



NORTHWEST
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
CAREER SERVICES

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE





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OVERVIEW

What is an internship?

Northwest Missouri State University defines an internship as: “A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”

Some students may wish to gain academic credit for their internship. If so, the student initiates the process of establishing a three-way agreement between the student, the University and the employer. Each academic department establishes their own internship criteria and requirements. Students should notify employers of any requirements needed to gain academic credit.

Why internships?

Some of the benefits employers get from a Northwest Intern include:

- Enriching the organization with the fresh perspective of a student with enthusiasm and energy
- The opportunity to complete special or short-term projects
- A cost-effective recruiting tool - interns can become permanent employees with a minimal learning curve
- A valuable public relations tool when the intern returns to campus and talks with fellow students about the experience
- Sharing in training tomorrow's workforce
- Investing in the local community
- Developing a partnership with higher education with an opportunity to enhance curriculum

Internships help employers build relationships with Northwest students, staff and faculty and help develop and maintain a pipeline for future recruitment.

Students use internships to gain real-world work experiences and test-drive potential careers while building a marketable resume. Some majors require students to complete at least one internship to graduate, and all students are encouraged to consider the benefits of internships.

ATTRIBUTES OF AN INTERNSHIP:

DURATION: Internships typically have a set start and end date and are usually a one-time experience. Typically internships for academic credit are based on 50 hours of work for every 1 hour of credit.

MENTORSHIP: Interns benefit from having strong mentors who are committed to developing the intern's skills.

ORGANIZATION: Internships have set experience plans that provide well rounded opportunities for student growth.

FEEDBACK: Interns should receive regular feedback from the employer, supervisor, and mentor.

PAID VS UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

The US Department of Labor has a fact sheet online at <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf> that outlines the "primary beneficiary test" they use to determine if an intern should be paid or not.

If possible, we recommend providing compensation for interns. Paid internships almost always attract a higher number of applicants and are typically seen by students as more serious than unpaid internships. Payment could come in the form of hourly payment, a stipend, housing allowance, etc.

Non-profit organizations are not required to pay interns but are welcome to do so.

Students who are doing an internship for academic credit are required to pay for each credit hour they receive. This means an unpaid, for credit internship can carry a substantial out of pocket cost for the student.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Academic credit is determined on a case-by-case basis and requirements vary by academic department or school and faculty member.

If a student would like to receive academic credit for their internship, they need to work with their faculty advisor to make sure they know and meet all requirements of the course and department or school.

It is the responsibility of the student seeking credit to advise employers of the requirements and schedule they must meet. The university does not expect an organization to make any dramatic changes to accommodate these requests, but we do encourage flexibility in order to meet the variety of situations and requirements students may face.

STARTING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

When starting an internship program it is important to consider the following details:

- Who will coordinate the hiring process?
- Majors/skills desired
- Work experience/projects
- Beginning and ending dates
- Job location
- Qualifications desired - coursework, year in college, etc.
- Rate of pay (if any)
- Number of openings
- Where and when interviews will be conducted
- How students should apply/respond and what materials are required to apply
- Application deadline

Identify intern supervisor and mentor:

Many students are working in a professional workplace for the first time during their internship. Having someone who is designated as the internship supervisor helps the student know who to direct questions to and can provide assistance when necessary.

The more connected the supervisor is to the work the intern is doing the more valuable the experience will be for both parties. It is important the supervisor be accessible and provide regular feedback and constructive criticism. As the intern establishes themselves into the position, the role of the supervisor should become less hands-on.

Some organizations also appoint an intern mentor. The mentor provides supplemental support to the intern and helps when the supervisor is not available. The mentor can take on the role of a trusted peer more than a supervisor or boss.

Create meaningful project(s) for the intern:

A key aspect of a successful internship program is providing the student with meaningful projects. Internships are meant to integrate classroom knowledge in a professional setting and provide valuable applied experience, so the work the intern is doing should reflect that. Avoid having interns complete “filler” projects like filing and other routine tasks.

Start by evaluating the organization’s needs and develop projects that fit those needs. Including some projects with clear deadlines and some that are more open ended will help give the intern a more well-rounded professional experience.

Example projects include social media management, web and graphic design, marketing, research projects and more. Students from different academic majors have different skills to offer.

Having a clear set of expectations and scope of work makes the program better for both the intern and organization.

DEVELOPING AN INTERNSHIP JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description for the internship will be the primary form of advertising, so the more detailed and attractive it is the more applications will likely be received.

It is important to use clear and concise language when describing all job duties and expectations. Also make sure to include detailed instructions on what application materials are required and how they need to be submitted. A clear application deadline can be helpful to streamline the hiring process.

Things to include in an internship job description:

- Job title
- Description of the position including expected duties and start and end dates
- Qualifications, required skills, coursework, or education level of candidates
- Compensation offered
- Company information (may include mission and values, history, etc.)
- Required application materials (resume, cover letter, references)
- Application instructions and deadline

Also consider including:

- Benefits to student (free parking, networking opportunities, free event admission)
- Learning goals and objectives of the internship
- Information on how the intern will be supervised and mentored throughout the experience
- Dress code expectations
- Time commitment required for internship (number of work hours per week or overall)

If you would like assistance creating or refining an internship job description, please contact Career Services.

