



## Employer Internship Guidebook

# The Basics

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The Employer Internship Toolkit is intended to act as a guide for organizations to develop an internship program that will serve the unique needs of each individual organization. There is information and templates in this toolkit that you are welcome to use as necessary for your organization.

## What is an internship?

An internship is a short-term, paid work experience. Internships have an emphasis on “on-the-job training” rather than merely employment. Student interns should have a mentor, challenging projects, and evaluations. A key aspect of internships is to expose students to the industry. Internships can vary depending on industry and the needs of a company, but common characteristics of internships include:

- Typically last 8 -12 weeks
- Can be offered as part-time or full-time opportunities
- Paid (if you are interested in participating, but can not afford to add an intern on payroll, please talk to the talent and education coordinator for more information)

## Why are internships important?

Internships are beneficial for both employers and students because they:

- Are an inexpensive recruiting tool for employers
- Provide employers with talent
- Offer opportunity to train future employees
- Allow mid-level staff to have an opportunity to manage interns
- Contribute to the establishment of a strong talent pipeline in the community
- Provide students with an opportunity to learn skills that will make them more employable and productive members of society
- Help schools and businesses stay connected
- Promote community involvement
- Encourage local talent to continue working in the area

## When do internships occur?

Season	Approximate Start Date	Approximate End Date	Average # of Hours Worked
Fall Semester	Mid-September	Mid-December	Part-time 10-20
Winter/Spring Semester	Mid-January	Mid-April	Part-time 10-20
Summer	Mid- May	Mid-August	Part-time or Full-time 10-40

# STEPS TO DEVELOPING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**1** IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF YOUR  
ORGANIZATION AND SET  
GOALS FOR AN INTERNSHIP  
PROGRAM

**2** DEVELOP INTERN JOB  
DESCRIPTION

**3** RECRUIT AND SELECT  
CANDIDATE(S)

**4** ONBOARD AND MANAGE  
INTERN

**5** EVALUATE PROGRAM

Students are seeking opportunities that use their aptitudes, stimulate their interests, and grow their skills.

# Developing an Internship Program

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## Step 1: Identify the needs of your organization and set goals for an internship program

Prior to hiring an intern, a business must understand how interns will fit within the company's goals and culture. A clear understanding of your company's needs and goals will help make the internship most valuable for the student, as well as maximize the benefits for your company.

### What are the needs of your organization?

- Consider your organization's recruiting needs (employees retiring or departments that are expected to grow)
- Think about projects that would be appropriately challenging for a student intern and beneficial for your company
- Consider typical business activities, entry level work, or ongoing work that a student intern could complete

A careful discussion with management is important to create a consensus on program goals. The program and internship can then be designed to best meet those expectations. For the program to be successful, **it will require the commitment of management.**

### What is the main goal for your organization's internship program?

- Expand a specific part of your business
- Initiate new projects
- Develop young talent
- Retain young talent
- Give mid-level staff opportunity to supervise and mentor interns

## Step 2: Develop intern job description

After goals for an internship program have been identified, develop a work plan and job description so both management and the intern understand the expectations of the internship experience. Students really want to know what kind of work they will be doing. Students are not experts in "HR-speak" - so write the internship description in clear, everyday language that will help the candidate know what kind of position it is and what kind of company you are. As you prepare a job description, think about the following:

### What type of work can an intern do?

Understanding what type of work an intern can do is important to ensure the intern has enough meaningful work to do and for a company to get the most out of the internship program. A balance of primary, background, and day-to-day work will enable the intern to be productive and have a well-rounded learning experience.

The best way to structure the internship work is to plan for three types of work:

1. **Project work:** These can be short- or long-term projects. They should require the intern to use their skills and learn new skills. Projects can be completed individually or as part of a team.
2. **Background work:** This should be some general work that is not time-sensitive and may be less than exciting, but the work is important to the career and company and requires some skill. The intern should be able to keep busy and feel productive with this work during times when they are in between projects or in downtimes.
3. **Unexpected work on issues that arise** during the normal ebb and flow of business. Providing interns with a taste of the true nature of your business and the wide variety of issues that employees must handle is a valuable experience.

