

How to Create a Youth-Friendly Workplace

An Employers Guide to Building a Quality Internship



SACRAMENTOWORKS

Executive Summary	2
SECTION 1	
The Business Case for an Internship Program	2
SECTION 2	
What is an Internship?	3
SECTION 3	
How an Internship Differs from a Job	4
SECTION 4	
Youth Development Principles	4
SECTION 5	
Working with Teens	6
SECTION 6	
Workplace Mentoring	7
SECTION 7	
Designing an Internship Program Plan	9
SECTION 8	
Elements of a Structured Internship Program	11
SECTION 9	
Managing Interns	13
SECTION 10	
Considerations after the Internship	15
SECTION 11	
Investment in the Future Workforce	15

Executive Summary

About This Guide

SETA – Sacramento Works for Youth is offering this guide to help employers understand the basic principles of youth development. As you read the guide’s content, think about how your work environment currently, or potentially, engages young people as resources. We understand that each organization has unique capacities and challenges to consider when developing internship experiences. Take time to identify what is most easily adaptable to your work setting and begin incorporating youth development principles where you can.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is divided into twelve sections. The first six sections provide general information about internships, youth development principles, working with teenagers, and workplace mentoring. Sections seven and eight explain how to design and structure elements for a high quality internship experience. Sections nine through eleven discuss things to consider when the internship is finished. The “Tips and Tools” section provide resources to help you implement a successful program.

SECTION 1

The Business Case for an Internship Program

Given the proper resources and support, young people can be powerful allies to companies seeking new ways of thinking and doing business.

If your business is not directly involved with youth issues, or young people, you may at first be hesitant to include youth in your work. Although young people lack certain work and life experiences, they have valuable skills and insights that adults do not have. A well-designed internship program can benefit your company and help a young person develop the 21st century skills they need for work and life.

EMPLOYER

Internships offer Opportunities for Employers to:

- Expand Capacity and complete special projects
- Tap into new ideas, innovation and enthusiasm
- Generate good public relations
- Pre-Screen potential employees
- Diversify your workforce
- Provide an intern with a positive mentoring experience

INTERN

Internships offer Opportunities for Youth to:

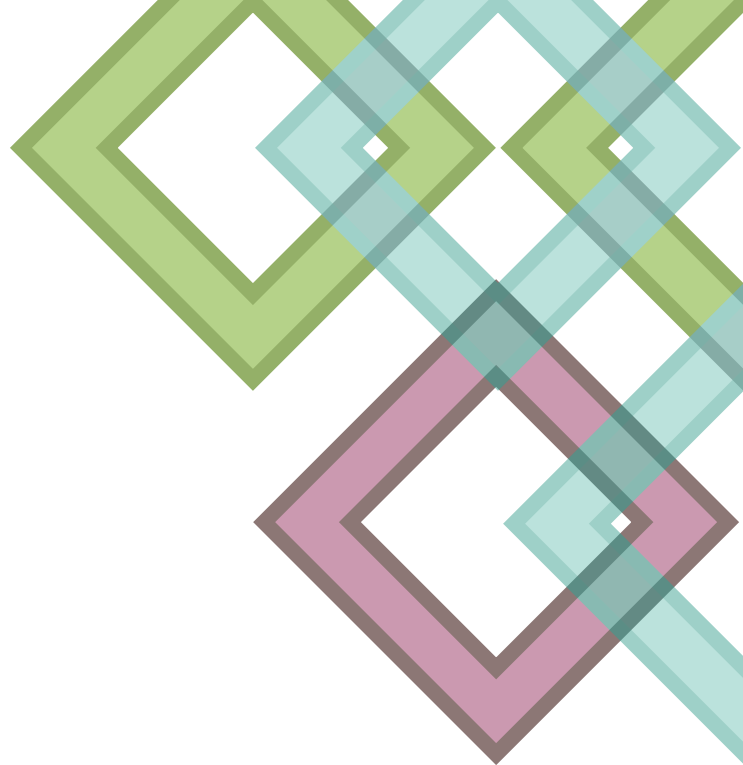
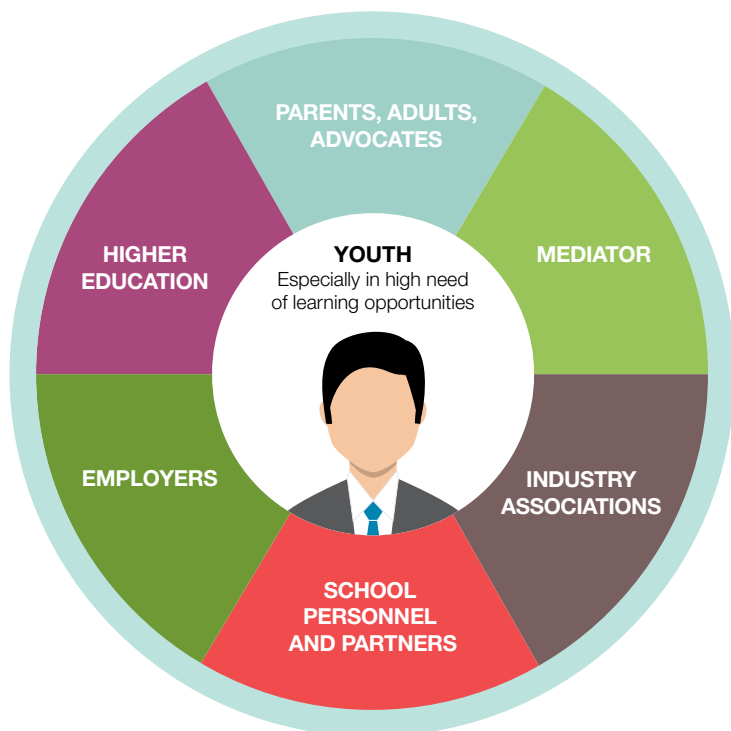
- Learn 21st century workplace skills
- Learn about the demands of the workplace
- Identify potential career options
- Learn how to build relationships with professional adults
- Experience new things
- Gain technical skills
- Get inspired

