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# BUILDING A PREMIER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A Practical Guide for Employers

BY JULIE CUNNINGHAM

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## About the Author

## About the Publisher—National Association of Colleges and Employers

How often have you heard students say, “I can’t get a job without experience, but I can’t get experience if no one will hire me!”? At the same time many hiring managers bemoan the lack of preparedness often shown by new grads: “If only they weren’t quite so ‘green.’”

There’s a wonderful, win-win solution out there, one that grows in popularity every year: internship programs. Students work in career-related positions, which give them the experience and career direction they need. Employers who hire them for these positions gain both high-quality temporary help and a pipeline of less “green” new graduates. Everyone wins!

This guide focuses on internship programs that are recruitment-oriented—programs that are designed to help “feed” the organization’s need for new graduate hires. It is designed as a how-to handbook for employers who are creating an internship program, and for those who already have a program in place, but want to enhance it. It contains ideas for program structure, tips for success, and forms that you can adapt to use for your own administrative and informational purposes.

Throughout this guide, we refer to “interns” and “internship programs.” Those terms are used in an inclusive way to refer to any college student employees who are in a career-related position, and whom you hope to hire into your organization after they graduate. However, distinctions are often made by both employers and universities between internship and cooperative education programs:

- Interns work in positions related to their major field of study; may work during the summer or the school year, but most often work full-time during the summer; may be paid or unpaid. There is usually no formal arrangement between the employer and the university.
- Cooperative education students (co-ops) work in positions related to their major field of study; alternate periods of full-time employment with periods of full-time study; may attend school and work concurrently; are almost always paid. There is a formal agreement between the university, the student, and the employer about the terms of the experience.

Many organizations also have a program for “summer hires.” These are typically short-term positions, often clerical in nature, and usually have been created for the children of executives. Since summer hire programs are not recruitment-oriented, they are not addressed in this booklet.

We hope that you find this guide to be an effective addition to your college relations toolbox.



# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Two of the hallmarks of a successful college relations program are receiving support from senior management and having an internship program. Senior management support for the college relations program in general, and for an internship program in particular, depends upon having a good business case for each.

A quick review of the business case for college relations shows us that college relations programs gain support for the following reasons. A college relations program:

- Allows the organization to grow its own future leaders.
- Brings in employees with a fresh perspective on the work world, the organization, and the task at hand.
- Ensures that there will be trained employees available to move up in the ranks as others retire or move on.
- Brings in entry-level employees to do the entry-level jobs, allowing the organization to focus its experienced talent on those jobs requiring that level of expertise.
- Aids in the organization's diversity efforts.

## How Internship Programs Support the Organization

An internship program supports the college relations program and the organization by:

- **Building a pipeline for the recruitment of new graduates.**

Increasingly, employers interested in recruiting new college graduates have some kind of experiential education program—either an internship or co-op program—and most use their program as a recruiting tool. In fact, employers consistently name internship and cooperative education programs as among their most effective tools for recruiting new college graduates.

By providing employers with a chance to see students in action, internships give employers an informed vantage point from which to judge 1) if the student's talents and interests match the opportunities available and 2) if the student and the organization's culture match. The employer also is better informed to judge what part of the organization would make best use of the student's skills. Conversely, many employers have avoided making costly hiring mistakes when the internship showed that there was not a match on one or both counts.

The internship period also serves as a time to build a bond between the student and the organization. Especially in times when the job market is highly active, that bond can help an employer to keep its best prospects from going to competitors. Even when the employment market is down, there is still competition

for top students, and an internship program can help draw them to an organization.

- **Providing project help.**

Interns perform a valuable function in organizations by taking on projects that cannot be done by full-time employees, but are nevertheless deemed important. From the point of view of all parties involved (students, employers, and colleges), project work is the ideal way to structure the student's work experience: A project has a defined reason for being, a beginning and an end, and a set deliverable. Project work provides the student with clear parameters and a sense of ownership, the employer with a deliverable and a way to measure the student's contribution, and the college with a basis for awarding credit to the student and an example to present to other students in the process of recruiting them into its internship program. In Chapter 4, we'll discuss ways to ensure productive, meaningful projects that are clearly defined and relevant for both the employer and the student.

- **Sending ambassadors back to campus.**

Students are some of the best networkers you will ever meet. They are well connected to other potential candidates to an extent made possible by their constant proximity to thousands of other students, and by the Internet. Picture the typical college campus in the fall, when students descend upon it, eager to renew old acquaintances and get caught up on events of the past summer. Now picture the student who worked in your organization. She had a great project related to her major, finished it and presented it to management, had a terrific manager who supported her development, and had a mentor who helped her learn the ways of the work world. She also made enough money to pay this year's tuition and, perhaps of most importance to many people her age, had a lot of fun running around all summer with the other interns. She has come back to campus with your logo T-shirt to wear and a great story to tell. And tell it she will—to everyone she meets: her friends, her co-workers at her campus job, her classmates and faculty, and her career counselor in the career center. She's a walking, talking, interacting advertisement, and has more credibility than any brochure you will hand out at a career fair.

- **Increasing the diversity in your organization.**

Diversity recruiting is a natural part of college recruiting. For one thing, diverse populations are easier to identify at the college level than at the experienced level. There

are minority schools, minority programs at majority schools, and independent minority career development organizations, all of which enable the employer to have direct contact with a diverse population of students. In addition, many schools have a significant number of international students. Recruiting these students is appealing to global companies who are striving for a more culturally diverse work force. Although many organizations view their experiential education programs as a diversity recruitment tool, for many more organizations the resulting diverse candidate pool is a fortunate by-product, rather than a stated goal.

- **Bringing in new employees who perform at higher levels more quickly.**

A new employee who has completed one or more internship periods with your organization knows the "lay of the land" and will require a shorter time to orient to the workplace. And, if they are doing work similar to that performed during the internship, they are likely to perform at a productive level more quickly than other new employees. While there is little empirical evidence to support it, it is also considered conventional wisdom among college relations managers that performance levels of former interns are better than the average new grad employee performance level. Perhaps this is due to the longer "interview," i.e., the work periods during which the match is assessed. Contrary to what we would like to have happen, having worked as an intern does not seem to correlate with higher retention levels.

## A Word About Metrics

Support from your senior management must be won on the basis of the business case items mentioned earlier. Trying to sell management on an internship program (or on college relations programs in general) on the basis of low cost is not recommended for two reasons:

- **First, no program that involves bringing talent into an organization is ever successful because it's cheap.**

Good talent acquisition is not cheap, whether the talent is senior level, entry level, or student level.

- **Secondly, there is little evidence that college recruiting is significantly less expensive than experienced-level recruiting.**

While there may be some cost savings in the recruitment

and salary levels of new grads and interns, it is offset by the cost to the organization of training these entry-level employees.

## The Costs of Running A Program

The costs to run an internship program can vary a great deal, depending on how the program is managed. Keep salaries down, offer no benefits, and leave out some of the popular perquisites, such as housing assistance, and you can run a low-cost program. But go to the other extreme—super-competitive salaries, full benefits, and unusual perks—and you’ve got a program with sky-high costs.

Below are the expense items you will need to calculate for your internship program.

### • Salaries

Salaries aren’t absolutely necessary, but they are recommended: First, it’s more natural (easier, from a psychological point of view, if you like) to place performance and evaluative measures on a paid employee for work done than on one who is unpaid. The relationship between organization and intern is also clearer from a legal standpoint. Secondly, by paying a salary, you open up your program to the universe of candidates who meet the qualifications, not just those who can afford a summer underwritten by Mom and Dad. (See Chapter 8, “Legal Aspects of Internship Programs,” for more discussion about paid and unpaid internships.)

Another tip: It’s best that intern salaries be paid by the hiring department rather than out of a central pool such as Human Resources. When the hiring department pays the intern’s salary, the staff is more likely to treat the intern as a member of the team. However, if Human Resources is starting up or “growing” an internship program and wishes to promote it, some “free” interns (salaries paid by HR) can be put in certain departments to “seed” the program for the first year.

### • Benefits and perquisites

In general, “bennies and perks” are not typically provided to interns and co-op students. The exceptions are usually related to transportation, moving/relocation, and housing. (See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the variety of benefits and perquisites that some employers have provided to interns.)

Obviously, the more benefits and perks that you can offer, the more attractive your internship opportunity.

And, because relatively few employers offer benefits and perks to interns beyond housing assistance and the other exceptions noted here, offering some “nonstandard” benefits can help you differentiate your program from your competitors.

That said, here is a word of caution from one who has been down the benefits-for-interns road: When considering which benefits to offer to interns, keep in mind how this will be perceived by your regular, full-time employees. Many a college relations manager with good intentions has been blindsided by backlash from employees who resented the offering of benefits to college students. My advice: Test the waters before implementing programs.

### • Recruiting costs

Many organizations fold intern recruiting costs into their overall college relations costs because it is difficult to separate out what was an intern-attracting event and what was a new grad-attracting event. They are often one and the same.

If you attempt to calculate intern recruiting costs separately, you will want to include a portion of those items that work for the overall college relations program, such as campus image expense, travel costs for recruiters, career fair fees, and the like. Generally, while the cost of sourcing interns (identifying potential candidates through events and advertising) is similar to that of sourcing new grads, recruiting interns (screening, interviewing, hiring, and shepherding the new intern up to the first day of work) is less expensive than recruiting new grads, a process that is more likely to include on-site interview costs, relocation expenses, and signing bonus costs—all more common with new grads than with interns.

### • Scholarships

By adding a scholarship award to selected internship positions, you may be able to attract to your candidate pool students in hard-to-recruit groups, such as high academic achievers and minorities. I recommend working with the scholarship coordinator in your target academic unit, e.g., the College of Engineering. The coordinator will help you publicize the internship/scholarship package and identify qualified candidates, and will either set up interviews or facilitate that process with the campus career center. Additionally, the scholarship coordinator can coordinate your award with the student’s other financial assistance, and will be the campus contact for receiving the award and

depositing it into the student's account. For summer internships, contact the coordinator in the preceding December for guidelines about the process. Students should receive confirmation of the scholarship and a description of the criteria for awarding it (usually successful completion of the internship) with their offer letters. Check with your organization's internal tax department to see if scholarship expenditures are tax deductible for your organization.

- **Hellos, goodbyes, and all things in between**

You will want to have some kind of a first-day orientation for all of your students. This is when their bonding to your organization truly begins. (See Chapter 4 for a description of intern orientation programs.) Similarly,

at the end of the work term, you will likely want to have some kind of event to close the term and express appreciation to the students, their managers, and others who supported the program.

In between these beginning and closing events, there are many opportunities to bring interns together for events that are social, training, or developmental in nature. Perhaps the most costly item for these events (remember—these are college students!) is the food. Budget generously for food, as students are a hungry lot. You may also have costs associated with trainers, speakers, or materials. And, it will behoove you to budget for a few gift items like T-shirts, book bags, and other items that can carry your organization's logo back to campus to enhance the intern's "student ambassador" function.



# GOALS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Most internship programs are part of a larger college relations program, which in turn is part of a larger staffing organization. If that is the case, it follows that the internship program will have a recruitment focus—meaning that the end goal is the hiring of graduating interns as regular, full-time employees.

There are two key measures to keep in mind to judge the success and effectiveness of your program:

- 1) your program's conversion of graduating interns to regular, full-time employees, and
- 2) the percent of your total new college hires that come from your own program.

## Minimum Benchmarks for a Recruitment-Oriented Program

Conversion-to-regular, full-time numbers as reported by employers vary greatly, but as a rule of thumb, you should look to convert a minimum of 50 percent of your graduating interns into regular, full-time hires. (In fact, high-performing programs typically convert 70 to 80 percent of their graduating interns into regular, full-time employees.)

Another measure to keep in mind: If your program is to

serve as an effective pipeline to new-grad recruiting, at least 25 percent of your new-grad hires should come out of your program.

These are minimum goals: If your program doesn't achieve them, it is not a useful recruiting tool. A program that performs below these minimums does not achieve recruiting results that are superior to those of a college relations program that does not include an internship program.

### Example: Acme Tech Works

Let's look at a fictional example. Acme Tech Works has a hiring goal of 100 new grads for this year. Of Acme's current group of interns, 50 are graduating this year. If Acme can convert 25 of those graduating interns to regular, full-time employment, it will have satisfied two goals: 50 percent of the graduating interns were converted to full-time ( $50 \text{ interns} \times .50 = 25 \text{ interns}$ ), and 25 percent of the new grad hires came from the intern group ( $100 \text{ total hires} \times .25 = 25 \text{ interns}$ ).

To carry our example a step farther, the savvy college relations manager at Acme also planned for success by overseeing intern hiring to ensure that at least 50 of those hired would be graduating this year in majors that would match the company's new-grad openings.

## Characteristics of the Successful Program

First, let me acknowledge that not all successful internship programs are recruitment-oriented. But as noted in the introduction, we're assuming that the point of your program is recruiting. Consequently, the information provided is geared toward recruiting-driven internship programs.

The successful internship program shares basic characteristics with the successful college relations program. It:

- Has support from top management.
- Is well-organized.
- Displays continuity from year to year.
- Is managed and run by well-trained professionals.
- Undergoes continuous evaluation and improvement.

Beyond these basic underpinnings, the successful internship program is also characterized by the following.

### • Buy-in at all levels

An internship program and the students who participate in it are touched by many in the organization. Everyone involved—from the alum who attends the campus intern fair, to the recruiter in HR, to the hiring manager, to the mentor, and even to the CEO who addresses the group at its farewell luncheon—has an effect on the student's experience in and impression of the organization. This makes it vital to the success of your program that everyone involved in the program supports its purpose and structure. HR's best job in recruiting and orienting the student is undone by the manager who sees the student as a "throwaway" employee.

Gaining buy-in at all levels is best done by program supporters at all levels. For example, the college relations manager and her recruiting staff may be the best choice for educating the hiring managers and mentors about the program, while the VP of Human Resources may be the best person to educate senior-level management. Take a look at your own organization and ask yourself, "Who touches this program?" and "Who is in the best position to gain support throughout each of these constituencies?"

