

Employer's Guide to Establishing an Internship at SUNY Potsdam

ABOUT SUNY POTSDAM :

- The State University of New York College at Potsdam is one of 64 units of the State University of New York and one of 13 arts and science colleges. The College awards the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Music, the Bachelor of Science, the Master of Arts, the Master of Music, the Master of Science in Teaching and the Master of Science in Education.
- SUNY Potsdam has two majors that require internships: the Business of Music major and the Community Health major. We are also proud to introduce a new minor in Industrial Technology and Environmental Studies. These newly established programs complement the mission of the College, which is to provide, promote and contribute to each student of the College through educational, cultural, personal, social and recreational programs and activities. There are currently 4,000 students attending SUNY Potsdam, majoring in over thirty-five areas of liberal studies. We believe this wide array of majors and minors, combined with our general education requirements, provides the student with a well-rounded educational background. This background will take graduating students and alumni into the new millennium better prepared to face the challenges of the future.

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT SUNY COLLEGE AT POTSDAM :

- The Internship Program at SUNY Potsdam is one component of an intensive career planning process available to students. This program is designed to integrate students, participating employers and the College into a partnership providing employers with valuable workers while also providing the student with career-related work experience. This career-related experience will enhance the intern's educational goals, while contributing to your organization's mission. This work experience may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid and may consist of special activities or be part of a regular job. Although the intern is expected to make a valued contribution to the workplace, learning must be the central focus of all internships.
- Additionally, the intern should not be looked upon as an expert in the field. It is important to remember that although an intern will bring special skills and fresh ideas to your organization, he/she is essentially at your organization to learn and put to use the knowledge and guidance he/she obtained in the classroom. Therefore, although all employees are required to complete mundane tasks, these tasks should be limited to only twenty percent of the intern's time. If your organization can meet its needs while contributing to the success of the intern's learning objectives, then the internship placement will be a perfect match.

INTERNSHIP TERMINOLOGY :

- **Site Supervisor:** As the Site Supervisor, you will be immediately responsible for the intern and his/her performance. You will be asked to complete an evaluation of the intern's performance and progress throughout the internship.
- **Faculty Sponsor:** The faculty member overseeing the intern. The faculty sponsor awards a grade and credit for the completed internship based on the student's performance and completion of assignments.
- **Internship Coordinator:** The staff member in charge of organizing and coordinating all internships. The student will initiate the internship process with this person. The coordinator will guide the student through the process from start to finish.
- **Internship Site:** The organization providing the internship opportunity.

EXPECTED RESPONSIBILITIES :

The Site Supervisor will:

- Sign and complete the employer portion of the [Internship Learning Agreement Form](#) prior to the intern beginning the internship experience;
- Introduce the intern to the organization and fellow employees, inform him/her of any safety and 'Right to Know Issues to teach the intern about the career field and provide training when needed;
- Be directly responsible for the intern during the internship;
- Encourage professionalism by assisting the intern in developing human relations skills; decision-making abilities and managing office politics;
- Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility; Keep the intern busy and directed towards his/her learning objectives;
- Develop connections between the intern's work and departmental goals;
- Maintain an open channel of communication with regular meetings;
- Complete a written final evaluation and mid-term evaluation. (The Internship Coordinator will send the final Evaluation Instructions directly to the employer.)

The intern will:

- Attend an orientation session with the Internship Coordinator from the Internship Program Office;
- Choose a faculty sponsor within the department the intern wishes to receive academic credit;
- Research three to five potential internship placement sites and prepare a resume and cover letter with the assistance of the Internship Program Staff or Internship Coordinator;

- Apply for an internship placement, complete interviews and secure an internship placement;
- Complete the Internship Learning Agreement Form, in coordination with the Site Supervisor, Faculty Sponsor and Internship Coordinator, and have each party sign the form;
- Act in a professional and appropriate manner in accordance with the rules and regulations of your organization.

The Internship Coordinator will:

- Act as primary liaison between the organization and SUNY Potsdam;
- Establish, visit and develop new internship sites;
- Distribute all internship opportunities the Internship Program Office receives to appropriate departments;
- Provide the intern with the assistance they will need to complete an internship. This includes help in researching an organization, preparing a resume and cover letter and providing effective interviewing and job search techniques;
- Keep a database of all internship sites for student and alumni use;
- Keep a file on all students completing an internship;
- Collect, record and distribute mid-term evaluation and written final evaluation forms of the intern. A copy of evaluation forms will be sent to the Faculty Sponsor;
- Evaluate the program on a bi-annual basis. Program results will be distributed upon request.