What is an Internship?

An internship is a period of practical training carried out by student within a company or organization.

An internship can be offered by any type of organization or company and come from any industry or economic sector. An internship can provide many benefits to your organization. Several of these benefits include:

- Top quality work product from any intern you hire.
- An early start on the training of possible future employees.
- New technology and innovative ideas that students bring from the classroom into your organization.
- Diversity within your organization's workforce a chance to tell students what your organization is all about.
- Exposure for your company as peers network.



The Internship

Internships are flexible, and you should develop your internship around the needs of your organization. For example, you may want to consider:

- Roles within your organization when you employees are frequently in demand.
- Skills required for various roles within your organization.
- Unique features about your organization or industry.

This handbook provides you with step-by-step instructions for starting your internship, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. Additionally, you will find answers to frequently asked questions.

Internships or a win-win situation for both employees and students. It is our hope that with your experience and vision, the motivation of your intern, and this handbook as your guide, this internship will be an enjoyable and highly productive experience.

Internships may be coordinated in partnership with an employment agency, industry associations, or educational programs. These experiences can be paid or unpaid, reflect a wide range of hours per week, and may last from one week to one year. The way an internship is structured really depends upon partnership agreements, program goals and existing capacities to support youth interns.

SECTION 3

How an Internship Differs from a Job

In a typical entry-level job, an employee receives training to perform the tasks necessary for the position, and then the employee is expected to carry out the duties as assigned, preferably with little supervision.

In an internship, however, the intern and supervisor work together to establish “intentional learning goals” that support the intern’s development and career interests. This means that an intern will often have more questions than a typical employee before, during, and after the internship.

The supervisor typically plays the role of mentor and coach whose goal is to develop the career interest of the youth. With a SETA – Sacramento Works for Youth intern, a case manager is available to work in partnership with the employer to support the youth in being successful.

Whether a company develops computer systems or provides catering services, it is essential that the intern learns how work relates to his or her life and interests, and to the work of others. Internships can also teach valuable lessons about how different careers affect the community, the economy, and the environment.

SECTION 4

Youth Development Principles

Employers can play a critical role in helping a youth develop skills and create relationships he or she may not experience at school or at home. A well designed internship can have an incredibly positive impact on a young person’s life.

More than 50 years of youth development research has identified the “building blocks” or conditions—called “supports and opportunities”—that contribute to youth being able to develop into self-sufficient, caring, and contributing adults. These Youth Development Supports and Opportunities are:

Emotional and Physical Safety

Meeting youths’ basic needs as well as building trust and respect;

Caring Relationships

Formed with at least one adult in each youth’s life, the existence of positive relationships with peers;

Youth Participation

Includes opportunities for youth to have a voice, multiple choices, leadership, and a role.

Community Involvement

Opportunities for the youth to connect and impact their community in positive ways;

Engaging Skill Building

Activities to strengthen interests and build new capacities.

The following overview provides some ideas to help you implement youth development practices in the workplace. You can also use Tips and Tools #1: Indicators of Youth Development Features in the Internship Setting, to assess and evaluate your progress over time. Emotional and Physical Safety Young people are often unaware of proper workplace behaviors, boundaries, and expectations that are not made explicit.

When introducing young people to the workplace, it is vital to set a warm tone while clearly defining roles, setting expectations, and establishing boundaries. A brief orientation can set the conditions for a safe and positive experience for the intern.

QUICK TIPS

- Orient the intern to the workplace and introduce him or her to coworkers.
- Have employees address the intern by name.
- Provide reliable equipment and demonstrate how to use it safely.
- Know and uphold child safety laws and sexual/racial harassment policies.
- Identify space for the intern to work that is his or her own.
- Explain to the intern your expectations about breaks, lunch, appropriate behavior, etc.

