

## Introduction

### Experiential Learning/Internship Employer Handbook

The Academic Success and Career Center is the premier Washington State University resource for student's career and internship development. The ASCC provides career-planning services to assist students in clarifying career goals through individual counseling, career assessments and a many activities and opportunities that guide students through the career development process.

As part of the ASCC, The Career Development Internship (CDI) program offers employers a resource for new energy and ideas in the form of **university students eager to gain professional experience**. These up-and-coming professionals can save you time, provide support on special projects, and invigorate the workplace. In return, student interns will benefit from your knowledge and experience while exploring career options and, potentially, earning academic credit.

We endeavor to provide students with a variety of programs that allow engagement in meaningful ways with potential and future employers as well as public, private, and non-profit entities. Talented and bright student interns represent over 50 different academic majors and minors. The Career Development Internship Program (CDI) is a **collaborative program** between the ASCC, the student and YOU! Our goal is to connect students with experiential learning opportunities that will enhance their skills, knowledge, abilities and readiness for the world of work!

We hope you will find this handbook a useful tool as you consider providing internships, cooperative work experiences and other experiential learning opportunities for WSU students. This overview and 'starter' resource will provide practical information, sample documents and a variety of resources to ensure that you and your company/agency/organization are able to successfully manage an experiential learning opportunity for students.

We often hear that students 'can't get a job without experience – and can't get experience without a job' Providing students with opportunities to engage in internships, practicum experiences, and real-world work situations helps them be the 'ready for work' employees we know you would like to hire after graduation. Providing opportunities for students to experience your world of work provides a win-win solution to the problem of having a work ready workforce!

You will find this handbook will give you the nuts and bolts you need to establish a credible internship program.

- Students will often seek **experiential learning opportunities**, often called 'internships', related to their major or minor field of study; they may work during the summer or during the school year, may be paid or unpaid (although we encourage companies, agencies and others to pay interns – and, of course, comply with all department of labor standards related to employment status). When students are not be enrolled in course credits as part of an internship, there is often no formal relationship between the employer or 'host' site and the University; you are simply entering into an agreement with the student intern. In contrast, when a student is enrolled in course credits as part of an internship, there typically will be a formal agreement entered into between you and the University.

**We are here to assist you as you work to develop internships and other experiential learning opportunities for students' Academic Success and Career Center.**

## Internship Development Career Development Internship Program (CDI) Program

### Fact Sheet for Employers

#### What is an internship?

An internship is a carefully monitored pre-professional work or service opportunity in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what is being learned throughout the experience. When internship learning goals align with the curriculum objectives of a University educational program, they may qualify for academic credit. The student, host supervisor, and, sometimes, University supervisor will develop a learning plan that will guide the work of the student. By offering their time, talent and enthusiasm, interns contribute to the organization's mission and goals, while gaining valuable practical experience. Gone are the days of utilizing interns as simple 'unpaid labor' – WSU students are seeking professional opportunities that challenge them and provide hands-on experience to help them be 'work ready' when they graduate.

#### What sort of training and supervision should be provided to interns?

The experience should be defined by the organization as an internship, identify specific projects and career-related learning, with systems in place for supervision, training and evaluation/feedback.

- The intern supervisor should provide organizational orientation, training, feedback, complete a mid-term evaluation of the intern and complete a final written evaluation of the intern's work. Direct and personal contact with the supervisor on a regular basis is expected, providing personal expertise in the field the intern is being required to perform.

#### How do we post an Internship?

We ask that all internship sites post internship opportunities utilizing our **Handshake** system. Log on the ASCC Employers webpage to view "Post a Job and Internship" <https://ascc.wsu.edu/employers/> Follow the instructions to sign in and create a profile and/or position.

- For more information or assistance in posting a position through Handshake: [employer@wsu.edu](mailto:employer@wsu.edu)

#### What type of student interns are available through the CDI Program?

- Student interns will commonly be Sophomore, Junior or Senior level students in good academic standing with WSU. Some may have a specific major – others may be in a certification process for their major or minor course of study.

#### How does the academic credit work?

- The student intern may earn a maximum of 15 credits altogether in this program. A minimum of 2 credits per semester is required – which equates to 6 on-site work hours per week. Students may continue for additional semester(s) at a site – pending successful completion of site and course work.
- The student intern has a course advisor from the ASCC who will provide support for completing a course curriculum throughout the semester to earn academic credit.
- A passing grade will be assigned based on the intern's performance onsite as well as the quality of their written, reflective assignments.

