

Internship Survey – Advice from Senior MHS Students

Survey Methodology: In early November 2006, second year and graduated MHS students in the Department of International Health were contacted by email to answer the following 10 questions. Responses were received by 25 students. These questions were developed by the Internship Opportunities Committee of the IH Student Group to provide some insight in the internship search process for 1st year MHS students in the department of International Health. Feedback we received is presented below. For further questions/details, please contact Sachiko Ozawa at sozawa@jhsph.edu.

1. What advice or "tips" can you give regarding the internship search process?

Think about what you want to get out of your internship....when deciding your internship - try to figure out what you will be doing day to day (will you be in the field or an office?), what your role is, and what skills you will gain - make sure it fits with your goals... but also be flexible (especially as far as location and topic).

First go to your advisor, have a talk with him/her about what areas of research you are interested in, and what types of work you want to be doing in the future. Then go home and have a search around on the internet, PubMed, etc. and just ponder the whole thing for a while. Then once you think you have a research area/geographical region/population of interest, go back to your advisor and they will be able to throw out some names of people and organizations that fit the bill, or refer you to someone who can. Then it's all up to you from there to make initial contacts.

I think that it is important to focus on not where you want to go, but what skills you want to develop. Start there and look at people and groups doing that kind of work

- Start early but do not panic. Do not hesitate to contact just about anyone as long as it's in a professional manner.

Network, network, network

-Be selective. Don't rush into an internship because you think you will not have another opportunity. While I'm not suggesting this for everyone, I only applied for one internship because it was the only one that I felt that I really wanted to do. But have a back up plan (as a back up I was planning to conduct my own research).

Start as early as first quarter to think about what you want out of the internship, including compensation, domestic/international, agency type, and how this experience will fit into your overall professional and educational goals. Go to all of the JHSPH sponsored events across degrees (MPH, MHS, PhD) to network with alumni, current doctoral students, TAs, and professors.

Start looking early. It helps to have a specific topic and/or geographic area to focus on (even if you're not sure it's what you want to do in the long run). Talk to professors and network with their contacts.

There is definitely not right or wrong way to go about this process, and because it's so individualized it can be difficult to give concrete suggestions. My first would be don't freak out if

people around you start getting them in Nov/Dec. I wasn't even sure of what my interests were until into third term, and so it ended up being a good thing that I had waited a bit. Also, try to narrow down either a region or a topic so you can begin talking to different professors. Also think about whether you want something in the field, in a larger WHO/World Bank type organization, or that focuses on data analysis as this will also help narrow your search and keep you from being miserable and ending up with something you really weren't that interested in. Also, feel free to talk to as many people as possible, you are not wedded to a specific one simply because you've talked to a person.

Start early and be persistent. If some place you apply to doesn't get back to you, find a contact person there and send your CV and info directly to them.

Do not stress about finding an internship, everybody finds one. Some take longer than others, but it will happen. Formulate an idea of what you want from your internship before you start looking just so you can

narrow down your search and make sure you get the best fit for you. Make sure you have a good mentor to work with you on the project, your experience will be that much better. Do something you wouldn't normally do. Take advantage of this opportunity to push yourself and challenge yourself.

Be open to any internship opportunity. In the end what really matters is the experience.

The more people you can talk with - especially those working in areas for which you have an interest - the better.

Don't be down or stressed out just because your friends got their internships first. Instead, be persistent, open to new opportunities and you will find an internship that works for you.

Start early, but don't be discouraged by the process. Try to find alumni or connections to people working in the organizations where you might like to intern. Consider some of the internships forwarded by your department or advisors.

- i) Look up as many websites;
- ii) Ask people around for internship opportunities;
- iii) Apply as many internship as possible (depends on whether the program is competitive or not)

Start asking around and researching internships *early*, ask faculty for leads, get in touch with students who've had experience with this sort of thing

Start your search early, and be use your the people around you to their fullest potential by letting them know what you're type of experience you're looking for. Take advantage of the experience of your advisor, or other faculty members.