Relationship Building

As an employer working with an intern, you have a great opportunity to model appropriate boundaries and respectful communication, as well as demonstrate a sense of enjoyment for work. The intern will take cues from you and others in the workplace as to what is, or is not, acceptable.

Internships are most successful when employers leverage their unique expertise with workplace guidance that supports young peoples' development. Building a positive working relationship with the intern will increase productivity from the start. The intern should have at least one caring adult, the supervisor/workplace mentor, who meets with him or her on a regular basis to address questions and concerns. Also remember to work with agency partners, such as the intern's case manager. These people can provide valuable support and guidance to you and the intern.

QUICK TIPS

- Model respectful communication and appropriate boundaries at all times.
- Create opportunities for the intern to observe/learn professional behavior.
- Be sensitive to the individual realities of interns including youth of color; youth with disabilities; those who speak English as a second language; and teen parents.

Youth Participation and Voice

Take time to listen to the intern. Ask questions about his or her interests, and set expectations for the internship together. Share something about yourself, like how you got into your career, or previous jobs that you have held. Identify projects that might fit well with the intern's interests. Young people thrive when they get a sense of the "big picture" and have input about their work. They really like to be productive, not simply to observe the workplace or do menial tasks.

QUICK TIPS

- Learn about the intern's interests and expectations for the internship.
- Develop a work plan with the intern to guide the experience.
- List tasks that will be expected and define what skills the intern will learn from those tasks.
- Get regular feedback from the intern about his or her internship experience.

Skill-Building

Discuss how 21st century skills are relevant to your profession. These skills include: problem solving; self-direction; oral and written communication; teamwork and diversity; research and technology; creativity; leadership; work ethics and social responsibility. Then, select tasks that allow the intern to develop some of these skills. Use a stair-step approach to guide the intern into increasingly more difficult tasks and responsibilities. Ask him or her to complete the 21st Century Skills Intern Self-Assessment (Tips and Tools #2) at the beginning and end of the internship to help reflect upon areas of growth.

QUICK TIPS

- Discuss 21st century skills important to your career field.
- Design assignments incrementally to build skills, interests, and confidence.
- Provide a variety of activities and scaffold them so the intern can take on more challenging tasks as the internship progresses.
- Incorporate self-assessment and constructive feedback on a regular basis.
- If the intern's performance diminishes over time check-in to see if the intern is bored or not sure how to do the work.

Community Involvement

Your company could be the source of inspiration that ignites a young person's passion and lifelong involvement in civic activities. Consider how your organization contributes economically and socially to the local and global communities. Allow the intern to learn about what your company values through committee work, discussions with staff, and if available, company sponsored community service projects.

QUICK TIPS

- Provide brochures and other materials that explain your company's values.
- Discuss how your company contributes economically and socially to the local and global communities.
- Involve the intern in an employer-driven community service project.

SECTION 5

Working with Teens

It's fair to say that you may need to take some extra time to learn about the teen(s) with whom you will be working. Youth want to be appreciated and respected as individuals, first. It also helps to know a little about their background and culture, as well as what you can expect from teenagers developmentally.

Since the “judgment center” of an adolescent brain is still forming, setting good workplace boundaries is essential to preventing misunderstandings.

The following chart offers some workplace strategies to help you work successfully with youth:

Adolescent Characteristic	Workplace Strategy
Interested in sense of independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the intern accountable for his or her work.
Up-front about what he or she wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the intern in project development. • Ask the intern about his or her interests.
Appreciates fairness and truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be frank, honest, and nonjudgmental.
Wants to do well but does not know how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be friendly and clear. • Discuss project activities, and/or company expectations (e.g., objectives, agendas, dress code).
Prefers involvement in multiple activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the intern in a variety of tasks.
Underdeveloped time management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign due dates; review timelines. • Model and explain time management skills. • Have the intern keep a project journal or time sheets.
Lacks self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with the intern to ensure he or she is clear on what is expected. Help set goals; the case manager may be able to help.
Knows everything; influenced by peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit and respect the intern's ideas. • Provide alternative suggestions and share reasoning.
Learns in short intervals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give new information in small steps. • Provide opportunities for the intern to practice and reinforce what he or she is learning.
Has already had jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore skills the intern already has and look for ways to enhance and build on them.

Matrix adapted from *Northwest National Leadership Training: Successful Strategies for Employers* by the Mid-Willamette Education Consortium.

Handling Difficult Situations

Since the young people with whom you will be working don't have a great deal of life experience, some of them may need extra coaching about appropriate workplace behaviors. For instance, what if an intern curses, deals poorly with conflict, or is disrespectful to fellow employees? Or maybe he/she dresses inappropriately, or smokes on the premises? If an intern displays any of these behaviors, of course you must intervene.

