

How To Develop a Successful Internship Program

The Ohio State University at Newark &
Central Ohio Technical College

Office of Career Development & Experiential Learning Services



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY
NEWARK



The Ohio State University at Newark and Central Ohio Technical College recognize the importance of experiential learning opportunities for both the educational advancement of students and the growth of host employers' businesses and organizations. This handbook offers a comprehensive outline on how to create an internship program that will be mutually beneficial to both the host employer and student.

Criteria for an Experience to be Defined as an Internship

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has established instructive criteria for an experience to be defined as an internship. To ensure that an experience is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the NACE definition, all the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Position Statement on U.S. Internships, July 2011.

Is My Organization Ready for an Intern?

Deciding to host an intern is a big commitment. You do not want to bring an intern on board only to find out that your organization did not utilize them. To ensure that this does not happen, your organization should do an internal audit. Consider the following:

How serious is my organization about hosting an internship program?

- Is my organization committed to working with a college or university?
- Will my organizational culture be supportive of student intern or internship program?

What can interns do for us? What are our goals?

- Does my organization have meaningful work for interns to complete? Are there special technical skills we need in interns?
- Do we want to use the internship program to identify, test, and recruit interns as potential new employees?
- Would an intern's naiveté and inexperience actually be an asset for our organization, providing a fresh perspective on our products or services? Or would a naïve intern actually be dangerous to self and to others in certain positions?

What human resources do we have to support an intern?

- Can my organization provide an individual with efficient supervisory skills to work with interns?
- Can my organization provide an individual with sufficient time to organize the program?
- In which departments might interns work?

What physical resources do we have to support an intern? For example,

- A safe, adequate workspace
- Access to computers
- Internet access
- Telephone and fax
- Other communication resources
- Adequate reference resources
- Parking
- Access to people who would be colleagues, resources, or internal clients

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When to Secure an Intern

If your company decides that they would like to host an internship, it is important that you begin your search early to increase the probability that an intern will be available. We recommend that you utilize our electronic job boards listed below to post your internship opportunities and view student resumes.

The Ohio State University – Buckeye Careers Network www.careers.osu.edu/employers

Central Ohio Technical College www.collegecentral.com/cotc

To increase the likelihood that your internship opportunity will be filled, we suggest that you secure an intern by the start date of each academic term. As the beginning and end dates of specific academic terms differ year by year, the dates below are approximations.

1st Day of Class for Autumn Semester: Mid August

1st Day of Class for Spring Semester: Early January

1st Day of Class for COTC Summer Semester: Mid May

1st Day of Class for Ohio State Newark Summer Session (including May Session): Early May

The current academic schedule for **Central Ohio Technical College** can be accessed at <http://www.cotc.edu/Academics/Pages/Academic-Calendar.aspx>

To view the academic calendar for **Ohio State Newark**, please visit <http://newark.osu.edu/academics/class-schedules>

Internship Description Instructions

Internship descriptions are strongly encouraged. In effect, a current job posting, if such exists, is acceptable. The purpose of the Internship Description is to serve as definition of what the intern will be doing throughout the internship experience. The major components of the internship should be clearly defined, and all involved parties should have mutual understanding.

The outline below is designed as a model for creating an Internship Description. Again, it should be individualized and should clearly note the expectations that each individual (i.e. student, site supervisor, and faculty member-if applicable) expects for the student to do, or be exposed to, during the internship experience.

Information to Include:

- Internship title
- Company/organization name and address
- Intern supervisor name, title, and contact information
- Preferred major(s) or program(s) of study
- Primary duties and responsibilities of intern
- Internship role requirements and/or preferred skills and experience

- Clearly established **learning outcomes** related to the student’s program of study
- Number of hours student is expected to serve in the internship – *if the internship is in connection to a course, the number of hours may be set by the program of study*
- Daily hours per week/days per week service is to take place
- Internship start date/end date
- How a student is to apply for the internship

Learning Objectives:

Clearly defined learning objectives or goals are the hallmark of very good internship experience. These objectives should be developed in collaboration with the student and the appropriate academic unit or the Office of Career Development. The resulting learning objectives should be related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.

