

Faculty's Guide to Establishing an Internship At SUNY Potsdam

RECENT FINDINGS:

- According to a recent National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) report, employers look first for new hires among their pool of interns and cooperative education interns. The next best candidates come from another organizations internship or co-op program. According to NACE, individuals who responded to their survey indicate that of their 1995-96 entry-level college graduate hires nearly half, 49.5 percent, had internship experience, and an average of 32.8 percent had co-op experience.
- The American Council on Education's 1996 Campus Trends Report states that 90% of schools provide academic and or faculty support for unpaid internships. Approximately 66% support paid internships for students.
- Statistics from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) report that there are presently 2,450 colleges offering internships at their schools.
- According to a survey conducted by Vault Reports, a New York-based career information company, over 78 percent of college graduates complete at least one internship by graduation and nearly 55 percent complete two or more internships
- Benita Myers, an accountant for the IRS, states, an employer can always tell the difference when interviewing a student who has been out there in an internship. There is increased maturity and knowledge of the field and experience gained which makes a big difference. (S.F.S.U. Career Guide, 1993)
- According to a study reported in the July 1997 HR Magazine, more than half of the employers answering a survey said they offer internships and 87 percent of respondents said that internships offer a good transition from school to workplace. Just over half of the employers said that college alone doesn't prepare students for the work force.

VALUE OF INTERNSHIPS:

The Internship Program staff believes:

- Internships make students more employable because they will have job-related experience;
- Faculty involvement increases the academic achievement of the student while at an internship site by providing an academic component to the program;
- Students who complete internships tend to retain and make continued use of

- what they learn;
- Employers look for students with prior work-related experience when hiring full-time employees;
- An internship will tell the student about his/her own personal strengths and preferences - qualities that need exploration before embarking on full-time employment;
- Internships give students valuable job hunting and interpersonal skills;
- Completing an internship will enable a student to meet professionals who can be valuable contacts and possibly a reference for future employment;
- Internships many times lead to permanent employment.

PROGRAM GOALS:

The commitment of all faculty and staff is essential to the success of the campus wide Internship Program. The Internship Program has been established to meet the following goals:

- To have an Internship Coordinator who is the central point of contact between faculty members, professional organizations seeking interns and students;
 - To provide SUNY Potsdam students with information, resources and services they need to apply for, attend and complete an internship;
 - To assist faculty with locating internship sites, and making site visits as requested;
 - To introduce students to the world beyond the borders of the college -- a world into which they will soon be venturing;
 - To increase the effectiveness and relevance of education by integrating academic learning with learning in an employment setting;
- To assist students in gaining contacts with potential employers.

WHAT AN INTERNSHIP IS NOT:

- Time-Out - An internship should not be viewed as time-out from school to go to work. An internship is a learning experience. A grade and credit for an internship is based on the student's academic component, not solely on the evaluation of their work performance.
- An Easy Grade - Most students report working just as hard, if not harder, on their internships as they do for classes. Pursuing an internship along with several other classes creates a demanding schedule.
- Resident Expert - Student interns bring special skills, knowledge, and fresh ideas to an organization. It is not appropriate, however, for an organization to expect an intern to be the resident expert. A professional staff person should supervise the student with some expertise in the area in which they are working.
- Go-Fer - Interns are not supposed to perform all the routine or uninteresting work within an organization. Internships should be meaningful learning

experiences. Most positions and projects will involve some routine work; however, it is recommended this be limited to twenty percent of the intern's time.

- Guarantee of a Job Offer - Sometimes an intern is offered a part or full-time employment as a result of contacts made during her/his internship. There is no guarantee that an internship will lead to a full time job.
- Adapted from: Inkster, Robert P. And Ross, Roseanna G. The Internship as Partnership: A Handbook for Campus-Based Coordinators and Advisors. Raleigh, NC: The National Society for Experiential Education, 1995.