### • Effective program design

Your program will be more successful if you start with a solid infrastructure. This includes clear program goals

and well-designed processes for sourcing, recruiting, and orienting students; converting interns to regular, full-time employees; and evaluating and improving your program. (See Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 for detailed discussions of these processes.)

### • Good selection

My father spent many years as a builder. He always told me that, "If you start with high-quality tools and materials, the job will be easier and the end product will be worth the effort you put into it."

The same principle applies to your internship program: If you start with high-caliber interns with the appropriate qualifications, your new grad recruiting goals will be much easier to reach.

It takes a college relations manager with an iron will and endless patience to ensure that recruiters and hiring managers take the hiring of interns seriously. It starts with college recruiters who are very clear on the criteria for initial screening, and extends to the hiring manager and the interview team. These are not "just" interns—as we've all heard from many a hiring manager willing to compromise the intern hiring process to save time or effort. Your job is to emphasize that the same standards used for new full-time hires must be applied to these students because converting them to such is the ultimate goal.

You should also recognize that your role in the intern selection process may require high-level diplomatic skills. More than one college relations manager has been faced with a non-qualified child of a senior executive. This is the reality: Sometimes it is best to set aside a slot or two to keep the peace (and your job!) and realize that not all interns will eventually qualify for or desire full-time employment.

(See Chapter 3, "Laying the Ground Work," for a detailed discussion of sourcing methods and selection challenges.)

### • A consistent, positive message

Just as it is important that your recruiters deliver a consistent message to all students at all campuses, so it is important that interns receive a consistent and positive message throughout their experience with your organization. This starts with and is ensured by proper orientation for the student and for the manager and mentor at the beginning of the work term. (See Chapter 4 for details on intern orientation and Chapter 3 for information about orientation for managers and mentors.)

- **An effective intern-to-full-time conversion process**

For most of us managing internship programs, it all comes down to that question your VP—or CEO—will inevitably ask you in the hallway, “So how many of them did we end up hiring?”

If that’s your bottom line, you’ll want to have a process in place that guarantees that your beautifully designed and executed internship program will not fail at the final and most important step. The key elements of an effective conversion process are outlined in Chapter 5.



## LAYING THE GROUND WORK

More than any other single elements, organization and consistency are critical to the success of your internship program, and the program manager—the program “champion,” if you will—is the person who provides that organization and consistency. Assuming you’re that person, as the program “champion” you manage the program, yes, but you also oversee all its aspects—from developing and communicating the program’s vision to working through the details to ensure the graduating intern offer process runs smoothly.

Even before you sit down to work out your internship program’s infrastructure (covered in Chapter 4), there are some basic, “ground work” elements you’ll need to review that will help you chart your program’s organization and consistency, including:

- Headcount planning.
- Program design and communication plan.
- Sourcing candidates.
- Manager/mentor selection.
- Manager/mentor orientation.

In this chapter, we’ll cover these basics.

### Headcount Planning

Having been out of college for a while, your hiring managers are no longer thinking in terms of the academic year—generally, they think in terms of the fiscal year. They may not be aware of how the ups and downs of the current market have affected the timing of when students

and employers attempt to connect. Your challenge is to educate those managers who do budgeting and headcount planning, so that they are prepared at the appropriate times with the information needed by your recruiting teams.

Each organization must decide for itself when it is ready to begin recruiting both interns and new grads. However, it is important to consider that many employers are out to beat the competition by recruiting earlier and earlier in the school year for both types of candidates. How early will vary by campus and for different majors. Check with the career centers on your target campuses to determine your optimal recruiting windows for interns.

Once you have determined the optimal recruiting window(s) for your target interns on your target campuses, it is time to plan your recruiting strategy. Your strategy will be based on your headcount plan. Your plan should include:

- Who—how many of each type of student (by major, level in school, skills) will you need?
- Where—in what geographic locations will the interns work?
- When—when will the interns be needed?

Devise a process to elicit this information from the headcount planners in your organization.

**(Tip:** I’ve found that it is best to begin with a reminder to the planners during the budget-planning process for the fiscal year in which you will hire your interns. This eliminates their

scrambling for money for intern headcount midway through the budget year and thus holding up the recruiting and hiring process.

Next, give the planners deadlines for delivering information to you that you need to plan and execute your intern recruiting strategy. Explain to them that there is a brief window for sourcing and hiring, and that the best students are in and out of the process quickly.

Once you have the headcount information, you are ready to finalize your strategy and go to campus and put it to work. (See the suggested timeline for headcount planning and recruitment activities at the end of this chapter.)

### Program Design and Communication Plan

The most important consideration in designing an internship program is this: It addresses the needs of both the interns and managers.

In general, students want three things from an internship program:

- an opportunity to use their skills.
- an opportunity for personal development.
- an enjoyable experience.

The well-structured internship program addresses a fourth need: easing the transition from college to work. Whether students realize it on a conscious or subconscious level, the internship is the beginning of their role transition from student to employee, and a well-structured internship program can facilitate that transition.

Managers, on the other hand, have simpler needs: They need a good business reason to participate in the program, a “roadmap” for doing so, and a pool of qualified candidates.

It is up to you as the intern program champion to design a program that addresses the needs of your target students and managers.

You are also responsible for communicating your program. Clear, consistent communication and consistent program delivery are key to the internal reputation of the program and to ensuring that your internal customers will want to participate in the program. You will want to devise a plan for internal communication that goes up, down, and across your organization. (More information about internal publicity for your program is discussed in Chapter 4 and information about communicating with managers and mentors is detailed later in this chapter.)

### Sourcing Candidates

Quite simply, your program cannot succeed unless you have a solid base of appropriate student hires, so sourcing is critical.

Sourcing intern candidates is very much like sourcing new-grad candidates. Your target campus career centers can offer you guidance in which events will lead you to the candidates you seek. On some campuses, there may be a separate administrative office just for the internship program, or it may be administered through academic departments. In such cases, it is also likely that students are receiving academic credit for the work experience, and you will probably be asked to sign an agreement with the college. This agreement describes the responsibilities of the parties involved—employer, student, and college. You’ll want to know this early on, allowing you time to get your legal counsel’s approval on the agreement. You may also need input from your hiring managers up front as some agreements require that the employer include an outline of the work to be performed by the student.

Job fairs that focus on intern employment are common to many campuses, but you can also recruit interns through general job fairs at which new grads, soon-to-be grads, and interns are all in attendance. It has been my experience that campus fairs are the most effective way of recruiting interns. This is because the fair is a good way to screen many students in a short time period. In addition, because intern interviews are often conducted via phone, the fair provides an opportunity for at least one member of your organization to interact with the potential intern in person—and that’s a real bonus. However, when job fairs aren’t available, or for some reason won’t fill your intern recruiting needs, there are many other avenues to sourcing good candidates. And, even if fairs are a part of your sourcing strategy, don’t overlook these options, which are detailed below.

#### • Other sourcing events

You can also source intern candidates through speaking engagements for professional associations, guest lectures in classes, open houses on campus and at your site, campus interviews, and any other event at which you have contact with students. Your staff and volunteer recruiters should always be on the lookout for candidates, even outside of campus. You never know when that salesperson at the computer store might qualify as your next IT intern.

- **Employee referrals**

Asking your current employees for referrals of intern candidates is the proverbial double-edged sword. In fact, you won't even have to ask for referrals. As soon as employees know that there are intern openings, the flood of resumes will start.

Here is where you will find both your best and your worst candidates—all of whom have their own personal cheerleader within your organization. My luck has always been that those who referred the worst candidates also worked in the same part of the building that I did, providing them with many opportunities to inquire about the status of their candidate! Still, employee referrals also provide many good candidates, and the cost to source these candidates is zero.

- **Campus scholarship offices**

If you are offering any scholarships to your interns, you will want to use the campus scholarship office(s) to identify candidates and accept the scholarship money for deposit into the student's account at the end of the term.

For scholarships that will be awarded with a summer internship, begin your contact with the scholarship coordinator in December. Scholarship coordinators usually work out of the academic dean's offices, but you may also find them in the financial aid office. Check with your career center if you need assistance in identifying them.

Next, find out their requirements and deadlines; typically, they want a complete description of the internship/scholarship package submitted to them in January or early February. They will then notify qualified candidates, who are asked to submit a resume if interested. You will likely be given a group of five to eight candidates from which to choose. Once you have made your selection for the scholarship recipient, you may want to consider the runners-up for regular internship positions.

An outline for an internship/scholarship announcement appears at the end of this chapter.

- **Faculty referrals**

If you have relationships with faculty members at your target campuses, you will be able to elicit good referrals from them. Your task is to make sure the faculty members understand the nature of your opportunity so that they will refer appropriate students at appropriate times. A word of caution: You should also understand that faculty members who hire research assistants may not refer their best students, hoping instead to recruit them for their own summer helpers.

- **Diversity identification resources**

Assuming one of the goals of your college relations program is to recruit a diverse work force, make your internship program an integral part of your diversity recruiting strategy.

One way to source talented, diverse students for internships is to work with various campus offices that serve the specific needs of these students. In addition, you can connect with professional societies that are focused around specific populations to identify interns; many of these societies have campus chapters.

Ask the career center staff at your target campuses for assistance in connecting with relevant offices and societies on campus.

- **Online job postings/advertising**

There are a number of websites and job posting services that can help you reach out for interns. A word of caution: As many posting services are public, you may get inundated with resumes, including many that do not meet your requirements. To narrow your scope, you may want to use a service that allows you to limit your postings/advertisements to students at certain schools. You can also contact the career centers at your target schools to find out what options are available to you through their websites; they may post listings on their site or offer advertising options.

Don't overlook your organization's own website as a place to promote your internship program and specific openings. On your website, you can go into more detail about your culture and benefits, and even include testimonials from and photos of former interns (a real draw for college students).

- **Print advertising**

Many student-oriented publications publish an edition in January or February. Some are general career-related periodicals and some are published by professional societies. An ad that runs during this time period can be an effective way to advertise summer and fall intern openings. Advertising in campus newspapers at your target schools will also yield a few resumes. Another word of caution: Be sure that your ad accurately reflects your requirements, or you may get more resumes than you need.

A note about sourcing interns: It is important to advertise, attend fairs, and otherwise conduct sourcing activities during both up and down economic periods. During "up" economic periods, you will find more competition for your target students, so you have to

be out there to make your organization visible. During “down” economic periods, students hear that the market is “bad” and feel discouraged about looking or assume there are no opportunities. (This phenomenon was reported to me by a group of students who lead an intern program student organization at a large state university. They reported having to work very hard to promote the many intern openings that were listed with their career center.) Employer advertising and other signs of activity/visibility can help restore students’ confidence that internships are out there even in down times.

### Selection Process Challenges

Whether your organization embraces interns wholeheartedly or accepts them reluctantly as another “HR program,” you will find that some of your greatest program challenges occur during the selection process. Here are a few “tales from the front” that I’ve encountered.

- **NEWS FLASH—School year, fiscal year are not the same!**

I’ve mentioned this earlier, but let me reiterate: Hiring managers have become accustomed to the fiscal year and may have forgotten the timing of the academic year. Or, they may think that the process works the same way as it did when they were in school. In either case, there is a good chance you’ll need to educate managers about the window of opportunity for hiring students.

- **The right mix**

In a recruitment-oriented internship program, you will have a goal to convert a certain percentage of your interns to regular, full-time employees. You can achieve this if your interns’ qualifications and skills match those required of your new grad candidates. Strive to have an intern group that comes close to matching your new grad hiring needs in terms of majors, skills, and diversity. Encourage managers to hire interns with graduation dates that coincide with when they will have new grad openings.

- **The boss’s kid**

Who in HR hasn’t been in the situation in which you are asked to “get” someone a job? Depending on how hiring decisions are made in your organization, you may or may not have any control over who is selected. Regardless, you do have influence and you may need to use it in this instance. While your internship program will not be taken seriously as a part of the staffing/

business strategy if it is heavy on these types of “employee referrals,” there may be situations in which, for political reasons, you have to make room for a candidate who is less than ideal. Plan it in and don’t worry over it.

- **The “it’s just an intern” attitude**

If you are to successfully convert your interns to regular, full-time employees, you must convince your hiring managers to take the hiring process seriously. Educate them on the value of hiring high-potential students and how much easier that is if they start early in the year. I’ve found that managers are most likely to hire poor candidates when it is late in the process and they are worried about getting the position filled.

- **The “whatever happened to...” problem**

Keeping track of your own interns from year to year can be a particular challenge. If you have a non-graduating intern whom you may want to ask back for another summer, assign a recruiter to keep in contact with the intern. You cannot rely on the student to keep in touch with you. He or she may become distracted by other employers, or assume that because you haven’t gotten in touch, you are not interested. And don’t forget about those students who interned with you early in their college careers and then interned a summer with another employer. They may want to come back to you later.

- **Competing against the “cumulative offer”**

I mentioned earlier the wide communication networks inherent in the college student culture. Your candidate is comparing your offer not only to others that he may have received, but also to those received by all of his friends. The end result can be that your candidate wants an offer from you that includes the best of every offer he has received, his roommate has received, or he has heard about from friends. There is no such ideal offer, and your diplomatic recruiters may have to explain this a few times.

- **So many resumes, so few candidates**

Depending on how much advertising you do, and the size of the campuses at which you make appearances, you may be the recipient of a flood of resumes. Students have become more aware of the importance of internships, and that is reflected in their zeal in applying

for them. Your challenge is to make sure that the flood of resumes includes enough candidates that meet your requirements. If you can get your requirements from your hiring managers early, you can advertise your needs more accurately and, hopefully, be rewarded with a candidate pool that meets your needs.

One last note about candidate selection: Don't overlook nontraditional students. We tend to picture interns as coming from the ranks of traditional students: 18 to 22 years old, single, with no children. However, nontraditional students also desire internships, and the diversity of backgrounds they bring is a definite plus for the organization and for the traditional students participating in the program.