RECRUITING INTERNS

Posting and promoting positions on campus:

Career Services is happy to help you post and promote your internship on campus. Once you have a complete job description you can email it to us at career@nwmissouri.edu and we will help distribute to students and faculty in targeted academic areas.

Market the internship on and off campus:

Recruiting an intern is very similar to recruiting an employee. Career Services offers several opportunities to market the position to students on campus.

Career Day: Offered each fall and spring, this event provides the opportunity to connect with potential hires for full-time or internship positions. We believe organizations will find our event to be both affordable and professional. Graduate schools and other post-professional schools are also encouraged to participate. This event is open to all students, alumni, and community members.

On-Campus Recruitment: Employers visit the Northwest Missouri State University campus each trimester to recruit quality candidates. Job/internship opportunities can be promoted through hosting information sessions/information tables, conducting on-campus interviews, and participating in career

events like Speed Networking and Mock Interview Day. These activities provide students with the opportunity to meet recruiters and network within their industry without leaving campus!

Other marketing options include social media posts, local newspapers, and classified ads, and more. Get creative! Career Services is also happy to help promote positions to students and faculty in targeted majors and programs.

For more information on these events or other on-campus recruitment options, contact Career Services at 660.562.1250 or career@nwmissouri.edu.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Collecting applications and conducting interviews:

The interview process can be as simple or complex as an organization desires. Some prefer to start with telephone or virtual interviews before meeting candidates face to face. Career Services is happy to help facilitate these interviews and can provide space on campus as needed. We recommend internship applicant interviews be treated in the same way regular employee applicant interview would be treated.

Remember, this may be the first real job interview a student has ever completed. Career Services can help with the interview process. We do require that students apply directly to the organization and the ultimate hiring decision be theirs alone.

Once the decision to extend an offer has been made, we recommend reaching out as soon as possible. Many students apply for multiple internships. Students are responsible for completing any paperwork necessary for an Academic Credit Internship class.

After filling the position, we also recommend removing the internship posting from Hire A Bearcat and other places if not already removed.

IMPORTANCE OF ORIENTATION

The first few days of an internship experience are vital to an intern's satisfaction and overall impression of the employer.

Developing an orientation process is very valuable in establishing the framework for communication throughout the experience.

Onboarding an intern in the same manner a new full-time employee would be is very helpful in setting ground rules and expectations. Simple things like reviewing the job description, talking about dress code and attendance policies and the preferred methods of communications within the organization are vital with interns.

Other possible topics to include in orientation:

- A facility tour and introductions to other staff members
- Overview of company (history, products and services, structure, etc.)
- "How to" instructions for office procedures like answering phones, opening, and closing office, unique computer programs, etc.
- Paperwork, policies, and processes

- Organizational structure and chain of command
- Discussion of expectations – both from the company and student perspective

For many students, this is the first professional setting they have ever been a part of so they may not be aware of things most of us would consider common sense. They may also not know what questions to ask, so having a set process helps make sure all interns start at the same level and with all required information.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Providing interns with informal and formal feedback is very helpful to make sure they are completing tasks assigned and to help them develop their professional skills. Weekly review sessions are a good practice and allow the intern to course correct as needed.

Questions to ask and topics to discuss in feedback sessions:

- Did the intern complete the tasks they were assigned? If no, why not?
- Does the intern have any questions that resulted for this week's work?
- Provide the intern with feedback on the week's work and overall performance. Where are they doing well? Where can they improve?
- Ask the intern to provide feedback to supervisor.
- Review the week ahead and make sure the intern is prepared for any new assignments.

The intern can also be encouraged to keep a portfolio of accomplishments to review during evaluations. This can be helpful with requirements for academic credit classes and for the student to have something to take with them when the internship is complete.

An internship can only be a valuable learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. Taking the time to evaluate both strengths and areas for improvement add tremendous value for the student.

Dismissal of an intern

The dismissal of an intern should be carefully considered. Students are relatively new to the professional world and are developing the same level of maturity and judgement as a full-time employee would be expected to have.

We recommend only dismissing an intern in cases of major misconduct (theft, assault, substance abuse, sexual harassment, etc.) or after significant and willful violation of organizational policy. If an intern is dismissed, they should be made aware of reason(s) why.

Final evaluation/exit interview

In addition to review sessions, a final evaluation helps an organization gauge the overall success of the internship for both the student and the organization. This also gives the supervisor an opportunity to discuss accomplishments of the intern and the possibility of future employment with company.

An exit interview is another way to collect feedback from the interns to gain insight on ways the internship program could be improved in the future, evaluate the impact of specific projects and assignments and more. Interns are an excellent way to build (or damage) an organizations reputation on

campus and a student who has had a positive experience can help drive other students to apply in the future.

Course Credit Evaluations

Some disciplines may require the intern supervisor complete an evaluation of the intern at the end of the experience. These evaluations are often a consideration in the overall grade a student will receive.

WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND VISAS

International students can bring a unique perspective to any organization. International students can bring very strong technical skills and fresh ideas to an internship program. They are typically very strong students and can be top prospects.