Just keep looking everywhere; be diligent and organized in your search.

Start early but don't panic if nothing turns up in the first couple months of your search. A lot of organizations will not know their summer/fall internship needs until April or May. Many exciting internship opportunities appeared over email list-servs as late as June, but most of us couldn't take them because we had already settled for something adequate but not awesome.

Some major organizations have internship deadlines as early as October, but most are in March. Keep this in mind if you are interested in the big multi- or bilateral agencies -- any of the UN agencies, World Bank, USAID, State Dept, etc.

When you contact anyone, be they professors or people at agencies you would like to intern with, be ready to answer questions about:

- what topic areas you are interested in and/or willing to consider - if you know what you want, be specific; if you are very flexible, that can work to your advantage, but you still have to know what you are talking about with regard to the areas you express interest in.
- what skills you can bring to the table (languages, qualitative/quantitative research and analysis, topical expertise,
- what skills you want to develop
- what you are looking for in a mentor/supervisor/host organization

Be flexible about money. You have probably already borrowed a huge amount of money to go to Hopkins, and in that context, borrowing a few thousand more to sustain yourself through a really significant internship experience may be a good investment in your professional development. That being said, if an organization is paying you, you can be sure they will be more invested in you and your work, including assigning you to real projects with meaningful outcomes, rather than some small task they've cooked up to occupy an intern. It is reasonable to expect to have your costs covered (flight, accommodations, etc.) but most MHS students will not end up getting a salary from their internship, unless you are able to set up something with a Hopkins affiliate and get paid through federal work study.

Look for internships that will help you to develop professional networks, language skills, regional expertise, research skills, etc. Take the time to read through relevant job descriptions for organizations you're interested in working with, and identify skills you need to develop or experiences you could leverage that when you are on the job market next year.

Start thinking about what you want out of the internship experience

If you are seeking a funded internship, start looking now because a lot of the deadlines are approaching

Don't freak out too early. I would say you should definitely wait until after you get epi 2 over with before stressing about the internship. Winter break is a good time to start looking.

Schmooze with faculty! Find faculty who do what you want to do or who work in places you want to work. Meet them. Get to know them. Find out who they're friends with. Contact their friends. Use the JH website to identify faculty in your areas of interest who may be outside of the IH/Health Systems department. Also, if possible identify something unique that you offer (e.g. grant-writing skills) and mention that to people. Tailor your cover letter when emailing various contacts. And Peter Winch's advice was great – don't email faculty on Mondays. Emailing them on Wednesdays or Thursdays will make for happier, more thought-out responses.

2. What was the hardest thing about the internship search to be aware of?

Might not find ANYTHING within a short time

Actually finding an internship that I wanted to apply for

In my case, I decided to contact a famous - and extremely busy - professor. I eventually got the internship, but I really had to persevere by emails. It's important to find a balance between seeming eager and seeming obnoxious. Remember that this internship is way more important to you than it is to them, so be humble!

That there is little to no formalized guidance for the process. That there are no official understanding between JHSPH and various organizations to take interns.

Competing with friends for the same position

Deadlines - for scholarships, funds, CHR approval; if you are doing your own research or new research to be added on to another study - submit application to Hopkins IRB and CHR as soon as possible

It might not be clear what type of skills you will be applying or what will be useful in the future.

It's hard to find something if you don't know what you're looking for. And even though you may want to start early, professors and organizations may not have internships available until the end of the year. Applying to internships posted on websites may not be fruitful unless you have a contact with the organization.

Finalizing the internship position and names of your potential supervisor. Talk to everyone and anyone that you know in the field at JHSPH and your past universities to make sure that you have at least two options and there is a fall-back plan. I knew plenty of MHSers who know that they may be working on a project by as late as May of the first year but eventually, something (funding, other) didn't fall through, and they are left without a practicum immediately after the June comp. It depends on your timeline - if you want to finish the degree asap, look for alternatives and make sure that you draft a document or two after the verbal consent of approval for the practicum to ensure that both you and the sponsor have an official agreement regarding the length, scope, and logistical aspects of the internship. I cannot emphasize how important this is.

