

Building an Effective Internship with UMW

Internship basics

A. National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition:

“An internship is 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.”

B. Think about the following questions:

- a. Will your internship be for academic credit/not? (You can ask the student this).
- b. If for credit, how many hours a week will the student work? (42 hours/semester for each credit).
- c. Will it be a paid internship or not?

C. Keep in mind the rhythm of the academic calendar:

- a. The deadline to enroll (if for credit) is the first week of the semester. Students are usually unavailable during finals or over semester breaks.

D. Want to post an internship with our Center for Career and Professional Development?

Email Andrea Cordray at acordray@umw.edu and visit their website to learn more.

Thinking about the work of an internship:

A. Substantive

The internship will be most meaningful to your organization & your intern if it is mission-related in some way. This can certainly include things like fundraising, event planning, donor relations, day to day client services, revising organizational policies: all of these things relate to getting the work of the organization done! But work that is more basically clerical, or tidying – less clear for the student how this helps the organization, and the work of the

organization.

B. Educational

What would you like interns to learn while working with your organization? Who would you like them to meet? What would you like them to take away from their time with your organization?

Internships can be important for non-profits as they assist organizations with limited resources in realizing their missions. They can often also be useful in terms of spreading awareness, passion and commitment to the cause of the organization. College interns can prove valuable lifelong advocates for these issues.

C. Scope of work

Is this for a special project/temporary/time sensitive? Recruit for this project, this time. The downside to this type of internship is also the sense of urgency: needing an intern for this specific semester, to do this specific task. The focus then turns to effective recruitment for that internship.

Or does the internship address an ongoing organizational need? If so, can you survive the semesters when you don't have an intern? A well-designed internship could be posted, recruited and filled for many semesters. This is especially the case for an internship for which students have positive experiences, and can be encouraged to tell others about.

Thinking about the resources required for the internship

A. Supervision/coaching:

- a. Who will the intern report to?
- b. How frequently will they meet with this person?
- c. Does this person have the time to devote to supporting the intern?

B. Orientation/training:

- a. What kind of training will the intern need to be successful?
- b. Who can provide it, when, in what format?

C. Material resource needs:

- a. Where will the intern be?
- b. Do they need space?
- c. A phone?
- d. A computer?

From Stevenson College, some sample internship tasks – to spur creative thinking¹:

Accounting/ Business/ Finance

- Create documents/spreadsheets
- Attend client and staff meetings
- Review financial information
- Provide customer service
- Participate in training sessions
- Analyze data to identify areas of opportunity and efficiency
- Generate financial forecast and cost recovery reports
- Engage in activities related to accounts payable/ accounts receivable
- Participate in audits and generate tax reports

Arts/ Design

- Create artwork and designs
- Schedule/attend client meetings; communicate with clients about their designs
- Proofread communications
- Work on a specific project or multiple projects
- Create portfolio of projects
- Design email templates, logos, graphics for emails and blogs, HTML build-out, Web banners, website updates, and look book concepts and layouts
- Research outlets for design opportunities

Education

- Create and implement lesson plans
- Decorate/organize classroom
- Assist students with projects
- Attend and participate in teacher/ staff meetings

¹ These are organized into distinct academic/issue areas – any internship could include a mix of these; and our liberal arts students are well-suited to address needs across these boundaries. But the list presented this way may also spark new ideas for internship tasks, and majors to recruit from.

- Monitor student progress
- Communicate with parents and other school/ program staff and administrators

Government

- Attend committee meetings
- Prepare meeting minutes
- Maintain blogs/ social media
- Create or modify documents and memos
- Work with lobbyists
- Assist with research projects
- Research legislative and regulatory issues
- Human Resources
- File applications from prospective candidates, process applications, and purge outdated applications
- Schedule interviews; generate letters/emails con
- Create video storyboards and scripts
- Support client accounts

Non-Profit/ Human Services

- Engage in fundraising and donor activities
- Coordinate volunteer activities
- Prepare news releases and communications
- Support staff in program development and implementation; transcribe case notes
- Observe or provide direct care to clients in programs to ensure their well-being

Paralegal/ Law

- Review and approve proposed contracts; act as a liaison with external lawyers and technical personnel
- Analyze and identify legal issues in cases
- Research methods of acquiring further evidence including affidavit or interrogatories, further hearings, etc./ conduct legal research

- Communicate with clients; attend staff/client meetings
- Organize files/notes
- Draft/ prepare legal documents

Videography/ Production

- Develop and produce storyboards and videos
- Produce clips and B-roll for press, presenters, website, etc.
- Watermark video of full pieces, copy/create repertoire DVDs
- Update/maintain video database
- Assist with post-production activities
- Schedule/attend video/photography shoots

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