

TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR INTERNSHIP

How do I create a successful internship program?

Creating a successful internship program can be a daunting task for many employers. To assist in the process, Coconino Community College (CCC) has created this resource guide. The following nine steps offer an outline for creating, administering, and evaluating the quality of your internship program.

1. **Determine the needs of your organization** – Researching the needs of your organization beforehand can save substantial time in the long run. Some thoughts to consider are:
 - What are your current needs?
 - What kind of projects/work assignments do you foresee interns undertaking?
 - What is the minimum experience required to complete projects/work assignments?
 - What is the best time of year to hire student interns?
 - How long should your internship last?
 - Do you have the workspace available to support the desired number of interns?
2. **Obtain employee buy-in** – The most successful internship programs are those that have obtained the buy-in of employees at all levels. Interns are most successful when they are seen as a welcome addition to the team.
3. **Familiarize yourself with legalities surrounding student interns** – Employers are encouraged to compensate interns through hourly wages, stipends and/or assistance with lodging expense. Compensation varies from industry to industry. According to the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers do not have to pay interns who qualify as trainees. The U.S. Department of Labor has outlined six criteria for determining trainee status and ensuring that unpaid internships are legal. (<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>):
 - Interns work under close supervision and do not displace regular employees.
 - Interns are not guaranteed a job at the end of the internship.
 - Interns understand they are not entitled to wages during the internship.
 - Training takes precedence over any benefits employers may receive.
 - Interns' training must primarily benefit them, not the organization.
 - Interns must obtain hands-on experience similar to that in a vocational setting.

If interns will be expected to carry out functions that will take precedence over training opportunities, deciding to provide paid internships from the onset will avoid any potential legal concerns in the future.

4. **Develop a compensation plan for students** - After researching the legalities of unpaid vs. paid internships and determining whether the employer would like to offer students college credits for the completion of an internship, the employer should develop a compensation plan. Putting together documentation/brochures regarding the benefits of completing an internship will help facilitate the interviewing and hiring process for the employer and the student.

5. **Create a position description** - Intern employers are expected to provide work experiences that are both challenging and educational. Creating a position description will ensure that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the expectations of the intern. Many descriptions vary, depending on the employers. This following list provides general information of what a description should contain but is not all inclusive or definitive:
 - A proper title
 - A description of the organization and work environment
 - A clear description of the position, general responsibilities, and learning objectives
 - The necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be successful in the position
 - The minimum education and experience requirements

6. **Create a work plan** - Programs that do not have a structured plan from the beginning create opportunities for unclear expectations for the student and supervisor. This can lead to an internship experience that lacks quality for both the student and the organization. Some suggestions for maximizing the intern's success and creating a training plan are as follows:
 - Assign projects that relate to the intern's area of study
 - Provide sufficient and appropriate training
 - Provide an orientation to the company and its culture
 - Provide opportunities for interns to get involved with company activities

Interns should have a supervisor or mentor committed to the professional development of others. Determining day-to-day and week-to-week projects, work assignments, tasks, and responsibilities prior to bringing your interns on board will also help your intern become successful in his or her new role. This may include a schedule and/or training plan that contain standing weekly appointments such as supervisory and feedback sessions, documented projects, professional development and training opportunities, etc.

7. **Fill the position** - Once parameters for the internship have been identified and agreed upon, you are now ready to begin recruiting for the position(s). You may decide you would like to post the available position(s) for free on our Career Services Online Job Board. The online job board also allows employers to search through student and alumni resumes. When you begin receiving candidates, it is

important to identify your expectations as it relates to skills needed. Do you prefer candidates with prior customer service experience, knowledge of Microsoft Office, excellent writing skills, etc.? This is where you can reflect back to step 2, determine the minimum qualifications you are seeking, and choose the most appropriate candidates. Once you have selected the appropriate candidates, you are now ready to schedule the first round of interviews. If applicable, you may then schedule second interviews with those students that you are interested in. Once you have selected the interns based on their interviews and skills, you are ready to make the internship offer.

8. **Execute the internship** - Now that you have created a work plan and filled the position, you are ready to bring your intern on board and execute the plan. Students are eager to have an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned in school and prove themselves. Upon arrival, employers are encouraged to:

- Review behavior/performance expectations
- Review learning objectives
- Discuss projected assignments
- Discuss training schedule (i.e., orientation, professional development sessions, etc.)
- Schedule times for supervision sessions (if not already scheduled)
- Provide opportunity for interns to discuss their expectations

As the internship progresses, employers may notice that they have under or overestimated the capabilities of a student, or what can realistically be accomplished during the internship. This is a good time to document the performance of the intern, assess their contributions, and reflect upon the projects assigned to students, the training received, and what could be tweaked to improve the next internship.

9. **Conclude the internship** - There are various ways to conclude an internship. How an internship ends depends largely on the performance of the intern, whether or not a part-time or full-time position will be offered, and whether other internships will be available in the future.

Some ideas for the final days of the internship are:

- Provide opportunities for the interns to do presentations to recap their internship experience. This can be a great opportunity for the intern to demonstrate their accomplishments and for other employees to see the value of internships.
- Discuss future employment options with the student (if applicable).
- Hold focus group sessions and/or exit interviews with interns to discuss the experience. Surveys can be used to facilitate this process. Possible questions include:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- Did the intern feel the workload was manageable?
- Were all the learning objectives met?
- What was the intern's overall impression of the employer and industry?
- Host a going away party for the intern
- Take the intern to lunch/dinner. Provide a letter of recommendation or certificate of completion

Sample Intern Position/Posting Description Title

Position Title: Marketing Intern

Start Date: March 12, 2019

Organization: XYZ Company

End date: May 31, 2019

Department: External Affairs

Work Schedule: Mon-Friday

Number of openings: 2

Hours per week: 15-20

Company profile: XYZ, established in 1996, is one of the leading banking institutions in the United States. With 40,000 employees nationwide, XYZ has experienced significant growth in the financial services industry and is known for its commitment to ethical practices in banking.

XYZ provides the following services to its consumers:

- Checking and saving account services
- Mortgage, auto loan, home equity, refinancing and credit card services
- Investing, advising and IRA services.
- Home owners, auto insurance, identify theft protection and life insurance services.

Position Description: The marketing intern will be responsible for grassroots marketing, event planning and community outreach for XYZ's Going Paperless project.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the internship, the intern will learn how to:

- Promote XYZ's Going Paperless project to current and potential customers, including individual and business consumers.
- Create and execute new marketing initiatives through research and with the support of XYZ staff.
- Identify, understand and utilize professional marketing strategies.
- Work with diverse populations in cross cultural or multicultural settings.

Qualifications:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Candidates with experience in event planning and /or who have interest in event planning.
- Students majoring in marketing, business or related field.
- Familiarity with Various social media outlets and relaxed marketing strategies.
- Minimum GPA of ___ preferred.

Applications instructions:

Please send cover letter and resume to: