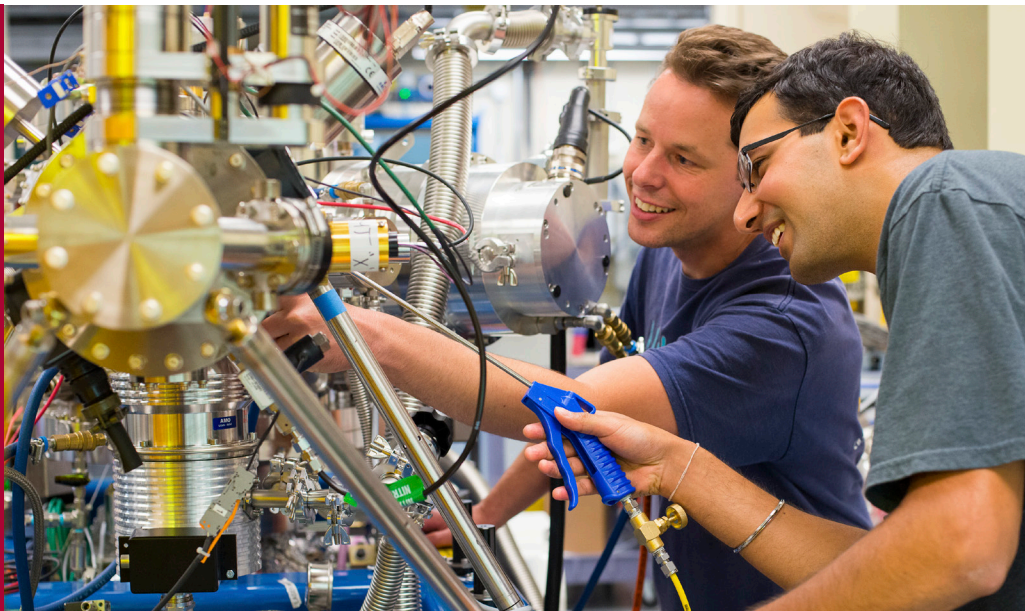


SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory

Advice from SULI Alumni



Get the Scoop from Interns

- Don't think about work during your lunch break. Chill out.
- Things are going to change, just go with it.
- Things take time, especially with the government.
- BE PATIENT. The pace can be slower than school.
- Network, network, network! You never know when you might need a job or a letter of recommendation.
- Get comfortable with the people in your group; find out what else is going on; get them to share what they know. They'll enjoy talking about it!
- Ask a lot of questions. Any type of question is appreciated so don't be shy.
- Hit the ground running! Work with your mentor to establish checkpoints. Figure out what your mentor wants. 8-9 weeks isn't a long time.
- Start planning your paper early. That way if it gets delayed you are still on track.
- Ask for previous research papers to read. Take every opportunity to learn. Find a good, basic paper on your research. You can also reach out to SLAC's Library Services to help with your research.
- Develop good work habits: organize your PDFs; save old files; take clear notes; save bad results; make sure you understand the theory before you apply it.
- Take safety seriously. The Lab, your mentor, and your research colleagues sure do.
- Get to know all the students from the various programs. Many students become close friends and are bonded by their experiences.
- Explore. The Bay Area is an incredibly diverse place. It'll help offset the occasional stress of research as well. Along a similar vein, explore the Lab.

Additional Advice from SULI Interns

"National Labs like SLAC are some of the few places where you have access to so many great researchers across so many fields. Spending a little time to become familiar with research taking place will both increase your understanding of the field as a whole and help you get a better sense of what you would like to pursue in grad school." - Ankur

"Have an open mind coming into the program. Enjoy the surrounding areas and hang out on the weekends with others in the program. It was definitely helpful to split food costs with others and cook joint meals for dinner. I made some of my best friends last summer in the SULI program and still talk to a majority of the students regularly." - Devan

"Balance work and play. I had a wonderful time with our group and put together what I felt was a project that stood up well to my high standards. It required a few late nights but this was balanced by weekend trips to Yosemite and several surfing trips down to Santa Cruz. I had an absolute blast. Zipcars are a wonderful way as well to get around and it is pretty inexpensive for five people to share a car for a few days." - Tim

"The group got much closer by taking trips around the area. We rented a cabin in Lake Tahoe for a weekend, went camping in Yosemite, wine tasting in Napa, beach in Santa Cruz, and went to San Francisco several times." - Andrew

"Meet with everybody and anybody from SLAC because the Lab is a very friendly place and is willing to teach/explain anything you want. You don't find that in many places. Definitely go to the lectures because they are very informative and give you an idea about many different areas of physics. Another thing is to meet with Stanford professors while you are there and get advice about graduate school." - Stephanie

Then Ask Your Mentor

- Will you explain my project in depth, give me a thorough background and tell me what its applications are?
- Will you give me a plan for research and a tentative list of goals to accomplish?
- What will my poster/paper be about and may I see examples from past years?
- What are you hoping I finish by the end of my internship? Do you have a timeline?
- Where does my work fit in to the overall project, and what is my role at the Lab?
- Do I need a defined work schedule? May I work overtime?
- How often do you want to meet? Will there be busy or stressful periods?
- How do I interpret the data?
- Are there any foreseen issues I should know about?
- What educational path did you take?
- What is your schedule? When will you be out of town/on vacation? Who should I report to when you are not here?

Testimonials

"I got to work on an interesting project and with some talented people. It was a great way to experience a real research environment. It also helped me clarify my academic and career goals." - Joachim

"I really enjoyed working with and meeting many different people at SLAC. My mentor and everyone I got to work with were amazing and made this program go way beyond what I thought working at SLAC would be like." - Pelham

"The most rewarding aspect of the internship for me was personal development. I was able to learn more about how to make my application stand out for grad school." - Sara

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