Interventions are a great way to not only explain to the youth what is inappropriate about the behavior, but to also help him/her develop new, productive life skills. First ask yourself, “has the intern been given clear expectations and workplace rules about this behavior?” If so, take the intern aside and respectfully explain your concerns. Review company policies and their importance. Discuss that what is appropriate with friends or family may not be at the work setting, and vice versa. Explain that sometimes differences between settings are insignificant; other times, they may cause serious misunderstandings.

Assess whether the inappropriate behavior is “situational.” Was the intern aware of the expectations of the workplace? Consider the intern’s interpretation of the situation. Ask the intern what prompted the behavior, and discuss and agree upon alternatives. Let the intern know that you will be monitoring the behavior and discuss what actions will take place if further interventions are necessary. Take time to document any concerns you have and share these with the intern’s program manager or mentor. And remember to give positive feedback and encouragement as the intern uses the new workplace behaviors.

Selecting the Right Youth Intern for Your Business

Selecting an intern will depend upon agreements that you make with partnering agencies. It is important to discuss how interns will be screened and selected with your partners. Determine what you need from an intern, as well as how you can accommodate the intern’s needs. Interviewing interns referred to your organization increases the likelihood of a successful match and allows you time to determine what employee may be an appropriate supervisor/workplace mentor for the intern.

SECTION 6

Workplace Mentoring

Mentoring is usually a formal or informal relationship between two people—a senior mentor (usually outside the protégé’s change of supervision) and a junior protégé.

Mentoring has been identified as an important influence in professional development in both the public and private sector. Successful mentoring programs require proper understanding, planning, implementation and evaluation.

While many models for mentoring exist, there are essentially two approaches.

- 1 Instrumental:** The goal in this approach is to foster learning and competent workplace behaviors. Instrumental mentoring might include advising the intern about appropriate work attire, teaching phone etiquette, and helping the intern understand the demands of the workplace. Most programs with an instrumental focus identify workplace readiness or, more broadly, career development as the primary goal;
- 2 Developmental:** Programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America that help build self-esteem and personal efficacy by pairing a young person with a caring adult fall into this latter category.

Flexibility is an essential quality for supervisor/ workplace mentors to model as they navigate the dual roles of mentoring and supervising. The challenge is to remain clearly and consistently “the boss” while fostering the mentoring aspects of the relationship. Supervisor/workplace mentors need all the usual skills necessary to effectively supervise.

Why Organizations Implement Mentoring Programs

From increased morale to increased organizational productivity and career development, the benefits of an organization that actively supports mentoring are numerous. However, successful mentoring programs do not just happen

Organizations must first make a strong business case to demonstrate why the organization should devote the time, attention and resources required to make a formal mentoring process work. Reasons for establishing a mentoring program must be linked to the organization’s business goals.

- **Skills Enhancement** – mentoring enables experienced, highly competent staff to pass their expertise on to others who need to acquire specified skills;
- **Professional Identity** – when younger employees are early in their careers, they need help understanding what it means to be a professional in their working environment. Professionals embody the values of the profession and are self-initiating and self-regulating. Mentors play a key role in defining professional behavior for new employees. This is most important when employees first enter the federal workforce;

- **Leadership and Management Development** – mentoring encourages the development of leadership competencies. These competencies are often more easily gained through example, guided practice or experience than by education and training;
- **Education Support** – mentoring helps bridge the gap between theory and practice. Formal education and training is complemented by the knowledge and hands-on experience of a competent practitioner;
- **Customer Service** – mentoring assists in modeling desired behaviors, encouraging the development of competencies in support of customer service, and above all, cultivating the right attitudes;
- **Knowledge Management/Knowledge Transfer** – mentoring provides for the interchange/exchange of information/knowledge between members of different organizations.

Orientation of Supervisors/Mentors

Orientation and training provides an opportunity for the supervisor/workplace mentor to clarify roles and responsibilities for creating a safe and high quality experience for the intern. If multiple partners are working on developing the internship program, discuss what aspects of the training each can provide.

The orientation needs to cover required policies and procedures related to workplace safety; confidentiality; equity; and sexual harassment. Participants should receive tips for creating a “youth-friendly” workplace, how to work with teenagers from diverse cultural backgrounds, and characteristics of adolescent development. The training should also emphasize the importance of setting good boundaries and how to keep the intern on track using a work plan.

Types of Mentors

The remaining four types of mentors:

- **Career Guide** – promotes development through career guidance, counseling and visibility;
- **Information Source** – provides information about formal and informal expectations;
- **Friend** – interacts with the protégé socially and provides information about people; and
- **Intellectual Guide** – provides an equal relationship, collaborates on research projects and provide constructive feedback and criticism. When planning in developing mentoring programs, agencies must consider the types of mentors and decide which type(s) of help will be most appropriate given the program goals.