## PARTS OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

- 1 Brief overview or background of the company
- 2 Outline the intern's responsibilities, tasks, and projects
- 3 Necessary qualifications and skills
- 4 Education requirements (grade, GPA, etc...)
- 5 Type of Internship: fall, spring, summer, full-time or part-time
- 6 Duration of internship
- 7 Hours required per week (Indicate if there is flexibility with schedule or specific hours that need to be covered)
- 8 Pay rate
- 9 Provide the job location

## Providing Compensation and/or Benefits to Interns

### Reasons for paying interns:

- Paying your intern a wage creates ownership in the program by both the business and intern.
- Unpaid interns may view the internship as a volunteer opportunity, reducing their commitment or motivation.
- Paid internships will likely increase interest in the position and improve your chances of finding your ideal candidate(s).
- The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act restricts an employer's ability to use unpaid interns. This Act applies to businesses that have two or more employees directly engaged in interstate commerce as well as annual sales of \$500,000 or more. Interns who qualify as trainees do not have to be paid. There are six criteria for determining trainee status (as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor); use this link for more information.

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

### Tips for Paying an Intern

- Wages for most internships are usually determined before the intern is hired and are not typically negotiated.
- Consider paying consistent wages to all interns within each department.
- Companies are able to determine their own pay rate.

### Other Forms of Benefits Companies Could Offer Interns

- Scholarships
- Social activities
- Time worked as an intern can accumulate and apply toward benefits if turned into a full-time employee after graduation.
- Paid holidays (if already receiving compensation)
- Tuition reimbursement

See example of an Intern Work Plan on page 12-13

See example of Intern Job Description on page 14

## Step 3: Recruit and select candidate(s)

Recruiting quality interns is one of the greatest challenges of an internship program. Participating in the Magnify Internship Program will give your organization the best chance of finding and obtaining quality student interns.

- Go to: *website to come in near future*
- Click on “Post An Internship”
- Complete all required fields and all other fields that are relevant to your posting
- Your submission will be sent to the Talent & Education Coordinator at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce for approval
- If any additional information is needed, the Talent & Education Coordinator will contact main contact on the submission
- Once approved, internship postings will be available for students to view
- Students will be able to search internship posting and mark interest for specific internship postings on their application
- Student applications will be submitted to the Talent & Education Coordinator for pre-screening
- Students will participate in a series of activities through the Magnify program to prepare for a successful internship experience
- Companies will then be able to conduct interviews of internship candidates and make their own hiring decisions as would be done with any other entry level position
- Companies will notify the student interns and the Talent & Education Coordinator of their decision and move to onboard the intern(s) being who accepted the job

[See example of Interview Questions on page 15](#)

[See example of Offer Letter on page 16](#)

[See example of Rejection Letter on page 17](#)

## Step 4: Onboard and manage intern

### Intern Orientation

It is very important that interns be warmly welcomed and introduced throughout the organization, just as you would welcome any new employee. Remember this could be the student's first work experience, so be sure you explain things in detail. You have the opportunity to help shape this individual into an employee with good work habits.

### An orientation provides the opportunity for:

1. The employer to reinforce expectations
2. The intern to ask questions
3. The goals of the internship to be clearly established
4. The process for communication and problem solving during the internship
5. Reviewing company policies

### Give intern resources needed to be successful. Will the intern need any of the following?

- Proper workstation
- Computer
- Company email account
- ID badge
- Uniform
- Access to supply room

### Introduce the intern to their mentor. The mentor will be responsible for:

- Making sure the intern has sufficient work
- Monitoring the intern's progress
- Help intern set goals for completing tasks
- Evaluating intern's progress and providing feedback
- Communicating with the Talent & Education Coordinator of any significant issues regarding the intern

See example of internship memorandum of understanding on page 18

See example Orientation Outline on page 19



## Step 5: Conduct exit interviews and evaluate program

An internship program will only be effective if it is continually evaluated and improved. An intern will only know the progress they have made if they are given feedback. Conducting exit interviews and evaluating the internship program is a vital last step.

### Check-In Evaluations

Provide regular check-in meetings to discuss status on a project, answer questions, discuss performance, etc... This helps to provide structure for the intern experience.

### Final Evaluations

As the internship ends, a final evaluation offers an opportunity for you to discuss overall performance, celebrate accomplishments, and opportunities for full-time positions with your company (if applicable).

