organization/place again! Second: Start a blog to keep in touch with people from home. I wrote a few blog posts and posted some pictures, and this allowed me to stay in touch with people while creating some distance to enjoy the abroad experience by myself. It was a wonderful exercise in reflection too! At the same time, don't feel pressured to document every detail of your experience. Sometimes it's more freeing to enjoy alone.”

“Be prepared and learn how to work effectively and live happily outside your comfort zone. I was outside my comfort zone almost the entire experience—it was a new culture, new language and new environment that was hard to adjust entirely to. However, I grew to find enjoyment and excitement in these experiences.”

“Make sure you are well prepared for your trip, but as much as possible try to suspend any preconceived notions that you may have about what life will be like during your placement. There is no way to predict what you will encounter! Be open to everything that comes your way, make sure you laugh at yourself and embrace uncomfortable situations, and above all MEET PEOPLE! Have dinner with someone new once or twice a week, go to social gatherings, sit with coworkers at lunch, ask for advice from people who are familiar with the area—people are your best resource and will completely transform the experience you have!”