Internship Guidance for ME/MNE Students During COVID 19

If you need an internship during the Summer of 2020 in order to graduate on or before May 2021, this guide is for you.

Reminder: What is the usual graduation requirement for internships?
1. Report your internship in Handshake for review and approval.
2. Work 300 hours in an experience that includes these elements:
   a. Application of engineering principles
   b. Teamwork
   c. Problem Solving
3. Complete this Class series:
   a. ENGR 395 Professional Development (1 credit course)
   b. ENGR 396 Internship Experience (taken with the internship, 0 credits, 0 cost, all online) or the ENGR 398 Co-op Experience if a co-op is done
   c. ENGR 496 Internship Review (taken after the internship, 0 credits, 0 cost, all online) or the ENGR 498 Co-op Review if a co-op is done

New Information: Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID19, the number of internship opportunities being reduced or rescinded, and the lack of on-campus research opportunities, the MNE Department offers the following guidance.

1. If you have an internship offer already for this summer:
   a. Work: Check in with your employer. If they are thinking of cancelling, offer these ideas to them to keep the internship:
      i. The employer could set up the internship as remote. Projects and ideas that the employer would like explored could be done this way.
      ii. Start the internship later in the summer. An 8-week, 40-hour a week internship will reach 320 hours. You could start as late as June 22, 2020 and complete 300+ hours, before classes start Aug 18, 2020. Another option is to start later in the summer, and finish the hours part-time during the fall semester, if the employer is local to campus.
      iii. If the employer is cancelling the internship due to economic hardship, and if you can afford to work for free, offer to work without pay.
   b. Class:
      i. Be sure to sign up for ENGR 396 Internship Experience during your internship. It’s online, costs nothing, and is required for graduation.
      ii. In the fall, take ENGR 496 Internship Review.

2. If you don’t have a position for this summer, consider your past work or research experiences to see if they could count as an internship.
   Work/Research:
a. If you’ve had an experience that could possibly count as an internship during the time that you’ve been studying for this degree, it might qualify as your required internship. Use the criteria above (under Reminder) to look at your experiences. If one seems appropriate, please email Laura Lemza lemzala@vcu.edu to evaluate it together, or post it directly to Handshake for review and approval.

b. This includes experiences you may have had while at community college, prior to coming to VCU. If your experience was during your time of studying for your current engineering degree, it might be eligible.

c. Research with a professor can usually count as internship hours, but the time in research can’t also be used to fulfill other requirements like VIP academic credit.

Class:

d. If past experiences are accepted for your internship, sign up for ENGR 396 this summer, and during the course, report about that past experience.

e. In the fall or later, take ENGR 496 Internship Review.

3. If you don’t yet have a position, Continue searching:

   a. Expand the job boards that you would normally use. Start with Handshake, and expand to LinkedIn, Indeed, Simply Hired, etc.

   b. Expand your search into different industries, different locations, and possibly different roles.

   c. Consider solving a problem for someone, remotely. Investigate organizations, not-for-profit companies, etc. that could use some help with some projects. Suggest projects you could offer them.

4. If you don’t have a position, get help from VCU Engineering. Do BOTH of the following:

   a. Email Laura Lemza at lemzala@vcu.edu to brainstorm options.

   b. Tell us that you don’t have a position and need help. Complete the survey sent by Ms. Reed at this link if you have not already completed it.

5. The MNE department is working to provide remote research or design internship opportunities for students who have exhausted all other options and are on-track to graduate in May 2021 or sooner.

   a. Students that respond to Ms. Reed’s survey at the link above by Monday, April 27 will be contacted by May 1 with additional details.

   b. Check your VCU email regularly.