

Internship Best Practices

Creating Internships that Work for
Organizations, Managers, & Interns

Introductions

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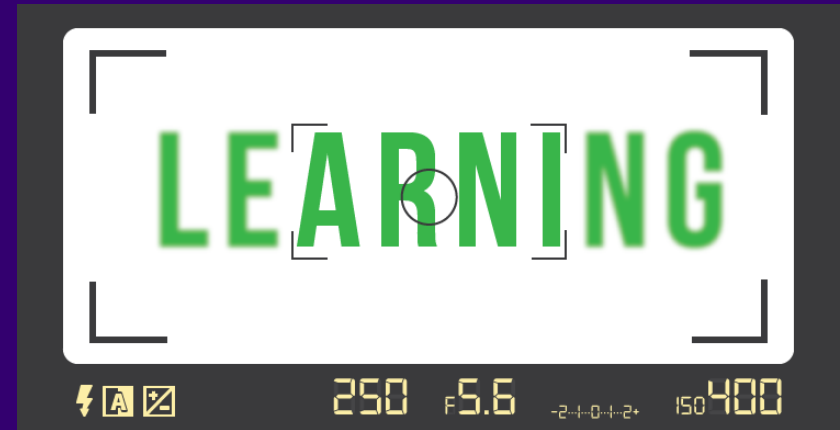
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Outline

- > Foundations
- > Setting your organization up for success
- > Convincing & coaching managers
- > Creating high impact experiences for students
- > Finding the right intern
- > Hiring Huskies
- > Wrap-up

Foundations



Definition

What is an internship?

- > A form of experiential learning that allows a student to do one or more of the following:
 - Integrate **academic learning** with “hands-on” experience
 - Develop or refine specific **skills**
 - Explore a **career interest**

- > Most internships:
 - Require **10+ hours** a week
 - Over the course of **10+ weeks** (length of 1 academic quarter)

Definition

How are internships different than jobs?

- > Internships focus on **student learning** to a higher degree
 - Should **not** be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform
 - Interns and supervisors should create **clearly defined learning objectives** related to the intern's academic/professional goals
 - Skills learned must be **transferrable**
- > Internships are often **project-based**
- > Internships typically have a **defined end date**

Definition

Similar to other roles....

- > There is intentional **onboarding**, ongoing **supervision**, and frequent **feedback** by an experienced supervisor who models professional and ethical behavior.
- > The **resources, equipment, and facilities** necessary are provided by the host employer.

Generation Z

- > Born between 1996ish and 2010ish
- > Currently ages 7ish to 21ish
- > Recent article:
 - <http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/attracting-job-candidates/gen-z-interns.aspx>
- > Interesting videos:
 - <https://www.randstadusa.com/workforce360/managing-gen-y-z/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1HyDn7dZ1o&t=15s>

Generation Z

What they value in positions:

- > Opportunities to grow / learn / advance
- > Chance to work hard / contribute / innovate
- > Positions with value / meaning
- > Flexibility

Generation Z

What they want in organizations:

- > Value corporate social responsibility and community involvement
- > Stability / security (many had parents lose jobs after 9/11 and/or in 2008ish)

Generation Z

What they value in bosses:

- > Want bosses who can teach / coach them
- > Value honesty / integrity / authenticity in bosses and employers
- > Value face to face communication

Setting Your Organization Up for Success



Answer Big Picture Questions

- > What are you **trying to accomplish** with an intern program?
- > Would internships **fulfill identified needs**?
- > Would an internship program **fit your org culture**?

Get Stakeholder Buy-In

- > Do you have support at the **top**?
- > Do you have **managers willing to devote time** to providing learning experiences for interns?
- > Can managers identify **interesting projects** for interns?
 - For students with little experience, working few hours?
- > Will somebody **help you** with recruiting, onboarding, etc.?

Think Through Intern Logistics

- > Hours per week, total # of weeks
- > Work space
- > Pay – highly encouraged!
 - Helps for-profits stay in compliance with **federal guidelines**
 - Helps employers **stay competitive** – 88% of for-profit internships in HuskyJobs are paid
 - Increases **diversity** of the applicant pool
 - Increases **investment/engagement** of all involved
- > Permanent hire conversion – expectations and process

Think Through Manager Logistics

- > **Who** can serve as intern managers?
- > How are they expected to contribute to intern **selection** and **onboarding**?
- > Are there guidelines for discussing intern **goals**?
- > How often are they expected to have **1:1s** with interns?
- > Intern **performance**:
 - How is performance **evaluated**?
 - How is performance data **collected**...from whom...by whom?
 - How is performance feedback **communicated** to interns?
 - How **often** is performance feedback given?

Build a Timeline

Typically takes about 12 weeks

- > Desired intern start date
- > Offer date
- > Interviews
- > Applications due
- > Job description posted
- > Job description drafted, reviewed, and finalized
- > Project identified and described
- > Manager identified & coached

Activity

- > What's something you probably need to give a little more thought to?
- > Who in your organization could be a thought partner regarding that issue?

