

How do student interns benefit from an Internship Program?

Students are seeking opportunities that stimulate their interests and provide real-world experiences. A meaningful, purposeful internship program will:

- Ensure the assignment of challenging projects and tasks.
- Provide projects that complement academic programs and/or career interests.
- Give broad exposure to the organization (remember this is a chance for them to personally develop and explore career possibilities).
- Provide adequate, reliable, and regular supervision and mentoring.
- Ensure interns are keeping pace and accomplishing goals.
- Orientation.
- Create a professional network.
- Industry relevance.
- Real life experience.
- Enable the intern to establish a professional network.

Learning Goals

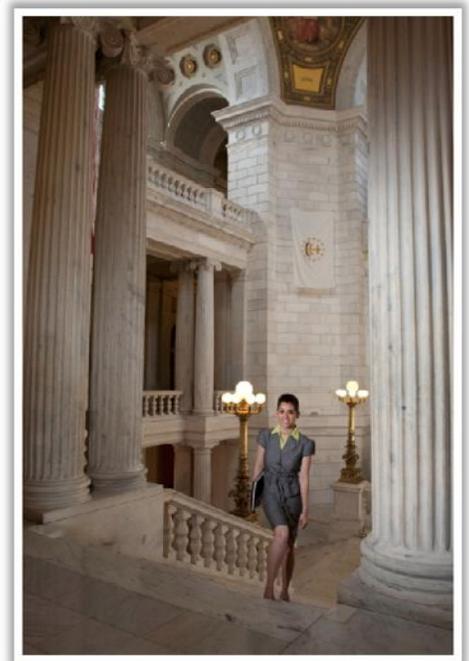
At the start of the internship, it is recommended that the supervisor and intern create a list of learning goals the intern hopes to complete. The learning goals serve as the academic and professional roadmap for the intern's semester/time with PGC. This activity helps to clearly identify the intern's learning objectives and how the intern plans to accomplish them. Creating these goals is also an opportune time to discuss workplace requirements, intern responsibilities, and hours expected to complete (to earn credit). We ask our supervisors to take the time to meet with the interns during the first week of the internship to discuss and negotiate learning goals. *(See end of document for sample learning goals).*

Providing an Intern Orientation

It is very important that interns be warmly welcomed and introduced throughout our company, just as you would welcome a new full-time employee. Not only are interns new to our company, in many cases, they are new to the professional world of work.

If affiliated with a school: Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment and objectives of PGC. Even though our interns may have worked part-time to support their education, these experiences may not have exposed them to company politics, the need for confidentiality, the importance of teamwork, or the profit-making nature of business. It is during the orientation and training that these issues and information about PGC are addressed.

The sooner your intern understands our company and how it operates, the sooner he or she can assume assigned responsibilities and contribute. Expectations can vary based on the size of our company and



the department, but in general, be sure to review:

- Hours
- Dress code
- Overall responsibilities
- How to cope with absenteeism
- Safety regulations and requirements

Key Elements of the Department Internship Program

Your department must understand how interns will fit within the company's goals and culture. Since each department will vary in age, size, workload, and productivity, so too will internship activities.

Questions that may determine what kind of **program** will work best for you:

- What does your department hope to gain from the program?
- Is your department looking to fulfill a need on a specific project? Will this internship(s) encompass one major project, or entail a variety of small projects?
- What are the tools and workspace necessary to provide the student?
- What talents, academic background and experience do you want in an intern? Decide on qualifications early on to help you select the best candidate.
- Who will be primarily responsible for the intern(s)? Will that person be a mentor, supervisor, or both?



It is important that employers realize that school and classes must remain a top priority for interns if they are a current student. The internship position should enhance their learning experience.

Understand that for most interns this is a new experience, and they may need support in balancing their schoolwork and internship. Agreeing on a set number of hours interns will work each week and offering flextime for freedom to plan their schedules on a weekly basis are two ways to support balance.

The student intern should meet with an academic or internship advisor for further direction.

Role of an Internship Supervisor and Mentor

It is going to be important to identify a supervisor for your intern(s) who will familiarize them with the company, provide assignments and serve as a "contact" person for questions. It is recommended that the intern supervisor be an expert in the type of work the intern(s) will be performing to provide the appropriate guidance for the intern's assignments. An intern supervisor's responsibilities will include:

- Taking part in an intern's application, screening, and interview process
- Conducting intern orientation
- Developing learning goals
- Meeting with an intern regularly to evaluate performance and if needs/goals are being met; and assessing the internship program's success

Role of a Mentor

In addition to the supervisor, a mentor may assist with transition into this new learning environment. This is done by answering general questions related to personal and professional growth and sharing career knowledge leading to networking in the field.