As a result of being a mentor, the person:

- Renews their enthusiasm for the role of expert;
- Obtains a greater understanding of the barriers experience at lower levels of the organization;
- Enhances skills in coaching, counseling, listening, and modeling;
- Develops and practices a more personal style of leadership;
- Demonstrates expertise and she has knowledge, and;
- Increases generational awareness.



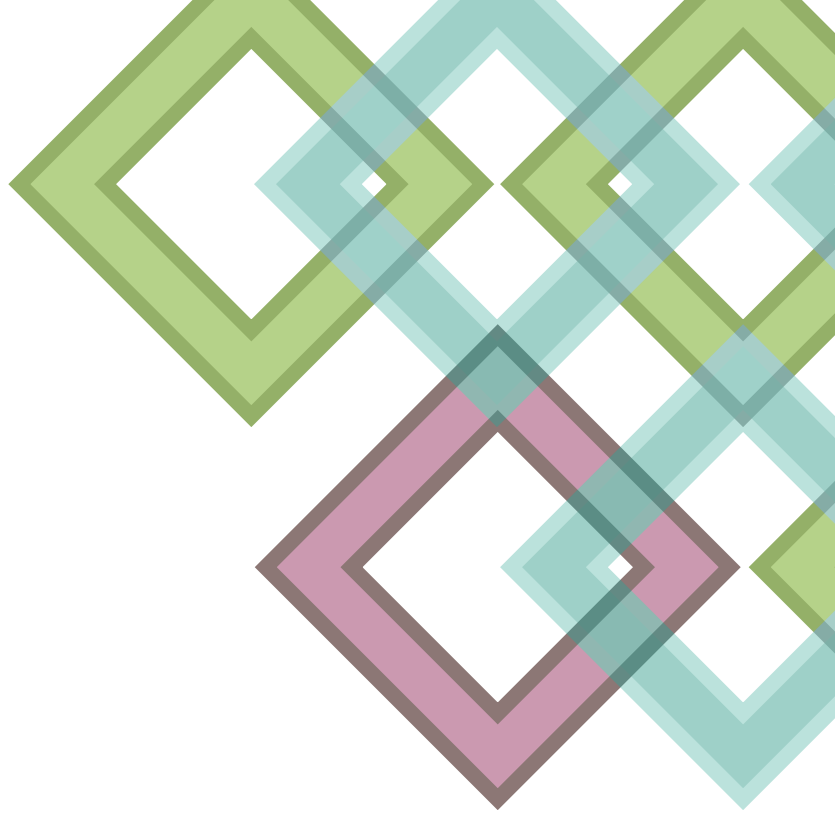
Designing an Internship Program Plan

Carefully plan and write out your internship program and goals. The internship program and goals will be measured by your company's management team and others in your organization.

Structuring the internship ahead of time will provide you with tangible goals and objectives that will enable you to prove to your organization's decision-makers the importance and value of a well-developed internship program.

In creating your internship program plan, include specific ideas, proposals and logistical information. Construct your plan based on your organization's needs and resources. The questions that follow may assist you in formulating an internship program and plan.

- **Do you want someone for a specific project?**
If so, what are the tasks and objectives of the project? What are the deadlines for completing the tasks and objectives?
- **What about general support around the workplace?**
Does your company need an intern to perform administrative and support functions including data entry, answering telephones, filing, etc.? If so, approximately what percentage of the intern's time will be spent on these activities?
- **Do you want to give the intern a taste of everything your company does?** How will cross-training be structured into the intern's schedule? How much time will need to be devoted to each department/area? Have employees from each department been designated to mentor the intern on their particular department functions?
- **Will you pay the intern?** If so, how much? Wages vary widely from field to field, so be sure yours are competitive or offer competitive incentives.
- **Where will you put the intern?** Do you have adequate workspace for them? Will you help make parking arrangements, living arrangements, etc.?
- **What sort of academic background and experience do you want in an intern?** Decide on standards for quality beforehand — it'll help you narrow down the choices and find the best candidates.
- **Who will have the primary responsibility for the intern?**
Will that person be a mentor or merely a supervisor? The assignment of a mentor who will work closely with the intern can be essential in creating a successful experience for the organization and the intern. Ideally, the mentor should be someone from the department where the intern is working and who is very familiar with the projects and tasks the intern is working on.
- This person doesn't have to be a teacher per se, but should be selected because he or she likes to teach or train and has the resources to do it. If the person you select has never mentored an intern before, providing basic supervision and mentoring guidelines and training may enhance the experience for both the mentor and the intern.
- **What will the intern be doing?** Be as specific as possible. Interns, like others in the process of learning, need structure so they don't become lost, confused or bored.
- **Do you want to plan a program beyond the work you give your interns?** Will there be special training programs, performance reviews, lunches with executives or social events? Keep in mind that your interns are walking advertisements for your company. If they have a good experience working for you, they're likely to tell their friends — word gets around. A bad internship, by contrast, can only hurt your chances of attracting good students for next year.



