

Student Edition **Internship Guide**



7 Step Internship Overview

1

Establish Employer Expectations - Set an Employer Meeting or Conversation to establish employer expectations. The most critical step for securing internships is to understand each party's understanding of the term internship. Internship, as a term, varies among colleges and employers. **A question to ask yourself: Have I communicated what I hope to gain from completing this internship with Blackburn College and your future employer?**

2

Academic Requirements - Determining how a given internship is tied to an intern's academic program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit. A learning agreement between the college, student, and employer must be completed (each academic program has a different approach for completing departmental contracts & forms). **Question to ask yourself: Have I connected with an academic advisor or faculty member to receive registration information and complete the proper paperwork to obtain credit?**

3

Learning Outcomes - Internship learning outcomes are learning targets for students. They provide interns with an understanding of what they should or would like to be able to learn by the end of the internship. **Question to ask yourself: Will I receive credit or non-credit for completing this internship?**

4

Compensation - Internships can be either paid, unpaid, or stipend based. Pay for interns varies by location, type of industry, etc. Most employers determine pay based on the students' class level and types of responsibilities. However, in most situations, interns working at for-profit organizations must be paid at least the minimum wage and any applicable overtime. **Question(s) to ask yourself? Will I receive payment for this internship? If so, what will my compensation be throughout my term?**

5

Student Expectations & Employer Guidelines - What do students and employers hope to achieve from the program? Employers are encouraged to evaluate current business activities and consider what ongoing work an intern would like to expand or projects the intern would like to initiate or complete. **Question(s) to ask yourself: What can an intern do for the employer? What would be daily tasks or monthly expectations?**

6

Supervision - Internship supervisors or hiring managers should emphasize the importance of real-life work assignments during a manager/mentor orientation and frequently communicate with the student interns throughout the internship term. Using mentors or a project team can provide the structure and guidance that an intern requires, particularly in the early stages of the internship. **Question to ask yourself: Who will be your supervisor? What is their style of leadership?**

7

Evaluation - Effective supervision throughout the internship process makes for a more satisfactory experience for the student and the company. At the end of the semester, a final evaluation is provided to the company, which is the most significant aspect of the intern's grade (if for Academic Credit) and experience. **Question to ask yourself: What type of evaluation will you complete at the end of your internship?**

What is an internship?

An internship is a short-term, usually semester-long, opportunity for students to gain valuable hands-on experience in their field of study/ interest. An internship has many practical benefits for students while also enhancing academic programs and satisfying the needs of employers.

Students whom Complete internships have access to:

- Practical experience and experiential learning that is completed and related to your academic and professional goals.
- Opportunity to build knowledge and skills, exposure to opportunities, and connections to professionals in your field.
- Can be paid or unpaid.

Benefits of Completing an Internship:

- Obtain experience related to major(s)
- Develop transferable skills
- Build professional network(s)
- Explore career options

Checklist to get started:

- Talk with your advisor
- Determine if completing an internship for credit is an option.
- Is an internship required for your major?
- How many hours are required?
- Explore featured opportunities by following Career Services on social media or by creating a Symplicity Account, etc.



Step 1: Employer Meeting or Conversation - Establishing Expectations

- If you are interested in a particular internship, set a meeting with the employer to conduct an Informational Interview or to initiate a conversation to determine employer expectations.
- An essential step for securing internships is to expand each party's understanding of the term internship. Internship as a term varies among colleges and employers.

When meeting with employers, a term of your internship should include integrating a learning outcome.

- A learning outcome, when discussing internships, could consider goals related to student or leadership skill development. In addition, an internship allows students to develop skill competencies specific to an occupation or profession.
- Ultimately, a student should desire to increase skills for understanding and working with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures and work effectively within various environments.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 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 allow students 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. Thus, assessing the organizational culture of the organization and understanding expectations will be critical for the student, employer, and college campus.

Step 2: Academic Requirements - Meet with an Academic Advisor or Faculty Member

- The most vital component of an internship is receiving credit or successfully satisfying the terms of said internship upon completion.
- Determining to what extent the internship will be linked to the intern's academic program should be considered before agreeing to accept an internship.
- Completion of an internship may include integrating coursework into an experiential opportunity to receive academic credit.
- Completion of a learning agreement between the college, student, and employer must be submitted to the academic advisor or approving faculty member. Each academic program has a different approach to completing departmental contracts & forms.
- It is the responsibility of the student to connect with an academic advisor or faculty member to receive registration information and complete the proper paperwork to receive credit.
- To gain academic credit for an internship, students must enroll in a specified internship course.

Step 3. Learning Outcomes - Establish the Terms of the Internship

- Internship learning outcomes are learning targets for students. Once again, learning outcomes provide interns with an outline of what interns should or would like to learn by the end of the internship.
- Connecting competencies to specific projects or tasks can be achieved.
- Whether the internship is for-credit or non-credit, learning outcomes should always be considered and listed in the internship job description before students commits to work terms.
- Learning outcomes will also provide internship supervisors with detailed examples for evaluation purposes.

Step 4. Compensation - Determine your pay rate or salary

- Internships can be either paid, unpaid, or stipend based. Pay for interns varies by location, type of industry, etc. Most employers determine pay based on the students' class level and types of responsibilities.
- The vast majority of interns working at for-profit organizations must be paid at least the minimum wage and any applicable overtime. Recommended pay is \$15-18 per hour. Paid interns are W-2 employees with the same protections as your other employees, in other words, interns are temporary employees treated virtually the same as regular employees with respect to labor law.
- As part of the planning process for your internship program, compensation must be considered. In some industries, unpaid internships are quite common. In others, internships can be very well-paid.
- An employer should consider what is appropriate or standard for the particular industry.

Step 5. Student Expectations & Employer Guidelines

- What do students and employers hope to achieve from the program? Employers are encouraged to evaluate current business activities and consider what ongoing work they would like to expand or projects they would like to initiate or complete.
- Employers should examine their company's recruiting needs (i.e. departments that are expecting growth and/or lacking new employees).
 - What can an intern do for the employer?
 - What would be daily tasks or monthly expectations?
- Determine specific projects and/or tasks for the intern that provide a practical extension of the intern's academic courses.

Step 6. Supervision & Student Development

- Internship supervisors or hiring managers should emphasize the significance of work assignments during a manager/mentor orientation. Supervisors can help students understand how each individual assignment works together to enhance larger operational initiatives.
- Employers should frequently communicate with the student interns throughout the internship term. Such communication could include task exploration, in which students are encouraged to complete additional tasks that will be helpful for the department.
- The use of mentors or a project team can provide the structure and guidance that an intern requires, particularly in the early stages of the internship.

Step 7. Internship Completion & Evaluation

- Effective supervision throughout the internship process makes for a more satisfactory experience for the student and the company.
- Employers should provide an evaluation to students at the end of the academic semester.
- Providing an intern with feedback about their performance and skill set provides a great learning opportunity for the student.



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