

# INTERNSHIP GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

Strengthen your workforce in partnership with the Internship Program at College of DuPage.

 College of DuPage



Thank you for investing your time and resources in our students' college internship experience. This booklet answers common questions you might have and gives you guidelines for our program.

## WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships at College of DuPage educate our students and prepare them to enter the workforce. Before hiring an intern, it is important to understand the definition of an internship. College of DuPage defines an internship as “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.



# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

## COMPENSATION

It is important to be aware of the differences in hiring an intern and an employee. If a student is hired as a paid employee the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires that he or she is paid at least a minimum wage. If a student is hired as an intern, the employer is not required to provide compensation, however, the internship must comply with the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Standards for unpaid internships. Specifically, the DOL states that the following criteria must be met in an unpaid internship in the for-profit sector:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment.
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern.
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff.

- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded.
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

The full fact sheet can be found at:

**[www.cod.edu/employers](http://www.cod.edu/employers)**. College of DuPage recommends each employer consult human resources or legal counsel before posting an unpaid internship.

## CREDIT

Some students will elect to pursue academic credit while others will not. Please note only College of DuPage may determine if an internship meets departmental criteria for awarding credit. Please note that when granted, academic credit is not a substitute for compensation. Students must pay tuition for all internship credits they earn.

## RECRUITING/HIRING

- All internships should be posted on the College of DuPage electronic job board. Directions to post can be found at **[www.cod.edu/employers](http://www.cod.edu/employers)**.
- Employers may also sign up to recruit for internships through our Campus Recruiting system. To schedule a day to visit campus, please call (630) 942-2230.
- Before conducting any recruiting at College of DuPage, it is important to review the Recruiting Policies and Procedures available at **[www.cod.edu/careerservices](http://www.cod.edu/careerservices)**.

# CRITERIA FOR EACH INTERNSHIP

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a position description with desired qualifications.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives/ goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is guidance and supervision by a qualified and appropriate employee who will assign duties to the intern that are career-related, progressive and challenging.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.
- The internship should be conducted in an acceptable professional location.



# JOB OR INTERNSHIP?

Sometimes it can be confusing to distinguish a job from an internship. To assist with clarity, please refer to the chart below. Use of this chart, in conjunction with the internship criteria, can help provide clarity when determining the appropriate classification for your position.

	<b>JOB</b>	<b>INTERNSHIP</b>
LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT	Permanent	Temporary (typically the length of a semester)
SALARY	Paid	Paid or unpaid
OUTCOME OF WORK PERFORMED	Company prosperity/Growth	Student learning; some employer benefit
EXPECTATION OF EMPLOYEE	Fulfill job responsibilities	Learn and develop new skills through completion of projects
QUALIFICATIONS OF EMPLOYEE AT HIRE	Has desired skills necessary to perform job	Limited skills/knowledge; will substantially grow these through experience
REASON FOR HIRE	Fill position	Varies: develop talent pipeline, assists with projects, etc. Does not fill routine employee role
EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY	Supervise	Mentor, guide, educate, supervise
WHO BENEFITS MOST	Employer	Student

# CREATING AN INTERNSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTION

Once you've confirmed you do want to hire an intern, the next step is to create a position description. This description should include the following:

## POSITION TITLE (THINK BEYOND "INTERN")

## PURPOSE/SCOPE OF POSITION

- What is the intern being hired to do?
- What are the goals for the position?

## RESPONSIBILITIES/TASKS

- What will the intern spend his or her time doing?
- What projects and tasks will the intern perform?
- What technology will they use?
- With what other professional staff will they work?

## REQUIRED OR DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS

- What skills must the student have to be considered?
- What skills or qualifications would you prefer?
- Make sure to include both technical and "soft" skills

## LEARNED COMPETENCIES

- Internships must be learning based, thus it is important to outline what the student will learn from this experience.
- Think about what competencies a student will have at the conclusion of this internship that gives them an advantage over other students.

## SUPERVISOR

- Please include information about who the supervisor is and his or her background.
- It's important the intern be supervised by someone considered an expert in the field. The intern must not be considered the expert.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

- Describe how you want the candidates to apply.
- Articulate what should be included in the application. Employers most commonly request a cover letter and resume, however, it is not uncommon to ask for supporting materials related to the position such as a portfolio, writing sample, letters of recommendation, etc.



# SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

## Making the internship experience a positive one.

### CONDUCT ORIENTATION/ON-BOARDING

Taking adequate time to provide a thorough orientation and training for the student intern will benefit the student, and allow the organization to reap productivity and effectiveness from the intern. Highlighted areas during this training include:

- Organization Mission
- Organizational Structure
- Organizational Rules, Policies and Expectations
- Definition of the Intern Responsibilities

### GIVE THE INTERN REAL WORK

Students want to work and they want to learn – so give them meaningful projects.

### PROVIDE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE OF THE JOB DUTIES

Interns want to understand the culture of the organization, get to know other professionals and observe and learn as much as they can.

- Invite them to observe a meeting
- Help them set up informational interviews
- Take them to lunch
- Allow them to sit in on a brainstorming session

The opportunity to learn outside the typical daily routine provides some of the most valuable knowledge.

### DESCRIBE THE “BIG PICTURE.”

Interns will do better work if they understand the “big picture.” Even if some of it seems obvious. Take a few extra minutes to provide background, details, and vision for the project or task.

### ASSIGN A MENTOR

Make sure the intern has someone who can serve as a mentor. Ideally, this isn't the same person as the supervisor, however, anyone can be an effective mentor if they are committed to teaching and guiding the student.

### PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Students need feedback to make improvements and learn. Given casually or formally through assessments and regularly scheduled meetings, this critical input helps the student prepare for their next professional step.

### REPORT A HIRE

You can report a hire on the College Central Network, [www.collegecentral.com/dupage](http://www.collegecentral.com/dupage), or by contacting the Career Services Center at [csc@cod.edu](mailto:csc@cod.edu).



The College of DuPage Career Services staff is always available for consultation or assistance with internships. We thank each employer for their commitment to educating our students and assisting them in becoming career ready.

## **CAREER SERVICES CENTER INTERNSHIP GUIDE**

Division of Student Affairs  
Student Services Center (SSC), Room 3258  
(630) 942-2230  
csc@cod.edu



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