

Internship Supervisor's Manual



Messiah College

Expanding the world of academic opportunities

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DEVELOPING WORK ACTIVITIES AND MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A large part of producing effective position descriptions involves the development of challenging work assignments that complement students' academic programs. One way to do this is to design a preliminary list of work activities that will fit the needs of your department. A detailed description of typical tasks will help the college to promote your internship or field experience, and to screen the right candidates for the position. Later, when the interns you select join your team, you will have a chance to review the work activities and modify them according to the interns' knowledge and personal work/learning goals.

As part of the educational process, internship work activities should focus on projects specifically related to the academic major and the degree the interns expect to receive. Students who perform menial tasks will become quickly demoralized and will learn nothing about applying their expertise to a business environment. While many students work (or have worked) at part-time jobs to finance their education, an internship does not fall into the category of a job. It is actually part of their academic program and should offer every opportunity to link classroom learning to workplace experience.

Undergraduate students expect and appreciate clear direction regarding what is expected of them and frequent feedback concerning what and how they have done. (In their academic environment, clear direction and periodic feedback is the way of life.) It is also most important that the interns perceive their work is making a useful contribution to the sponsoring organization.

A particular concern at the undergraduate level is that the work assignments provide the interns with a variety of tasks, while accommodating the needs of the organization. Of course, some of the interns' responsibilities will involve repetition, because all work involves some repeated activity. We are suggesting, however, the program be designed to maximize the scope of the students' organizational experience.

Sample tasks that undergraduate students have provided for their sponsoring organizations include the following:

- ✦ performing laboratory tests
- ✦ writing handbooks or manuals
- ✦ designing posters, charts, graphs
- ✦ generating financial forecast and cost recovery reports
- ✦ performing software/hardware modifications
- ✦ conducting studies and surveys
- ✦ developing slide/sound presentations
- ✦ compiling technical reports
- ✦ creating academic lesson plans
- ✦ conducting research
- ✦ generating marketing plans
- ✦ conducting training packages
- ✦ preparing budgets and financial reports

Developing challenging work assignments relative to the students' abilities is a major thrust of the position description. Your final internship, or field experience, description will incorporate the needs of your organization as well as the abilities and academic goals of the students you employ.

KEY POINTS

- ✦ Describe challenging, but realistic tasks students can accomplish within a three month period.
- ✦ Work with faculty to establish specific learning objectives for students.
- ✦ Identify outcomes or expected products.
- ✦ Be willing to incorporate the students' particular strengths.
- ✦ Show how this work relates to the overall efforts of the department or organization.

NOTES

ORIENTING AND TRAINING INTERNS

Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment and objectives of business and industry. Even though your interns may have worked part-time to support their education, these experiences may not have exposed them to organizational politics, the need for confidentiality, the importance of teamwork, or the profit-making orientation of business. It is this orientation and training dimension of the internship experience that emphasizes the partnership role of the sponsoring organization.

The sooner your student interns understand what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. You can help this process by providing the following kinds of information about your site:

■ Personnel Structure

- ✦ company organization
- ✦ special industry jargon
- ✦ specific work standards and procedures
- ✦ reporting relationships
- ✦ access to the supervisor (days, times, and duration)
- ✦ tasks that can be completed without supervisory approval
- ✦ work processing requests and timeliness
- ✦ mail and telephone systems
- ✦ approved form(s) for correspondence
- ✦ safety regulations
- ✦ procedure for signing off completed work
- ✦ periodic forms or reports to be completed
- ✦ security and confidentiality issues, if relevant
- ✦ acceptable dress and appearance
- ✦ maintaining the premises and work station
- ✦ productive interactions with others at the work site
- ✦ personnel who can answer different kinds of questions
- ✦ how the organization wants the intern to deal with clients, customers, and vendors

You can communicate this information in several ways:

- ✦ take your interns on a tour of the facilities and introduce them to the other employees
- ✦ give your interns company materials to read such as newsletters, annual reports, an organization chart, or memos from the CEO
- ✦ encourage your interns to spend break and lunchtimes in places where employees gather
- ✦ schedule regular one-on-one meetings with them
- ✦ give the interns opportunities to observe (or participate in) professional meetings
- ✦ allow the interns to interview company personnel
- ✦ encourage the interns to walk around and observe others at work

The success of an internship depends on the partnership between representatives of the organization, the college, and the student. These three parties need to agree on the conditions of the internship, the responsibilities of each party, and the reporting requirements. The site supervisor is the critical link. You guide your interns by providing direction and feedback. If a problem occurs, you counsel the students and contact the faculty supervisor, when necessary.

KEY POINTS

- ✦ Develop a thorough orientation and training plan to be implemented when the interns begin work, so they will learn quickly and become productive members of your team.
- ✦ Invest supervisory time to establish an important bond with interns and set a crucial tone for the internship experience.