Convincing & Coaching Managers



Share the Condensed Definition

- > Internships allow students to:
 - Integrate **academic learning** with “hands-on” experience
 - Develop or refine specific **skills**
 - Explore a **career interest**

- > Internships focus on **student learning** more than jobs
 - Should **not simply advance** the operations of the employer
 - Interns and supervisors should create **clearly defined learning objectives** related to the intern’s academic/professional goals
 - Many internships are **project-based**

Educate on the Basics

- > Most internships are **9-20 hours** per week
 - Up to 40 in the summer
- > Typically last about **10 weeks**
- > Defined beginning and **end date**

Sell the Benefits

Benefits to supervisors....

- > Mutual learning
 - “teaching someone is a great way to learn or relearn something yourself”

- > Mentoring
 - “it’s a pleasure to help them navigate the company and learn how to be successful in their careers”
 - “knowing we can help them grow professionally is amazing!”

Sell the Benefits

Benefits to organization...

- > Fresh ideas, energetic, innovative, eager
- > They can produce some amazing results
- > Interns know how to reach younger target audiences
- > Build a pipeline for future hiring
 - In a national, mostly corporate, employer survey:
 - > 72.7% offer rate (asking interns to stay on)
 - > 85.2% acceptance rate (interns agreeing to stay on)

Prepare for Challenges

> Time

- Spent directly - training, meeting with intern, etc.
- Used indirectly - time away from one's own projects, etc.

> Projects

- Thinking of interesting, appropriate projects
- Figuring out how to hand off a project

Outline Tasks & Time

- > Think of project
- > Write or review position description
- > Selection process
- > Organizational onboarding
- > Task-specific training
- > Initial discussion of goals
- > Regular meetings
- > Performance evaluations

Suggest Tangible Best Practices

- > Pick a few from the next section
 - Onboarding
 - Learning
 - Engagement
 - Projects
 - Relationships
 - Exposure
 - Feedback
 - Reflection

Activity

- > What will be your biggest challenge with managers?
- > What is your plan to address it?

Creating High Impact Experiences for Students



Onboarding

> Importance

- Helps everyone start on the same page with clear expectations
- Helps interns feel welcomed and valued

> Ideas

- Create a first day checklist
- Facilitate structured orientation the first day or two
- Share written expectations such as attire, hours, absences, etc.
- Tour of facility
- Lowdown on unwritten things like nearest coffee shop, cleanest bathrooms, team traditions, etc.
- Assign a buddy, who is not the intern's direct supervisor

Learning

> Importance

- Interns are learners first, contributors second
- Gen Z interns want to learn and grow
- Showing interest in their learning can contribute to intern commitment, productivity, and desire to stay long-term

> Ideas

- When you get a meeting invitation, think “could my intern benefit from attending with me?” or “could this meeting benefit from having an intern’s perspective?”
- Ask interns to mention a few things they want to learn in the cover letter and/or interview
- In the first week, work with interns to co-create learning goals and periodically refer back to the goals

Engagement

> Importance

- Internships teach students about the real world and success requires commitment, focused participation, accountability, etc.
- Without full engagement, interns cannot sufficiently discern what they liked and want to replicate in future experiences

> Ideas

- Give interns stretch assignments that challenge them
- Allow interns a chance to fail in a safe environment
- Explain how intern projects connect to the larger organization
- Assign projects that are important to the organization
- Let interns have a real voice on project direction
- Expect accountability for attendance, punctuality, and deadlines

Projects

> Importance

- Internships should involve meaty/meaningful work
- Interns are eager to contribute
- Positions that exclusively involve menial or routine work might be better classified as jobs

> Ideas

- Brainstorm if projects can be modified to match learning goals
- Assign side projects that align with their interests
- Mutually decide how to break down, scaffold, and hand over projects in a way that feels supportive to interns
- Tell them it's okay to ask questions
- Ask what work samples they want to create for future employers

Relationships

> Importance

- Interns should learn how to interact with others in a work setting
- Exposure to diverse perspectives helps deepen intern learning
- A benefit of interning is meeting others who might help with career development later

> Ideas

- Plan a welcome meet and greet on the intern's first day
- Assign both individual and team projects, when possible
- Plan social activities with interns and young professionals
- Create intern Facebook group
- Allow interns to conduct informational interviews on the clock
 - > Help them reach out to contacts as needed

Exposure

> Importance

- Exposure to diverse tasks and tools helps broaden interns' horizons and skill sets
- Seeing different teams and levels of an organization helps interns better understand the big picture

> Ideas

- Offer a training session on a program an intern wants to learn
- Ask interns to write meeting agendas and/or minutes
- Require interns to present to the work team and beyond
- Invite executives to share career advice with interns
- Invite interns to attend meetings about projects related to theirs

Feedback

> Importance

- Receiving honest feedback is the only way interns can improve
- Learning to receive both positive and constructive feedback in the workplace is critical to interns' future success

