



OFFICE OF

CAREER EDUCATION

10 STEPS TO CREATING AN EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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- 1. Write a job description:** Writing a job description helps you to better understand how you will use your intern and what you want them to do. And the written description gives your interns a clear sense direction, responsibilities and goals while at your company.
- 2. Set beginning and end dates:** Defined dates help the intern schedule and plan their life. Because interns are enrolled in school, consider dates that coincide with the semesters for Marshall University. At the end of the internship mark the occasion with a formal closure, exit interview, evaluation or just a nice lunch out to thank them for their service.
- 3. Create an intern manual:** Many interns have no previous experience in an office environment, and may not be aware of office decorum or etiquette. To avoid drama and distractions in the workplace, give your interns a training manual that brings them up to speed on what's expected and how things are done at your organization. The handbook should contain your general office policies, dress code, computer/Internet-use policies, office hours, work schedule, confidentiality policy, a Twitter/Facebook or social media policy, a description of how interns are evaluated, and a disciplinary policy.
- 4. Recruit and interview:** Post internship positions on your own site and JobTrax via Marshall University. Once you have your candidates, interview them and put them through a similar hiring process as employee candidates go through. This treatment is good experience for the intern and it helps you select a candidate who might make a good hire once their internship is completed.
- 5. Reserve a cubical or work station:** Interns, like employees or contractors, need a dedicated place work. And, unless the job is manual labor, they'll need a computer, a company e-mail address, a login and password to access to your network, and a phone.
- 6. On-board your intern:** Plan a day or two of on-boarding activities. Make sure your interns have meetings with each employee they're likely to interact with, during the meetings the employee can explain how they contribute to the company and its goals. Also take time to familiarize your interns with the company's processes, systems and culture.
- 7. Pay your interns:** There are two good reasons you should pay your interns. 1) They'll be highly motivated and act more responsibly. 2) There's a fine line between unpaid interns and unpaid employees and you may be violating the rule for unpaid interns as defined by Fair Labor Standards Act if you don't pay them. What is the average pay for interns? According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2011 Internship Survey, interns at the undergrad level earn an average \$18 per hour, while those at the grad level earn just more than \$24 per hour.
- 8. Assign one person to manage the intern:** Interns require more supervision than employees, and when they don't get the guidance they need, they often choose to be unproductive rather than risk making mistakes. The best manager for an intern is an experienced employee, who is accessible (i.e. not in meetings) throughout the day. Take your coaching and mentoring moment seriously.
- 9. Give your interns meaningful work:** Interns want responsibilities, not just tasks. Tasks are one time, short assignments such as making copies or filing invoices. Responsibilities are long-term areas of ownership or projects such as coordinating a program, managing your company Facebook page, or creating a library of customer testimonials. Also, it's good practice to invite your interns to meetings that pertain to their team, department or projects.
- 10. Set your expectations:** Intern perfection is rare. Set your expectations fairly and be prepared for inconsistency in the quality of their work and a mishap now and then. Use the rough episodes to help the intern develop themselves personally and professionally.