GENERAL INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES:

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Students must be in Junior or Senior standing to complete an internship.
- A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required; however, some departments may have additional specifications and higher GPA requirements.
- Students may complete up to 12 credit hours toward their 120 hours to graduate.
- A minimum of 40 hours of working time is needed for each academic credit requested.
- The deadline to apply for an internship is the semester preceding the term in which the student would like to do the internship.
- Students must complete the Internship Learning Agreement Form with the faculty sponsor prior to beginning the internship.
- Internship registration will not be assigned until all appropriate parties have approved The Internship Learning Agreement Form.
- Internships undertaken during the academic year are included in regular full-time tuition fees if the student is a full time student. Internships undertaken during the summer session will be charged regular credit hour fees.
- Students may not work with a parent or relative at an internship site.
- Students may undertake paid or unpaid internships.
- Any changes in placement status by the student intern must be reported immediately to the Internship Coordinator and faculty sponsor.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS:

- Academic internships must first be approved by the student's faculty sponsor.
- The number of credits and whether credits can be counted toward their major must be determined by individual department policy.
- Students must recruit a faculty sponsor within the department they will receive academic credit (this person does not have to be the student's advisor).
- Internship placements should be experiences that relate significantly to a student's academic program and/or career goals as determined and approved by the student's faculty sponsor.

- In addition to site work, students will be required to complete academically meaningful assignments, as per agreement with the faculty sponsor.
- Students must satisfy all expectations for the internship, both at the work site and through academic assignments. The site supervisor assesses work performance and academic assignments are evaluated and graded by the faculty sponsor.
- Grading will rest with the faculty sponsor. (However, the evaluations from the site supervisor should be taken into consideration).

SITE REQUIREMENTS:

- Site supervisors are responsible for introducing the student intern to the professional organization and will supervise the intern throughout the duration of the internship.
- Site supervisors will be required to complete a mid-term and final evaluation of the student intern while at the site. A copy will be distributed to the faculty sponsor.

THE BENEFITS OF AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:

FACULTY:

- Creates an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, research and expertise between faculty, students and employers;
- Enriches the academic experiences of undergraduates and graduates through a structured work-learning program;
- Enables positive collaboration and cooperation across different departments and offices;
- Provides a focal point for advocacy about experiential education;
- Relieves the faculty and departments from many of the logistical and administrative concerns associated with internships.

STUDENT:

- Enhances classroom learning by integrating academic curriculum and real world experience;
- Offers the student intern the opportunity to learn how to structure goals geared towards life/work planning;
- Provides the student the opportunity to gain valuable hands on experience while examining an area of potential employment;
- Assists students in gaining experience in supervisor relationships, cooperation with co-workers and communication skills;
- Teaches students valuable job-search skills such as career assessment, resume writing and interviewing techniques;
- Encourages students to network and collaborate with professionals.

EMPLOYER:

- Provides a vehicle for screening potential employees;
- Lowers training costs by hiring former interns;
- Enables the organization to gain fresh, innovative staff assistance at low cost;
- Increases the interaction with the College, thus gaining better access to faculty expertise;
- Offers staff the opportunity to positively contribute to the professional growth of an individual;

SUNY COLLEGE AT POTSDAM:

- Assists in the recruitment and retention of students. Internships enhance prospects for professional employment after graduation, which attract student and parent interest;
- Keeps college curricula up-to-date with changes in industry through constant input from the employment sector.
- Expands the range of educational opportunities for students;
- Builds a positive relationship between the college and the surrounding business institutions;

INTERNSHIP TERMINOLOGY:

FACULTY SPONSOR:

The Faculty Sponsor will:

- Assist students 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 that the faculty sponsor will approve;
- Award credit and a final grade based on the student's completion of assignments;
- Keep in contact with students throughout the duration of their internships, in order to appraise the student's progress.
- Note: A faculty sponsor can be different from an assigned/selected Academic Advisor. Also, a faculty sponsor may be from any academic major.

INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR:

The Internship Coordinator is the staff member from the Internship Program Office who will:

- Provide students with the assistance they will need to participate in an internship. This includes researching an organization, preparing a resume and cover letter and teaching effective interviewing and job search techniques
- Assist faculty in establishing and visiting new internship sites
- Distribute all internship opportunities the Internship Program Office receives to appropriate departments;
- Keep a database of all internship sites for student and alumni use;
- Keep a file on all students completing an internship to ensure all interns are accounted for;
- Collect, record and distribute mid-term and final evaluation forms of student interns. A copy of both evaluation forms will be sent to the Faculty Sponsor;
- Evaluate the program on a bi-annual basis.
- Program results will be distributed upon request.