NOTES

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Experience shows that employers who take adequate time at the beginning of the internship to orient the student reap productivity and effectiveness more quickly than those who don't. To help acclimate interns, please take time initially to:

■ Explain the Mission of the Organization

- ✦ How did the organization start? Why?
- ✦ What is unique about your product or service?
- ✦ Who benefits from your product or service?
- ✦ What are the organization's current objectives?
- ✦ How may the intern contribute to those objectives?

■ Explain the Organization Structure

- ✦ Who reports to whom?
- ✦ Who, specifically, is the intern's supervisor?
- ✦ What is the intern's department responsible for?
- ✦ How are decisions made?
- ✦ Which personnel can answer different kinds of questions?

■ Outline Organizational Rules, Policies, Decorum and Expectations

- ✦ Is there special industry jargon?
- ✦ What are the specific work standards and procedures?
- ✦ What access to the supervisor (days, times, and duration) does the intern have?
- ✦ How should they handle work processing requests?
- ✦ How do the mail and telephone systems work?
- ✦ What are the approved forms for correspondence?
- ✦ By what safety regulations must they abide?
- ✦ Is there a procedure for signing off completed work?
- ✦ What periodic forms or reports need to be completed?
- ✦ Are there any security or confidentiality issues the intern should be aware of?
- ✦ What is acceptable with regard to dress and appearance?
- ✦ How should they maintain the premises and their work area?

■ Define the Intern's Responsibilities

- ✦ What is the intern's role?
- ✦ What projects will be assigned to him or her?
- ✦ What resources are available to the intern?
- ✦ What training is necessary?
- ✦ How does the organization want the intern to deal with clients and vendors?
- ✦ What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
- ✦ Do other employees understand the intern's role?

■ Monitor the Intern's Adjustment and Understanding of What is Expected

- ✦ Make yourself visibly available to the intern
- ✦ Assign someone who can periodically "check-in" with the intern
- ✦ Provide feedback and constructive criticism
- ✦ Force the intern to ask questions

SUPERVISING THE INTERN

As an intern supervisor, you use all the skills necessary in any effective supervisory relationship:

- ✦ Providing leadership
- ✦ Motivating
- ✦ Developing and training
- ✦ Delegating
- ✦ Communicating
- ✦ Evaluating

Additionally, the students will look to you as a mentor who will assist their transition from the classroom to the work environment. Since the internship is an extension of the learning process, you will need to provide opportunities to bridge the two experiences.

We suggest that you meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings, the students can:

- ✦ report on the status of a project
- ✦ ask questions
- ✦ learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- ✦ participate in an evaluation of their strengths
- ✦ discuss areas needing growth and development
- ✦ get a sense of what kind of work lies ahead

At the same time you will have an opportunity to coach, counsel and reinforce positive attitudes and performance. To assist you in providing feedback, assessment forms will be mailed to you at the mid-point and at the end of the semester (see sample at the end of this booklet).

You should anticipate that you will have some interaction with your students' internship coordinator through telephone calls, on-site visits, and written evaluations. Such persons will help you find a solution if difficulties occur (intern attendance or punctuality problems, low motivation, unsatisfactory work, or personal conflicts). Also, you should get in touch with the college contact if the internship conditions must be altered, such as a change in supervisors, delays in the availability of data needed by the students to complete an assignment, a strike by unionized employees, transfer or termination of an employee involved in the interns' work, or other unanticipated changes.

Encourage your interns to keep a portfolio of work accomplished during the experience. This will help fulfill the students' academic requirements and provide them with a sense of accomplishment. In addition, it will give you a basis to discuss their professional growth. Specific work documents to include in a portfolio might be any of the following:

- ✦ Job Descriptions
- ✦ Legislation
- ✦ Proposals
- ✦ Manuals
- ✦ Citations & Awards
- ✦ Contracts
- ✦ Program Outlines
- ✦ Company Newsletters
- ✦ Performance Appraisals
- ✦ Charts/Graphs
- ✦ Correspondence
- ✦ Press Releases
- ✦ Certificates
- ✦ Research Report
- ✦ Financial Reports
- ✦ Displays & Exhibits
- ✦ References
- ✦ Survey Reports
- ✦ Cost Analyses
- ✦ Computer Print-outs

In addition to spontaneous and informal meetings, you should use the form provided by the Internship Center to evaluate your interns' performance at the midpoint of the internship, so the students know where they stand. You should consider the quality and timeliness of the work produced to date, ability to take and follow direction, work habits, and areas needing growth and development. This information will also provide data for the final evaluation and serve as a reference point for the students' subsequent performance.

KEY POINTS

- ✦ Maintain an open channel of communication with formal and informal meetings
- ✦ Keep the interns busy and directed towards their learning objectives. Students rarely complain of overwork, but they do complain if they are not challenged.
- ✦ Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility.
- ✦ Encourage professionalism by assisting the interns in developing human relations skills, decision-making abilities, and managing office politics.
- ✦ Remember that you are a role model.
- ✦ Develop connections

NOTES

TEN CONCERNS OF INTERNS

1. Give us real work!

It can't be said too many times that interns want to work and learn. An internship can help you get a job done that you couldn't otherwise, right? If you've brought on an intern as a recruitment tool, then how will you be able to assess their abilities? It just makes sense to utilize your interns well.