## Manager/Mentor Selection And Orientation

If you are able to choose which managers have interns, you have an ideal opportunity to select those people who have the skills required to work effectively with interns: These are individuals with an interest in developing people, adequate time to supervise and evaluate an intern, an ability to recognize potential in inexperienced employees, and a respect for the role of college recruiting in the business strategy. These perfect people do exist, but they aren't always the managers who step forward to hire interns.

You will also ask the hiring managers to choose mentors for their interns. The mentor acts as a resource person to acquaint the intern to the work and cultural environment of the organization. Having a mentor for the intern in addition to the manager is a great way to enhance the student's experience. Another benefit: You will have another person who knows the student well enough to judge the match between the student and the organization when the time comes to make hiring decisions for regular, full-time positions.

Managers should select mentors early enough to enable them to attend the manager/mentor orientation. The ideal mentor:

- Has been out of college less than five years.
- Works in the same department as the intern.
- Has the time to devote to mentoring.
- Is interested in being a mentor.
- Understands the project(s) on which the intern will be working.

### • Student expectations of mentors

According to the aggregated results of an annual survey that was conducted for several years, interns expect their mentors to:

- Make the transition to the workplace as smooth as possible.
- Teach and help when needed.
- Explain processes and procedures.
- Help the intern navigate the organization's culture.
- Act as a positive role model.
- Provide feedback on the intern's performance.
- Take an active role in the intern's development.
- Teach the intern about the organization and its products and services.
- Take the intern out to lunch often.

Don't laugh: In the survey results, lunch was mentioned numerous times. As noted previously, food events are favorites among college students, but in this context, lunch is actually a way for the intern to have the undivided attention of the mentor.

The same survey found that, when asked how the mentoring experience could be improved, student responses mostly had to do with having a mentor with a positive attitude about being a mentor, and having a mentor who has the time to devote to mentoring.

### • Orienting managers and mentors

Orienting your managers and mentors to the purpose and processes of the internship program begins as soon as they become aware of the program and decide to hire an intern. As you communicate information on how to select and hire the interns, you will also communicate the intent of the program and the manager's role in it. This can be done with a memo or a short hiring process guide. This document should include:

- Information about program requirements.
- Information about how to get resumes.
- An interview process outline.
- Interviewing guidelines.
- Advice on how to make offers.
- Key dates, such as hiring deadlines, orientation meeting dates, and intern start dates.
- An invitation to manager/mentor orientation sessions.

## CHAPTER 3

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- Contact information for the college relations team.

You should hold formal orientation sessions at least one month prior to the start date for your interns. This gives the managers and mentors adequate time to prepare detailed versions of job descriptions, finalize tasks, acquire necessary materials, sign interns up for training classes, and get the workspace (including phone and computer) in order.

The orientation is your opportunity to set expectations. You will be doing the same thing when the interns arrive. This ensures that everyone is in agreement from day one about the purposes and goals of the internship experience. It's also a time to develop a sense of teamwork among everyone who touches the program, to get buy-in that you are all working together to successfully bring these people into your organization. In addition, by orienting managers and mentors, you are ensuring consistency of the experience throughout your intern group.

Manager/mentor orientation can be delivered in several ways. I have found that a short, one- or two-hour, in-person session is the best: It's easy to have a question-and-answer segment, and experienced intern managers and mentors can share their experiences with first-timers. Videoconferencing works well for multiple locations. And, the in-person session can be taped and made available to those who could not attend, and the handout materials can also be sent out or made available through your intranet.

An outline of a manager/mentor orientation session appears at the end of this chapter.

A final thought about managers and mentors: Recognizing them at a luncheon for the interns, or by sending a thank-you note to the manager/mentor and his/her superior, is a good way to recognize their support of, and build their loyalty to, the internship program.

## Materials to Adapt

### Timeline for Headcount Planning & Recruitment Activities

Note: This timeline is based on a fiscal year beginning January 1 and having interns in the summer. Adjust your activities accordingly if your fiscal year is different, if you have interns throughout the year, or if you are in an industry such as high-tech or professional services in which summer interns are recruited in the fall for competitive reasons.

- **October 1:** Send a memo to all directors who have budgeting responsibility, reminding them to build intern expenses into their budgets. A similar memo should go to the hiring managers who work for the directors, asking them to remind the directors as well. Include in each memo the fiscal quarters during which interns work, and how much the average student costs per work term.
- **November 1:** Send a follow-up reminder about budgeting to the directors and hiring managers.
- **December 1:** Follow up with promising intern candidates that you met at fall career fairs, letting them know that you will begin recruiting your interns at the end of January.
- **December 15:** Send a new memo to all directors and hiring managers, giving them a deadline of January 15 to have all of their requirements (job descriptions, qualifications, approvals for each position) to you. Explain that recruiting events on campus begin at the end of January, and that you are able to do the best job of finding candidates for them if your recruiters go forth armed with the information they need to source appropriate candidates.
- **January 15:** Deadline for all requisitions for summer and fall interns. Put together a master list of open positions and include the following information for each position: the major and level desired (e.g., junior); skills required and desired; type of work to be performed; geographic location; hiring manager name; and when the internship will be performed (e.g., summer or fall).
- **February 1:** Your recruiters start the rounds of spring intern fairs, armed with the information they need to identify the best candidates (i.e., the master list mentioned above). Throughout the hiring period, you and your team should also identify candidates through other campus events, Internet and print advertising, and employee referrals.
- **February 1:** Send a packet of information to every intern hiring manager, with guidelines for hiring their interns. Include program requirements; tips on how to get resumes; interviewing guidelines and an interview process outline; tips on making offers; a list of key dates, such as hiring deadlines, orientation meeting dates, and intern start dates; an invitation to manager/mentor orientation sessions; and contact information for the college relations team.
- **February, March, and April:** Over this time period, recruiters screen in the most appropriate candidates and make resumes available to hiring managers. Other aspects of the hiring process—e.g., who conducts the interviews, who extends the offers, and how long candidates have to decide—will be determined by your organization's size and structure, but will likely be similar to your new grad recruiting processes.  
For those candidates who accept the internship, the college relations department sends the information the intern needs—housing details, start dates, location of first-day activities, etc.—prior to the first day of the internship.
- **April 1:** Managers and mentors attend orientation sessions to help them prepare for a successful summer with their interns.
- **May and June:** Interns start on common dates and attend orientation sessions before beginning what promises to be a great experience with your organization.

### *Materials to Adapt*

## Acme Tech Works Internship/Scholarship Plan

Acme Tech Works, a global telecommunications company headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, will offer an internship/scholarship package. The summer internship and following academic year scholarship will be offered to an outstanding University of Kansas student majoring in computer engineering, electrical engineering, or computer science.

### **Internship:**

The student selected as the Acme Tech Works Scholar will work at Acme's Chicago, Illinois, location for the summer. The intern will work under the supervision of a technical manager within the Goliath 264 Firmware Development group. The Firmware Development group is responsible for designing, coding, testing, integrating, and troubleshooting firmware in a real-time, embedded environment for the Goliath 264 Super Duper Communication System.

Acme Tech Works will hire approximately 130 summer interns to work in its Chicago location. Interns work a 40-hour week, with at least 10 weeks of work required during the period from mid-May to the end of August. Interns have a supervisor and a mentor, are required to attend planned activities, and must submit mid-summer and end-of-summer reports. In addition, interns participate in the Intern Expo at the end of the summer.

Interns whose permanent address is more than 60 miles from Chicago are provided with housing for the summer. Those within commuting distance (at least 20 miles, but less than 60 miles away) are given a travel stipend. Acme sponsors a recognition banquet at the end of the summer. Our interns work hard and have a great time!

### **Eligibility:**

To be considered for an Acme Tech Works Internship/Scholarship package, students must meet the following criteria:

#### **Required Qualifications:**

**Degree program:** BS or MS CompE, EE, or CS

**Cumulative GPA:** 3.5 or higher

**Current status:** Junior or above

**Area of study:** Software Engineering, Computer Engineering, Telecommunications

**Course work:** Software/Hardware

#### **Other:**

- Must have the right to work permanently in the United States
- Good verbal and written communications skills
- Team-oriented
- Good problem-solving skills
- Highly self-motivated
- Willing to take initiative and work with minimal supervision

#### **Desired Qualifications:**

**Cumulative GPA:** 3.8 or higher preferred

**Course work:** Software Engineering, Telecommunications, Microprocessor, and/or Operating Systems

**Experience:** "C" Programming, Debugging/Problem Solving, Team Projects

**Outside Activities:** Active involvement in one or more activities, such as student professional organizations, or campus social or academic groups.

## *Materials to Adapt*

### **Acme Tech Works Internship/Scholarship Plan (cont.)**

#### **Selection Criteria:**

Scholarship candidates will be evaluated on the basis of the above stated criteria and other factors, including their interest in the telecommunications field. Financial need is NOT a consideration in the selection decision.

#### **Selection Procedure:**

**To apply**, students should mail, fax, or e-mail a resume and cover letter no later than February 2, 20XX, to:

Acme Tech Works, Inc.  
College Relations  
Attn: Ms. Kellie Johnson  
264 Acme Place  
Chicago, IL 60601  
kjohnson@acmetechworks.com  
FAX: 312/555-1212

**(Please indicate in your cover letter that you are applying for the University of Kansas Scholar position.) Students will be selected and interviewed on campus on February 7 or 21.**

This scholarship is a one-time award. Assuming satisfactory performance, interns may be eligible to return to work at Acme Tech Works during summers until graduation.

#### **Financial Award:**

The scholarship amount is \$2,500. Awarding of the scholarship is contingent upon the completion of the internship during the summer of 20XX, with a favorable rating by the intern's supervisor. The scholarship will be awarded at the beginning of the 20XX-20XX academic year, following the procedures established by the University of Kansas for these types of awards.

Intern salaries at Acme Tech Works vary according to the intern's year in school. (Hourly rates for the 20XX summer are yet to be determined.) There are no benefits associated with intern employment, other than the accrual of time toward vacation if hired full-time after graduation. Housing is provided to interns whose permanent address is more than 60 miles from Chicago. A travel stipend is paid to those whose permanent address is within commuting (20 to 60 miles) distance.

#### **More Information About Acme Tech Works:**

For additional information, please visit our website at [www.acmetechworks.com/careers/](http://www.acmetechworks.com/careers/).

Acme Tech Works is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### *Materials to Adapt*

## **Intern Manager and Mentor Orientation Meeting Agenda**

Welcome and introductions

Why we have interns

Profile of this year's intern group (schools, demographics, returning vs. new, where they are working, etc.)

Preparing for your intern:

- Work station
- Position description/objectives
- Training
- Mentoring program

First-day checklist

Tips on mentoring interns

Interns' expectations

What we expect of them

The intern schedule of activities

The intern handbook

Mid-summer and end-of-summer evaluations (format and due dates)

Mid-summer and final reports (outline and due dates)

The Projects Expo (purpose of event and manager's role)

Exit interviews

*Materials to Adapt***Preparing for Your Intern: Checklist for Managers/Mentors****PRE-ARRIVAL**

- Offer letter
- Relocation information
- Housing information
- Transportation information
- Instructions for arrival first day
- Welcome sign and first-day gift
- Personal computer/work station/e-mail with relevant software (schedule necessary training)
- Telephone with extension assigned
- Office furniture/office supplies
- Safety equipment
- ID card (done at orientation)
- Position description/objectives
- Select mentor

**UPON ARRIVAL****Introduction**

- Be available to greet student and welcome him/her to the department
- Introduce co-workers and mentor
- Review your group's organization and function
- Review position description and objectives
- Review emergency and safety procedures

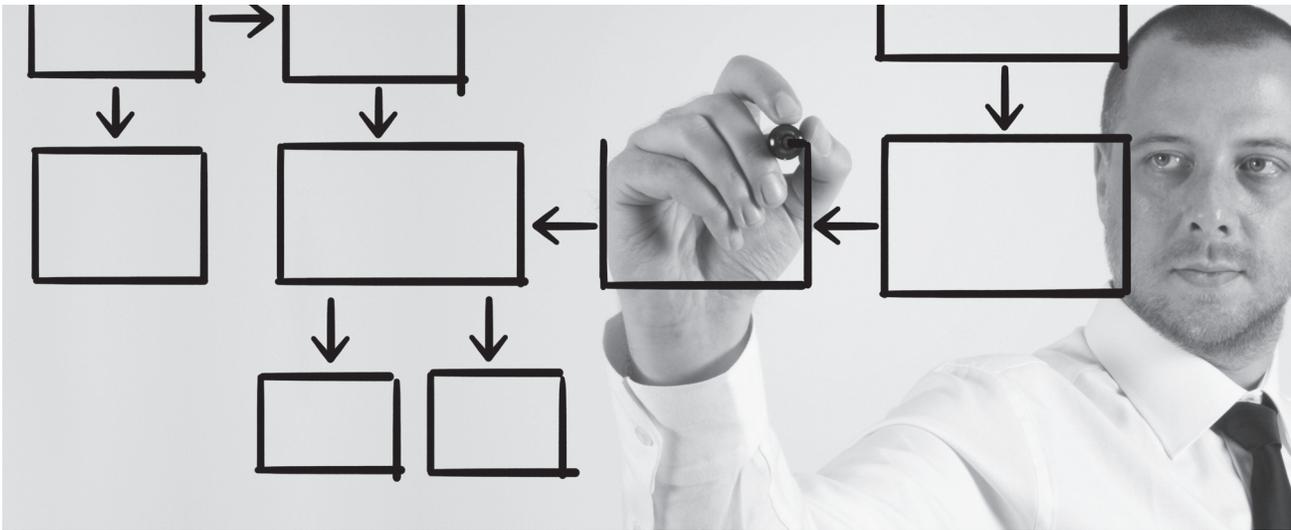
**Review Policies**

- Normal work hours
- Overtime
- Leaving work for appointments
- Holidays and other time off
- Record keeping
- Pay periods
- Dress code
- Supplies and other resources

**Facility Tour**

- Cafeteria
- Library
- First aid area
- Other areas of operation relevant to assignment

= Completed at HR on or before first day.