I don't know if there was one hardest thing, I guess timing of it all, the finalizations tend to fall around the same time as midterms in April and when a lot of scholarship applications are due. So, I would suggest doing things ahead of time (writing up mock cover letters, finalizing your CV) so you can have things to send off immediately to potential internships.

You're pretty much on your own for the search. It's also sometimes tricky to find out what the specific process is for obtaining an internship and what Hopkins' requirements are for MHS students...Unless the handbook has been updated.

I received very little help from Hopkins. This is not like other schools where they hold your hand the whole way and make sure you are finding an internship worth your while. I had to find this all on my own.

It is hard to know what kind of work you will be doing once you get "on site". Things usually do not turn out the way you expect them to because you have little control over the situation. You just have to be able to roll with it and make the best of the situation. But do not be afraid to ask for what you want or take charge of your project to make it a worthwhile experience.

Most of the coolest internships where you really learn hands on are not paid. So start looking for some funding now so you can have the option to take on an unpaid internship.

Just like searching for jobs in the market entails a series of try and error, the internship search is the same. Finding an internship has a lot to do with the timing, connections and luck.

You need to be flexible. Sometimes projects or opportunities may not work out, and you may be back at square one.

Realizing that timing may be a factor in terms of whether an internship position is open. It may have nothing to do with your credentials.

Waiting for the answer/reply from the internship program you applied can be discouraging.

Faculty are busy and don't always respond in a timely manner (or sometimes at all)
Knowing exactly what I wanted to do...

The most difficult aspect of my internship search was figuring out what I wanted experience in.

It can be tempting to take the first opportunity that presents itself because, after all, everyone is telling you how hard it is to find something and how lucky you are that you have something lined up so quickly. Don't take it unless it's what you really want. There will be other opportunities that arise later in the year that are far more in line with what you want to be doing.

Waiting for responses -- especially if from overseas
Someone might say it shouldn't be a problem and informally commit before checking with their superiors and following protocol

It's like any job process...you're going to get rejected...you're not going to get offers for things you think would be a great match. I don't think I was prepared for that. Also, so much is timing - if professors have openings etc.

Rejections suck. Believe that you still rock anyway.

3. What was the best thing about the internship search to be aware of?

When you actually get offered the job!

Just saying the Johns Hopkins name opens so many doors. It also helps to drop the name of your advisor or professors, as they are probably renowned in their field (but ask their permission first)

Decide right off the bat what you want to get out of the internship. What will you compromise on and what are things that you must have.

There are a lot of opportunities to work with Hopkins faculty on research projects - I believe these make for some of the best internship experiences

Could get to know a lot of people

There is funding out there but you need to start early and secure something so that you can apply

You may not know what you are getting into by simply applying blindly via e-Recruiting sites. That can turn into an interview within weeks if you are pursuing private ventures.

There are a lot of possibilities.

Don't forget about the resources of previous students, faculty, and staff. If you have an internship in mind run it by a few of them. They may have invaluable suggestions about the person you are thinking of working with or the location (I was considering working with a prof and was quickly told by a number of people not to, and was given specific reasons, it definitely changed my mind) Also, realize that you will most likely not be paid for it (expenses might be covered if you're lucky) and that the scholarships through the IH department and school are more for recognition than actual financial support. Many are valued at about \$500 which, although helpful, in many cases won't be enough for a plane ticket.

You have the opportunity to secure amazing positions if you enlist the support of contacts at Hopkins.

The best thing to be aware of is the living situation (if you are going overseas). You should make sure you have a place to stay that you are comfortable with because this is where you will be spending a significant amount of time so you should like it.

You will get an internship.

I don't think there was a best thing.

The IH MHS Students are all in it together. Share ideas about what you may want to do, what type of organizations you are interested in and which professors to go talk to, because your friends may have some suggestions.

You may end up with multiple offers and have difficulty choosing between them.