The Faculty Sponsor will:

- Work with the intern throughout the duration of the internship;
- Upon request, meet with the site supervisor to discuss internship placements;
- Assist the intern in creating learning objectives that must be met while interning at a selected site. These objectives will be stated in the Internship Learning Agreement Form which the faculty sponsor will approve;
- Award credit and a final grade based on the interns completion of assignments;
- Keep in contact with the intern throughout the duration of the internship, in order to appraise his/her progress.

THE INTERNSHIP LEARNING AGREEMENT :

- The Internship Learning Agreement Form outlines the work and learning objectives of the internship, and must be completed and approved prior to the intern beginning the internship. The Internship Learning Agreement Form is a legal binding contract between the student, the work-site organization and the College. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all three parties involved.

To ensure that all three parties involved in the internship are legally aware of their rights and responsibilities, this legal agreement should be drafted and accepted by your organization, the student intern and the College.

The Internship Learning Agreement Form details the following factors:

- Content Of The Job - What are the job duties and responsibilities?
- Training - What type of training will the student receive?
- Compensation - Will the intern be compensated by an hourly wage or a stipend (if at all)?
- Time - How much time will the student be working? The national standard states that for each academic credit requested, a minimum of 40 hours at the internship site is required. For example: 120 hrs. = 3 credits = 8 hrs. per week.
- Site Supervision - How the intern will be supervised; To whom the intern will report and how often.
- Academic Component- The scope is negotiated between the faculty sponsor and the intern. The intern must complete the academic component in order to receive academic credit. The scope of the component is dependent upon the number of credit hours requested and the completion of the stated learning objectives and should complement the intern's job description.
- Grading - Whether the internship is graded numerically, satisfactory or unsatisfactory will be determined by the faculty sponsor prior to the beginning of the internship.
- Credit - Is approved and granted by the faculty sponsor and it is the faculty sponsor's decision whether to grant credit, and if so, how much.
- Evaluation - The student will be evaluated by their site supervisor during the internship experience. A written final evaluation form will be distributed to the site supervisor once an internship has been secured. Evaluations will be used by the faculty sponsor when granting the student a final grade.

PROCEDURES :

The following outline of procedures is a guideline you may follow when first implementing an internship program within your organization. The steps include:

Obtaining Support :

- The first step you should take is to secure support from your co-workers, supervisors and/or managers regarding an internship program. If there is support and cohesiveness amongst professionals from the inception of the program, the program will be more successful, efficient and well-organized.

Documenting Your Program :

- When you have gained support from other professionals within your organization, you should document the goals and objectives for the internship program. This will ensure that the roles and expectations of all parties involved in the internship placement are understood.

Goals and Objectives :

When drafting a list of expectations, take into consideration the following:

- Activities you need to accomplish before staffing an intern
- Activities/roles of the intern
- Roles of the supervisor
- Payment to intern
- Workplace requirements
- Application requirements
- Marketing and outreach plans to attract potential intern
- Evaluation methods

Complete the Internship Learning Agreement Form with the Intern

- In order to maintain a consistent approach with the intern, and to ensure the intern achieves his/her goals and objectives for the internship placement, SUNY Potsdam has mandated the intern complete an Internship Learning Agreement prior to beginning an internship.

Selecting an Intern

Work-Site Responsibilities

- Once you have gained support from your co-workers, created roles and objectives for the intern and have discussed the roles and responsibilities of those acting as site supervisors, you can begin the process of seeking an intern. It is important to remember that when looking for an intern, you are essentially looking for a potential employee. Therefore, the process of screening and hiring an intern is as important as hiring a full time professional employee. If the career goals, interests and work ethic of the intern closely match your organizations, the internship is likely to be a good match. If your organization can provide an environment conducive to the intern's educational goals, while at the same time make a positive contribution to your organization, then an intern will be of good use to you. Additionally, your organization is obliged to abide by all discrimination laws when sponsoring an intern. It is illegal to discriminate in an internship situation because of the intern's race, color, religion, nationality or

disability. It is also required that the employer provide adequate accommodations in the workplace for an intern with a disability.

Internship Coordinator's Responsibility

- SUNY Potsdam's Internship Coordinator is available to discuss your internship placement. The Internship Coordinator will provide you with an Internship Request Form which can be completed and sent back to the Internship Coordinator. This form will provide you with an opportunity to present a description of the internship position and other necessary information regarding the internship placement. Your internship opportunity will be displayed in the Internship Program Office, on the campus-wide public server available for student use and distributed to appropriate departments.