Many employers are concerned with the work and knowledge required to legally hire a student who is not a US citizen. Hiring an international student is not as hard as it appears, and most student visas allow for profession-based work experiences in the student's field of study.

The type of work and amount of time an international student is allowed to work is dependent on the type of visa they have. As an employer there is very little paperwork to complete.

To be eligible for internships and profession-based work experiences, an international student must have been enrolled at Northwest for a full academic year unless their academic program requires it at an earlier stage. The internship also must relate to the student's academic program.

International students have the same work hour requirements as domestic students, so they can only work 20 hours per week during the fall and spring and 40 hours per week in the summer.

If you have any questions about hiring an international student or what you would be required to do in order to hire an international student at Northwest, please contact the International Student & Scholar Services Coordinator at 660.562.1395.

EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In addition to evaluating individual interns, organizations may want to evaluate the internship program they offer overall. This allows adjustments to be made from term to term and makes the entire program more beneficial.

We recommend looking at the following data when evaluating the program:

- Number of applicants vs number of interviews offered
 - This can show how effective the internship job description was in attracting qualified candidates. If there were many applicants who were not suitable to interview adjusting the language used on the job description and marketing materials may be needed
- Interviews vs offers
 - If planning to hire more than one intern, but several interviews did not warrant extending offers to targeting different skill sets or majors for the position in the future may be needed

- Offers made vs offers accepted
 - If several applicants were extended offers to but many were turned down, reevaluating the compensation offered and other market conditions may be needed
- Cost per hire
 - What did each intern cost the organization?
 - Was the total cost (money, time, effort, etc.) worth the return they offered the company?
- Conversion rate
 - How many interns convert into full-time employees (or would be wanted if able) – if this number is low, targeting different student majors or skill sets in the future may be needed
- Retention rate
 - Will/did interns return for another (future) internship?
 - Do full-time employees who started as interns stay with the company longer than employees who did not intern?
- Quality of hire (from organization's perspective)
 - Was the individual intern a good hire?
 - Are there developmental areas this student should focus on between now and graduation?
- Quality of experience (from intern's perspective)
 - What experiences or skills did they gain?
 - How would they rate the company and supervisor?
 - Will they recommend the company/experience to other students?

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or concerns along the way, please let us know.



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STUDENT INTERNSHIP FEEDBACK

Student interns should be given regular feedback in order to grow as professionals. We suggest that you meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance.

During these meetings students can:

- Report on project/work status
- Ask questions
- Learn how they are contributing to the organization
- Discuss their strengths
- Discuss areas needing further development
- Get a sense of what work is coming up

Some academic credit internships will require a mid-term and final feedback form to be filled out by the internship supervisor in order to provide the student with a grade.

Focusing on professional skills will help the student grow and develop as a future worker.

It is also important to give the student feedback related to the project or assignment they are working on.

Giving them constructive criticism and areas to improve on is always a good way to help them improve.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Internship Coordinator, Travis Kline at (660).562.1455 or tkline@nwmissouri.edu.



STUDENT INTERN FEEDBACK

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Rating scale:

- 1 - Unsatisfactory (Does not meet expectations)
- 2 - Uncomplimentary (Rarely meets expectations)
- 3 - Fair (Meets expectations)
- 4 - Commendable (Sometimes exceeds expectations)
- 5 - Exceptional (Consistently exceeds expectations)

Attendance & Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5
Dependability	1	2	3	4	5
Initiative/Drive	1	2	3	4	5
Judgment/Common Sense	1	2	3	4	5
Adaptability	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to Learn	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Work	1	2	3	4	5
Attitude Toward Work	1	2	3	4	5
Attitude Toward Others	1	2	3	4	5
Follow Directions/Accepts Guidance	1	2	3	4	5
Progress/Improvement	1	2	3	4	5
Future Employability	1	2	3	4	5

Other comments: _____

INTERNSHIP SAMPLE EXIT INTERVIEW

Understanding and considering the intern's view of their experience will enable you to continue recruiting strong candidates for future openings.

Using data and information collected at the end of each internship will allow you to make necessary adjustments to strengthen your internship program.

Schedule in advance to give the student opportunity to prepare thoughts and questions.

Avoid scheduling on the student's last day on the job so that there is time to take care of any action items that may come up.

Exit Interview Steps

1. Explain the purpose of the exit interview.
2. Encourage the student to be as candid as possible.
3. Explain that you will be taking notes.
4. Begin with less sensitive questions to put the student at ease.
5. Gradually move into areas of greater sensitivity.
6. Ask the student if he/she has any remaining questions or suggestions for improving the internship program.
7. Conclude by thanking the student for his/her time and honesty.



EXIT INTERVIEW

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position Title: _____ Supervisor: _____

Questions

1. How similar was your actual assignment to your expectations?
2. How would you rate this office as a place to work?
3. How well did your experience provide information about your chosen field?
4. What was the best part of your intern experience?
5. What was the worst part of your intern experience?
6. Would you recommend this office to other students for an internship assignment?

Why or why not?

7. What suggestions do you have for improving the internship program?
8. Any other comments you would like to include