

Steps to Creating an Internship Program

Internships can be valuable tools for both employers and students alike. They provide low cost labor for those projects employers just never seem to find time to do, and a hands-on learning experience for students seeking on the job college credit. Establishing a formal program is an important step in implementing an effective internship program. Below are suggested guidelines to help you begin.

Internships may be:

- For credit or for experience (will depend on college or university requirements)
- Full or part time
- Coincide with an academic semester or term, or during summer break on an individualized schedule

First steps include:

- **Identify the intern supervisor:** It is important that both you and your student know who the 'boss' is. This employee will be the direct contact for students on scheduling, training, and feedback. The supervisor will be required to provide guidance on specific projects, be available to answer questions, sign any necessary documentation for college credit and complete a written evaluation for the program. Through the GO-i-INTERN program, employers will be offered the opportunity for mentor training. The intern's direct supervisor and/or other employees involved in direct training will be encouraged to attend these sessions.
- **Determine meaningful duties:** Before advertising the internship opportunity, the employer should determine exactly what project(s) the intern will be assisting with and/or directly responsible for, goals for completion and other details of the position. Remember that your intern could be a possible future employee – providing him or her with real work experiences will keep the intern engaged, provide valuable knowledge in the field, and provide you with completed tasks.
- **Write a job description:** The internship position description will be posted to the GO-i-INTERN website and may be used in other online and print marketing materials. Just as you advertise for any position within your company, there are key components that should be included for the internship job description as well. Sections may include:
 - Organization Overview – brief description of company with link to company website
 - Minimum GPA (based on 4.0 if required)
 - Degree track – specify whether you desire a student working towards a two-year, four-year or vocational degree; class standing (freshman-senior); preferred field (engineering, IT, accounting, etc.)
 - Timeframe – specify when your intern will be needed (during the semester, from May-August, June only, etc.)
 - Weekly Schedule – specify whether or not your intern will work full or part time, how many hours per week, days, etc. Remember that if the internship is not paid they will likely have second jobs and interns hired during a semester may have other classes. Some college and university programs require a minimum number of internship hours in order to earn academic credit. Include your preference, but be sure to discuss these issues with each applicant.
 - Requirements and Skills – remember your intern is working to learn and will likely not have experience in the field, however, do list any computer or personality traits you desire.
 - Other – identify whether the position is paid, travel required, housing stipend included, application deadline, etc. Details may be discussed more in individual interviews, but students will be weighing their options early in the spring semester and the more they know about your position, the more likely they will be to apply.
- **Posting your job description:** You may post your internship job description online at <http://intern.owensboro.com>. If you have trouble accessing or navigating the site, please contact our office at 270-926-4339. Since most colleges will be finished with the spring semester by mid-May, students will begin making summer plans early in the year. We suggest submitting your job description as soon as possible with a deadline for application around April. Students may submit an application directly to our office through the website or directly to your company if a contact is listed. All advertisement by our office will direct students to the GO-i-INTERN website in order to search all available internship positions within the community. You may also choose to advertise the position through other media outlets such as newspapers, college newsletters, online, etc.
- **Selecting an intern:** Hiring an intern will be similar to the process used to hire all employees. Students will be encouraged to submit resumes, and directed on where to complete an application if required in your job description. After selecting the students you wish to interview from the resumes and applications received, you can begin setting up interviews. If you have several candidates from one school or region, it may be beneficial to host an interview day at a central location. Our office will also supply interview space, or you may invite students to your facility. Be sure to discuss any academic requirements by the college or university (minimum hours

needed, paperwork, evaluations, etc.). Also discuss specific duties and skills pertaining to the position and answer all questions the student may have about pay, housing, travel, hours, etc.

- **HR Issues:** Employers are encouraged to pay interns an hourly wage or provide some type of stipend for their services whenever possible. It is important to assess your budget now, and determine what incentive you can offer students during the internship timeline. The US Dept. of Labor requires an unpaid internship meet the following six criteria:
 1. Interns cannot displace regular employees
 2. Interns are not guaranteed a job at the conclusion of the internship experience; however, the employer may opt to do so
 3. Both employer and student understand there is no wage entitlement for the time spent in the internship
 4. Interns must receive training, even if taking time to do so somewhat impedes their work
 5. Interns must gain hands-on experience
 6. Training is primarily for the benefit of the intern, not the organization
- To ensure your internship position meets the above criteria and complies with other state and federal laws please contact the following organizations for more information:
- **United States Department of Labor**
(866) 4-USA-DOL
<http://www.dol.gov/>

Kentucky Department of Labor

502-564-3070

<http://www.labor.ky.gov>

Review **KRS 341.055(17)** at <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/KRS/341-00/055.PDF> for information on Unemployment Insurance requirements

- **GO-iINTERN Details:** The GO-iINTERN staff is currently seeking opportunities to promote our program on college and university campuses both locally and regionally. During summer 2009, our office will provide networking opportunities for all participants of the GO-iINTERN program. Events may include a community orientation, Chamber Young Professional Day, and summer wrap up. Mentor training is also being considered for supervisors. We will attempt to provide the best schedule to meet everyone's needs effectively, but encourage companies to allow interns to attend the networking events if they fall during work hours.
- If you have further questions on how to get involved with GO-iINTERN or establishing your own internship opportunity, please contact our office at 270-926-4339 or use the "**Contact Us**" form on our w