#### Pay for Student Interns

We strongly encourage 'for profit' and not-for-profits to pay interns. Department of Labor guidelines can be reviewed here: [DOL Guidance on Pay for Interns](#)

**Recommended Timeline for Employers to Get Involved?**

Think about your internship needs in advance. Get optimal exposure and advertising by posting at least 2-3 months prior to the intern’s expected start date. This allows sufficient time to advertise, screen and select the best candidates). We also recommend participating in our Fall and/or Spring Career Expo events!

<b>To Recruit and Intern for:</b>	<b>Submit Internship Posting by:</b>
Fall Semester (Late August – Early December Placement)	Early March Spring EXPO is early February
Spring Semester (Early January – Late April Placement)	Late September or Early October Fall EXPO is early October
Summer Semester	Late January to Early February Recruit at either – or both - Fall and Spring EXPO!

## Starting an Internship Program - Employer Guide

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### 1. DECIDE WHAT THE INTERN WILL DO

**Special Projects.** If you are like most employers, you have a long “wish list” of special projects that need to be done but don’t have the personnel resources to organize and implement them. Because of the nature of their academic schedules, students often look for internship opportunities of limited duration (generally 15 weeks), so employers find interns to be an ideal solution to this problem. For example, interns can be assigned to organize research projects, plan special events, develop special promotional campaigns, or design web pages. When developing an internship involving special projects, you should identify goals, timelines, and outcomes so that everyone understands the purpose and expectations involved.

**On-Going Operations.** Certain business and organizations routinely experience peak periods where additional staff is needed. Others may operate under very limited budgets and need additional staff throughout the year. Again, interns may be able to alleviate some of these problems. For example, interns may be assigned to serve as facilitators for youth groups, human resource management support staff, public relations assistants, or marketing associates. Remember that students are looking for internships that provide them with professional experience with an opportunity to learn.

### 2. DETERMINE HOW MUCH TIME THE INTERN WILL SPEND WITH YOU

**How long will the internship last?** Determine how much time it will take to accomplish the goals. Generally, students are available for a semester (15 weeks) or a summer internship and some students will consider longer durations.

**Part time or full-time?** Many students intern full-time during the summer when they don’t have classes. Some local internships are set up on a part-time basis (10-20 hours per week), allowing students to gain experience while maintaining a partial or full load of credits.

### 3. ESTABLISH THE NECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

- Designate a mentor/supervisor for the intern
- Decide whether the intern will work in one department or several
- Determine the kind of orientation and training the intern will need

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- Provide safe working facilities. Make available equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the student to perform his/her duties.
- Assume liability for work-related injuries sustained by the intern, insofar as the agency may determine the same to be required by law in that state.

#### 4. WRITE A POSITION DESCRIPTION

- Brief organization description and organization web site
- Position title
- Skills and qualifications required/preferred
- Duties and responsibilities
- Pay rate (or indicate that it is unpaid)
- Hours per week
- Location (city, state)
- Start/end dates of the internship
- How to apply and deadline to apply

#### Employer Internship Responsibilities

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- Offer a true career-related experience that enhances academic learning. Hiring a student to perform busywork (data entry, filing, answering phones, etc.) is appropriate for internship experiences only when balanced with meaningful professional responsibilities. The internship serves as a link between classroom learning and practical application so it should involve the student in making decisions and learning about a field through hands-on experience.
- Provide a position description that will describe the internship. If students are enrolling in academic credit for the internship, they may be required to complete an Internship Learning Agreement (see sample) from their academic department, which they are responsible for sharing with you. This is an opportunity for you and the student to clearly define the learning goals and job duties for the internship.
- Appoint someone to act as a mentor/supervisor during the experience. Be sure that this person has the time to oversee the student's performance and offer constructive feedback.
- Provide an orientation for the student to the work site. Introduce the student to the organization, the employees, the physical layout, and the order of responsibility. Be sure the student intern knows the general philosophy and procedures of operation for the organization as a whole. Inform the intern of rules and expectations to be followed.

## Internship Liability Concerns

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### Medical Insurance

Students are responsible for obtaining their own medical insurance for injuries to self. WSU's Office of Benefits and Payroll Services has student medical insurance available; the student may be able to be listed on their parents' insurance policy; or the student could obtain insurance through a local vendor.