The Stages of an Internship

Adapted from: Sweitzer, H.F. & King, M.A. (1999). The Successful Internship: Transformation & Empowerment

Some of the concerns and challenges interns face seem to occur in a predictable order. Each stage has its own obstacles and opportunities. There are concerns interns will have at each stage, and to some extent, those concerns must be resolved for them to move forward and continue learning and growing. However, the process of resolving the concerns is also a learning experience in and of itself. At each stage, there are important tasks that will help interns address the concerns. If these tasks go undone and the concerns are left unresolved, the intern can become stuck in a stage.

Rate of progress through the stages is affected by many factors, including the number of hours spent at the agency; previous internships or field experiences; your personality; the personal issues and levels of support you bring into the experience; the style of supervision and the nature of the work. The more you understand as a supervisor, the better the learning experience for the intern.

Anticipation

- Beginning of internship
- Anxiety- "What if" ... Interaction with many people
- Level Task accomplishment low
- Definition of specific goals with consideration of skills needed to complete established goals
- Assumptions- need to examine and critique
- Development of good relationships with supervisor, co-workers, etc.

Disillusionment

- Gap between expectations for the internship and what is occurring
- Sometimes gaps small, others large
- "What if..." from previous stage has become "What's Wrong"
- Possibility for tremendous for personal and professional growth by working through problems.

Confrontation

- To get past Disillusionment stage intern must face and study what is happening
- Failure to acknowledge and discuss problems can diminish learning experience, performance, etc.
- May need to reevaluate goals- may be unrealistic or opportunities may have changed
- As issues raised in disillusionment are resolved, task and morale accomplishments will raise
- Must continue to confront and not get "frozen in the moment"
- Empowerment from knowing can grapple with problems effectively.

Competence

- Morale high- trust in yourself
- Transition into "professional" from "apprentice"
- Good platform to demand more from self and assignment- increase workload, responsibility

Culmination

- May face a variety of feelings at this stage
- Pride in accomplishments, sadness in leaving
- Need to address emotions, find avenue to express them



Common Internship Forms

Each school has learning agreement forms they may ask you to complete.

Mid Term and Final Evaluation

An internship can only be a true learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. An effective evaluation will focus on the interns' initial learning objectives identified at the start of the internship. Supervisors should take time to evaluate both the student's positive accomplishments and areas for improvement.

Interns will look to their mentors and/or supervisors to help them transition from the classroom to the workplace. It is recommended that mentors and/or supervisors regularly meet with interns to receive and provide feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings, the students may:

- Report on a project's status
- Learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- Participate in evaluating their strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Get insight about what work lies ahead

Typically, supervisors are asked to evaluate interns at the midpoint and end of the internship. Employers are encouraged to review the internship with the intern before he or she leaves. Evaluations are helpful when determining the intern's success within the organization for future internships or employment upon graduation.



Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in supervising and mentoring an intern. Your participation provides interns the opportunity for both personal and professional growth. Interns and volunteers have been commended for their diligence, work ethic, and professionalism. We are confident that you will find them a welcomed addition to your department.

Intern Today, Employee Tomorrow: The Indiana Employer's Guide to Internships (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://indianaintern.net/pdf/IIN-EmployersGuide1-11-1.pdf>.

Employer's Guidebook to Developing a Successful Internship Program (n.d.). Retrieved from http://neded.org/files/businessdevelopment/internne/EmployerGuidebook_DevelopingSuccessfulInternshipProgram.pdf

SAMPLE LEARNING GOALS: BUSINESS

Service and Training Manager

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To create an improved interviewing and hiring system that will lead to more accurate and relevant interviewing, lower turnover and a stronger team.

Activities/Resources:

- Evaluate current interviewing forms.
- Alter the forms to be more behaviorally based; create new forms if necessary.
- Determine desired qualities (experience, availability, customer focus, etc.) and the importance of each characteristic.
- Determine the most effective way to determine the information from the applicant.

Evidence:

- Include data that highlights lower turnover in Quarter 4.
- Include original forms and procedures.

Objective 2: Create a more efficient system of training to provide a consistent, comprehensive New Employee Orientation to all associates in an engaging manner.

Activities/Resources:

- Create a system on training that is consistent for each new employee.
- Maintain a fun, engaging environment.
- Create an environment of trust and camaraderie.
- Get feedback from new associates for any alterations needed.

Evidence:

- Include an electronic version of the new training binder.

DETAILS

Duties include:

- Interviewing and hiring new associates
- Training new and existing employees on all best practices
- Give coaching and feedback to all associates regarding performance
- Meet Customer Experience Survey requirements (currently #3 in the district)
- Managing Old Navy Card Goals (Currently #9 in the district)

Evaluation methods:

- Daily communication with Store Manager
- Weekly meetings for evaluation and feedback
- Quarterly performance reviews

Expected workdays:

- Sunday 12-9pm
- Monday 8-5
- Tuesday 1-10pm
- Thursday 1-10pm
- Saturday 9-6

(Changes weekly, but always 5 9-hour shifts per week)

- Start date: January 23 End date: May 2