Try to search for internship programs which may fit your career path, so that you can have a taste of what it is like to work in that area/field before you apply for a full-time job in that field. After all, it will not hurt you to work as an intern in a field you thought you like, but turn out that you are not interested in developing a career in.

Talking with professors/ students about their work, about the kind of internship work I could do, about the search process, etc. was an educational experience in itself. It helped me to think through my interests and expectations, helped me see what was out there in terms of public health jobs, gave me an idea of what job searching entailed. Another good thing was finding that many were willing to help me out.

Take the opportunity to meet with some faculty members you might not normally interact with and learn about their research and ask if there is any way you might be able to get involved

It is the time that you really realize just how many opportunities there are in public health. It can be a little bit overwhelming, but it gives people (especially those who haven't worked much in public health) a chance to know what is out there. And everyone ALWAYS finds something!!!

Reading all the job postings, and then realizing what skills you need to build for when it comes time to apply for real jobs. This is very helpful to find out.

There is a best thing? Uh, I guess compiling a list of contact names and organizations from which to search for jobs.

Eventually, everyone came up with something to keep themselves out of trouble. Even if it seems like nonstop disappointment, something will come through in the end.

4. What were the primary sources of information you used in looking for internships?

A lot of opportunities are announced through email list serv

JHSPH career service, network, websites

Email listserves, Internet, Career Fair (Some organizations reserve internships for specific schools and do not post them on their websites)

Internet, my academic advisor.

People, internet

Internet. Reading papers and reading about the ongoing research in the field to identify people and agencies. Advisor and faculty. PhD students.

E-recruiting websites from universities including JHSPH, idealist.org, professor recommendations and names that were given to me by fellow students.

Organizations' websites and professors.

I relied pretty heavily on the professors at school, and also notices that were sent out by organizations looking for students. Mostly profs though.

Internet

Other students who had done the MHS internship before. Karen Charron knows how most students experiences went so she is good at helping you narrow down what you want out of the internship. I did an online search of people/groups doing relevant work and contacted them. I

used old contacts to see if they knew anyone who had an internship opening. Other professors who have on-going projects are also great resources.

Professors, old work contacts, friends, and other students at Hopkins.

I talked to 2nd year Students and Professors, looked at the Global Health Council employment/internship ads and also pursued full time jobs as well.

Faculty (mostly from outside of the IH department), other students, old coworkers (in that order)

Professors and organizations' websites

Internet (which may not be the best way according to a job-hunting book)

Faculty, Hopkins friends, some internet searching i.e. reliefweb, globalhealthcouncil, etc.

Web Resources

Idealist.org -- look for posted internships, jobs, and scan for interesting organizations that may not have current openings

Global Health Council website

AWID - Association of Women In Development

Job sites -- Reliefweb, Development Exchange, individual NGOs, OneWorld.net, etc.

Websites of organizations but mostly Hopkins faculty.

Internet, organizations we spoke about in class or heard of through others.

Professors are your best resource. Guest speakers at lunch time seminars can also be useful contacts, particularly since you have a chance to meet them in person rather than over email. Other students who have contacts in the NGO world or at other universities may also be helpful.

Internet searches

I think I used the internet and the HopkinsNet to email some alumni. Ultimately, the Hopkins contacts didn't help me, but it is a really good resource and I was able to talk to some "high-up" people in organizations.

NGO websites

Friends of Hopkins professors

Friends of friends who work with African NGOs

Contacts met at job fairs (at Hopkins) and conferences (e.g. APHA)

Various circulating emails on Hopkins network

5. How did you make the first contact with the organization you interned at?

I found the internship through my academic advisor

Talked to a person there, who became my current internship supervisor

I met them at the Career Fair (in either March or April). I spoke to the recruiting representative for about 20 minutes and left her with my resume (which I also submitted with a cover letter by email the following day).

I applied through a formal internship program

There was a topic in my degree program that was cross-cutting, but few people had in-depth exposure to. I spoke with a doctoral student in the department about it several times after she has expressed some interest on the topic while TAing my class, and she referred me to several other doctoral students who have had full-time work exposure on the issue, and I was referred eventually to a domestic government agency as a result.