# THE STRUCTURED PROGRAM

In this chapter, we will discuss those aspects that are the “bones” of your internship program: its infrastructure. The organization and consistency of these “bones” will reflect positively on your program, in the eyes of both your interns and your internal customers.

Your infrastructure will include:

- Job descriptions
- Compensation and benefits plan
- Intern orientation sessions
- Intern handbooks and websites
- Intern activities for fun and professional development
- Evaluation
- Visibility

## Job Descriptions

Do you know what your interns are doing? If you do, you will be able to ensure that they are getting the career-related experience they seek, and that they are doing jobs that test their ability to do professional-level work in your organization. In an informal survey of 20 employers in a variety of industries, “reviewing job descriptions” was the way most-often cited to ensure productive, meaningful projects for students.

Review job descriptions early—after the position is approved and before it is filled. As college relations manager, you should do a quick review of approved openings and ask managers to redo any proposed project outlines that do not

appear to be on a paraprofessional level or that will not fill an entire work term. (Underestimating the level of work that an intern can do, and the speed at which he or she can do it, is common among newer intern managers. You may need to provide guidance in this area.)

The next-best way to ensure productive, meaningful projects, according to responses to my informal survey, is to have contact with your interns, either in groups or one-on-one, throughout their work term. Ask them what they’re doing and if they are busy enough. If the answer is no, then you will want to first coach the intern on speaking to the manager about this (a good learning experience) and follow up later with the intern and/or the manager. Don’t be hesitant about getting involved in this. Remember that your interns are carrying the story of their experience back to campus, and you have a high stake in that story being a positive one.

## Compensation and Benefits

As mentioned earlier, I recommend that you pay your interns, unless you are in a field in which no employer pays them. If you choose not to pay them, you will want to check the U.S. Department of Labor’s guidelines and requirements regarding non-paid students and consult with your organization’s legal counsel. (See Chapter 8, “Legal Aspects of Internship Programs.”)

Consistency in the application of pay scales is of the utmost importance when paying interns. Pay rates are

a common topic of conversation among your student employees (and the more you tell them not to discuss salaries, the more they will!). As long as pay scales are consistently applied you should not have any real problems, although you can certainly expect those questions about why Sara makes more than Justin. Pay for interns is usually on a set scale—it is not typically negotiated.

Most employers vary pay rates according to the functional areas to which the interns are assigned. As a rule of thumb, students working in technical fields make more than students in nontechnical fields. Pay also varies according to the amount of schooling that has been completed. Many employers determine intern pay rates by using a scale similar to this one:

Level in School	Pay Rate
Freshman	60% of new graduate rate
Sophomore	67% of new graduate rate
Junior	75% of new graduate rate
Senior	80% of new graduate rate
Graduate student	75% of new graduate rate
Graduate student (top M.B.A. school)	80-90% of new graduate rate

(Personally, I prefer to use the anticipated date of graduation rather than the level in school for undergraduates. The level in school is important to the school, but to the employer, the date of availability for regular, full-time work is what really matters. Using the anticipated graduation date defines the student in workplace terms rather than academic terms.)

When determining pay rates for students, you will want to check salary surveys, such as those published by NACE and others. Your target schools' career centers will also be able to provide guidance on intern salaries commanded by their students. In addition, your compensation department may use industry-specific surveys in determining pay rates. Due to the nature of their positions, interns will *always* be non-exempt employees. Other compensation guidelines can be provided by your compensation staff.

Comprehensive benefits are not generally provided to interns. There are a few larger companies that grant full benefits, but these are the rare—albeit highly visible—exceptions. Instead, most offer some type of limited benefits.

Those most often cited by employers responding to a NACE survey include:

- Paid holidays
- Planned social activities
- Time worked as an intern accrues toward benefits if hired after graduation
- Relocation assistance

Less-common offerings, according to responses to NACE's survey, include:

- Medical benefits
- Dental benefits
- Tuition reimbursement
- Scholarships
- Vacation time

## Intern Orientation Sessions

Like the manager/mentor orientation session, an intern orientation session serves to set expectations from the first day. For students, it also serves as an information delivery vehicle and a bonding experience. If you have hired a graduate student intern to manage your program (see Chapter 9, "Best Practices"), this is a great time to have the interns meet that person and begin to identify with him or her as their leader for the term.

Intern orientation should be held on the students' first day of work, and should not be an optional event. An orientation will get the interns off to a good start and help avoid misunderstandings during the work term. (**Tip:** It is best to have as many interns start on the same day as possible. Not only does this mean that fewer sessions are necessary, but the students will have more fun in a large group. If you have a very small group of interns, or you have them scattered at many locations, you will want to adjust your plans accordingly while ensuring that everyone gets some kind of orientation.)

A comprehensive orientation can be accomplished in about two hours, depending upon the size of the group. (**Tip:** When planning activities for students, remember that they are used to sitting in class for no more than an hour or two at a time, so that is about how long you will be able to keep their attention.) Start by getting paperwork out of the way (employment forms, ID badges, and the like). This process can require some students to wait around while others finish up the necessary forms, so be sure to serve food and have your college relations staff mingle with students so that the wait doesn't become tedious.

## CHAPTER 4

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Once the mandatory tasks are done, start with an icebreaker exercise to get the group together and engaged. One of my favorites is to have the students pair up with someone they don't already know and spend five minutes in conversation. Then each student introduces his or her partner to the group, telling the partner's name, school, major, hometown and "something interesting" about that person.

The next segment of the session will be an overview of the program, including the schedule of activities; information on housing, benefits, and the miscellany of the workplace; and finally, a discussion of the expectations that you have of the students and what they can expect of their experience with you. You may want to hand out an orientation package that includes a pen, handouts of the activity schedule and other information, your intern and/or employee handbook, and a directory of all the interns. A welcome gift such as a mug or T-shirt can be included as well.

One clever college relations manager gives every intern a disposable camera so that they can take keepsake photos throughout their internship.

### Communicating Your Expectations

While you don't want to come across as heavy-handed with your interns, it's important to remember that these are, for the most part, young people new to the workplace, and that you have to be very clear about your expectations of their behavior. They don't have the experience to "know better" that experienced professionals have. Below are some examples of expectations that you might outline to the group. You'll want to communicate these very clearly and couch your presentation of them in the fact that your greatest goal is that they have a successful work term with you.

You can tell your interns that they are expected to:

- Exhibit good work habits. (Give examples—getting to work on time, keeping the work area organized and neat, following through on assignments, etc.)
- Be on time for all activities.
- Communicate with the college relations staff, manager, and mentor.
- Pay attention to announcements from the college relations staff.
- Turn in mid-term and final reports on time.
- Participate in planned activities.
- Understand legal matters (e.g., confidentiality and patent agreements that they may have signed; use of e-mail and other technology belonging to your organization).

You will also want to tell them that you recognize that they,

too, have expectations. You can tell interns that they can expect from you:

- A challenging work assignment.
- Enough work to stay busy.
- Feedback on their performance throughout the work term.
- Opportunities to learn and network.
- An organized, well-managed program of work and activities.

If you have at least a dozen participants, a good way to end the orientation session is to have some sort of fun, team-building activity. (My favorite is to put students in teams of six, give them a large box of Legos, and tell them they have 20 minutes to "build something." They can use the Legos and anything else in the room. The results are often hilarious—not only the projects but also each team's presentation of their project to the group as a whole. Prizes are awarded to the team judged "most creative" by the college relations staff.)

Finally, managers or mentors should pick up their interns at the orientation session room, or if the interns work in scattered facilities, they should be escorted or sent to a place where they can be picked up by their manager or mentor. (**Tip:** If you have receptionists or guards at each facility, they should be given a list of new interns that includes the manager's name and phone number.)

At the end of this chapter, you'll find a sample agenda and topics for an intern orientation session.

### Handbooks and Websites

Even though they attend an orientation session, interns will have questions throughout the work term. Many of them fall into the category of "frequently asked questions"—questions you will hear over and over.

An intern handbook is a good way to provide your students with answers to their questions, as well as providing them with a guidebook to your organization's structure and culture. (See the sample Table of Contents for the handbook at the end of this chapter.)

Your handbook can be hard copy or online. It can be on your company intranet, or you may even put it on your external website so that students who have accepted offers with you but have not yet started can access the information (via password).

Another communication and information vehicle that is gaining popularity is the website dedicated exclusively to interns. To avoid problems with misinformation, the site should be managed by the college relations staff (as opposed to being set up and run by interns).

## Intern Activities for Fun and Professional Development

Let's revisit for a moment the top three things that interns want from their work experience: 1) an opportunity to use their skills; 2) an opportunity for personal development; and 3) an enjoyable experience.

The experience that the student has in the assigned department should address all three of these areas. The project should make use of and develop the student's skills. The student will achieve professional development from participating in department teams and meetings, and observing role models. The department should also include the student in departmental recreational activities.

In addition to the experience provided by the department, the college relations team can also provide opportunities for fun and for professional development. An excellent way to do that is to provide a schedule of activities for the students that incorporates both social and informational/learning events. These events serve to further orient the students to your organization's culture, and to build the bond with your organization and among the students. A schedule of activities should consist of one-third social events and two-thirds professional development events.

Let me also note that social and professional events for your interns can greatly benefit you and your staff by providing you with opportunities to interact with students and to keep your finger on the pulse of what students are thinking. As the college relations manager, you may not get out to campus as often as you'd like, or your time there may be spent with faculty and staff. Intern social and professional events give you and your staff the chance to mingle with the students and have those informal discussions with them that will keep you in touch with their values, attitudes, and preferences.

### Social Activities

Social events should occur early in the work term, after most of the students have started work, but before any cliques have developed. This gives the students a chance to meet the others and begin forming those very important social bonds that constitute for them "an enjoyable experience." I suggest that these initial social events be alcohol-free and provide some activities for interaction. For example, a lunchtime picnic on company grounds is a good choice and always popular with interns. It can include volleyball and Frisbee, and the food can be served by college relations recruiting staff (ask for volunteers). Or, you might opt for a happy hour at a local sports bar that

has billiards, darts, or other group activities. Even if you have your event at a bar, you can keep it alcohol-free with soft drinks and, of course, plenty of pizza. These events serve to get the students acquainted at the beginning of the term. They will take it from there.

### Professional Development Activities

There are many possibilities for professional development activities. Here are a few suggestions:

#### Senior executive presentation

Students are always very impressed when a senior executive addresses the group, and a photo taken after the presentation of the group with the executive makes a nice gift for the students.

#### Training classes

Training classes such as those that address a product overview, presentation skills, or time management serve to showcase how your organization values skills development.

#### Career seminars/career-related classes

Career seminars and resume critiques are well-received and communicate to the students that you have an interest in their career decision-making challenges.

#### Plant tours

If you have a manufacturing facility, group tours are always popular and are a good way to show students in non-manufacturing areas where the efforts of many all come together.

#### Volunteer activities

If your organization promotes volunteerism and community service, you may want to offer your interns and co-ops the opportunity to get involved in those endeavors.

A sample schedule of professional and social activities appears at the end of this chapter.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential component in your program. On one side, evaluation will help you improve and enhance your program by turning a spotlight on what works and what doesn't. Evaluation is also the component you will rely on to determine which interns to consider for regular, full-time employment.

You should include the following in your evaluation process:

- Intern feedback.
- Intern reports and presentations.
- Exit interviews.
- Manager evaluations.

### Intern Feedback

Interns provide you with a wonderful opportunity to get feedback and input on almost every aspect of your college relations program. You have a “captive” group that is representative of your target groups for both interns and new grad hires.

#### Surveys

Obviously, you will want to elicit feedback from your interns on your internship program—who better to ask? A hiring process survey done about two weeks into the work term (see the sample survey at the end of this chapter) is a good way to find out if your recruiting processes are perceived as efficient and welcoming. At the end of the work term, you may want to do an exit survey (see the sample exit survey at the end of this chapter) to get feedback on all aspects of your internship program. These surveys can yield a great deal of useful information about how your processes and activities are perceived, and if they are accomplishing what you designed them to do. However, asking for feedback through surveys can be a double-edged sword. Be careful that you don't set up your interns as constant critics by over-emphasizing their role in giving feedback.

#### Focus groups

Another great way to get student input is through focus groups. I used focus groups for a number of years to get student input on advertising campaigns, career fair booths and giveaways, website features, and campus image. Focus groups have an advantage over surveys in that you can have a dialogue and ask questions about comments that are made. A focus group should consist of eight to 12 people, selected to represent your target candidate profile. Have your focus group meet two or three times during the work term. Each meeting should be about an hour long and include refreshments. Meetings over lunchtime or near the end of the day are usually well-attended. In my experience, mornings are not good times to ask students to participate—they are much more talkative later in the day!

One or two senior members of your college relations staff should conduct the focus group, with another staff member present to take notes. That should be it—the presence of too many staff members will stifle the conversation. (Another alternative is to ask a representative from your advertising agency to conduct the focus groups for you. Agency staff are often experienced at this and may elicit input as an outsider that you as an insider cannot.)

### Intern Reports and Presentations

#### Mid-term and end-of-term reports

Mid-term reports let you know if the student is having a meaningful experience and is getting the attention and feedback needed from the manager and mentor. Give students guidelines for writing their mid-term report and a deadline for turning it in. (See the sample guidelines at the end of this chapter.) Copies of the reports should also be provided to the appropriate manager and mentor. To increase the usefulness of the exercise, you may want to urge your managers to use this as a good time to have an informal mid-term performance review with the intern.

End-of-term reports can follow the same guidelines as the mid-term report and should be turned in prior to or at the exit interview, giving you the opportunity to follow up on any issues raised in the report.

End-of-term reports also serve other purposes. They can be used to pull out testimonials for use in recruiting brochures and websites. They can be shown (along with the resume and other documents) to managers who are considering hiring that student for a second internship or after graduation. They can be used to help you make decisions about which interns to bring back. And lastly, they can be used to help you pinpoint manager or mentor issues.