Orienting The Intern To Your Organization

- Once you have accepted an intern, he/she will report to your organization at a pre-determined time. There are many ways your professional organization can go about welcoming your intern. Presented below are a few suggestions.
- Pre-Arrival -Before the intern arrives at your organization, you may want to send him/her a packet of information describing your organization and its mission. A description of what the intern's responsibilities will be while at your organization should be included. If your intern will be moving to a different area, it would be appropriate to send information on housing, public transportation, local shopping areas, etc.

Orientation

Once the intern arrives at your organization, it's a good idea to acclimate him/her to their new environment. Some suggestions include:

- Welcome the intern as you would a professional employee;
- Explain your organization's mission and goals and policies;
- Outline the policies, procedures and expectations of the intern;
- Explain the potential risks that may occur at the workplace setting (if any);
- Introduce the intern to fellow employees and instruct him/her on office equipment;
- Explain the dress code, attendance policy and sick/holiday leave;
- Show the intern the cafeteria/washroom/ break room, etc.
- Discuss whom the intern reports to in the absence of his/her supervisor;
- Detail the safety regulations and procedures of your organization;
- Describe any regulations that must be adhered to when working with clients.

Supervising The Intern

- As the Site Supervisor, part of your responsibility will be to bridge the professional workplace with the traditional form of classroom learning, while acting as his/her coach and mentor.

Presented below are a few suggestions for supervising the intern:

- Explain your work expectations of the intern, and discuss the procedures you will follow for terminating the intern if the situation should arise;
- Maintain an open channel of communication with the intern;
- Schedule regular meetings with the intern to appraise his/her progress and to address any concerns either you or the intern has;
- Design productive and progressive work assignments for the intern.
- Invite the intern to accompany you to professional meetings, seminars and conferences to learn more about your professional position;
- Be open and receptive to the intern's ideas and suggestions;
- Encourage the intern to attend staff meetings.

Evaluating The Intern

- It will be important to evaluate your intern throughout the duration of the internship experience. The Internship Coordinator will send a mid-term evaluation and final evaluation form in an email for the site supervisor to complete regarding his/her progress . Both evaluation forms will be forwarded to the student intern's faculty sponsor, who will use them when determining the intern's final grade.

Evaluating The Internship Program At Your Organization

- Professionals in your organization will want to see evidence that the Internship Program is effective and worthwhile. If an annual evaluation is completed, your organization is more likely to catch any pitfalls along the way and reinforce the positive contributions of the program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT INTERNSHIPS :

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP AND A JOB?

- An academic internship always has a learning component attached to it. The main purpose behind an academic internship is that the intern will utilize the professional organization to gain valuable work-related experience in an area of interest.

WHAT DOES SUNY POTSDAM REQUIRE FOR A STUDENT TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

- SUNY Potsdam requires the intern be in junior or senior standing with at least a 2.5 GPA and must have completed at least 12 semester hours at SUNY Potsdam. Some departments may have additional requirements and a higher GPA. Potential interns must meet with the Internship Coordinator prior to starting the internship, and must choose a faculty sponsor within the department they wish to receive academic credit. The intern is required to complete an Internship Learning Agreement Form, which details the learning objectives that must be met and academic assignments which must be completed before a final grade is given for the internship.

WHO DETERMINES WHETHER OR NOT AN INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT IS ACCEPTABLE AND WORTHY OF ACADEMIC CREDIT?

- The faculty sponsor within the department the student wishes to receive academic credit will determine whether or not an internship placement is acceptable.

WHO SELECTS THE STUDENT FOR AN INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT?

- The Site Supervisor selects the student intern who is most appropriate for the internship placement.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I WANT A STUDENT TO COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP WITH MY ORGANIZATION?

You should contact SUNY Potsdam's Internship Coordinator at 315-267-2863, located in the Internship Program Office to discuss the internship placement.

HOW CAN I ATTRACT A POTENTIAL STUDENT INTERN?

- By completing the Internship Request Form and submitting it to the Internship Coordinator. Your internship information will be displayed and distributed across campus. Additionally, an internship file detailing your internship placement will be kept on file in the Internship Program Office for student use. This will enable all students to become aware of your placement opportunity in an efficient, timely manner.

MUST I SEND AN INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION TO SUNY POTSDAM EACH SEMESTER I WOULD LIKE AN INTERN?

- No, you will only have to send one detailed description of the intern's responsibilities to the Internship Coordinator. The Internship Coordinator updates the listings each semester, so you can contact the Internship Coordinator and make changes when necessary.

WHEN DOES AN INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT TAKE PLACE?