Emailed, gave a brief introduction, the rundown of the internship practicum required for MHS students, and ended with a request to refer to me any possible opportunities within their organization.

I started in networks that I already knew, spoke with professors in class and asked them for tips and contacts

I ended up working for my advisor, but I contacted other people through email and applying to internships online.

I ended up with two internships, one over the summer and another during the year. The one in the fall was with an NGO and thus more formal (interviews/ cover letters etc) whereas now I'm on a research project so it meant sending a CV with a brief explanation of why I was interested in the project. Realize that you are basically free labor so people want you to come, as scary as it seems now, in many ways the students have the upper hand and we are often able to pick and choose in the end.

The only option was an online, very generic application. After that, I had to find specific people in the organization and sent e-mails to them directly.

I worked for them before starting at Hopkins.

Through another MHS student, who worked in that organization in the past.

I sent an email discussing what my background was, what I was interested in getting out of the internship. This led to a meeting and an agreement about my internship.

I was fortunate to be present at an hour long seminar given by my current boss. I basically approached him in person and asked him straight out if there were intern opportunities at his organization.

Contact with a Hopkins professor led me to get involved in a project with the organization. This project led to the internship the following year.

I am working with a Professor but I found out about the project from a 2nd year MHS student.

Faculty

Through the Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health Leadership in the PopFam department.

Scheduled a meeting with them to discuss their work.

Email, though she is alumni, though a professor gave me her name.

Through a friend of my fiancé's.

Emailed a few researchers until it got into the appropriate hands

I applied to a defined internship (through ASPH and CDC), so I actually didn't talk to anyone before finding out that I had gotten it.

6. When did you start looking for internships & in which month did you get it?

I started thinking about internships in December - but was completely clueless. I decided to work on a Hopkins research project in January or February - but many internship opportunities were circulating in the following months and there are some advantages to waiting

The first application I submitted it was Dec 2005. But I didn't start sending tons of applications until March. Got it at the end of May, 2006.

I started looking in November, got it in January.

I started really early, but don't remember when. I had several opportunities available, but wanted to be doing primary data collection. Other options at the time were in Cameroon with a small non-profit doing HIV prevention, and with Nathan Wolfe doing data collection on bushmeat. These were all great opportunities, but funding and mentor opportunities varied.

- January/February - April

Halfheartedly in September, but I really focused on my internship search in March. I got the internship at the end of April.

I started looking in November of my first year and got it finalized by February/March.

I think I started in the third term, and ended up accepting my internship a couple weeks before school ended.

I didn't start really searching around until January/February, and I had one offer in February, and another that was finalized in April.

I started casually looking over winter break. I got my offer in April (I think.)

I started looking at the end of third quarter/beginning of fourth quarter. I think I had my internship by May?? I can't remember exactly, but I was not pressed at the end for time.

Started looking in October, made contact with funding opportunities in December, and applied for and received funding in March.

I have always kept an eye out for opportunities from my first day at Hopkins but really started looking in November.

I wasn't actively looking for an internship at this time - but I was fortunate to find one around January or so.

Looking: November (I am an uber planner). Got it: March

I started working with the organization in the first term, through a project with a professor at Hopkins. I negotiated the internship with the organization by January.

Started in November and found one in March.

I started looking in November/December, but I got my internship in April.

I started really late-- in April I think. I finally agreed on an internship in August.

Began in the fall (around this time) and got it in August. I'm an outlier, don't freak out. Be flexible.

I actually had mine lined up before starting at Hopkins because I had been awarded a fellowship

I applied for the internship in late December/early Jan (I think), and may probably started browsing websites in late November - but nothing serious. I don't think I really cracked down until winter break. I found out I had gotten the internship in early March.

I started in October. I got an internship in April.

7. What type of work do/did you do in your internship?

I coordinated a small qualitative research study (as part of a larger Hopkins research project) - I designed an interview guide, trained interviewers, conducted interviews myself, coded and analyzed data...