#### Presentations

Many organizations have their students do presentations of their projects at the end of the work term. This is a great way to showcase the interns and their work. Presentations should be brief and can be presented within departments, or opened up to anyone who wants to attend. My experience has been that most of the attendees are other interns. However, don't be surprised if a senior executive or two pops in; they are aware of your program and interested in seeing how new talent is brought into the organization. In addition, presentations can be a great way for hiring managers to assess the crop of interns, and perhaps identify candidates for future openings in their areas.

#### Projects Expo

Like presentations, the Intern Projects Expo gives hiring managers a chance to assess potential recruits, but it is also a good way to display the breadth and depth of your internship program to your internal constituencies. I used expos effectively when the number of interns was too great to do individual presentations.

An expo is set up similarly to a campus job fair. Use your cafeteria or any open space that has room for people to circulate. Each intern has a “booth” and makes a display that represents their project. The expo is open to everyone and publicized through posters, the intranet, and broadcast voice mails. Employees are able to come when they have a break in their schedules and browse through at their own pace. Having all interns display their projects at once is also impressive to those who think the program is “just a college kid or two doing clerical work.” If you conduct an expo, take plenty of photos to put on the “interns” section of your website and in your employee newsletter.

### Exit Interviews

Exit interviews serve many of the same purposes as the student reports, but they focus more on the internship program than on the student’s experience in the assigned department. Exit interviews should be conducted a few days before each student’s departure by a member of the college relations staff. Students who are at remote locations can be interviewed by telephone. Prior to the exit interview, students should fill out and submit an exit interview form (see the sample form at the end of this chapter), which can then be used as talking points during the interview.

### Manager Evaluations

Manager evaluations are an important part of evaluating interns for further employment. Your managers should be told at orientation that they will be required to complete a written evaluation form and an in-person review with their interns prior to the interns leaving. Remind the managers later in the term, and give them a deadline for completing their evaluations, e.g., the intern’s last day of work. (See the sample evaluation form at the end of this chapter.)

One of your big challenges will be to convince your managers to take the evaluation as seriously as they would that of any of their employees. You will be using this evaluation to help make decisions about whether to bring students back, either for another internship or as regular, full-time employees. Managers are often reluctant to be critical

and to take the time and effort to give this feedback to the student, because (as we’ve heard during the hiring process) “It’s just an intern.”

## Visibility

Once you have your program up and running for the term, you will want to give it some visibility within your organization. Intern presentations and an Intern Projects Expo can help showcase your program, but also be sure to use more overt tools to publicize your program, including your organization’s newsletter and intranet, where you can trumpet news about your program and its successes.

Articles you might publish in the newsletter and intranet could include a general article about how many interns you have, where they are from, and what they are doing; profiles of each of your scholarship recipients; and highlights of your Intern Projects Expo, including photos and testimonials from attendees. At the appropriate time of year, you may want to publish an item about how many of the last crop of interns were hired as regular, full-time employees.

To publicize your program locally and on campus, contact your organization’s PR department and ask for help in publicizing your program through press releases or by making appropriate media contacts. If that’s not possible, you can do your own “PR” work. You can “pitch” story ideas to local or campus papers by calling up a reporter or editor, or you can prepare press releases that target specific local newspapers or campus papers. General promotional “pitches” and press releases aren’t likely to get you much play. Instead, focus your “pitch” or press release on news or a human interest angle. (For example, a campus newspaper will be interested in how your internship program affects its readers—students of that college. You might try something like, “Last year, XYZ Company hired 94 new college graduates—22 of them were from ABC College. All 22 served an internship with XYZ at some point in their college career...” If your organization is one that encourages “good press” for its programs, this can accomplish that purpose as well as foster your on-campus image and help in your intern-recruiting process.

### *Materials to Adapt*

## Sample Intern Orientation Meeting Agenda

- Check-in and greetings; introduce staff.
- Complete paperwork; make ID badges (social time while waiting for badges); hand out goodie bags—information, handouts, and gifts.
- Introductions of interns—have them pair up, interview each other (5 minutes), and then introduce each other to the group.
- Orientation topics to cover (staff to provide):
  - Wearing your ID badge; building hours
  - Schedule of activities for the summer
  - Committees—description and sign-ups
  - Directory of Interns
  - How to get in touch with college relations staff
  - Timesheets and getting paid
  - Direct deposit of checks
  - Overtime/holidays/benefits
  - Dress code
  - Where to eat lunch
  - Corporate library
  - Taking classes this summer
  - Fitness center
  - Housing/travel stipends
  - Mentors
  - Reports and supervisor evaluations
  - End dates
  - Exit interviews and evaluations
  - Our expectations of you
  - What you can expect from us
  - The Intern Handbook
  - Fun stuff to do in the area
- Questions and answers
- Team-building exercise
- Closing; hand out logo T-shirts; send interns to reception areas to meet managers.

## *Materials to Adapt*

### **Sample Table of Contents for an Intern Handbook**

- Welcome
- About the organization (*Note: Include history and basic information such as industry position, size, organization's goals, and values.*)
- Organizational structure
- List of organization's divisions, groups, locations, product names, and services
- Organization acronyms and terms
- Intern/co-op definitions (*Note: Include this if you have both types of students and need to distinguish between them.*)
- Intern and co-op responsibilities
- Manager and mentor responsibilities
- Benefits information
- Policies (*Note: Include those policies most relevant to interns and a disclaimer that there are other policies that may affect their employment.*)
- Contact information for college relations staff
- FAQ (*Note: Include answers to such frequently asked questions as: Where do I park? Where can I eat lunch? How do I have my paycheck direct-deposited? As a resident of another state, how do I get state tax forms for filing taxes next year? How do I apply for employment here when I am graduating? How do I find out more information about this organization?*)
- Things to do in the area (*Note: Include recreational activities.*)

## CHAPTER 4

### *Materials to Adapt*

### Sample Intern Activities Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Facilitator/Speaker</b>
May 15 - May 22	Orientation	8:30 - 11 a.m.	Conference Room E	College Relations Team
May 24	Town Hall Meeting – all company employees	7:30 - 9 a.m.	Auditorium	CEO
May 25 & 28	Memorial Day Holidays	—	—	—
June 1	Manufacturing Plant tours	3 - 4:30 p.m.	Plant	Manufacturing Supervisors
June 1	Intern Social	5 - 7 p.m.	Sports Bar	Intern Social Committee
June 6	Product Overview	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Customer Training Center	Training Staff
June 8	Picnic	lunch time	Grill area outside Bldg. 1	Hosted by College Recruiting Teams
June 15	Town Hall Meeting – all company employees	7:30 - 9 a.m.	Auditorium	CEO
June 15	CEO Welcome to the Intern Group	9 - 10 a.m.	Conference Room E	College Relations Team and CEO
June 21	Product Update Seminar	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Auditorium	Manager will register his/her intern
June 27	New Hires Discuss the Company (panel and lunch)	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Conference Room F	New Grad Employees
June 29	Mid-summer Reports Due	by 5 p.m.	—	Send to College Relations Administrator
June 30	Volunteer Day – city park cleanup	8 a.m. - Noon	Memorial Park	Intern Social Committee
July 4	Independence Day Holiday	—	—	—
July 11	Benefits/Stock Options Seminar	9 - 11 a.m.	Conference Room F	Benefits and Finance Staffs
July 18	Workshop – Managing Your Career	8:30 a.m. - Noon	Training Room B	Career Development Staff
July 25	Projects Expo	2 - 5 p.m.	Cafeteria	All Interns
July 27	Town Hall Meeting – all company employees	7:30 - 9 a.m.	Auditorium	CEO
July 27	Cubs vs. Cardinals Game	1 p.m. - ?	Wrigley Field	Hosted by College Recruiting Teams
August 1	Recognition Luncheon	11 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Country Club Banquet Room	Intern Banquet Committee
August 10	Town Hall Meeting – all company employees	7:30 - 9 a.m.	Auditorium	CEO
By last work day	Final reports due	by 5 p.m.	—	Send to College Relations Administrator

## Materials to Adapt

### Sample Intern Hiring Process Survey

Please take a few minutes to voice your opinions about our employment process and intern program. Please return to [College Relations staff member] by [date]. Everyone who returns their survey will receive a prize! Thanks for your help!

How did you hear about us?

\_\_\_\_ Campus Career Center

\_\_\_\_ Friend

\_\_\_\_ Job Fair

\_\_\_\_ Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Did you do any research on our company (or other companies) prior to your interviews?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what resources did you use? \_\_\_\_\_

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

What was your initial contact with us?

\_\_\_\_ E-mail

\_\_\_\_ Phone

\_\_\_\_ Face-to-face interview

\_\_\_\_ Intern/job fair

\_\_\_\_ Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Was any follow up done after your initial contact?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what was done? \_\_\_\_\_

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

When was our hiring process explained to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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

How much time lapsed between your interview and your offer? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Was the job explained adequately to you when you had your interview and/or your offer?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If no, what should be changed? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Was the intern program in general explained adequately to you?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If no, what should be changed? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Did you attend one of our information sessions?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what did you like/dislike about it? \_\_\_\_\_

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

How could it be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Did you attend information sessions for other companies?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what did you like/dislike about them? \_\_\_\_\_

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

What did you like about our recruiting process (information sessions, interviews, contacts with us, etc.)?

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

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

*Materials to Adapt*

**Sample Intern Hiring Process Survey (cont.)**

What did you dislike about our recruiting process? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you interview with other companies? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
If yes, which companies? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you have other offers? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
If yes, what made you choose this one? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like about the recruiting process of other companies? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did you dislike about the recruiting process of other companies? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any contact with your mentor?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
If yes, what has the contact been? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What should be the responsibilities of an intern mentor?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you expect to gain from the mentoring relationship?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that you are being adequately supervised?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
If no, how do you feel your supervision could be improved?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you finding yourself busy? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Are you finding your work to be challenging?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Are you finding your project work to be related to your major?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If you are not satisfied with your work assignment, what ideas for improvement do you suggest?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how could we improve our summer hiring process and intern program? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NAME (optional\*) \_\_\_\_\_

*\*If you do not want to put your name on the survey, but still want to receive the prize, please e-mail [College Relations staff member]. Let [staff member] know that you participated in the survey and [he/she] will send you a prize.*

## *Materials to Adapt*

### **Intern Reports: Sample Guidelines**

#### **Sample Guidelines for Mid-Term Reports**

1. Reports should be no more than one typed page in length.
2. Reports are due to the college relations administrator by the mid-point of your work term, [give date].
3. Please give both your manager and your mentor a copy of your report.
4. Include the following items in your report:
  - Your name and the name of your direct manager and your mentor.
  - The name of the department in which you are working.
  - A brief description of what you have been doing so far in your internship.
  - The two or three things you would most like to gain from your experience here.
  - A brief discussion of how your work term has/has not been what you expected up to this point.
  - Anything else you would like to comment on or make observations about, e.g., what you're learning about the corporate world, how this internship compares to others you've had, and the like.

Have fun!

#### **Sample Guidelines for Final Reports**

1. Reports should be no more than one typed page in length.
2. Reports are due to the college relations administrator by your last day of work, [give date].
3. Please give your manager and your mentor each a copy of your report.
4. Include the following items in your report:
  - Your name and the name of your direct manager and your mentor.
  - The name of the department in which you are working.
  - A brief description of what you did in your internship.
  - A brief discussion of what you believe you have gained through your experience here.
  - A brief discussion of how your work term has/has not been what you expected.
  - Anything else you would like to comment on or make observations about, e.g., what you have learned about the corporate world, how this internship compared to others you have had, and the like.

Have fun!

*Materials to Adapt*

**Sample Intern Exit Survey**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

How did you get your summer internship (e.g., campus interview, mailed resume in, employee referral)? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you feel you had adequate supervision and mentoring? \_\_\_\_\_

Please comment on the quality of your interviews with our representatives: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate your job performance this summer? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose us over other employers? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you understand what was expected of you as an intern, in terms of reports, attendance at luncheons, etc.? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If we provided your housing, how did things go? \_\_\_\_\_

Any suggestions for improvements to the orientation, luncheon speakers program, or intern activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that your compensation package (pay + housing or travel allowance) was adequate? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider us for another summer internship or for full-time employment when you graduate? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If not, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you kept busy on your job? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

How would you rate this organization as a place to work? \_\_\_\_\_

Were your assignments clear to you and related to your school major? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No If not, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Where would you like your last paycheck sent? \_\_\_Home \_\_\_School

I understand that I must turn in my ID badge before I leave.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Materials to Adapt

### Sample Form: Manager's Evaluation of Intern

Intern Name \_\_\_\_\_ Department Name \_\_\_\_\_

Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

Use the key below to rate your intern on Work Performance Areas and Developmental Areas.

**5 = Outstanding.** Performance is without question superior, and all standards and objectives have been clearly exceeded. Interns whose performance puts them in the Outstanding category serve as examples to their peers. Initiative and leadership are clearly exhibited.

**4 = Exceeds Expectations.** Performance is clearly and indisputably above average, with all standards and objectives having been met and a substantial number of the objectives having been exceeded.

**3 = Meets Expectations.** Performance is totally acceptable, with standards and objectives for the internship having been met. Represents the performance level expected from most of our interns.

**2 = Needs Improvement.** Performance is below the standards expected. Below average performance that lacks appropriate professional and personal attitudes and/or technical skills. Exhibits deficiencies that could prevent advancement unless corrected.

**1 = Does Not Meet Expectations.** Performance fails to meet minimum standards, and the intern should not be asked back.