INTERNSHIP SITE:

The organization providing the internship opportunity. The internship site plays a large part in producing challenging work assignments that will complement a student's academic program. Internship work activities should focus on projects specifically related to the student's academic area of interest.

SITE SUPERVISOR:

The Site Supervisor will:

- Be directly responsible for the student intern during the internship experience;
 - Introduce the student to the organization and fellow employees, teach the student intern about the career field and provide training, if needed;
 - Complete a mid-term and final evaluation of the student's performance while at the site. (The Internship Coordinator will send evaluation forms directly to the employer)
 - Meet regularly with the student intern;
 - Keep the interns busy and directed towards their learning objectives
 - Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility
 - Encourage professionalism by assisting interns in developing human relations skills, decision-making abilities and managing office politics;
 - Develop connections between the intern's work and departmental goals
- Maintain an open channel of communication with formal and informal

INTERNSHIP LEARNING AGREEMENT FORM:

The [Internship Learning Agreement Form](#) outlines the work and learning objectives of the internship. Internship credit is based on the academic component of the internship. The Internship Learning Agreement Form outlines the following factors:

- Content of the job - What are the job duties and responsibilities?
- Training - What type of training will the student receive?
- Time contributed - How much time will the student be contributing?
- Site supervision - How will the student intern be supervised?
- Academic assignments - Will be negotiated with the faculty sponsor and subject to the requirements of the department through which the academic credit is awarded.
- Grading - Will be determined by the Faculty Sponsor and the specific academic department. Grades will be based on the completion of assignments and evaluations from the site supervisor.
- Credit - Is approved and granted by the faculty sponsor and the department awarding the internship. Decisions will be guided by individual departmental policy. The number of credits must be determined before the student begins the internship.
- Evaluation - Each student intern will be required to submit an evaluation form of the internship site, for potential future use of the site.

A FACULTY SPONSORS CHECKLIST FOR SPONSORING AN INTERN:

____ Require students to review the guide to Establishing an Internship packet provided by Internship Program Office.

____ Have the student meet with the Internship Program Internship Coordinator to discuss the procedures they must follow before obtaining an internship. The Internship Program staff will then assist the student through the steps of finding and establishing an internship. The Internship Program staff will:

- Orient students to the internship program
- Provide resources for the student to research different sites
- Help students prepare a resume and cover letter
- Prepare the student for the phone and/or personal interview

____ After the student has completed a resume, cover letter, sent them out to three or four organizations and secured an internship, the student and yourself should arrange a meeting to discuss the Internship Learning Agreement form.

____ Review and discuss the learning objectives on the Internship Learning Agreement Form and make revisions/suggestions as needed. The learning objectives will be the most essential part of the form, as they are geared towards the educational goals of the internship.

____ Make certain the student is cognizant of the dates to communicate with one another, the amount of credit they will receive and the assignments that will be required of them.

____ Review and sign the Internship Learning Agreement Form. The student will then take the form to get all the needed signatures, the last being the Internship Coordinator. The Internship Coordinator will keep the original agreement form, and send a copy to you. A file will be kept for all the students completing an internship. This is to ensure that information on all students completing internships are accounted for and to assist in program evaluation.

____ Contact the Internship Coordinator if there are any questions or concerns about your intern throughout the duration of the student's internship.

____ At the close of the semester and all required assignments are completed, you hand in a final grade.

REQUIREMENTS:

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

- The student must be enrolled at SUNY Potsdam and have Junior or Senior standing (60 credit hours earned toward graduation). The student must have completed at least 12 semester hours earned toward graduation from SUNY Potsdam. The student must have a minimum GPA of a 2.5 or higher, however some departments may have additional specifications and higher GPA requirements. A student can complete an internship during the Fall Semester, Winter Break, Spring Semester or during the Summer.

WHAT PAPERWORK OR FORMS DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE BEFORE SPONSORING AN INTERN?

- The only form you will have to sign is the Internship Learning Agreement Form. Additional paperwork may be required depending on your specific department's prerequisites.

CAN STUDENTS COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP BEFORE THEY SIGN UP FOR AN INTERNSHIP COURSE?

- No. A student must register for an internship before beginning an internship. Academic credit may not be earned for hours worked before the student is registered for the internship.