Program management & research

-Acting public health officer overseeing four refugee camps consisting of approximately 65,000 refugees -Managing the community health programs in the four camps, supervising three community health supervisors and 65 community health workers -Coordinating public health campaigns and other donor funded activities -Developing data collection materials and a system for monitoring and evaluating community health services -Developing training materials for community health supervisors and community health workers -Developing and revising guidelines for home based care services and STI contact tracing -Researching health concerns of repatriated refugees in order to best prepare those planning to repatriate

Nutrition research in Tanzania and England, mostly lab work and fieldwork, some analysis.

Formative Research

- Epidemiology/M&E of child health programs at county level

I performed a literature review and was temporarily appointed as the program/work group coordinator for a federal inter-agency research colloquium.

I did baseline household interviews, was the field coordinator of a small community-based trial, trained and managed local field staff, and conducted process evaluation (my internship was long—10 months)

Over the summer I did a monitoring and evaluation of a health education intervention addressing behavior change among rural women in Latin America. It involved writing up a survey, conducting in-depth interviews with the women, and analyzing the data. I was pretty much on my own, and I'm not sure how good the final product was, but I learned a lot. Now I'm also doing qualitative interviews with injection drug users and stakeholders looking at the feasibility of harm reduction interventions.

I was the assistant project coordinator for a research study.

I worked on a clinical trial in South Africa doing a lot of data management/analysis and some side projects that consisted of literature searches and overall project support.

I have been lucky to have two cool experiences. The first is as a data analyst and consultant to the MOPH in Afghanistan and the 2nd was an unpaid informal internship with a JHSPH Professor, focusing on Malaria Control and Prevention in Nigeria.

I am working basically as a research assistant and support staff to the technical/professional staff.

I worked on 2 projects. The first was to gather data, coordinate efforts and edit the to-be-chapters for a book. The other was to conduct an internal assessment of the organization's project evaluation process.

Data analysis, training, supervision of staff, oversight of fieldwork, collaboration with regional offices.

HIV/AIDS prevention in China

Data analysis and management, NGO work such as report writing, program planning, needs assessments, etc.

Formative research and implemented a social/behavioral intervention related to dengue

I analyzed a large dataset - looking at hospitalizations due to pertussis in the U.S. I had to use STAT transfer, b/c you soon find out that 90% of the world uses SAS and not STATA (as does the CDC). I published a graph in MMWR and a summary of the data on the NCHS website.

Some data analysis, lots of writing.

Health economics research in an informal urban settlement in Nairobi

Some database design, development of a community plan for a piece of a epi study.

Independent qualitative research for process evaluation of MOH program on adolescent friendly health services.

8. What type or organization do/did you do your internship?

Indian NGO that is a partner with JHSPH in a research study

Academic

Humanitarian Agency

Academic institution.

JHSPH

County healthcare agency

It was a research group at Hopkins from the Center for TB research.

My internship is a Hopkins affiliated project.

Federal government

Hopkins researcher

NGO and through a professor's project.

Government

World Health Organization

The World Bank

A school of public health overseas

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in conjunction with a small grassroots NGO in the field

Non profit, nongovernmental, DC-based organization

Grassroots NGO

NGO

A Hopkins project.

A non profit, NGO, vaccine science.

I received funding from the Gates Institute in PopFam. My in-country internship supervisor was a faculty member at the Gates-affiliated School of Public Health at the national university.

I worked at the National Center for Health Statistics, which is a part of CDC.

9. How many years of work experience did you have prior to your internship?

0

0.5

0 Full-time years.

0 in public health

<1 yr after college

- I had only one summer internship where I worked in a local health department doing West Nile Virus surveillance.

- I worked through college and went straight to JHSPH after receiving my BS. I was compensated for half of my work experiences and volunteered for the other half. So I would say ~1 year.

0 in public health

- 0 full-time. Some volunteer/summer work

- 0 years of public health experience. 2 years of other work related to my undergrad degree (biology)

- I had work experience with data management from a work-study job at the Center for American Indian Health- maybe two months. And the background knowledge I received with my degree was also very helpful, especially the data management class and 4th term biostats.