- Internships can take place during the academic semesters, winter break or over the summer. How long an internship placement lasts depends on the host organization, the intern and the faculty sponsor.

HOW MANY CREDITS CAN THE INTERN RECEIVE FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

- The number of credits awarded for an internship placement is determined by the faculty sponsor. The maximum amount of credit that may be earned for all internship placements combined is 12 credit hours toward graduation. The national standard for internship credit is a minimum of 40 hours of working time for each academic credit requested. For example: 120 hours= 3 credits= 8 hrs. per week; 160 total hours= 4 credits= 10.5 hrs. per week, etc.

ARE INTERNSHIPS PAID?

- Academic internships can be paid or unpaid. The organization providing the internship placement determines whether or not an intern will be paid.

WILL I BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GRANTING THE INTERN A FINAL GRADE?

- No. The intern's faculty sponsor will award a final grade for the internship placement based on the academic component of the internship experience. However, the intern's faculty sponsor takes your written final evaluations into consideration when granting the intern a final grade.

HOW MANY TIMES PER WEEK/SEMESTER WILL I BE REQUIRED TO MEET WITH THE STUDENT INTERN?

- Meetings between you and the intern will depend on your time commitments and regular procedures. However, this should be determined prior to the student beginning the internship placement.

DO I HAVE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE FACULTY SPONSOR THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THE INTERNSHIP?

- You are not required to maintain contact with the intern's faculty sponsor during the internship placement. However, you may contact his/her faculty sponsor during the internship placement to discuss the intern's work and/or evaluation form that you will need to complete.

DO I HAVE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THE INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT?

- No. However, the Internship Coordinator will be available throughout the duration of the student's internship placement for consultation.

MAJORS OFFERED AT SUNY POTSDAM :

The School of Arts and Sciences

Anthropology
Art History
Art Studio
Biology
Business Economics
Chemistry
Criminal Justice
Computer Science
Dance
Drama
Economics
Employer Relations
English
French Language and Literature
Geology

Health and Wellness
History
Interdisciplinary Natural Science
Mathematics
Philosophy
Physics
Political Science
Psychology
Sociology
Spanish Language and Literature
Speech Communication
Student Initiated Interdepartmental Major

School of Education areas of Certification

Business Administration
Community Health
Elementary Education Pre-K-6,
Elementary Education and Early Secondary Education (English, General Science,
Mathematics, Social Studies)
Secondary Education (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, English, French,
Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies, Spanish)
Information and Communication Technology
Interdisciplinary Middle School Science/Mathematics

The Crane School of Music

Business of Music
Music Business Administration
Music Composition
Music Education
Music History and Literature
Musical Studies
Music Theory
Performance

Minors

Acting
Africana Studies
Anthropology
Archeology
Art History
Art Studio
Biology
Business Economics
Business of Music
Chemistry

Communication (Speech)
Community Health
Computer Information Sciences
Criminal Justice
Dance
Design and Technical Theater
Directing
Economics
Employment relations
Environmental Science
Environmental Studies
French Studies
Geology
Health Science
Hearing Science
History-European
History-United States
Information Technology
International Studies
Literature
Jazz Studies
Journalism
Mathematics
Museum Studies
Music Business
Native American Studies
Philosophy
Physics
Political Science
Pre-Law
Psychology
Society and Human Services
Spanish
Statistics
Speech Communication
Wilderness Education
Women's Studies
Writing

SAMPLE WORK ACTIVITIES :

Presented below are varied work activities that could be assigned to an intern:

- Create and implement marketing strategies
- Organize educational programs
- Edit course proposals and newsletters
- Assist in planning and teaching a course

- Create software and participate in client interviews
- Prepare county economic and political risk analysis
- Monitor bald-eagle nests and report findings
- Draft legislative proposals
- Research, prepare and distribute news releases, articles, memos, letters and reports on various communication activities
- Coordinate media events
- Provide individual, family, and group therapy with children and adolescents and perform psychological assessments
- Develop effective campaign strategies
- Write briefs on legislative issues
- Prepare testimony for congressional hearings
- Analyze social and economic policies problems
- Assist with the on-site inventory of vegetation and waterfowl activity
- Organize human resource systems
- Present programs to companies or service organizations
- Assist in outreach to various organizations
- Design hardware
- Supervising unmatched clients, and training volunteers.
- Conduct scientific programming
- Facilitate hands-on science and math activities
- Assist in proposal development
- Assist in classroom and creative arts program and lead parenting workshops
- Work with youth from urban, disadvantaged backgrounds