

Career Preparation as an Undocumented Student

Finding internships, gaining new skills, and preparing for your career is difficult enough already, but being an undocumented student can present additional challenges. Below are some ways to gain experience and develop professional skills through less traditional methods. Experience does not have to come from internships or jobs. *Some of the advice given below is subject to change as policies regarding undocumented students change.* Be sure to think creatively, and conduct some research, on different ways to expand your abilities and experiences!



1. Internships

Internships provide a chance to put the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to use in an industry setting. The on campus career fairs are great opportunities to network and find internships. Look at other ready references to learn more about finding internships!

- ◆ Students with DACA
 - ◆ Students with DACA are legally allowed to work, and complete internships, in the United States.
 - ◆ It is not necessary to reveal your DACA status with employers
 - ◆ DACA does not cover working for the federal government, places that require citizenship or background checks. Be sure to look at the criteria of the job before completing the application
- ◆ Undocumented Students
 - ◆ Cannot be paid legally for work as an employee
 - ◆ Look for alternatives to traditional paid internships

2. Job Shadows

Job shadows are not as common in engineering fields as they are in the medical field, but job shadowing can give insight into working in industry. Once you have a connection with an employer or individual in an industry, politely ask them for the chance to shadow them for a day.

3. Volunteering

Often, volunteering does not require documentation or a background check. Volunteer work is a great way to get involved and gain more experience outside of the classroom. Search the local community, and use OSU resources, to find volunteer opportunities.

4. Get Involved on Campus

- ◆ OSU, and specifically CEAT, have several clubs focused on diversity and bringing together students with similarities. It is possible that getting involved with organizations will help you find other students that have been through this before with similar statuses. Look online for a list of the CEAT Diversity and Inclusion organizations.
- ◆ Joining clubs is a great way to network, as well as develop leadership and other skills. Many clubs bring employers to their meetings, and this is a great way to make a personal connection with a recruiter or industry professional
- ◆ Research experience can also be a great way to gain experience and grow outside of the classroom. Contact professors to learn more about the projects they are working on and see if they have room for you to work with them.

5. Start an LLC

If you have a particular skill, like coding or construction abilities, and could do contract or project work, it might be beneficial to start a limited liability company. Starting an LLC does not require documentation or a social security number. In Oklahoma, there is a filing fee of \$100, but the application is only 1 page.

Go to <https://www.sos.ok.gov/corp/filing.aspx> for the Oklahoma LLC application. Creating an LLC to do work and projects is a great way to make some money and gain some experience!

6. Graduate School

- ◆ It is possible to attend graduate school as an undocumented or DACA student. Graduate school is a great way to get more specific in your field and open you up to a new set of post school opportunities.
- ◆ For undocumented students, it is important to note that some teaching assistant and graduate assistant positions are limited to students with citizenship and documentation. This does not make graduate school unattainable, but it does limit the funding opportunities for graduate school.

We understand that undocumented students will face more challenges finding internships and experiences to grow professionally than traditional students. For additional resources on professional development, internships, and alternatives to internships- contact CEAT Career Services, or OSU career services.