2 years

2 years of work experience - health related, but none abroad

- 2 years of work experience in an infectious disease laboratory.

- 2 years, mostly as a faculty and research assistant in academic settings. Three months of field work experience as a health education volunteer prior to internship.

2.5

- 2.5 years full time in a health related field. 1.5 years full time in another field. 1 year as a research assistant for a Hopkins work-study position.

3 years

4

5 years

5 years

7+

- I had spent one year abroad between undergrad and grad school, so I'm definitely on the younger end of things, but everybody has been helpful and supportive so don't freak out if you're in the same boat.

10. Do you have any other "words of wisdom" for the 1st year MHS students?

Its like dating. Stick to what you want to do and don't settle with something you aren't happy with. Half of the fun is in the search, and you can learn a lot about your preferences during this time.

It helps if you know what you are willing to or want to do before you begin looking for an internship.

Don't worry too much about getting the BEST possible internship. It doesn't always work out the way you hoped but this is not the end of the world. Take what you can from your project and try to use the skills that you received from your degree when you can. If you can find a funding mechanism for your internship, that is also a plus. Talk to the student affairs office about the possibility of work-study for your internship.

Have confidence in yourself, be professional, be motivated, know what you want. Don't let initial setbacks get you down. I got my internship very early with the first person I contacted, but some people contacted 10 organizations and finally got their internship in May. It's often not a reflection on your personal abilities, so just persevere and something will come through! And my internship has now turned into my first job, and a PhD starting next September. GOOD LUCK!

The internship is a two way street – do not take for granted that you are there as a temp and simply work on tasks when given. Be proactive and make the most out of each day, interact with everyone and make sure that you are performing as part of a team, no longer how short that you'll stay. Make sure that there is a clear understanding about the practicum paper topic between your readings and yourself before you leave Baltimore.

Believe it or not, biostat will get easier, and you will appreciate it once you get out. Take as much quantitative analytics classes as possible while you are on-campus. Even though econ, SAS, or spatial analysis may seem challenging, it is well worth it to diversify your capabilities.

Don't settle for something that doesn't really fit what you want

"Perseverance" was the word that encouraged me a lot, which came from my advisor. Also talking and sharing with friends helped.

As unhelpful as it sounds, just relax now, stuff will fall into place, great things always pop up, people always end up with internships, even if it's not what they thought they would do back in Sept. Also, sometimes it is better to be on programs that are more structured because otherwise it can take three months just to figure out what is going on, and then there is such a limited time for the actual research to take place. GOOD LUCK!

Fight for more support from Hopkins faculty and staff. The fact that this survey is being circulated to students at this stage in the game is a good sign that things might be on a better course for students this year.

It is not a bad idea to first go to a country first, work for the organization you applied. Then, try to get an intern with another organization through local connections. This is much easier. This is what I did.

If there are any students that seem particularly interested in Latin America tell them that they can contact me since I spent a while trying to sort through what is out there and might be able to make the process easier for them. [by Morgan Philbin]

Keep your ears and eyes open for positions. Network with other MHS students whether 1st or 2nd years cause they just might hold the key to your dream internship. Good Luck!!!

Know what you want to get out of the internship experience (goals) before going in. This takes spending time in research, making the effort to discuss the research/program with contacts, and limiting your options.

Good luck. It'll happen. It may not be the best experience of your life, but it most likely will not be the worst. Suck it up and use every advantage you can. Learn from the people you are working with. You never know if you'll be working with those people in the future.
Good Luck to everyone!!

Don't put it off until 4th term -- do some major research over winter break and send out inquiries during 3rd term

Be persistent. Good luck!

You will find an internship. It may be stressful, but just know you will find something. Make sure you are completely aware of what your responsibilities are beforehand and don't take an internship that doesn't fulfill what you want to gain out of your experience. Talking to faculty is probably the easiest route to go - although it's not impossible to find internships with outside organizations. If possible, try to start writing part of your master's paper while on the job...it makes things go a lot faster when you're trying to finish up at the end. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at leah.sirkus@gmail.com. I'd be happy to help in any way! Good luck!!!