### Exit Interviews

These can provide insight directly from your intern on ways to improve the program going forward. Interns and mentors should both complete evaluations of each other.

You can also consider quantitative measures such as:

- Number of interns that become full-time employees
- Number of requests for interns within your organization
- Growing number of qualified intern applicants

See example Evaluations for exit interviews on page 20-21

# FAQS

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**1. Q: What level of compensation is typical for an internship?**

A: An hourly wage typically ranges from \$8.00 - \$12.00 per hour for high school students depending upon experience and industry.

**2. Q: Is my organization responsible for providing insurance or benefits to the intern?**

A: Check with the HR department if your company for this answer. However, because interns are short-term employees, they are not typically eligible for insurance or benefits.

**3. Q: Do interns work 40 hour work weeks? Do they typically work five days a week?**

A: Summer internships are the only possibility for an intern to work 40 hours weeks. Internships during the school year are part-time and the company can determine the number of hours an intern works. Intern schedules are typically flexible and revolved around their class schedules. The company and intern will need to work together to develop a schedule that works best.

**4. Q: When does the hiring process start?**

A: The talent and education coordinator will keep you updated on dates and deadlines for each internship semester.

**5. Q: Will students earn academic credit for an internship experience?**

A: It's possible that they could. This will vary widely on the student and their school of attendance.

**6. Q: Can full-time employment be offered after the internship program has been completed?**

A: Yes!

**7. Q: What do I do if my intern is not working out?**

A: Consult with you HR department, but below are a few suggested steps you can take:

There are various reasons an intern may not be successful or fully engaged in the internship position. For example, the intern could feel unchallenged, overwhelmed, doesn't understand role or hasn't received proper, ongoing feedback. To avoid these types of issues, ensure:

- Effective training and orientation
  - Clearly communicate goals and expectations to the intern (beginning in orientation)

- Supportive mentor and/or supervisor
  - Make sure the mentor and/or supervisor understands his or her responsibilities prior to the internship starting and is helping the intern adjust to the company

If you experience problems with an intern:

Step 1: Be sure the intern's mentor is clearly and regularly communicating feedback and ways to improve. Listen to the intern's perspective, offer assistance, and suggestions.

Step 2: Have a sit down meeting with the intern. Express concerns and expectations. Ask the intern to commit to addressing the concerned area.

Step 3: If you have followed your typical procedure addressing a problem with an employee, and the problem persists. Please contact the talent and education coordinator with concerns.

Step 4: If the intern doesn't improve within the addressed areas, allow the intern the opportunity to leave on his or her own terms, or consider respectfully letting the intern go.

Remember, dismissing interns, as with dismissing employees, should not be the first solution and may not be the best answer. Interns serve as ambassadors for your business – whether their experience was a good or bad one. However, learning the importance of meeting an employer's expectations and the consequences of not meeting expectations can be an important learning experience for a student.

## Internship Work Plan

Intern Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name, Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Name, Title:

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Company:

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Internship Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Internship:

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Goal(s), Key Tasks, & Projects of Internship:

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Hourly Wage: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supplies:

\_\_\_\_\_ Desk

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone

\_\_\_\_\_ Company Email Account

\_\_\_\_\_ Company ID

\_\_\_\_\_ Uniform

\_\_\_\_\_ Access to Supply Room

\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Intern Job Description**

**Position:** PC Support Analyst Intern

**GPA desired:** 3.0

**Organization:** ABC Company

**Number of Openings:** 2

**Department:** Information Systems

**Date:** 05/02/09

**Cycle:** School Year

**Location:** Holland, MI

**State Date:** 09/01/09

**Salary:** 12.00/hour

**Time Requirements:** Part time 15 – 20  
hours/weeks

### **Job Description:**

- Responds in a timely and courteous manner to helpdesk calls from end-users with software and hardware questions
- Provides support for office products such as e-mail, electronic calendaring, work processing, and spreadsheets
- Performs hardware and software installations
- Performs routine maintenance on PC's and peripherals
- Goes to end-users' desks and provides tutoring for PC applications such as WordPerfect, Word for Windows, Excel, Lotus 1-2-3