Work Performance Areas (Give number rating and comment)	Rating
<b>Instructions:</b> Follows instructions appropriately. Performs tasks with little or no supervision. Comments:	
<b>Quality:</b> Completes tasks accurately and thoroughly. Work reflects neatness, attention to detail, and conformance to company standards. Comments:	
<b>Quantity:</b> Completes an expected volume of assigned or related activities. Comments:	
<b>Planning:</b> Sets realistic goals. Organizes and prioritizes assigned tasks. Is able to manage multiple assignments. Comments:	
<b>Communications:</b> Expresses verbal and written ideas effectively. Demonstrates an understanding of departmental jargon. Comments:	
<b>Teamwork:</b> Interacts with others effectively. Comments:	
<b>Attendance:</b> Is punctual and regular in attending work, meetings, and appointments. Comments:	
<b>Technical Skills:</b> Has technical skills appropriate to level in school and job requirements. Comments:	

*Materials to Adapt*

**Sample Form: Manager’s Evaluation of Intern** (cont.)

<b>Developmental Areas (Give number rating and comment)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Presence:</b> Exhibits self-confidence, poise, tact, and maturity. Projects a professional appearance. Comments:	
<b>Versatility:</b> Is flexible in effectively dealing with new or unusual situations. Comments:	
<b>Initiative:</b> Is a self-starter. Recognizes tasks within his/her realm of authority and assumes responsibility. Comments:	
<b>Judgment:</b> Perceives and distinguishes relationships and/or alternatives. Makes sound decisions. Comments:	
<b>Competence:</b> Demonstrates knowledge and applies skills appropriate for carrying out tasks and solving problems. Comments:	
<b>Attitude:</b> Displays a willingness to learn. Accepts suggestions and guidance in a positive, enthusiastic manner. Comments:	
<b>Dependability:</b> Is reliable and follows through in an appropriate and professional manner. Comments:	

Has your intern satisfactorily completed work objectives that were outlined at the beginning of the summer/term?  
 Yes  No Comments:

Indicate the intern’s overall performance level:  
 Outstanding  Exceeds Expectations  Meets Expectations  Needs Improvement  Does Not Meet Expectations  
 Comments:

Would you recommend this person for another internship/co-op term or for full-time employment after graduation?  
 Yes  No Comments:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# KEY ELEMENTS OF THE INTERN-TO-FULL-TIME CONVERSION PROCESS

When you ask college relations program managers what their best practices are, one of the most-often mentioned is converting interns to regular, full-time employees. As detailed in Chapter 1, your program should have a minimum conversion rate of 50 percent—that is, you should convert 50 percent of your interns to regular, full-time employees.

In this section, we will cover the mechanics of conversion. We'll discuss:

- Making matches.
- Timing of offers.
- After-offer follow up.
- Challenges in the conversion process.

## Making Matches

The manager who has supervised and developed the intern for one or more sessions should, out of professional courtesy, be given the first option on whether to make a full-time offer to her graduating intern.

However, there are cases in which this doesn't work. For example, the manager may not have any appropriate

openings; or the intern may have decided that he wants a different type of work, a different manager, or a different location. Whatever the case, these determinations should be made during the last work term before the student graduates, along with the determination of whether the student is an overall match for your organization. Allow the intern to “look around” by doing informational interviews with managers in other departments. This helps the intern and you to be sure that the best possible match is being made: Students like to explore their options, and this gives them the chance to confirm in their own minds that their current situation is a good fit. For interns who aren't sold on their manager or work area, it provides an opportunity to see if they might fit in better elsewhere in the organization.

If you determine that the student is not a match for your organization in any capacity, it is best for a member of the college relations staff to tell the student that at the end of the last work term. That way, you are relieved of the awkwardness of the student expecting an offer from you, and the student is free to pursue other opportunities. This is a tough meeting to have, but you will feel better about it, and you'll get points from students for being honest with them about their status.

### Timing of Offers

Whenever possible, it is advantageous to make offers before the end of the student's final work term. This sends the student back to campus on a high note, with another positive thing to say about the experience with you. Other plusses: You also have a tangible link to a candidate you want, and knowing how many offers you already have on the table will help in your recruitment planning for the next semester or two.

Of course, the drawback to making early offers is that the student can use your offer to "shop around" for others. But, when competition is tough for good students (and that happens in both good and bad economic climates) the "splash value" of the early offer works to your advantage.

Making offers at the end of the work term may not be practical, due to when openings occur, or because of business uncertainties or the timing of students' graduation dates. If that is the case, your best strategy is to keep in close contact with the students and make the offers as soon as you are able, taking into account the progress of their job searches.

### After-Offer Follow Up

Speaking of following up with students after their work term, this is most important when there is an offer on the table. The student who is graduating and has an offer from you is likely to still conduct a job search and attempt to garner other offers. And, in the long run, it's better for everyone if he does. If a student accepts your offer without looking at any other employers, it is likely that he will always wonder what other jobs he may have had, and may be tempted to leave your organization sooner. The student who has looked around at other employers and chooses your offer over others is more likely to feel that a good match was made and be satisfied with it. This sounds a lot like dating!

So, realize that your candidates are going to look around, even when they have an offer from you. Note that you

don't need to ignore this competition: In between the time that you make the offer and the candidate declines or accepts, you have a great opportunity to continue to build the bond between the candidate and your organization and influence his decision in your favor. Without overdoing it, you should keep in contact with your candidate. This can be done by the college recruiter, by the hiring manager who made the offer, or by an alumnus from the candidate's school that is on the recruiting team for that campus. Types of contact that are helpful are phone calls, e-mails, "care packages" during finals, taking the student out for a meal when on campus, or asking the student to help out at your career fair booth or campus information session. Whichever of these activities you choose will help. Your goal is just to keep in touch and let the student know how much you would like him to join your team.

### Challenges in the Conversion Process

The challenges that you will face in the conversion process are few, but can be sensitive.

First, as mentioned earlier, managers are sometimes reluctant to provide you with a "no-holds barred" evaluation of their interns. This can make it difficult for your recruiters to know whether or not to try to find offers for all interns.

Second, if you make an offer in August, will the salary hold up until May? It may not, and you have a couple of choices here. You can make the salary offer in August and change it (upward) if need be later. Or, you can make the offer in August without a salary, and add the salary when you get your new salary ranges for the next year.

Third, students sometimes use early offers as leverage to get higher salary offers from other employers. They may then come back to you to negotiate your offer.

Take these challenges into account, and you'll be better able to handle them should they arise.



# EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE

The emphasis placed on measurement varies from one organization to another and even from one division to another within organizations. Your first task as the champion and manager of your internship program is to determine the “hot buttons” in your organization when it comes to measuring success. One organization may value beating the competition, while another values beating its own previous-year results. One organization may value diversity goals while another looks more closely at retention. Whatever is most important to your organization should be your most carefully measured result. However, many organizations leave it to the program manager to determine the measures of success (ah, empowerment!). In this chapter, we will address several aspects of internship programs that can be measured, and methods for doing so. For the recruitment-oriented program, your highest priority will be tracking your “conversion” rate, i.e., how many of your graduating interns become regular, full-time employees. Even so, you will want to measure other aspects of your program. Doing so will enable you to pinpoint problems and make improvements that may save time or money, enhance quality of hires, and push your conversion rate higher. How many different measures you keep, and how fine you slice them, will depend upon the resources you have available to devote to the tracking and record-keeping required.

## Metrics

Here are suggested metrics for your internship program:

- **Conversion rate**

As mentioned in the first chapter, a conversion-oriented program should convert at least 50 percent of your graduating interns to regular, full-time employees.

Base your calculations on the number of interns who graduate and begin employment within a set amount of time, e.g. within nine months after their graduation date. Some employers divide their program participants into “recruited” and “non-recruited” groups, and only calculate the conversion numbers on the recruited group, e.g., a high-tech company that has technical and non-technical interns may only intend to recruit the technical grads after graduation, and therefore calculates conversion numbers only for that group. In this case, your conversion numbers will be higher, but so will your cost-per-hire since you incur costs for all interns. (Note: A conversion worksheet is provided at the end of this chapter.)

- **Retention rate**

This is a measure of how long your former interns stay with your organization after being hired full time. Compare this to the retention rate of new grad hires that are not

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your former interns, and to overall retention rates for that category of employee, e.g., all accounting professionals.

Theoretically, your former interns should stay with the organization longer since they went through a lengthier and more rigorous selection process.

### • Performance

There are two different aspects of performance that can be measured in your internship program: 1) performance of former interns as regular full-time employees; and 2) performance of interns as interns.

For the first aspect, look at the performance ratings of your former interns after their first year on the job. How does that compare to the performance ratings of both non-intern new grad hires, and to employees of that category in general?

For the second aspect, look at how managers are rating the performance of interns assigned to them. If your managers are not rating your interns' performance at a high level, this will tell you that you need to reevaluate some aspect of your intern selection process.

### • Productivity level

Do your hiring managers perceive that the productivity of their departments rises as a result of the addition of interns to their departments? If interns are carefully selected and managed, the answer should be "Yes." This is a measure you'll want to gather to show one dimension of your program's value to the organization.

### • Management satisfaction

Are your managers satisfied with the internship program? Do they feel that they are getting the quality of candidates and hires that they need? Do they participate in the program year after year? Do they want to hire more new grads as a result of having interns? Do they feel that the program is well-managed? These are the questions you should be asking to gauge satisfaction of your internal customers.

### • Student feedback

Student feedback can help you pinpoint areas for improvement. Moreover, because your former interns are your most important ambassadors on campus, it's important to get feedback from them through surveys and exit interviews to ensure that they have a good story to tell. In addition, measures of student satisfaction (including testimonials) can be used to market the program on your website and in collateral materials.

### • Diversity goals

An internship program can be a very productive way to achieve new grad diversity recruiting goals. Measure the percentage of students from diverse populations in your program, and take a look at their conversion rate separately.

### • Cost-per-hire

It is important to measure your cost-per-hire for interns. These tend to be expensive programs to run, and you should track the expenses and judge whether you are getting a good value for the cost. In addition, some practitioners believe that their intern programs result in a lower overall cost-per-hire for new grads. This is debatable, but tracking expenses can tell you if it is true for your college relations program.

As we look at evaluating internship programs, it is also important to note why programs or individuals fail—and to look at this from both the student and employer perspectives.

## Student Perspectives

Below are common remarks from students who have not had a successful internship experience:

- The work is not challenging enough or isn't related to my field of study.
- There is not enough work to last the term, and my manager is slow about giving me more work or another project.
- My manager (and/or mentor) doesn't give me feedback on how I'm doing.
- My workspace (or tools) aren't adequate. (*Complaints range from no computer or phone, to being in an area that is too noisy to allow the intern to concentrate, to not having the proper tools and resources to do the work.*)
- My manager (or mentor) is too busy for me or doesn't seem interested in me.
- It is obvious that my work will not be used later; my work isn't taken seriously.

Note that these complaints generally have to do with the students wanting to make a real contribution and be taken seriously. Students are eager to learn and to prove their value. Setting up an environment in which that can happen will not only delight them, but will make your program a better recruiting tool.

## Hiring Manager Perspectives

Why do students fail in their internships, from the hiring manager's perspective? Below are the issues most commonly cited:

- Student has unrealistic expectations.
- Student lacks the quality of being able to “get things done.”
- Student is unable to manage time well.
- Student is too arrogant/too timid.
- Student is unable to adapt to the corporate culture, i.e., the student is not “picking up” on professional behavior.
- The student waits too long to ask for help or direction with work assignments.

In this case, most of these issues can be addressed by a good selection process and, once the student is on the job, effectively communicating with and mentoring the student. These issues demonstrate why it's important for the intern program champion/manager, during orientation sessions with managers, mentors, and students, to emphasize the importance of *active* supervision and mentoring.

## Reasons for Failure

Why do internship programs fail? In Chapter 2, I covered reasons why programs succeed—generally speaking, they fail for the opposite reasons.

Programs that fail:

- Lack support from top management.
- Are poorly managed or lack a team of professionals assigned to the program.
- Lack continuity from year to year.
- Have problems that are not addressed or lack continuous improvement.
- Lack evidence of results that are related to the organization's staffing strategy.

Clearly, some of the reasons for failure can't be controlled by the internship program manager. Cutbacks and management changes can stymie the efforts of even the best champion. However, knowing the hallmarks of success and the harbingers of failure can help you manage this very important recruitment program.

***NACE Worksheet***

**How to Calculate Intern/Co-op Conversion Rates**

To calculate the conversion rate for your interns/co-ops, determine the number of eligible\* interns/co-ops and the number of offers that have been accepted by eligible interns/co-ops. (\*For these purposes, an eligible intern/co-op is one who is graduating and is pursuing career opportunities. Interns/co-ops who are still in school are not considered eligible. Similarly, interns/co-ops who have decided to pursue further education are not considered eligible.)

Divide the number of acceptances by the number of eligible interns/co-ops, and multiply by 100. This gives you your conversion rate.

Example:

$20 \text{ acceptances} / 50 \text{ eligible interns} = 0.4$

$0.4 \times 100 = 40\% \text{ conversion rate}$

1. Number of eligible interns\* = \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of accepted offers = \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of accepted offers \_\_\_\_\_ / Number of eligible interns = \_\_\_\_\_

4. Multiply your answer to #3 \_\_\_\_\_ x 100 = \_\_\_\_\_ percent conversion rate



# DOCUMENTATION FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Documentation is a wonderful thing, as long as you don't have to write it yourself. However, what seems to be a thankless task and an endless chore can be a lifesaver.

This section addresses the aspects of your program that should be documented on an ongoing basis. Having this information written down will serve several purposes:

- The process of documentation helps you to clarify what you do, how you do it, and why you do it.
- The program manual is a resource for new employees on your staff.
- You will be able to pull together information and presentations very quickly (especially critical if you have to defend your program or ask for additional resources).
- In addition, when you get that big promotion and move on, your successor will appreciate the documentation you've left behind!

## What to Document

You will want to document the following for your internship program (see the end of the chapter for samples of many of these items):

- Your program's mission statement.
- Activities you need to engage in to achieve your mission.
- Who is responsible for each activity and how it will be carried out. (Management, the internship program manager and coordinator, students' managers and mentors, and the students themselves should all be assigned specific responsibilities.)
- Standards, including eligibility and application requirements; submission deadlines; length of appointments; and guidelines for quality assignments and student performance appraisals.
- Compensation structure, and benefits or perquisites available to students, e.g., relocation and housing policies.
- Employment status of interns and co-op students, e.g. temporary/nonexempt.
- Workplace requirements, including information on health and safety, dress code, working hours, background/security checks, insurance, etc.
- Plans for marketing the program to target colleges and universities.
- Summary of the program's performance that details how student workers have contributed to the organization and how frequently they have been a source for regular, full-time hires.