* Special Addition: An account of the Internship Search from a student in South Africa:

My situation was rather unique. I had lived in South Africa four years ago previously as a student on a study abroad program, and talked about the country, its politics and the current HIV crisis at every opportunity with my advisor. I was also extremely ambivalent about returning--wouldn't it make more sense to go to another place, meet new people and establish another "region" or expertise? Finally, in about the middle of January, my advisor (and a few others) told me that it would be ridiculous to not return to South Africa and to work for the organization I was consistently bringing up in conversations. So, I started a blitzkrieg of emails in February or March (I don't quite remember) to the Treatment Action Campaign which takes international volunteers. When I didn't hear from them for a few weeks and small grant applications had an impending deadline, I started calling them. I called them several times for several weeks. You might say I hounded them and finally got a letter of invitation detailing some work that I would be doing for them in their campaigns and organizing department. In the meantime, I drafted a small qualitative research project I wanted to conduct with TAC members, got CHR exemption for the project, and packed my bags for September.

Since my arrival, it's taken about two months to get the clearance from the organization necessary to do the project. I must say that I had no idea there would be so many international volunteers in the office, nor would my daily tasks consist of everything from photocopying documents to driving people around Khayelitsha. I think I was so grateful and excited to have the opportunity to volunteer for the organization, that I didn't ask enough questions or present a clear picture of my strengths and weaknesses to them before my arrival. As a result, while I thought would take two weeks to set up interviews has essentially taken two months. I don't regret this, as I've learned a lot about communication and being assertive, but I have lost time. As a result, I'm working on extending my stay, which is wonderful for me. I love it here and am very lucky to have my fiancé with me.

In addition to the volunteer work I'm doing with the TAC, I also wanted to spend some time meeting different contacts and organizations to establish long term relationships and contacts for possible dissertation work. In many ways, the informal and unstructured part of my stay here has been the most rewarding. I've gone to ARV clinics and art shows in an effort to get a sense and understanding of the massive rollout of ARVs that is currently going on in South Africa. I also did a tremendous amount of reading before I came here on the matter. The reading has been

invaluable in providing context and being able to put faces with the names of the various anthropologists and epidemiologists I've met. It also means that I was a bit saturated with information before I came here, and sometimes I wonder if it would have been more beneficial to read less specifically on South Africa's HIV epidemic and rollout and more generally about issues of scale up, activism and adherence.

Not being attached to any university or research group has been a boon in the sense that I can establish my own network. But it has its drawback--I've had to create my own community here, which is a slow process, especially if you're only around for a brief amount of time.

And now, some practical advice:

1. Do not arrange housing until you arrive in country. Set aside the \$100 or \$200 necessary for staying at a hostel and spend a few days finding the place you feel comfortable in. I made the mistake of setting up a homestay before I came here. It was so disastrous that I moved out within 72 hours of my arrival in country.
2. Think about weather. I know this sounds strange, but think about when the rainy and hot season is for the country you'll be visiting and think about winter especially if you're working in the Southern Hemisphere. Cape Town floods miserably from June to August and I intentionally chose to come in September. It's been indispensable for my work to not be headed out to flooded places on a daily basis.
3. If you are going to volunteer for an agency, try to find out as much about their volunteer program before you get there--the hours, the expectations, the structure of what you'll be doing, the number of foreigners in the office.
4. Take local language classes as early as possible. You will feel so much more hip if you can greet people in their language. It breaks down barriers!
5. Expat living and socializing is to some extent inevitable, especially if you are in a large capital city. Try to take the time to find local friends who are good narrators of their country. Read the literature being produced in the country. Listen to the music. Go to art shows and movies if available.
6. If you're returning to a place you lived in the past, recognize that it will not be the same, and that's ok.
7. Schedule a longer rather than shorter stay. You will want to stay longer.