### **Qualifications:**

- Knowledge of Windows, WordPerfect, Word, Lotus 1-2-3, cc: mail preferred
- Familiarity with PC's and Macintosh preferred
- Must have own transportation
- Must be incoming high school junior or above

Application Procedure: apply for Magnify Internship Program

### Sample Interview Questions

1. What made you interested in this internship?
2. What do you hope to gain from this internship?
3. Provide a recent example of when you (overcame a challenge, participated on a team, etc...)
4. What experience do you have with (software, program, etc...)
5. What does your schedule look like during the week? How many hours do you feel you can work?
6. When are you available to start the internship?
7. Other questions related specifically to the position

### Sample Internship Offer Letter

Date:

Student Name:

Student Address:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am pleased to offer you an internship position at (Company Name) as (Position Title) at a pay rate of (dollar amount). Your first day or orientation will be (Date). Your mentor will be (Name of Mentor).

If you have any questions, please contact (name of contact and contact information). We are excited to have you on the team at (Company Name). We look forward to seeing you on (Date).

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Title)



### **Sample Internship Rejection Letter**

Date:

Student Name:

Student Address:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your application and interest in the internship position at (Company Name). After a careful review of each candidate's qualifications, we have selected another candidate who more closely fits our needs. We are not able to offer you an intern position at this time.

Though you were not selected for this position, we hope you will again consider applying to our company when future position vacancies correspond to your qualifications and career objectives.

Thank you again for taking time to interview for the position, and we wish you success in your career.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Title)

### Internship Memorandum of Understanding

The following is designed to assist in providing a high-quality internship experience for both the intern and the employer. This form should be completed together by the intern and the immediate supervisor or mentor. Both parties should provide input into the completion of the form and agree to the terms outlined. Please note: this is not a legal contract.

\*Intern should submit a copy of the completed form to the talent and education coordinator

#### Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School of attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Internship Description

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Internship Description

Student internship will begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and end on \_\_\_\_\_.

Goals to accomplish during internship:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you want to experience or learn during this internship?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List the projects that will be assigned to the intern

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other goals: \_\_\_\_\_

Intern Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Orientation Outline**

1. Review organization vision and company history
2. Explain organizational structure
  - a. Who the intern should report to
  - b. How the intern should report
3. Explain the need-to-know items and policies:
  - a. Parking
  - b. Work station
  - c. Specific work dates and times
  - d. Office or facility hours, breaks, and lunches
  - e. Using office equipment (phones, copy machines, etc...)
  - f. Dress code
  - g. Attendance and punctuality
  - h. Other company expectations
4. Review the internship
  - a. Identify and discuss main projects
  - b. Job description
  - c. Key tasks and responsibilities
  - d. What to do during down time
  - e. Results expected
  - f. Action plan
5. Set regular evaluation meetings
6. Inform the intern of departmental or staff meetings he or she is expected to attend, and provide time during those meetings for the interns to report progress as necessary
7. Identify a back-up supervisor or mentor who can answer the intern's questions if the regular mentor is not there or available
8. Provide a tour of the facility
9. Introduce to staff

### Sample Intern Evaluation of Employer at the end of Internship

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Were you given responsibilities, tasks, and or projects that enabled you use your knowledge and skills?
2. Did your mentor work with you and provide feedback regularly? Were they able to answer questions when necessary?
3. What new skills or knowledge did you gain during this experience?
4. How could the internship have been better?
5. What did you love about the internship?
6. Was there anything that you were hoping to learn and didn't get the opportunity to during your internship?
7. Would you recommend this internship to other students?

Any other comments:

### Sample Employer Evaluation of Intern

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Internship: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How well was the intern prepared for this internship?
2. Are there any academic or instructional areas that would benefit this intern?
3. How would you rate the intern's sense of responsibility toward projects and assignments?  
(1 – worst, 10 – best)
4. Please provide a few examples in which the intern showed good judgement, work efficiently, and or demonstrated perseverance?
5. What are the intern's strengths and weaknesses when interacting with others?
6. What are the interns strengths and weaknesses when it comes to leadership?
7. Discuss areas where the intern has made significant improvement.
8. Are there any areas the intern needs to work to improve?
9. Would you recommend this intern for future employment? Why or why not?

Any other comments:

# Contact

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