### *Materials to Adapt*

## Sample Documentation: Internship Program Mission Statement

### **Mission**

The internship program supports the organization's staffing strategy by providing a significant source of quality new graduate hires.

## Sample Documentation: List of Activities Needed to Achieve Mission

Here is a sample list of some of the activities you need to engage in to achieve your mission, and who is responsible:

**Activity:** Gain visibility with and support from senior management.

**Responsibility:** Senior HR management, internship program manager

**Activity:** Provide a framework for headcount planning, sourcing, recruiting, orienting, managing, and evaluating interns, and a means to communicate these processes.

**Responsibility:** Internship program manager, college relations staff

**Activity:** Provide attentive supervision and mentoring of student employees, and evaluate their appropriateness for future employment with the organization.

**Responsibility:** Intern managers and mentors, college relations staff

**Activity:** Design a program for the interns that gives them a cultural orientation to the organization, as well as opportunities for professional and personal growth.

**Responsibility:** College relations staff

**Activity:** Engage in professional conduct and job performance that are in line with the organization's standards for future employment.

**Responsibility:** Interns

**Activity:** Manage a process that ensures maximum conversion of interns to regular, full-time employees. Set conversion goals and a means to identify barriers to high conversion rates.

**Responsibility:** Internship program manager, college recruiters

## *Materials to Adapt*

### **Sample Documentation: Standards for Interns**

#### **An intern hire must:**

- Be a student in good standing at an accredited university that has been approved by the college relations department.
- Be majoring in a field appropriate to the job opening.
- Have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent.
- Be able to legally work in the United States for an indefinite period of time.
- Be able to pass the organization's drug screening and background check.

### **Sample Plan for Marketing the Internship Program**

Here is a sample plan for marketing the internship program to target colleges and universities (in Chapter 3, see “Timeline for Headcount Planning & Recruitment Activities” for suggested timing of event):

- Set up an intern section in the organization's website that details majors hired, types of work available, locations, testimonials from former interns, and how and when to apply for positions.
- Post intern position announcements on intern job sites and with target schools' career centers. Place print ads in campus newspapers and in campus-oriented career publications. Include a description of the intern program in collateral materials.
- Attend intern and general job fairs on target campuses. Conduct campus interviews with selected candidates.
- Solicit employee referrals of intern candidates.
- Publicize the intern program through campus relations activities such as speaker engagements, visits to faculty members, participation in mock interviews, and activities with student organizations.

## Legal Issues: Primary Beneficiary Test Determines If Internship Must Be Paid



In May of 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) set forth a “six-part test” to determine if an intern could actually be classified as an “unpaid intern.”

**On January 5, 2018, the DOL issued a statement essentially ending the reign of the six-part test and replacing it with the primary beneficiary test to determine if an individual can be classified as an unpaid intern.**

This test looks at who is the “primary beneficiary” of the internship—the company or the student:

- If the company is the “primary beneficiary,” then the internship must be paid.
- If the student is the “primary beneficiary,” then the internship may be unpaid.

The primary beneficiary test does not include a rigid set of requirements, but a non-exhaustive list of factors to determine who is the primary beneficiary of the internship. The factors include:

- the extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation;
- the extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by an educational institution;
- the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit;
- the extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar;
- the extent to which the internship’s duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning;
- the extent to which the intern’s work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern; and
- the extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

The DOL’s fact sheet on unpaid interns (see <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>) now states that “this test allows courts to examine the ‘economic reality’ of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the ‘primary beneficiary’ of the relationship.” The fact sheet proceeds to list the factors set forth above and indicates that “the ‘primary beneficiary test’ [is] a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the [Fair Labor Standards Act] necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case.”

The DOL fact sheet further states that the “FLSA exempts certain people who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency or who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for non-profit food banks. [The DOL] also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation, for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to nonprofit organizations. Unpaid internships for public sector and nonprofit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.”

Going forward, companies should be mindful to structure any unpaid internship so that it complies with the requirements of the primary beneficiary test.



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# LEGAL ASPECTS OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Internship programs come in many shapes and sizes, as do the legal issues associated with such programs. In light of the potential legal liability that may follow from an improperly administered internship program, you should consult with legal counsel prior to implementing policies and procedures governing the use of interns.

In general, most of the legal issues surrounding internship programs stem from one source—the nature of the relationship between employer and intern. What is the relationship? Is the intern a “trainee,” “volunteer,” or “employee”? The most common question employers have about internships—*Must I pay the intern?*—is dictated by the nature of the legal relationship between the employer and the intern. (Note: Even if you are not required by law to pay your interns, you should give serious consideration to doing so. You’ll have a better range of candidates to choose from—not just those who don’t need the money—and, image-wise, unpaid internships can reflect poorly on your organization.)

## Determining the Relationship

An organization’s legal relationship with respect to its interns will depend upon a variety of factors. In virtually all cases, an intern will be deemed either an employee or a trainee. To clarify the issue of “employment” in the area of internships, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

set forth a six-part test for interns in May 2010. Under this test, the employer is not required to pay an intern if these criteria are met:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the employer’s facilities, must be similar to training that would be given in an educational environment;
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the student;
- The intern does not displace regular employees;
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and on occasion its operations may be impeded;
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
- The employer and the intern must understand that the intern is not entitled to wages.

Overall, the employer must focus on the work performed by the intern, the training provided by the employer, and, ultimately, who receives the benefit from the internship. The true test is whether the internship is structured to benefit the intern, not the employer. The DOL’s Fact Sheet #71 offers additional insight into how to determine the relationship.

## Common Legal Questions And Issues

### • **Must we pay our interns?**

As noted above, the answer to this question is dictated by the legal relationship between the organization and the intern. If the intern is an employee of the organization, the intern must be paid in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and any applicable state law wage and hour requirements. If, on the other hand, the intern is a non-employee trainee, the organization is not legally required to pay the intern for his or her services.

While the law does not always require that interns be paid, practical considerations weigh heavily in favor of providing paid as opposed to unpaid internships, including:

- The vast majority of organizations pay their interns, so this is the “standard” and is expected by many students. Organizations that choose not to pay interns may be at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to attracting high-quality interns.
- Paid internships will expose the organization to a broader pool of intern candidates. The reality is that many students cannot afford to forgo paid work to gain the valuable experience an internship may offer. If an organization limits its pool of candidates to only those students fortunate enough to have adequate financial resources to be able to consider an unpaid internship, the organization will be severely limiting its pool.
- Pay makes it easier to place expectations on and require specific deliverables from interns.

### • **Can I classify our interns as independent contractors or volunteers?**

In light of the legal requirements necessary to establish the existence of a bona fide independent contractor or volunteer relationship, it is unlikely that either classification will be appropriate with respect to interns. Pursuant to common law principles, in order to be properly classified as an independent contractor, the intern must control not only the end result of the work, but also the manner and means by which the end result is accomplished. In the typical internship program, the employer exercises control over “the result to be accomplished and means and manner by which the result is achieved.” This is the hallmark of being an intern (i.e., the employer is teaching the intern how to do the work). As a result, with respect

to virtually all interns, it will not be possible to classify them as independent contractors. (See the end of this chapter for a list of factors used to determine whether an individual is an independent contractor or an employee.)

With respect to the volunteer classification, while the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines employment very broadly, i.e., “to suffer or permit to work,” the law does recognize that the FLSA was not intended “to stamp all persons as employees who without any express or implied compensation agreement might work for their own advantage on the premises of another” (*Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.*). As such, individuals who serve as unpaid volunteers in various community services are not considered employees for purposes of the FLSA provided they satisfy the applicable legal requirements. In this regard, the DOL takes the position that individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part-time basis, for public service, religious, or humanitarian objectives, without contemplation of pay, are not considered employees of the organizations that receive their service. Examples of non-employee volunteers include parents who assist in a school library or cafeteria, or drive a school van on a field trip.

Students may not, however, volunteer services to for-profit, private-sector employers. Accordingly, for most private-sector employers, it is not possible to classify interns as unpaid volunteers, unless the interns otherwise qualify as trainees as set forth above.

### • **Must an international student serving an unpaid internship claim the internship time period as part of his or her practical training time? Can the student serve the internship without authorization from the INS?**

Some employers have suggested that if the international student is not paid, then the internship is not practical training and the student does not have to claim the internship as part of his/her 12-month allotment of practical training time. Others suggest that if the training is unpaid, students do not have to seek authorization from the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS).

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to these questions. The “practical training” regulations do not address the issue of compensation for practical training. As such, whether or not unpaid internships must be counted toward a student’s “practical training” time is unclear.

Similarly, whether or not an unpaid internship requires INS approval is not specifically addressed in the regulations. What is clear, however, is that international students who work without proper INS authorization risk serious sanctions. In this regard, if a foreign student is found to be “out of status,” which *could* include working in practical training without the appropriate authorization, the student may be barred from re-entry into the United States for a period of up to five years. Accordingly, employers faced with these issues should seek legal counsel from an immigration expert before agreeing to permit an international student to participate in an unpaid internship without receiving appropriate INS work authorization approval.

### • **Can an organization require interns to sign a noncompete and/or nondisclosure agreement?**

Depending on the nature of an organization’s business and the scope of the internship experience, the organization may desire to have its interns sign a noncompete and/or nondisclosure agreement.

A nondisclosure agreement prohibits an employee or intern from disclosing an organization’s confidential and/or proprietary information to third parties both during the employment/internship period and subsequent to the termination of that period. This information may include product or process information; customer lists and profiles; marketing, business, and strategic plans; pricing lists; technological innovations; research and development plans and studies; and any other information that is not publicly known or ascertainable from outside sources. A nondisclosure agreement does not restrict the intern/employee’s ability to work elsewhere upon the termination of the internship program or employment relationship, but rather, it places limitations on the information the intern/employee can use for the benefit of a subsequent employer.

A noncompete agreement, on the other hand, precludes the intern/employee from working for a competitive company subsequent to the end of the internship program/employment relationship. Generally, a noncompete agreement specifically describes the prohibited competitive activity, the geographic area within which the individual may not compete, and the duration of the noncompete obligation.

To be enforceable, a noncompete agreement must satisfy each of the following requirements:

- The agreement must be necessary to protect a legitimate business interest of the organization;
- The agreement must be reasonably limited with respect to both duration and the geographic area covered; and
- The agreement must be supported by adequate consideration (i.e., the intern/employee must receive something of value in return for the agreement).

Clearly, interns may be exposed to confidential and proprietary information during the course of the internship program. As such, it is not unusual for interns to be required to sign nondisclosure agreements in conjunction with the internship. In fact, such agreements are recommended if the intern is to have access to sensitive and valuable confidential information of the organization.

Due to the nature of most internship programs, however, noncompete agreements are not frequently used with interns. First, because most interns do not immediately enter the work force subsequent to the end of the internship program, the duration of the noncompete is unlikely to be long enough to actually restrict the intern’s subsequent employment opportunities. Additionally, in the event that the internship is unpaid, a noncompete agreement is unlikely to be supported by adequate consideration. Finally, it will be difficult for most organizations to convince a court that it is necessary to restrict an intern’s subsequent employment opportunities in order to protect a legitimate business interest.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, organizations that want to use noncompete agreements with interns should, at a minimum, do the following:

- Explain to the student that the internship is conditioned upon the execution of a noncompete agreement;
- Discuss the purpose, intent, and critical provisions of the agreement with the student;
- Ensure that the agreement defines the competitive activity that is to be restricted; in this regard, the agreement should be limited to prohibiting only those activities that are necessary to protect the organization’s legitimate business interest(s);
- Ensure that the agreement is reasonably limited in terms of duration; the time in which the student will

be limited in seeking employment from competitors should be no longer than necessary to protect the organization's legitimate business interest(s); and

- Have the agreement signed by the student prior to or contemporaneously with the start of the internship program.

- **Should my company cover interns under its workers' compensation insurance? Who is legally responsible if the intern gets injured?**

Workers' compensation laws vary from state to state, so before implementing any internship program, you should check with legal counsel (or the organization's accountant) to determine whether it is necessary to cover interns under your organization's workers' compensation insurance.

If the applicable state law fails to specifically address the issue of an organization's responsibility for providing workers' compensation insurance for its interns, the state law will likely define the terms "employer" and "employee." These definitions will provide guidance with respect to whether the organization or the intern's school is responsible for providing the intern with workers' compensation coverage.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is often advisable to cover interns under the organization's workers' compensation insurance even if not legally required to do so. This is because such coverage generally limits the organization's liability for job-related injuries to medical expenses and lost wages. Absent such limitations, the intern can seek compensation for emotional distress and pain/suffering, both of which are likely to greatly increase the potential cost to the organization of any such claim.

One way to minimize potential workers' compensation liability is to establish and carefully explain the organization's safety policies and procedures to your interns. Educating interns with respect to the safety hazards and risks inherent in the workplace is likely to decrease the overall risk of injury. These educational discussions should be well documented by the organization. As a general matter, companies with good safety records seldom see an increase in safety problems when interns are on site.

- **Are "exclusive" internship programs (e.g., programs limited to racial/ethnic minorities) permissible?**

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled against "exclusive" programs, and a "minority-only" internship program would fall into this category. A better option is to diversify your intern candidate pool to encourage minority participation in your program.

Besides legal difficulties, a "minority-only" internship program—or any other "exclusive" program that is based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or gender—also has the potential to backfire and create ill will and image problems for your organization.

- **Are interns covered under federal EEO and antidiscrimination provisions (e.g., Title VII, ADA, ADEA)?**

As a general rule, the answer is yes. For purposes of most federal EEO and antidiscrimination legislation, interns are deemed to be employees. As such, interns are provided with the same protections made available to the organization's regular employees, and your organization should follow the same guidelines and policies with interns that it follows with its regular employees.

