Internship Best Practices

Creating Internships that Work for Organizations, Managers, & Interns
Introductions

Workshop content was developed by:

> Career & Internship Center
  – Briana Randall, Director – Internship Project
  – Emma O’Neill-Myers, Associate Director for Employer Relations

> Foster School of Business
  – Josina Garnham, Experiential Learning Manager

> Career Center @ Engineering
  – Arianna Aldebot, Associate Director
Outline

- Foundations
- Setting your organization up for success
- Convincing & coaching managers
- Creating high impact experiences for students
- Finding the right intern
- Hiring Huskies
- Wrap-up
Foundations
Definition

What is an internship?

> A form of experiential learning that allows a student to do one or more of the following:
  – Integrate academic learning with “hands-on” experience
  – Develop or refine specific skills
  – Explore a career interest

> Most internships:
  – Require 10+ hours a week
  – Over the course of 10+ weeks (length of 1 academic quarter)
Definition

How are internships different than jobs?

> Internships focus on student learning to a higher degree
  > Should not be simply to advance the operations of the employer
  > or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform
  > Interns and supervisors should create clearly defined learning objectives related to the intern’s academic/professional goals
  > Skills learned must be transferrable

> Internships are often project-based

> Internships typically have a defined end date
Definition

Similar to other roles....

> There is intentional **onboarding**, ongoing **supervision**, and frequent **feedback** by an experienced supervisor who models professional and ethical behavior.

> The **resources, equipment, and facilities** necessary are provided by the host employer.
Generation Z

> Born between 1996ish and 2010ish

> Currently ages 7ish to 21ish

> Recent article:

> Interesting videos:
  – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1HyDn7dZ1o&t=15s
Generation Z

What they value in positions:

> Opportunities to grow / learn / advance
> Chance to work hard / contribute / innovate
> Positions with value / meaning
> Flexibility
Generation Z

What they want in organizations:

> Value corporate social responsibility and community involvement

> Stability / security (many had parents lose jobs after 9/11 and/or in 2008ish)
Generation Z

What they value in bosses:

> Want bosses who can teach / coach them

> Value honesty / integrity / authenticity in bosses and employers

> Value face to face communication
Setting Your Organization Up for Success
Answer Big Picture Questions

> What are you trying to accomplish with an intern program?

> Would internships fulfill identified needs?

> Would an internship program fit your org culture?
Get Stakeholder Buy-In

> Do you have support at the top?

> Do you have managers willing to devote time to providing learning experiences for interns?

> Can managers identify interesting projects for interns?
  – For students with little experience, working few hours?

> Will somebody help you with recruiting, onboarding, etc.?
Think Through Intern Logistics

- Hours per week, total # of weeks
- Work space
- Pay – highly encouraged!
  - Helps for-profits stay in compliance with federal guidelines
  - Helps employers stay competitive – 88% of for-profit internships in HuskyJobs are paid
  - Increases diversity of the applicant pool
  - Increases investment/engagement of all involved
- Permanent hire conversion – expectations and process
Think Through Manager Logistics

> Who can serve as intern managers?

> How are they expected to contribute to intern selection and onboarding?

> Are there guidelines for discussing intern goals?

> How often are they expected to have 1:1s with interns?

> Intern performance:
  – How is performance evaluated?
  – How is performance data collected...from whom...by whom?
  – How is performance feedback communicated to interns?
  – How often is performance feedback given?
Build a Timeline

Typically takes about 12 weeks

- Desired intern start date
- Offer date
- Interviews
- Applications due
- Job description posted
- Job description drafted, reviewed, and finalized
- Project identified and described
- Manager identified & coached
Activity

> What’s something you probably need to give a little more thought to?

> Who in your organization could be a thought partner regarding that issue?
Convincing & Coaching Managers
Internships allow students to:
  – Integrate **academic learning** with “hands-on” experience
  – Develop or refine specific **skills**
  – Explore a **career interest**

Internships focus on **student learning** more than jobs
  – Should **not simply advance** the operations of the employer
  – Interns and supervisors should create **clearly defined learning objectives** related to the intern’s academic/professional goals
  – Many internships are **project-based**
Educate on the Basics

> Most internships are **9-20 hours** per week
  > Up to 40 in the summer

> Typically last about **10 weeks**

> Defined beginning and **end date**
Sell the Benefits

Benefits to supervisors....