2. Do what you say, and say what you do!

Be honest with your interns about what they can expect during their internship. If the job will require stuffing some envelopes, then make that clear. But if you tell the intern they will be researching a project, and they spend 90% of their time doing "grunt work," then bad feelings will develop. Honesty doesn't cost you anything, and it will make the interns feel that much more respected.

3. We like feedback!

Remember that interns are students, and they may not have the business skills and experiences that you take for granted. If your intern makes an oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.

4. We want to be included too!

Is there a staff meeting that they can attend? Can they quietly tag along to that next project meeting? Headed to lunch with a couple of people in the office? Please include them in the daily life of your workplace. After all, if you provide a little more perspective on the intern's work, the product will be much better.

5. Please explain.

When you assign work, make sure you give a detailed explanation. While the work may seem trivial and obvious to you, it may not be obvious to someone who's never done it before. Patience and a few extra minutes at the beginning will pay off later when your intern can produce good work independently.

6. I want a mentor!

Make sure that interns have a mentor or supervisor to provide guidance. Make it someone who truly likes to teach, and the experience will be even better.

7. A minute of your time please.

The best mentor in the world is useless if he or she can't or won't spend the necessary time mentoring. As newcomers, interns may not speak up if they're feeling ignored, so the burden of making sure they're okay is on the mentor. If the busiest person in the office wants to be the designated mentor, he or she should schedule regular times to meet with the intern.

8. Be prepared!

That wonderful day has arrived and the intern goes to start their internship only to learn that no one knew they were coming, and there is no place for them to work.

9. Um...I need a chair.

It is amazing how many employers hire an intern and don't think about the fact that they will need a desk, chair, phone and a computer in order to do the task assigned. It is no fun, and not efficient to move an intern from desk to desk as people are out one day to the next. If you want to get a job done, you need to supply the intern with the tools to do the job.

10. Show me the money (as best you can).

While each internship is different, and each industry has its own personality, remember that interns have expenses. Your organization may not be in a position to pay much, but anything can help. Maybe you can help pay for their parking, take them to lunch every so often, or develop some other creative way to assist them.

SAMPLE

MID-TERM INTERNSHIP ASSESSMENT FORM Messiah College Internship Program

Student: _____ Organization: _____

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Unsatisfactory | (Never demonstrates this ability/does not meet expectations) |
| 2 | Uncomplimentary | (Seldom demonstrates this ability/rarely meets expectations) |
| 3 | Fair | (Sometimes demonstrates this ability/meets expectations) |
| 4 | Commendable | (Usually demonstrates this ability/sometimes exceeds expectations) |
| 5 | Exceptional | (Always demonstrates this ability/consistently exceeds expectations) |

If any criteria are not applicable to this internship experience, please leave the response blank.

A. Ability to Learn

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Asks pertinent and purposeful questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Seeks out and utilizes appropriate resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Accepts responsibility for mistakes and learns from experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

B. Reading/Writing/Computation Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Reads/comprehends/follows written materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Communicates ideas and concepts clearly in writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Works with mathematical procedures appropriate to the job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

C. Listening & Oral Communication Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Listens to others in an active and attentive manner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Effectively participates in meetings or group settings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Demonstrates effective verbal communication skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D. Creative Thinking & Problem Solving Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Breaks down complex tasks/problems into manageable pieces | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Brainstorms/develops options and ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Demonstrates an analytical capacity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

E. Professional & Career Development Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exhibits self-motivated approach to work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Demonstrates ability to set appropriate priorities/goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Exhibits professional behavior and attitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

F. Interpersonal & Teamwork Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Manages and resolves conflict in an effective manner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Supports and contributes to a team atmosphere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Demonstrates assertive but appropriate behavior | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

G. Organizational Effectiveness Skills

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Seeks to understand and support the organization's mission/goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Fits in with the norms and expectations of the organization | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Works within appropriate authority and decision-making channels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

H. Basic Work Habits

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Reports to work as scheduled and on-time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Exhibits a positive and constructive attitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Dress and appearance are appropriate for this organization | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I. Character Attributes

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Brings a sense of values and integrity to the job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Behaves in an ethical manner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Respects the diversity (religious/cultural/ethnic) of co-workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

J. Comments (do not feel compelled to write something):

K. Overall Performance (if I were to rate the intern at the present time)

Unsatisfactory		Poor			Average		Good		Outstanding	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(F	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A)

___ I have ___ I have not discussed this assessment with the intern.

Evaluator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title/Position: _____ Telephone: _____

Please mail or fax this assessment form to:
Internship Center, Messiah College, Box 4514, Grantham, PA 17027 / Fax: 717.691.6043