> Ideas

- 10-minute stand up meeting every shift to check in
- Weekly project debrief meetings
- Monthly formal performance evaluations
- Final review / exit interview
- Anonymously survey other interns and staff who routinely interact with an intern and coalesce the results
- Celebrate wins

Reflection

> Importance

- Learning to reflect on performance is critical to success
- Self-reflection helps interns become more self-directed

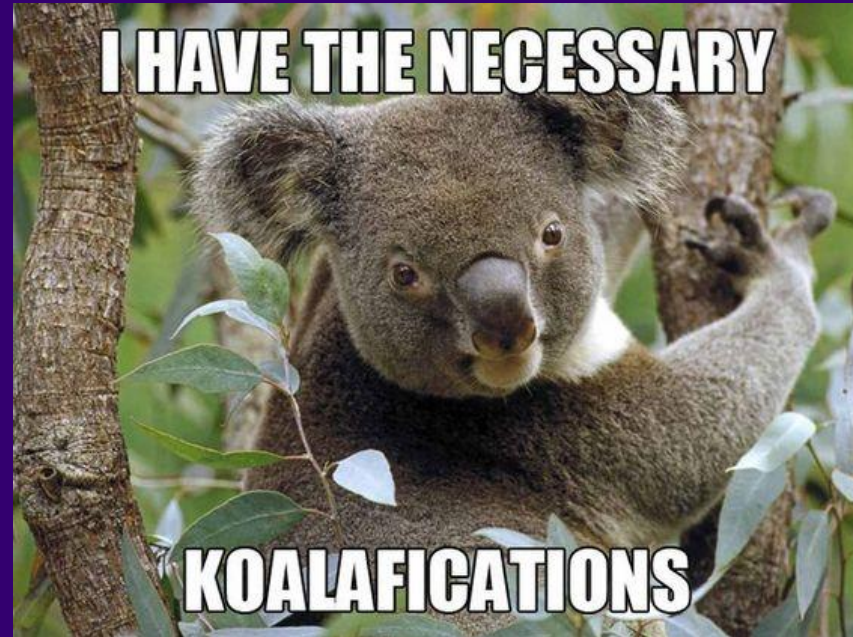
> Ideas

- During check-ins, ask interns questions such as:
 - > Use adjectives/adverbs/metaphors to describe how things are going
 - > How are you progressing towards stated learning goals?
 - > What has been challenging?
 - > What could you have done differently in a given situation?
 - > What would be a good next step after this internship?
- Require interns to write weekly learning logs and action plans
- Offer to provide feedback on resume, serve as reference, etc.

Activity

- > Write down some tangible ideas you can suggest to managers that seem doable for your organization.
- > Aim for 1 in each category.

Finding the Right Intern



Targets

Think about target audience...

- > Generation Z
- > How might the information about Gen Z presented earlier impact your intern recruitment?

Targets

Think about *your* target audience

- > What **attributes** would help an intern be successful?
- > What **skills** does one really need coming in?
- > Think broadly about **majors**
- > How can you appeal to and market to **diverse** groups?

Position Descriptions

Standard stuff

- > Sell your organization
- > Describe the role
- > List requirements
- > Application instructions
- > Compensation (wage, or whether its paid/unpaid)

Position Descriptions

Internship-specific stuff

- > Describe what interns will learn
 - What You Will Learn
 - Interns Will Develop Skills In
 - You Will Gain Experience In
 - How You Will Benefit

- > Ask interns to include a few ideas about what they'd like to learn in their **cover letter**

Position Descriptions

Internship-specific stuff

- > Approximate **start** and **end** dates
- > Number of **hours** per week
- > Location of internship site

Reach Out

Get it out there...

- > Encourage **employees** to push it out
- > Post to **social media**
- > Connect with local **colleges**
- > Post to niche **industry websites** and listserves
- > Post to **national sites**
 - idealist.org
 - internmatch.com
 - internships.com

Hiring Huskies



Hiring Huskies

Know typical intern recruiting cycles

- > For summer internships
 - Accounting, finance, consulting, some tech – Oct/Nov
 - Other areas –
 - > Most students start thinking more seriously about summer internships in Jan/Feb, even March/April
- > For other parts of the year
 - 4-8 weeks before you want an intern to start

Hiring Huskies

Get started

- > Post your position on HuskyJobs
 - \$35, for-profit employers
 - \$10, other employers
 - careers.uw.edu/post-a-job/

- > Connect with targeted student groups and departments
 - Academic areas, cultural groups, political, hobbies, etc.
 - Find a group and send an email
 - depts.washington.edu/thehub/sao/

Hiring Huskies

Come to campus

- > Attend a Fair
 - careers.uw.edu/Employers/Calendar
- > Host an Information Session
- > Conduct On-Campus Interviews

Activity

- > What is one new strategy you can use to get your internships in front of candidates?
 - At the UW
 - Beyond

Wrap-Up



Reflection

- > What is a key takeaway for you?
- > What is a next step you can take?

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