> Mutual learning
  – “teaching someone is a great way to learn or relearn something yourself”

> Mentoring
  – “it’s a pleasure to help them navigate the company and learn how to be successful in their careers”
  – “knowing we can help them grow professionally is amazing!”
Sell the Benefits

Benefits to organization...

> Fresh ideas, energetic, innovative, eager
> They can produce some amazing results
> Interns know how to reach younger target audiences
> Build a pipeline for future hiring
  - In a national, mostly corporate, employer survey:
    > 72.7% offer rate (asking interns to stay on)
    > 85.2% acceptance rate (interns agreeing to stay on)
Prepare for Challenges

> **Time**
  - Spent directly - training, meeting with intern, etc.
  - Used indirectly - time away from one’s own projects, etc.

> **Projects**
  - Thinking of interesting, appropriate projects
  - Figuring out how to hand off a project
Outline Tasks & Time

- Think of project
- Write or review position description
- Selection process
- Organizational onboarding
- Task-specific training
- Initial discussion of goals
- Regular meetings
- Performance evaluations
Suggest Tangible Best Practices

> Pick a few from the next section
  – Onboarding
  – Learning
  – Engagement
  – Projects
  – Relationships
  – Exposure
  – Feedback
  – Reflection
Activity

> What will be your biggest challenge with managers?

> What is your plan to address it?
Creating High Impact Experiences for Students
Onboarding

> Importance
  – Helps everyone start on the same page with clear expectations
  – Helps interns feel welcomed and valued

> Ideas
  – Create a first day checklist
  – Facilitate structured orientation the first day or two
  – Share written expectations such as attire, hours, absences, etc.
  – Tour of facility
  – Lowdown on unwritten things like nearest coffee shop, cleanest bathrooms, team traditions, etc.
  – Assign a buddy, who is not the intern’s direct supervisor
Learning

> Importance
  – Interns are learners first, contributors second
  – Gen Z interns want to learn and grow
  – Showing interest in their learning can contribute to intern commitment, productivity, and desire to stay long-term

> Ideas
  – When you get a meeting invitation, think “could my intern benefit from attending with me?” or “could this meeting benefit from having an intern’s perspective?”
  – Ask interns to mention a few things they want to learn in the cover letter and/or interview
  – In the first week, work with interns to co-create learning goals and periodically refer back to the goals
Engagement

> Importance
  – Internships teach students about the real world and success requires commitment, focused participation, accountability, etc.
  – Without full engagement, interns cannot sufficiently discern what they liked and want to replicate in future experiences

> Ideas
  – Give interns stretch assignments that challenge them
  – Allow interns a chance to fail in a safe environment
  – Explain how intern projects connect to the larger organization
  – Assign projects that are important to the organization
  – Let interns have a real voice on project direction
  – Expect accountability for attendance, punctuality, and deadlines
Projects

> Importance
– Internships should involve meaty/meaningful work
– Interns are eager to contribute
– Positions that exclusively involve menial or routine work might be better classified as jobs

> Ideas
– Brainstorm if projects can be modified to match learning goals
– Assign side projects that align with their interests
– Mutually decide how to break down, scaffold, and hand over projects in a way that feels supportive to interns
– Tell them it’s okay to ask questions
– Ask what work samples they want to create for future employers
Relationships

> Importance
  – Interns should learn how to interact with others in a work setting
  – Exposure to diverse perspectives helps deepen intern learning
  – A benefit of interning is meeting others who might help with career development later

> Ideas
  – Plan a welcome meet and greet on the intern’s first day
  – Assign both individual and team projects, when possible
  – Plan social activities with interns and young professionals
  – Create intern Facebook group
  – Allow interns to conduct informational interviews on the clock
    > Help them reach out to contacts as needed
Exposure

> Importance
  – Exposure to diverse tasks and tools helps broaden interns’ horizons and skill sets
  – Seeing different teams and levels of an organization helps interns better understand the big picture