Developing an Internship

To get the most out of an internship that you offer, it is recommended that you tailor it to meet the specific needs of your organization. An internship offers your organization the opportunity to get to know a potential candidate for hire while challenging them in this environment.

The following questions are some that could be considered when developing your unique internship:

1 Do I consider this internship as a possible building block for future employment within my organization?

If you answered “yes,” you may want to ask yourself if there are any roles within your organization where you frequently hire new employees, such as:

- Sales/service representatives?
- Research?
- Technicians?
- Public relations and outreach?

Many organizations have particular roles for which turnover is high, or new employee recruitment is fairly constant. An internship can help your organization fill this pipeline and get a head start on new recruitment. During the course of the internship, your intern will have learned about your organization and how it functions.

As a result, they can hit the ground running if they are hired as new employees after they have graduated. In addition, you will have greater insight of the candidate you have hired and their quality of work as a result of getting to know them personally and professionally during this time. Additionally, you will want to think about any specific skill sets that are beneficial to your organization that are not typically learned in the classroom, such as:

- Research skills
- Client interaction
- Business practices
- Software skills
- Business/grant writing.



A new hire who has interned with your organization will be able to utilize their “on the job” training that you have invested in them and will already be familiar with how your company operates. The intern will already have an understanding of any unique organization policies or procedures. Similarly, depending on how you have capitalized on time and communication throughout the internship, your intern may be partially trained. The time and energy you have invested in this intern and potential job candidate results in a clear advantage over other entry-level candidates applying for a similar position within your organization.

If you answered “no,” you may want to think about what types of projects would most benefit from additional manpower assigned to the task. If this is the case, you could start work on “back burner” projects or projects that are approaching a deadline.

2 What other aspects of my organization are unique?

An intern may be interested in learning unique processes or technologies which your company utilizes. The educational system provides students with a wide array of background knowledge on the processes and technology that exist, but is unable to offer “real world” experience.

Internships can fill this void. Additionally, by allowing the student to receive hands-on training with the unique procedures and features of your organization, the intern is able to experience and understand what sets your organization apart from the competition. It may also introduce them to a potential career path, perhaps even as a part of your organization.

Elements of a Structured Internship Program

A well organized internship sets the conditions for a safe, productive, and positive experience for the intern and the supervisor/workplace mentor. Once you have defined these aspects of your internship, you will be able to post a description of the program and begin the recruitment process.

The internship coordinator should work with staff to assess current projects and workload to determine appropriate situations where an intern may be able to contribute.

Each staff member should consider:

- What ongoing tasks are taking place in my department or organization?
- What is the current workload of my department or organization?
- What projects are currently on the “back burner”?

For example, do you have materials you would like to develop or update? Would you like to redesign your organization’s website but just don’t have the time? Given proper supervision, an intern can be a great source of assistance with these labor-intensive tasks. Similarly, an intern may conduct research for a report that another staff member will write.

What does the company need? Are there certain tasks or projects that will be most beneficial to the company?

INTERN ORIENTATION

Step 2: Allocation of Resources

Long before your intern arrives on the job, the allocation of resources will need to be considered. You will need to allocate financial, time, and material resources in order to create an environment in which your intern can succeed.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- How will the intern be paid?
- Will it be a stipend amount or an hourly rate?
- If a stipend is offered, is this for a project or the entire internship summer program?
- Are you conforming to state and federal compensation regulations?
- Will the intern be required to pay for parking?
- Will the organization provide a parking pass?

- Will the organization reimburse the intern for parking costs?
- Will the organization pay for mileage if the intern needs to travel?
- Does housing or a housing stipend need to be provided if the intern will be relocating to the area?

These are just some of the questions that need to be addressed when attempting to budget for the internship.

TIME RESOURCES

It will also be necessary to devote a fair amount of time to the intern. This will also involve activities such as participating in a new employee orientation session, attending scheduled staff meetings, scheduling meetings with the mentor and supervisor, and the intern’s work schedule. For example, will the intern work 5 days a week or on an alternate schedule? Will the intern be allowed to work a “flex” schedule, only working a set number of hours each week? It also must be determined how much “face to face” time is needed between the intern and the other employees to complete a project. All of these possibilities need to be considered when designing your internship.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

Your organization will need to provide a number of material resources to enable your intern to succeed. You should allow time to plan for the availability and acquisition of these resources so that your intern can begin work immediately upon arrival. Some of the resources that may need to be supplied include:

- Computer with special software installed;
- Workspace: cubicle, office, desk;
- An e-mail account;
- A telephone extension;
- Voice mailbox;
- General office supplies: pens, pencils, tape, stapler, paper clips;
- Work rules and company policies; and
- How the intern needs to record their work time.

Planning ahead and providing these materials will allow your intern to start off on the right foot and maximize the time they will spend working for you.

What resources (financial, time, materials, etc.) will need to be allocated?

