



IGNITE EMPLOYEE INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

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UMKC Career Services

Western Michigan Strategic Alliance and Detroit Regional Area Chamber of Commerce's *Starting and Maintaining an Internship Program* – Michael True, Director – Internship Center, Messiah College



IGNITE EMPLOYEE INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

What is an Internship?

An internship is an official program typically offered by an employer to undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate students to work either part time or full time at a company for a certain period of time to gain professional or trade experience.

Types of Internship Programs

Internships can be paid or unpaid — though, if they are unpaid, they're usually subject to stringent labor guidelines. In the United States, federal law mandates that unpaid interns must not benefit the company economically or be used to displace the work done by paid employees. Some states have their own regulations regarding interns. For example, in California, unpaid interns must receive college credit for their work. The Ignite initiative will not reimburse for or support unpaid internships.

Most American internships are work experience internships — essentially on-the-job training in a field that the student or young worker wants to learn more about. Though employment isn't guaranteed at the end of an internship, many employers use internships as a way to train and evaluate future employees. In fact, a 2009 NACE survey of U.S. employers with interns found that 67% of those interns were given job offers after their terms were complete.

Benefits of Internship Programs

- An inexpensive recruiting tool and an opportunity to train new employees.
- The opportunity to evaluate prospective employees while they are working for the organization can reduce significant costs in finding new talent.
- Interns bring current technology and ideas from the classroom to the workplace and therefore increase an organization's intellectual capital.
- Interns can be another source for the recruitment of diverse employees into your workforce.
- An internship program can supply an easily accessible source of highly motivated pre-professionals.
- Interns provide an opportunity for mid-level staff to manage.

Developing an Internship Program

1. Identifying Your Business Needs and Setting Goals

Do you have difficulty finding qualified employees?

Does your organization require skills or talents that are typically not learned in the classroom?

- Software or hardware skills (ie. CAD, Revit, D-Tools, Adobe)
- Research or process skills
- Client or customer interaction

Do your full-time employees have projects that could benefit from the focused attention of an intern, such as research or special projects?

Will existing resources, equipment, and accommodations be sufficient for the intern?

Do you have available workspace and parking?

Will you need to purchase software or equipment?

Do you have an appropriate sponsor to oversee the intern?

What will you pay the intern?



Developing an Internship Program, continued

2. Writing a Plan

Identify goals, timelines, workspace, and a general description of the opportunity.

Develop an intern job description:

- What are some of the intern's daily duties?
- Is there a typical or special project the intern will be asked to work on?
 - It is important for interns to understand and participate in the day-to-day operation of the organization. They should be given tasks that help teach them important processes and procedures and give them skills valuable to employers. When the opportunity is available, the employer should create a special project that is relevant and can be accomplished during the internship.
 - Interns are ideal candidates for research projects or in-depth analysis that regular employees simply don't have time to tackle.
- What skills or level of education will be required?
 - The employer needs to determine if the internship requires certain computer or analytical skills or if he/she needs to have taken certain classes or coursework.
 - You should determine the importance of grades, course requirements, and classification in school in relation to your specific business. Some employers have specific requirements for grade point average; some require that the student complete specific courses. You may choose to accept only certain majors or grade classifications.
- Who will supervise/mentor the intern?
 - Someone who can provide guidance and support must manage the intern. Interns will need regular supervision.
- How will the intern interact with other employees?
 - The internship should allow the intern to get an understanding of the organization's operations. Interaction enhances the intern's and the other employees' experiences.
- How will intern performance be evaluated?
 - An end-of-internship review is important for the student to learn from his/her experience. If the student receives course credit for the internship, ask if his/her school requires a specific form for the review.
- How much time will the intern be expected to work per week?
 - You must set expectations. Will the intern work during a semester or the summer? Will he/she work during the regular work day or after hours?
- What will the intern be required to wear?
 - It is important to clearly describe your dress code.

Developing an Internship Program, continued

3. Recruiting a Qualified Intern

Not sure where to start when looking for qualified interns?

Below we've identified the best resources for intern recruitment.

- Career Services
- Career Fairs
- Social Media
- Student Organizations
- Job Boards

4. Selecting an Intern

- Does the student possess the skills required for the internship position?
- Has the student completed relevant coursework for this internship? Some internships will require completion of certain courses.
- Does the student have any previous work experience or other relevant experience? Engagement in clubs and other activities may also demonstrate a student's ability to manage multiple responsibilities.
- Has the student displayed leadership qualities?
- Has the student listed class projects or experience that is relevant to the internship?

5. Managing the Intern

During the onboarding process, the employer will review the job description, establish expectations and workplace behavior, and discuss the best way to communicate and solve problems that may arise. How an intern is monitored and evaluated will be unique to each company or organization. Establishing the framework for communication throughout the process is important for a successful internship.

- Monitor the intern's progress.
- Help your intern set goals for completion of various tasks, including daily, weekly and monthly goals.
- Evaluate the intern's progress periodically and give feedback. It could be a formal review given at the half-way point or delivered occasionally in an informal manner.

Developing an Internship Program, continued

6. Evaluating Performance

Ask post-internship questions:

- How would you describe the relationship between what was promised vs. what was delivered?
- Why do we strive for predictable individual and team performance?
What lessons can you share?
- What lessons or examples can you share from your experience in time savings or improved processes?
- Do you think this company and/or industry would be an exciting place to start your career?
- Did the internship provide you with any insights that you hadn't anticipated?
- How would you rate your internship on a scale from 1 to 10?
Write a list of pros and cons.
- Would you recommend your internship to a friend (why or why not)?
- What knowledge and skills did you gain, and how do you plan on applying them in the future? Identify knowledge and skills you now possess that can be applied to future positions.