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### Worker's Compensation

If a student is paid in an employment capacity, the student should be covered by the employer's workers' compensation policy. If a student is unpaid or receives a stipend, it is highly advisable for an employer to obtain a rider to its existing workers' compensation policy to cover the intern.

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### Professional Liability

Students are able to obtain liability insurance for a low cost covering one year through a WSU insurance policy offered through **WSU's Risk Management Office** <http://riskmanagement.wsu.edu/> or through a professional association in their field.

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## Internship Wage Issues: Offer a Paid or Unpaid Internship?

### **Please Note - This is Not Legal Advice!**

**{The information on this page is not legal advice. It is provided for informational purposes only. Please consult with your legal counsel regarding wage issues for your specific internship positions.}**

**It is always desirable to compensate interns.** The WSU undergraduate average for student debt FY 2020 is \$26,576. Students participating in paid internships can alleviate some of their student debt. Employers also benefit by attracting the best applicants and maintaining a stronger sense of accountability with their interns.



Whether or not an employer must pay an intern depends upon the on-the-job experience that the individual will have in relation to the standard set forth under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a federal law which establishes the minimum wages for work performed. Pursuant to the FLSA, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has developed criteria from a **2015 2<sup>nd</sup> Court of Appeals decision for a 7 Prong Test regarding for-profit unpaid internships.**

**For-profit companies are able to offer unpaid internships if the following conditions are met:**

- The intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, expressed or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee – and vice-versa.
- The internship provider must provide training that is similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
- The internship must be tied to the intern's formal education program by integrating coursework or receipt of academic credit.
- The internship must accommodate the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar at their university.
- The intern's work must complement, rather than displace, the work of paid employees while also providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
- The internship's duration needs to be limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
- The intern and the employer must both understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

Regarding non-profit organizations, 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. WHD (Wage & Hour Division) also recognized an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely, without anticipation of compensation, for religious, charitable, civic or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships for public sector and non-profit charitable organizations, where intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible. Please see the **Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act** for more details.



### Tips for Employers:

- Consider structuring internships on an academic model
  - Create a syllabus that provides specific learning objectives with measurable results
  - Limit the scope of the activities to be performed by the intern and establish clear expectations
  - Make sure the interns know that it is their responsibility to promptly report any assignment of duties or activities that are outside the identified scope
  - Assign intern supervisors to the interns who are willing to put in the time to ensure there is a strong, mentoring relationship
- Consider developing an orientation program
  - Establish clear expectations and revisit learning objectives to start the interns off strong
- Don't promise a job after the internship
- Control and track the hours worked by your interns
- Establish a partnership with the university to ensure you're aware of dates and deadlines and to see if students can earn academic credit for their time with your organization
- If you have the means to do so, pay your interns because typically it leads to better outcomes and higher levels of satisfaction for students and employers
  - Paid interns are 94% more likely to recommend an organization to others as a great place to work

(\*This synopsis is from an original presentation by Intern Bridge, <http://www.internbridge.com/>)

A **stipend** is typically a lump sum, is not related to work performed, and usually covers costs associated with the internship like lodging, clothing, transportation, childcare, and tuition; whereas salary/wages are received regularly and are related to work performed. Wage and hour laws do not use the term "stipend." If a person is entitled to be paid, then the stipend must equate to at least minimum wage.

**Stipends**, in the form of a scholarship, can be set up through WSU Accounts Payable. To determine the cost associated with the number of credits the student will be taking please contact the WSU Bursar's Office <https://bursar.wsu.edu/contact-us/>



The **federal and state work-study programs** will support students who are doing internships at qualifying organizations. Students must also be eligible for work-study financial aid. For more information, contact **Student Employment**.

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**How much should we pay an intern?** We recommend identifying a fair entry-level starting salary for a similar position at your organization and multiplying it by a percentage to determine the intern’s salary. The percentage will vary depending on the intern’s education level and experience. For example, a senior may earn 85-90%, a junior 80-85%, a sophomore 75-80%, and a freshman may earn 70-75% of a typical starting salary for a similar position. If you follow this rule of thumb, you can offer increases each year to returning interns and stay within your current salary structure.

## GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING PLAN

### Academic Success and Career Center

Use this as an outline to design and document an intern’s learning objectives and expectations. This document should compliment a legal contract which is signed between authorized representatives of the Site and the University.

