

# EMPLOYER **INTERNSHIP** GUIDE

## EASTIN CENTER FOR CAREER READINESS



The Eastin Center for Career Readiness in the Spears School of Business believes that every student who walks through our doors has a significant contribution to make to this world. Our mission is to guide and support our students so that they are prepared to pursue professional opportunities, practice continued growth, and fully develop that contribution.

In this guide, you will find information to get started in the development of an internship program, and learn more about establishing a relationship with the Eastin Center for Career Readiness and OSU Career Services. While this guide is not intended to be an in-depth resource, as the implementation of an internship differs from one employer to the next, we hope that it answers many questions often asked about internship development.

The Spears School of Business welcomes the opportunity to work with you to design an internship program that fits your company's needs and to help build your talent pipeline.

### **WHY CONSIDER HOSTING AN INTERNSHIP?**

Hosting an internship can be a great experience for both employers and students. Internships serve to introduce students to potential professions and organizations, while providing opportunities to investigate a career choice and utilize application-based learning in a professional work setting.

Internships provide employers with energetic workers who bring practical skills, unique ideas, and fresh perspectives to the organization. They provide employers the opportunity to identify and assess potential full-time hires and gain campus visibility. Additionally, there is reduced turnover and training among entry-level employees who were former interns (Hergert, 2009).



### **DESCRIPTION OF AN INTERNSHIP**

In accordance with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and the U.S. Department of Labor, OSU Career Services defines an internship as follows:

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 give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths. For employers, internships provide the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. Employers are encouraged to focus the majority of interns' experiences on activities and responsibilities that allow exploration of the organization, industries and career paths while adding value to both an intern's qualifications and to the employer. Students tend to share their experiences with others, and creating a positive learning environment is the best publicity an employer can earn.

All internships posted with OSU Career Services should meet the following criteria:

1. 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



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- the operations of the employer or be the work a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
  3. The experience must have a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
  4. Clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
  5. Supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
  6. Routine feedback provided by the experienced supervisor.
  7. Resources, equipment and facilities provided by the host employer to support learning objectives/goals.

The setting may be a non-profit organization, a government office or a private/public for-profit business. The internship may be for academic credit or not. These factors and other specific characteristics of each internship experience are determined by the employer and/or in collaboration with the student intern(s).

The Eastin Center for Career Readiness does not want a student's internship to be primarily clerical or unskilled labor work, an undefined experience or an unguided/unsupervised experience.

### COMPENSATION CONSIDERATION

Although an internship can be paid or unpaid, the Eastin Center for Career Readiness encourages employers to compensate interns to adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Compensation should consider industry, location of internship, and desired competencies. Hourly wages vary by industry and the nature of the work. The U.S. Department of Labor provides extensive guidance to help employers determine whether interns must

be paid minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act for the service that they provide. We would encourage all employers to review this guidance at <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf>.

### ACADEMIC CREDIT

In some cases, students in Spears Business can receive academic credit for their internship experiences. Ultimately, the decision to pursue academic credit is the responsibility of the student, and if academic credit is to be earned for the internship experience, the student must receive approval from their departmental internship coordinator before starting at an internship site. The student is also responsible for communicating with his or her employer about supervisor obligations related to earning academic credit, which may include a formal internship contract with defined learning objectives, a time log of hands-on internship hours, formal performance evaluations, communication with a faculty internship supervisor or other commitments. Please keep in mind that the application timeline for students earning academic credit may differ by academic department, and the sooner students are aware of an internship



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possibility, the sooner they can begin the process of earning academic credit for it.



### DESIGNING YOUR PROGRAM

Once it is determined that the employer has the resources and structure to support a successful internship program, the planning begins. Advance arrangements are key to developing a high-quality internship program. The following 10 guidelines should help you get started in establishing an internship site:

#### 1. **Develop Specific Projects and Assignments**

Whenever possible, identify and delegate projects that have a definite beginning and end in the internship timeframe. This structure allows the intern to feel like an integrated team member of the organization and also provides concrete and measurable outcomes at the conclusion of the experience. For example, a measurable learning objective might be, "The intern will produce a marketing plan for ABC product line." Conversely, an immeasurable learning objective might be, "The intern will acquire an understanding of our marketing concepts."

#### 2. **Select a Site Supervisor**

To ensure appropriate supervision, coaching and mentoring takes place, interns should be paired with an on-site supervisor and/or a career mentor. The site supervisor is typically the hiring manager. The supervisor and intern should meet on a regular basis,

and the supervisor should be accessible for consultation throughout the experience.

#### 3. **Create a Job Description**

Just like with any open position, you should include specific duties and projects associated with the internship. It also is important to include the internship duration (fall, spring or summer), hours (part-time or full-time) and compensation in the description. The Eastin Center Career Services team can assist in drafting a job description based on your needs.

#### 4. **Post the Position on the OSU Hire System**

Posting part-time, full-time, internship and co-op positions is easy and always free. The most successful postings will include employer name; job contact's email, phone, etc.; title; description of duties; majors being sought; type of job: full-time, part-time, work-study, internship, or co-op; employment location; and work authorization requirements. There are two ways to post a position: post it yourself or let the OSU Career Services team post it for you. You can learn more about posting on the Hire System via the link provided: <http://www.hireosugrads.com/Employers/Post.aspx>.

#### 5. **Interview and Select an Intern**

For the most part, the process for the selection of an intern is similar to the recruitment of an entry-level professional employee, and the interview process may be conducted at your organization, or on the Oklahoma State University campus, depending upon the strategies you utilize to reach students.

#### 6. **Make an Offer in a Timely Manner**

As internships are extremely competitive in today's job market, communication and follow-up in the selection process is very important. A lapse in communication during the selection process may result in a top candidate accepting an internship elsewhere.



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It is not unusual for employers to recruit, interview and extend internships during the fall semester for the following summer.

### 7. **Coordinate Logistics Prior to the Intern's Arrival**

Be sure to arrange for workspace, phone use, email account, payroll forms, security clearance, parking permits and other needs. If you are hiring out of town interns, they will have questions about temporary relocation. While it's not the employer's responsibility to provide housing for interns, it's a good idea to serve as an information resource for the student prior to their arrival.

### 8. **Outline Basic Intern Training**

The training program should cover company basics, including an overview of the organization's mission, vision and values, an office tour, staff introductions, and other expectations, such as dress code, where to

park, office policies and other details. This training may be a formal orientation process or one-on-one with the supervisor and/or career mentor.

### 9. **Establish Performance Criteria and Offer Regular Feedback**

Setting of expectations will provide benefits to both the intern and the employer as it sets a framework for discussion. It serves as a professional development experience for the intern and clarifies employer expectations of what constitutes quality job performance.

### 10. **Exit Interview Process**

Before interns return to school, solicit feedback on the nature of their experience and suggestions they may have for improving the program. If the intern is someone with whom you would like to work again in the future, be sure to get updated contact information.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

We can help! Contact the Eastin Center for Career Readiness at 405.744.2772 or at [eastincenter@okstate.edu](mailto:eastincenter@okstate.edu). For more information visit [business.okstate.edu/eastin](http://business.okstate.edu/eastin).

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