For example, if an intern requests a reasonable accommodation to enable him or her to perform the essential functions of the internship, your organization is required to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) with respect to this request. Likewise, you may not exclude an internship candidate solely because he or she requests an accommodation. This would constitute unlawful retaliation. (Please note: Depending on how the internship program is structured—if, for example, it is school-sponsored—the intern's school may be responsible for a portion of the cost of the accommodation.) Similarly, if an intern complains of sexual or some other form of unlawful harassment, your organization is required to address and investigate the complaint in the same manner that it would investigate a similar complaint made by a regular employee.

## *Materials to Adapt*

### **“Employee” or “Trainee” Checklist**

Is your intern an employee or a trainee? Here are some considerations to review to help you determine if your interns meet the six criteria set forth by the Fair Labor Standards Act (see page 44). If you can affirm that your internship program satisfies each of these criteria, your intern is likely a “trainee.”

- The work is an integral part of the student’s course of study.
- The student will receive credit for the work or the work is required for graduation.
- The student must prepare a report of his/her experience and submit it to a faculty supervisor.
- The employer has received a letter or some other form of written documentation from the school stating that it sponsors or approves the internship and that the internship is educationally relevant.
- Learning objectives are clearly identified.
- The student does not displace other employees.
- The student is in a shadowing/learning mode.
- The employer provides an opportunity for the student to learn a skill, process, or other business function, or to learn how to operate equipment.
- There is educational value to the work performed, i.e. it is related to the courses the student is taking in school.
- A staff member supervises the student.
- The student does not provide a benefit to the employer more than 50 percent of the time.
- The employer does not guarantee a job to the student upon completion of the training or completion of schooling.

**“Employee” or “Independent Contractor” Checklist**

Is your intern an employee or an independent contractor? Below are the questions the courts will review to make this determination. Note that it is likely that some factors may suggest employee status while others may suggest independent contractor status. As such, it is best to look at the relationship as a whole rather than focusing on one or two factors.

- **Instructions.** Is the worker required to comply with the organization’s instructions about when, where, and how the work is to be done? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Training.** Does the organization require the worker to attend training or regular meetings? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Integration.** Are the worker’s services integrated into the organization’s business operations? Is the success or continuation of the organization’s business dependent to an appreciable degree upon the performance of the worker’s services? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Services Rendered Personally.** Is it necessary for the services to be rendered personally by the worker? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Hiring, Supervising, and Paying Assistants.** Does the organization hire, supervise, and pay assistants for the worker? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Continuing Relationship.** Do the worker and the service recipient have an ongoing, continuing relationship? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Set Hours of Work.** Is there a set amount of hours and days that the worker must work each day/week? Does the organization determine the worker’s schedule? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Full Time Required.** Is the worker required to devote substantially his or her full time to the business of the organization? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Doing Work on Employer’s Premises.** Is the work performed on the organization’s premises? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Order or Sequence of Work.** Is the worker required to perform services in the order or sequence set by the organization? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Oral or Written Reports.** Is the worker required to submit regular or written reports to the organization? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Method of Compensation.** Is the worker paid on an hourly or salaried basis? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)  
Is the worker paid on a per-job basis? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Payment of Expenses.** Does the organization reimburse the worker for expenses (i.e., business travel, insurance, etc.)? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Furnishing of Tools and Materials.** Does the organization furnish significant tools, materials, and other equipment to the worker? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Significant Investment.** Does the worker invest, through capital infusion, in the facilities that are used by the worker in performing his or her services? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Realization of Profit or Loss.** Is it possible for the worker to realize a profit or suffer a loss as a result of the performance of services? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Working for More Than One Firm at a Time.** Does the worker perform more than *de minimis* services for a multiple of unrelated persons or firms at the same time? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Making Services Available to the General Public.** Does the worker make his or her services available to the general public on a regular basis (e.g., through a separate, private practice)? (Yes=IC; No=Employee)
- **Right to Discharge.** Does the organization have the right to discharge the worker irrespective of the result produced? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)
- **Right to Terminate.** Does the worker possess the right to end his or her relationship with the organization at any time without incurring liability? (Yes=Employee; No=IC)



# BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Internship programs have been an integral part of many organizations' operations for a number of years. Consequently, program managers at these organizations have overhauled, analyzed, tweaked, and otherwise massaged their programs to ensure their ongoing success. Thanks to these program champions, you don't have to reinvent the wheel to ensure your program's success—you have best practices to draw upon.

You'll find 15 best practices in this chapter. Try some of these; you may find that they work well for your internship program. As your program matures (and as you compare notes with colleagues and gather feedback from your interns), you'll likely develop your own list of best practices.

## **Best Practice #1: Provide interns with real work assignments**

Providing interns with real work is number one for ensuring your program's success. Interns should be doing work related to their major, that is challenging, that is recognized by the organization as valuable, and that fills the entire work term.

You can guarantee that hiring managers provide real work assignments by checking job descriptions, emphasizing the importance of real work assignments during manager/mentor orientation sessions, and communicating with interns frequently throughout the work term to determine how they perceive what they are doing.

## **Best Practice #2: Hold orientations for all involved**

It's important that everyone "be on the same page," so to speak. Make this happen by holding an orientation session for managers and mentors, as well as a session for students. Orientations ensure that everyone starts with the same expectations and role definitions. This is time well spent—the effort you put into these sessions will pay off throughout the program.

## **Best Practice #3: Provide interns with a handbook and/or website**

Whether in paper booklet format, or presented as a special section on your website, a handbook serves as a guide for students, answering frequently asked questions and communicating the "rules" in a warm and welcoming way.

A separate intern website serves many of the purposes of the handbook, but has the advantage of being easy to change. You can use your website as a communication tool, with announcements from the college relations staff or even articles of interest written by the interns themselves. A website can be especially beneficial to students who are working at remote locations (or who are back at school) and want to feel connected to the main part of the organization. (Tip: Password-protect your site, or parts of it, so that only your interns, staff, and others you've designated can access it.)

### **Best Practice #4: Provide housing and relocation assistance**

Few employers can afford to provide fully paid housing for interns, but you'll find you get a lot of appreciation if you offer any kind of assistance toward housing expenses. If that's not possible, provide assistance in locating affordable housing: For those relocating to the job site, the prospect of finding affordable, short-term housing can be daunting. Easy availability of affordable housing will make your opportunity all the more attractive to students, broadening your pool of candidates.

If you can pay for all or some of your interns' housing, be sure to design (and stick to) a clear policy detailing who is eligible. This will eliminate any perceptions of unequal treatment. In addition, be aware that employer-paid or employer-subsidized housing is considered a taxable benefit. Check with your internal tax department on exceptions to this.

You will also want to consider the issue of relocation, which is separate although related to housing. Many organizations pay some or all of their interns' relocation expenses to and/or from the job site.

### **Best Practice #5: Offer scholarships**

Pairing a scholarship with your internship is a great way to recruit for your internship program—and this is especially true if you are having difficulty attracting a particular type of student or student with a specific skill set to your program. Attaching a scholarship can increase your pool of candidates with the desired qualifications.

### **Best Practice #6: Offer flex-time and/or other unusual work arrangements**

Students mention flex-time as one of their most-desired features in a job. (My theory is that a flexible time schedule during their internship eases their transition to the workplace.)

If you think about how students spend the day on campus (varied schedule each day, with varied activities such as work, class, social time), you can understand that 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday is a bit of an adjustment for them. A flexible schedule can make them feel less chained in by an unchanging routine.

Other work arrangements that I have found to be successful with students include keeping them on as part-time, remote employees after they go back to school (depending on the type of work they do for you and whether they have a willing manager), and having them

come back and work over school breaks for a couple of weeks. These are excellent ways to keep communications open and build a stronger bond.

### **Best Practice #7: Have an intern manager**

Having a dedicated manager for your intern program is the best way to ensure that it runs smoothly and stays focused on your criteria for success. Unfortunately, the size and resources available to most internship programs mean that this isn't always possible. If your program isn't big enough to warrant a dedicated full-time staff member, an excellent short-term solution is to hire a graduate student (look for a student working toward an advanced HR degree) to be your intern, and put this college relations intern in charge of the daily operation of the internship program. This gives the interns a "go-to" person, and gives you and your staff a break from the many daily tasks involved in running a program of any size. For this to work, you have to plan the program structure in advance (don't expect your intern to do it), and be very accessible to your college relations intern. (A sample of responsibilities for your college relations intern appears at the end of this chapter.)

### **Best Practice #8: Encourage team involvement**

Involve your college recruiting teams—whether they are "volunteers" who participate in college recruiting, staff members dedicated to college recruiting, or some combination of both—in your intern program. They can sponsor social or professional development events, and help to orient the interns to your company culture. In my programs, college team members served as cooks at intern picnics, hosts at speaker events, and drivers for social outings such as ball games.

### **Best Practice #9: Invite career center staff and faculty to visit interns on site**

Although some programs—especially those that are very structured on the university side—make visits by career center staff and faculty a regular practice, most do not. In general, career center staff and faculty members have relatively few opportunities to visit employer work sites to see firsthand the types of experiences that their students are getting. By inviting them to your site, you will build a better working relationship with these groups, which can lead to more student referrals, enhanced campus visibility, and increased flexibility on their parts when your business needs dictate it.

**Best Practice #10: Hold new-hire panels**

New-hire panels are one of the best ways I have found to showcase an organization to interns as a great place to work. These are panels of five or six people who were hired as new grads within the last three years. They act as panelists in a meeting of interns, giving a brief summary of their background and then answering questions from the intern audience. Your interns get insight about the organization from your new hires—people who they perceive are like themselves and who they consequently view as credible sources of information.

In these meetings, I've found that the interns consistently bring up the same topics: Why did you choose this employer over others? What was your first year like? How is being a full-time employee here different from being an intern? Do you recommend getting a graduate degree? In the same field, or an M.B.A.? Is it better to go straight to graduate school after the bachelor's or better to work a while?

It's also fairly consistent that the new hires will offer other types of advice to your interns, such as how to handle finances those first couple of years out of school. (Their typical advice: Don't run right out and buy a new car, and, Start contributing the maximum to your savings plan as soon as you are allowed.)

College relations staff should attend these sessions, but should remain unobtrusive, staying in the back of the room so as not to stifle the conversation. By being there, you stay aware of what is on the minds of your target group, and you can answer any detail questions that may come up, such as those related to benefits.

**Best Practice #11: Bring in speakers from your company's executive ranks**

One of the greatest advantages for students in having internships is the access they get to accomplished professionals in their field. Consequently, speakers from the executive ranks are very popular with students—it's a great career-development and role-modeling experience for interns. Having a CEO speak is especially impressive. Best scenario: Your CEO is personable, willing to answer

questions, and willing and able to spend a little informal time with the students after speaking—your interns will be quite impressed.

For you, having your executives interact with the interns has multiple benefits: It's another way to “sell” your organization to the interns, and it gets your executives invested in (and supporting) your program.

**Best Practice #12: Offer training/encourage outside classes**

Providing students with access to in-house training—both in work-skills-related areas, such as a computer language, and in general skills areas, such as time management—is a tangible way to show students you are interested in their development.

You may also want to consider providing interns with information about nearby community colleges: Many students will be interested in attending during their work term to take care of some electives and/or get a little ahead with the hours they need to graduate. If you have the budget, you may also want to consider paying the tuition for courses they take while working for you, but, as is the case with housing, any assistance you can provide—even if it's just providing them with information about local schools—will earn you points with students.

**Best Practice #13: Conduct focus groups/surveys**

Conducting focus groups and feedback surveys with these representatives of your target group is a great way to see your organization as the students see it. Focus groups in particular can yield information about what your competitors are doing that students find appealing.

**Best Practice #14: Showcase intern work through presentations/expo**

Students work very hard at completing their work and are generally proud of their accomplishments. Setting up a venue for them to do presentations (formal presentations or in a fair-type setting such as an expo) not only allows them to demonstrate their achievements, but also showcases the internship program to all employees.

### **Best Practice #15: *Conduct exit interviews***

Whether face-to-face or over the telephone, a real-time exit interview done by a member of the college relations staff is an excellent way to gather feedback on the

student's experience and to assess the student's interest in coming back. Having the students fill out an exit survey and bring it to the interview gives some structure to the conversation.

### *Materials to Adapt*

## **Sample Responsibilities for a College Relations Summer Intern**

If you hire your own intern to assist with your program (select someone working toward an advanced degree in HR), you'll find this person can be indispensable in handling a variety of tasks and responsibilities. Below are some suggestions for how your intern can assist with your internship program as well as your overall college relations program.

The college relations intern can:

- Act as the first go-to person for interns with questions or concerns.
- Assist with intern orientation sessions.
- Create a directory of interns and distribute it to interns, managers, and mentors.
- Complete the intern schedule of activities and distribute it to interns, managers, and mentors.
- Conduct the intern hiring process survey and write a summary of the results.
- Manage intern activities and training, e.g., confirm speakers, schedule rooms, order food, send reminders, etc.
- Chair intern committees, e.g., social and banquet.
- Make contacts throughout the work term with interns who are assigned to outlying facilities.
- Assist college recruiting teams with setting up sponsored events.
- Write articles on the intern program for the organization's newsletter.
- Remind managers to do informal mid-term evaluations of interns.
- Collect mid-term reports from interns.
- Set up/coordinate the Projects Expo, e.g., schedule, publicize, and handle tasks associated with the expo.
- Send final evaluation forms to managers.
- Conduct a survey and focus group of recent new grad hires to gather feedback and marketing information.
- Update campus presentation materials.
- Review the college recruiting sections of competitors' websites and suggest improvements to your organization's website.
- Conduct intern focus groups with the help of an ad agency.
- Update school information files.
- Assist with preparations for fall recruiting.
- Send out exit interview surveys, conduct exit interviews, and write a summary of the results.
- Write a summary of the work-term experience.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Established in 1956, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated. The professional association connects nearly 5,000 college career services professionals at nearly 2,000 college and universities nationwide, and more than 2,000 HR/staffing professionals focused on college relations and recruiting.

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