Step 3: Assignment of a Mentor

Each intern should be assigned a mentor within your organization. Throughout their internship experience, the mentor will be the intern's first stop for questions or to solicit guidance regarding project tasks and responsibilities. The mentor should also be available for general questions pertaining to:

- The company or industry (where the intern may learn from the mentor's experience).
- Operational questions (ranging from use of the photocopier to the location of a local lunch spot).

The role of mentor should involve a commitment of time to the intern. The mentor may be a department head, project leader, or long-time employee who is knowledgeable of the project on which the intern will be working. The mentor's role should include:

- An initial orientation for the intern (conducting a tour of the facility, showing the intern where the office equipment is located (photocopier, fax machine);
- Introducing them to others in the department with whom they will be interacting;
- Development of an ongoing relationship.

Some mentors may choose to offer an "open-door" policy to the intern, encouraging the intern to stop by anytime with questions. Other mentors may prefer the structure of a weekly meeting, where the intern is encouraged to bring a list of questions they may have from the past week. Either way, it is important that every intern know that someone is available to answer their questions.

Who will provide orientation and guidance (be a mentor) to the intern?

Step 4: Identifying a Department or Project Team

The primary goal of each student seeking an internship is to gain "real world" and practical experience in their chosen career field. It is beneficial for each intern to be integrated into a department or project team, where they will not only learn from completion of their own assigned tasks, but also develop a sense of the "big picture". A large portion of the internship should be focused on how the intern's own tasks contribute to the outcome of the project as a whole. By integrating the intern into a professional department or project team, the intern will be able to improve their teamwork and communication skills. Other team members will be able to provide:

- Guidance through experience related to specific project tasks;
- Guidance on professional work ethic (such as time management and meeting deadlines);
- Stories about learning from mistakes;
- Advice on handling difficult customers.

An intern can benefit greatly from the experiences of others on the team. Remember, an intern is looking to build skills that will add to what they have already learned in their coursework. This real world experience is an opportunity for the intern to build a connection between theory and reality. Therefore, it is important to assign the intern meaningful project work, in addition to the routine tasks.

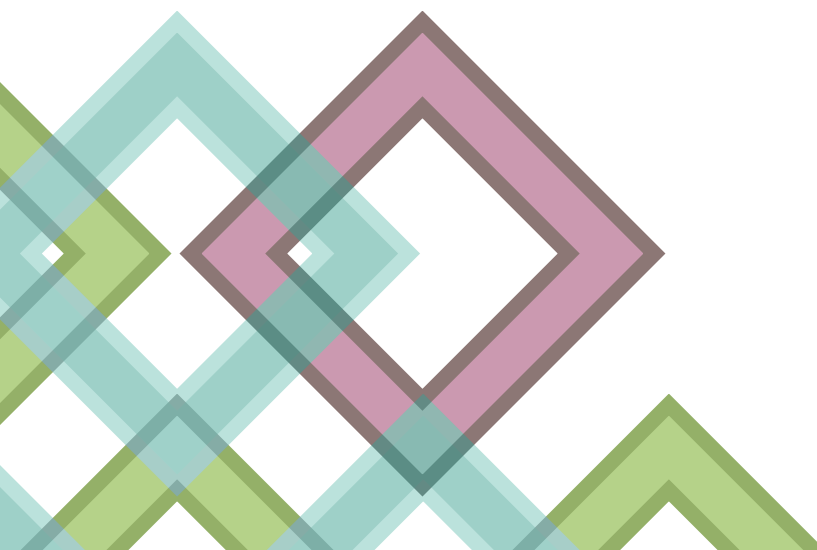
WHAT IS MEANINGFUL PROJECT WORK?

Consider tasks within the scope of your project with which an intern will be challenged to apply their knowledge and improve their skills. Remember, the intern is there to learn and gain experience. Consider the skills of the intern, and give the intern the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the project.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT COMPLETED PROJECTS?

Set goals for the intern's progress. You can help the intern set goals for the completion of various tasks, including daily, weekly, and monthly goals. If the intern is working on a project with deadlines, setting goals may help ensure that these deadlines will be met. Guide the intern in breaking larger tasks into action steps and setting goals for their completion. Set milestones so that the intern knows he/she is working toward something, and has a sense of accomplishment when each milestone has been achieved.

What department or what project team will the intern work for?



Step 5: Developing an Internship Description

Now that you have answered the above questions and have thought about how your organization can make the most of this program, it is time to develop a detailed description of your internship. As is the case with any job description, the more detail you can provide for each section, the easier it will be for you to select the right candidate for your internship. Elements that should be included are:

- Information about your organization and/or project;
- A description of the qualifications or skills required of the intern;
- Preferred majors and/or fields of study;
- Compensation;
- The number of hours of work per week;
- Starting and ending date.

EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIP

Evaluation will help you improve your program by finding out what works and what doesn't. Creating mid and end-of-term opportunities for the intern to reflect upon the internship is critical to his or her development. A midterm and end-of-term performance review will also provide you the chance to offer constructive feedback to the intern. The intern should complete an evaluation of the program after the internship is completed. The final evaluation will help you gain feedback about the overall quality of the experience from the intern's perspective.



SECTION 9

Managing Interns

The beginning days of an internship are often its defining days. When you give interns their first tasks, you are signaling what can be expected in the future. If you give them nothing or very little to do, it sends a message that this job will be easy — and boring.

Interns don't want that, and of course, neither do employers. The organization of your internship program will probably be the single most important influence on an intern's impression of your organization, and thus the chances that he or she will come back. So how do you "plan for success?"

Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment, and objectives of business and industry. Even though your interns may have worked part-time to support their education, these experiences may not have exposed them to organizational politics, the need for confidentiality, the importance of teamwork, or the profit-making orientation of business. Including an orientation session as the beginning of the intern training process emphasizes the partnership and commitment to internships in your workplace.

The sooner your student interns understand what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. You can communicate this information in several ways:

- Take your interns on a tour of the facilities and introduce them to the other employees
- Give your interns company materials to read such as newsletters, annual reports, an organization chart, or memos from the CEO
- Encourage your interns to spend break and lunchtimes in places where employees gather
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with them
- Give the interns opportunities to observe (or participate in) professional meetings
- Allow the interns to interview company personnel
- Encourage the interns to walk around and observe others at work

The success of an internship depends on the partnership between representatives of the organization, the college, and the student. These three parties need to agree on the conditions of the internship, the responsibilities of each party, and the reporting requirements. The site supervisor is the critical link. You guide your interns by providing direction and feedback. If a problem occurs, you counsel the students and contact the faculty supervisor, when necessary.

Review your program goals. The nature of the program and the activities should directly relate to your these goals and will assist you in creating and maintaining a structured meaningful internship experience.



Orientation Checklist

Experience shows that employers who take adequate time at the beginning of the internship to orient student interns reap productivity and effectiveness more quickly than those who do not. In acclimating interns, please take time initially to:

EXPLAIN THE MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

- How did the organization start? Why?
- What is unique about your product or service?
- Who benefits from your product or service?
- What are the organization's current objectives?
- How may the intern contribute to those objectives?

EXPLAIN THE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

- Who reports to whom?
- Who, specifically, is the intern's supervisor?
- What is the intern's department responsible for?
- How are decisions made?
- Which personnel can answer different kinds of questions?

OUTLINE ORGANIZATIONAL RULES, POLICIES, DECORUM AND EXPECTATIONS

- Is there specific industry jargon?
- What are the specific work standards and procedures?
- What access to the supervisor (days, times, and duration) does the intern have?
- How should they process requests?
- How do the mail and telephone systems work?
- What are the approved forms for correspondence?
- By what safety regulations must they abide?
- Is there a procedure for signing off completed work?

- What periodic forms or reports need to be completed?
- Are there security or confidentiality issues the intern should be aware of?
- What is acceptable with regard to dress and appearance?
- How should they maintain the premises and their work area?

DEFINE THE INTERN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- What is the intern's role? Provide a clear job description.
- What projects will be assigned to him or her?
- What resources are available to the intern?
- What training is necessary?
- How does the organization want the intern to deal with clients and vendors?
- What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
- Do other employees understand the intern's role?

MONITOR THE INTERN'S ADJUSTMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS EXPECTED

- Make yourself visibly available to the intern
- Assign someone who can routinely "check-in" with the intern
- Provide feedback and constructive criticism
- Encourage the intern to ask questions

KEY POINTS

- Develop a thorough orientation and training plan to be implemented when the interns begin work, so they will learn quickly and become productive members of your team.
- Provide a clear job description for the intern.
- Invest supervisory time to establish an important bond with interns and set a crucial tone for the internship experience.

SECTION 10

Considerations after the Internship

If you determine that an intern is a great match for your company why not consider hiring him or her as an employee? If the intern is in school, invite him or her to do work intermittently, or on a particular project, as scheduling permits. If hiring the youth is not a possibility, simply expressing your desire for the intern to “keep in touch” will send the important message that you care. You may also consider other professional contacts that you know who could continue to support the youth in his or her personal and professional growth.

SECTION 11

Investment in the Future Workforce

You now have some basic tools to help you build a star program within your company. Even if you are starting with one intern and you are a small business, intention is everything. Both you and your intern will greatly benefit by taking small, meaningful, and consistent steps towards creating a developmentally rich internship experience.

Now more than ever, we need companies willing to demonstrate professionalism, communication, teamwork, innovation, and critical thinking skills. As employers make the effort to provide workplace mentoring, larger numbers of young workers will be prepared for the workplace and self-sufficiency. Thank you for investing in the future workforce and the life of a young person. You might be surprised at how rewarding an experience it can be.