Additional Considerations:

- Specify the frequency of supervisory meetings, and who will be part of such meetings.
- Include special projects such as writing assignments, evaluating or processing data, creation of project or special report for the internship site organization, etc. Note the expected outcome of such projects.
- Include exposure to staff meetings, opportunities to participate in community meetings or projects, and any other networking opportunities that will be offered during the internship.
- Consider the limitation of time spent observing, answering phones, serving as receptionist, greeting guests, filing, etc.

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Submitting a Position Description

You can post your internship by accessing our electronic job boards.

The Ohio State University – Buckeye Careers Network www.careers.osu.edu/employers

Central Ohio Technical College www.collegecentral.com/cotc

Once registered, you can post your internship opportunities to Ohio State Newark and Central Ohio Technical College. For assistance please contact Derek Thatcher, Manager, Office of Career Development at 740.366.9453, thatcher.42@osu.edu or dthatche@cotc.edu.

Interviewing an Intern

Although the same steps used to hire full-time employees can be followed to hire interns, employers may find that they need to adjust the interview format in order to fit the nature of the internship and the candidate's experiences.

Because students generally lack professional experiences, internship interview questions should focus on goals. Throughout the interview, ask questions that will help you determine if the internship you are offering will be an appropriate experience for the candidate to meet his or her career goals.

When hiring an intern, place as much effort into the selection process as you would hiring a full-time employee. An intern may become a future employee. You will spend time and money to train the intern, so choose someone you believe would be a good fit in your organization in the future.

Focus on future goals in place of professional experience:

- How do you think this internship experience will prepare you for your career?
- What are your plans for after graduation?
- Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?
- What are your long term and short term goals?

Look for: Answers that indicate that the student has thoughtfully considered a career path and is planning to pursue a career related to your industry after graduation. In addition, an ideal internship candidate will express a strong interest in the educational and learning value of the opportunity rather than to simply to fulfill a requirement.

Inquire about academic experiences rather than professional:

- Tell me about a time when you had a heavy course load. How did you manage your time?
- How do you feel your campus involvement (if any) relates to the professional workplace?
- What has been your most rewarding college experience thus far?
- Why/how did you choose your major?
- What was your greatest achievement?
- What courses in your major have you completed thus far?

Look for: Answers that highlight the student's decision-making skills as well as the ability to manage deadlines and academic coursework. Also, look for a student who can transfer the skills gained via campus involvement into the professional workplace. It is also important to make sure that the student has completed sufficient coursework and has the knowledge necessary to work at an internship level.

Ask questions to determine the candidate's work ethic:

- Tell me about a time when you had to work as a member of a team to complete a task. What role did you fulfill?
- What was your favorite summer or part-time job? Why?
- What have you learned from your part-time or student jobs (if listed on resume)?
- Why did you choose the career field you would like to work in?

- What will motivate you in this position?
- Why do you think you will be successful in your chosen field?
- What do you believe is an intern's role in an organization/company?

Look for: Answers that show a student has found value in past experiences, including part-time or temporary jobs. Look also for student responses that express responsibility, dedication, and a willingness to learn by experience.

Analytical & Problem-Solving:

- Describe a situation when there seemed to be no way to complete a project and yet you found a way. What happened?
- How do you handle projects with short deadlines that require precise calculations and analysis? What is your approach?
- What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me about your contribution to solving the problem.

Leadership & Interpersonal:

- What do you do differently from your classmates? What will you bring to the position that other candidates with similar academic and work experience may not offer?
- Give an example of a situation when you had to compromise your own goals/objectives for the sake of the team.
- Please describe a time when your work was harshly criticized? How did you react to this feedback?
- Talk about a group project when a team member was not fulfilling their commitments. How did you deal with the person? What were the end results?