> Ideas
  – Offer a training session on a program an intern wants to learn
  – Ask interns to write meeting agendas and/or minutes
  – Require interns to present to the work team and beyond
  – Invite executives to share career advice with interns
  – Invite interns to attend meetings about projects related to theirs
Feedback

> Importance
  – Receiving honest feedback is the only way interns can improve
  – Learning to receive both positive and constructive feedback in the workplace is critical to interns’ future success

> Ideas
  – 10-minute stand up meeting every shift to check in
  – Weekly project debrief meetings
  – Monthly formal performance evaluations
  – Final review / exit interview
  – Anonymously survey other interns and staff who routinely interact with an intern and coalesce the results
  – Celebrate wins
Reflection

> Importance
  – Learning to reflect on performance is critical to success
  – Self-reflection helps interns become more self-directed

> Ideas
  – During check-ins, ask interns questions such as:
    > Use adjectives/adverbs/metaphors to describe how things are going
    > How are you progressing towards stated learning goals?
    > What has been challenging?
    > What could you have done differently in a given situation?
    > What would be a good next step after this internship?
  – Require interns to write weekly learning logs and action plans
  – Offer to provide feedback on resume, serve as reference, etc.
Activity

> Write down some tangible ideas you can suggest to managers that seem doable for your organization.

> Aim for 1 in each category.
Finding the Right Intern

I HAVE THE NECESSARY KOALAFICATIONS
Targets

Think about target audience...

> Generation Z

> How might the information about Gen Z presented earlier impact your intern recruitment?
Targets

Think about your target audience

> What attributes would help an intern be successful?
> What skills does one really need coming in?
> Think broadly about majors
> How can you appeal to and market to diverse groups?
Position Descriptions

Standard stuff

> Sell your organization
> Describe the role
> List requirements
> Application instructions
> Compensation (wage, or whether its paid/unpaid)
Position Descriptions

Internship-specific stuff

> Describe what interns will learn
  – What You Will Learn
  – Interns Will Develop Skills In
  – You Will Gain Experience In
  – How You Will Benefit

> Ask interns to include a few ideas about what they’d like to learn in their cover letter
Position Descriptions

Internship-specific stuff

> Approximate **start** and **end** dates

> Number of **hours** per week

> **Location** of internship site
Reach Out

Get it out there...

> Encourage employees to push it out
> Post to social media
> Connect with local colleges
> Post to niche industry websites and listserves
> Post to national sites
  – idealist.org
  – internmatch.com
  – internships.com
Hiring Huskies
Hiring Huskies

Know typical intern recruiting cycles

> For summer internships
  – Accounting, finance, consulting, some tech – Oct/Nov
  – Other areas –
    > Most students start thinking more seriously about summer internships in Jan/Feb, even March/April

> For other parts of the year
  – 4-8 weeks before you want an intern to start
Hiring Huskies

Get started

> Post your position on HuskyJobs
  – $35, for-profit employers
  – $10, other employers
  – careers.uw.edu/post-a-job/

> Connect with targeted student groups and departments
  – Academic areas, cultural groups, political, hobbies, etc.
  – Find a group and send an email
  – depts.washington.edu/thehub/sao/
Hiring Huskies

Come to campus

> Attend a Fair
  – careers.uw.edu/Employers/Calendar

> Host an Information Session

> Conduct On-Campus Interviews
Activity

What is one new strategy you can use to get your internships in front of candidates?

– At the UW

– Beyond
Wrap-Up
Reflection

> What is a key takeaway for you?

> What is a next step you can take?
Contact Information

> Briana Randall, brianakr@uw.edu
  – Director – Internship Project, Career & Internship Center
> Emma O’Neill-Myers, econeill@uw.edu
  – Assoc. Director - Employer Relations, Career & Internship Ctr
> Arianna Aldebot, aaldebot@uw.edu
  – Associate Director, Career Center @ Engineering
> Josina Garnham, josinag@uw.edu
  – Experiential Learning Manager, Foster School of Business
Internship Best Practices

Creating Internships that Work for Organizations, Managers, & Interns