#### I. Parties Involved:

<u>Student:</u> Your Name	<u>Site:</u> Site Name
Student ID#	Supervisor’s Name
Mailing Address	Mailing Address
Phone Number	Phone Number
Email Address	Email/Fax, if available

#### II. Duration:

Specify the starting date and final date of the internship with the organization/company

#### III. Hours:

Specify weekly work schedule on-site. (e.g. Mon: 2-5, Wed: 11-3). As a general rule, a student **must** work three (3) hours per week for each academic credit

awarded for the duration of the semester to receive academic credit from the University.

#### **IV. Student Learning Goals:**

Specify the professional and career development goals this internship will help you achieve and list them in priority of importance. Include general learning objectives (understanding of retail, banking, hotel industry, etc.), specific goals (observing merchandising techniques, strengthening interviewing skills, etc.).

#### **V. Student Responsibilities**

Specify responsibilities to the organization to be completed during the internship. A manageable project or focus is most desirable (e.g. research and make recommendations for a fundraising campaign, write press releases and p.s.a.'s, etc.). These tasks should be clear and concise to avoid uncertainty during the course of the internship and at the time of the final evaluation. Responsibilities should assist you in achieving above-stated learning goals and should not be merely clerical in nature.

#### **VI. Supervisor Responsibilities**

- A. Training - Plan on a significant time commitment initially. Structure an orientation to both the organization and specific role to be assumed. Attendance at on-going staff meetings is desirable, if possible.
- B. Feedback - Regular feedback sessions should be formally arranged to facilitate consistent supervision, guidance, and constructive criticism on a weekly basis. These times should be specified and adhered to. Specify how feedback will be given on an on-going basis. A formal midterm conference date should be set and included in this contract.
- C. Final Evaluation - A final written evaluation from the supervisor of the student's performance is required. Specify due date (in syllabus).

#### **VII. Credit**

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of credit hours desired) credit hours will be awarded at the end of the term based on successful completion of the internship (final evaluation score) and all written assignments.

#### **VIII. Signatures:**

Please make sure all the following sign the original document, with a clarification that the plan is not intended to serve as a legally binding contract:

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LEARNING PLAN

### What is a learning plan?

A learning plan is a non-contractual understanding between the student, the Internship Supervisor and the ASCC Internship Coordinator regarding (1) what is going to be learned (2) learning activities and tasks to generate learning, and (3) how the student will be evaluated to demonstrate learning gained during the period of the internship. Anticipated learning identified in the plan includes knowledge and skills specific to the internship site, as well as more generalizable knowledge and skills. The learning plan usually incorporates several areas of anticipated internship learning, including the following:

#### 1) **Organizational Information**

Students learn about the organizational structure, functions of various offices, governance and decision-making processes, climate and culture of the work unit and larger organization.

#### 2) **Interpersonal and Affective Skills**

Such skills include interpersonal advising skills, interviewing and listening skills, group dynamics in staff meetings or committees, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, and community building skills.

#### 3) **Specific Job Competencies**

These competencies vary with each office, for example, federal financial aid regulations, advising about career resource information, transfer requirements from a community college to various universities, college admission procedures, programming activities, etc.



#### 4) **General Professional Knowledge and Skills**

These transferrable skills might include planning and organizing oneself and activities, time management and prioritization, ethical behavior and decision making, written communication, professional decorum, confidentiality, respect for diversity, cultural fluency, legal implications of one's actions, etc.

#### **What does one include when writing a learning plan?**

A separate learning plan may be written each semester, reflecting the specific learning and projects specific to that semester. The learning contract should be as specific as possible in order to guide the learning and projects in a focused direction. It is also assumed that as unanticipated learning opportunities arise, the learning plan may be revised.

#### **There are four steps in writing your learning plan:**

##### **Internship Goal**

Write your general learning goal for the internship experience in terms of what you want to accomplish. It is best if this is from one to three sentences in length at most.

##### **Learning Objectives**

What do you want to learn? What do you want to know or be able to do by the end of the semester? What knowledge, skills and competencies do you want to acquire or enhance? These statements should be as specific as possible.

##### **Learning Activities and Resources**

List the specific activities, tasks, or projects that you will be involved in to learn what you have identified in your learning objectives, e.g., observing, interviewing individuals, developing materials, participating in meetings, reading, etc. Include both human and material resources that you plan to use.

##### **Evaluation of Learning**

Identify how you will document how your learning objectives have been met. What evidence will you provide to demonstrate your learning? For example, what materials did you develop? Are there excerpts from your learning journals? Is there a written summary of a learning experience?