ColumbusInternships.com - Source JPMorgan Chase OMST Program Recruiting

Supervision and Feedback

As an intern supervisor, you use all the skills necessary in any effective supervisory relationship:

- Providing leadership
- Motivating
- Delegating
- Communicating
- Developing and training
- Evaluating

Additionally, the students will look to you as a mentor who will assist their transition from the classroom to the work environment. Since the internship is an extension of the learning process, you will need to provide opportunities to bridge the two experiences.

We suggest that you meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings, the students can:

- Report on the status of a project
- Ask questions
- Learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- Participate in an evaluation of their strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Get a sense of what kind of work lies ahead

At the same time you will have an opportunity to coach, counsel and reinforce positive attitudes and performance.

You should anticipate that you will have some interaction with your students' internship coordinator through telephone calls, on-site visits, and written evaluations. Such persons will help you find a solution if difficulties occur (intern attendance or punctuality problems, low motivation, unsatisfactory work, or personal conflicts). Also, you should get in touch with the college contact if the internship conditions must be altered, such as a change in supervisors, delays in the availability of data needed by the students to complete an assignment, transfer or termination of an employee involved in the interns' work, or other unanticipated changes.

Encourage your interns to keep a portfolio of work accomplished during the experience. This will help fulfill the student's academic requirements and provide them with a sense of accomplishment. In addition, it will give you a basis to discuss their professional growth.

Specific work documents to include in a portfolio might be any of the following:

- Job Descriptions, Company Newsletters, Financial Reports
- Performance Appraisals, Displays & Exhibits
- Proposals Charts/Graphs References
- Manuals, Correspondence, Survey Reports

- Citations & Awards, Press Releases, Cost Analyses
- Contracts, Certificates, Computer Print-outs
- Program Outlines, Research Report

In addition to spontaneous and informal meetings, you should evaluate your intern's performance at the midpoint of the internship, so the students know where they stand. Consider the quality and timeliness of the work produced to date, ability to take and follow direction, work habits, and areas needing growth and development. This information will also provide data for the final evaluation and serve as a reference point for the student's subsequent performance. When conducting the **final evaluation**, you should use the form provided by the **Office of Career Development** or appropriate **academic department** to evaluate your intern's performance.

KEY POINTS

- Maintain an open channel of communication with formal and informal meetings
- Keep the interns busy and directed towards their learning objectives. Students rarely complain of overwork, but they do complain if they are not challenged.
- Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility
- Encourage professionalism by assisting the interns in developing human relations skills, decision-making abilities, and managing office politics.
- Remember that you are a role model.

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What Interns Want

Give us real work!

It can't be said too many times that interns want to work and learn. An internship can help you get a job done that you couldn't otherwise, right? If you've brought on an intern as a recruitment tool, then how will you be able to assess their abilities? It just makes sense to utilize your interns well.

Do what you say, and say what you do!

Be honest with your interns about what they can expect during their internship. If the job will require stuffing some envelopes, then make that clear. But if you tell the intern they will be researching a project, and they spend 90% of their time doing "grunt work," then bad feelings will develop. Honesty doesn't cost you anything, and it will make the interns feel that much more respected.

We like feedback!

Remember that interns are students, and they may not have the business skills and experiences that you take for granted. If your intern makes an oversight, just pull the student aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.

We want to be included too!

Is there a staff meeting that they can attend? Can they quietly tag along to that next project meeting? Headed to lunch with a couple of people in the office? Please include them in the daily life of your workplace. After all, if you provide a little more perspective on the intern's work, the product will be much better.

Please explain.

When you assign work, make sure you give a detailed explanation. While the work may seem trivial and obvious to you, it may not be obvious to someone who's never done it before. Patience and a few extra minutes at the beginning will pay off later when your intern can produce good work independently.

I want a mentor!

Make sure that interns have a mentor or supervisor to provide guidance. Make it someone who truly likes to teach, and the experience will be even better.

A minute of your time please.

The best mentor in the world is useless if the individual can't or won't spend the necessary time mentoring. As newcomers, interns may not speak up if they're feeling ignored, so the burden of making sure they're okay is on the mentor. If the busiest person in the office wants to be the designated mentor, this individual should schedule regular times to meet with the intern.

Be prepared!

That wonderful day has arrived and the intern goes to start their internship only to learn that no one knew they were coming, and there is no place for them to work.

Um...I need a chair.

It is amazing how many employers hire an intern and don't think about the fact that they will need a desk, chair, phone and a computer in order to do the task assigned. It is no fun, and not efficient to move an intern from desk to desk as people are out one day to the next. If you want to get a job done, you need to supply the intern with the tools to do the job.

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Students conducting an internship or other experiential learning experience for academic credit should confer with their academic or faculty advisor to ensure they meet the policies, guidelines and accompanying responsibilities established for that course. Viewed broadly, students must be in good academic standing as determined by their institution and/or program of study and not be in violation of the institution's Student Code of Conduct. During the experience the student is viewed as an agent of the College/University and should adhere to all policies and guidelines established by the appropriate academic unit and institution.

Role of College/University

Students conducting an internship or other experiential learning experience should avail themselves to the assistance provided by the College/University to construct a successful experience. For those experiences conducted for academic credit, the student should seek the assistance of the appropriate academic department. In all other instances, students should contact the Office of Career Development and Experiential Learning Services.

Conclusion

Deciding to hire an intern can be a big step in any organization/company. There are many steps and considerations that must be made in order to create an environment that is both productive and successful. However, the fact is, interns can be wonderful additions to your team, and with the right knowledge and awareness, interns can become a regular fixture in your company.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Career Development & Experiential Learning Services at the address, phone number or e-mail address listed below.

Office of Career Development & Experiential Learning Services
Warner 226, 1179 University Drive, Newark, OH 43055
Phone: 740.366.9453, Fax 740.364.9646, thatcher.42@osu.edu or dthatc@cotc.edu

Appendix A: Definitions

Clinical Experience: Supervised course work within which the student has the opportunity to engage in clinical activities similar to those performed by a departmentally approved professional. Departmental policies and accreditation criteria often define the experience. Site supervisors are often held to specific credentials as a component of such.

Co-op: Cooperative education is a unique form of education that differs from summer employment and internships. The National Commission for Cooperative Education (NCCE) explained the development of a co-op model “that incorporates a cooperative education as a structured educational strategy integrating classroom studies with learning through productive work experiences in a field related to a student’s academic or career goals. It provides progressive experiences in integrating theory and practice. Co-op is a partnership among students, educational institutions and employers, with specified responsibilities for each party”.

Experiential learning: Experiential learning, at its core is operationalized by engaging students in learning through sequential exposure to challenging, compelling, and enriching activities conducted in appropriate settings. It integrates development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and fosters application of methods of critical inquiry. It engages students in personal reflection in order to organize, interpret, and bring meaning and coherence to their learning experience.

Internship: Internships are work-related learning experiences that provide students with the chance to gain important knowledge and skills in a career related that may or may not be directly related to their academic study. An internship provides exposure to career fields of interest without making a permanent commitment.

Internship Host Site: The organization, business, or entity that offers an organized hands-on experience for a student intern. The Host will define the Site Supervisor, provide or assist with the creation of a position description, determine pay for the experience, and define the duration of the experience.

Site Supervisor: The individual designated to provide direct supervision to the intern while s/he is at the Internship Host Site.

Supervision: A tutorial and mentoring form of instruction in which a supervisor monitors the student's activities in practicum, field work, and internship and facilitates the learning and skill development experiences associated with practicum, field work, and internship. The supervisor monitors and evaluates the clinical work of the student while monitoring the quality of services offered. (From the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP] Standards.)

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