Internship Manual

Procedures and Guidelines for the Otterbein University Internship Program

Office of Academic Affairs
Center for Career & Professional Development
Preface

The Internship Manual has been written to assist students, faculty, and employers who wish to participate in Otterbein’s internship program. For departments that have developed their own policies regarding internships, this manual serves as a general guide.

In order to carry out a complete evaluation of our internship program, it is essential that faculty internship coordinators, work supervisors and students complete the appropriate evaluation forms. This will help us to evaluate not only each individual internship experience, but also will show us how effectively the overall program is working.

It is important to have feedback on this internship program. Therefore, we request that you give us any suggestions you consider helpful in making this program work well. We hope to broaden our internship contacts and provide internships that challenge and supplement the education our students are experiencing at Otterbein University.

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GOALS OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

An internship, as defined by the Otterbein University Internship Program, is a structured academic opportunity that allows students to apply academic skills and knowledge in the work place. Experiential education that is based on a set of learning objectives helps students to prepare to meet career responsibilities after graduation. The goals of the program are:

- To allow students to apply, evaluate, test and integrate academic knowledge and theoretical concepts in a work setting.

- To develop and expand students’ knowledge about themselves and their abilities, goals, and career interests in a work setting.

- To expand students’ awareness of the world beyond the campus by exposure to a variety of careers, disciplines, life styles, and environments.

- To reduce students’ intellectual and geographic parochialism.

- To allow students to gain access to knowledge and equipment not available on a college campus.

- To encourage students to take a greater responsibility for their education and life, and develop self-reliance, personal style, values, and beliefs in a manner consistent with becoming a responsible and productive individual.

- To provide students with experience in the disciplined and discriminatory use of evidence in making decisions and solving problems in a work setting.
POLICIES OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Student Eligibility
- Students must be in good academic standing to apply for an internship. A cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7 is preferred, but the final decision about participation rests with the individual academic department.

- Typically, students who participate in an internship have junior or senior status; however, certain departments will make exceptions to this rule in individual cases.

Academic Credit
- A maximum of 16 semester hours of internship credit may be counted toward degree requirements at Otterbein.

  - 42 hours of work or work-related activities are required for each hour of assigned credit. Therefore, a full-time intern registers for 16 semester hours and is expected to spend 45-48 hours per week on activities specified in the learning contract. These hours include both “on-the-job” tasks and “off-the-job” tasks such as reading, journaling, research, etc.
    
    3 hours per week x 14 weeks = 1 semester credit
    15 hours per week x 14 weeks = 5 semester credits
    30 hours per week x 14 weeks = 10 semester credits
    48 hours per week x 14 weeks or 45 hours per week x 15 weeks = 16 credits

- Students are able to receive academic credit for internships completed during J-Term. Each day of J-Term is equivalent to one semester week. Therefore, an intern must work 3 hours per day to receive one credit hour, 6 hours per day to receive two credit hours and 9 hours per day to receive 3 credit hours.

Financial Considerations
To participate in the Otterbein internship program, students must pay tuition for an internship based on the semester hours attempted. A student’s financial aid will apply to internship hours as well as hours attempted in traditional courses. Any extra travel or work-related expenses are the student’s responsibility. Some student interns may be paid a salary or stipend by their host organization; other internships are unpaid.

Geographic Location
Most internships obtained by Otterbein students are local. However, internship opportunities exist in other areas of Ohio as well as in other states in the U.S. The Philadelphia Center and The Washington Semester are only two examples of the many out-of-state programs or opportunities that exist. There are also increasing numbers of students who are choosing to do an international internship. International internships are available in a variety of countries.

Timelines
- Students should begin exploring internship placements no later than one semester preceding their intended internship. (It should be noted that some very competitive internships have application deadlines of six to eight months prior to the start of the internship.)

- Students should select their faculty coordinator one semester prior to the internship to allow time for all the preliminary planning and paperwork.

- All deadlines for the completion of work outlined in the learning contract will be established by the faculty coordinator.
 ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student
- The intern should complete a learning contract that defines the nature of the work experience, the learning objectives, and academic expectations. Though this contract is developed collaboratively with the faculty coordinator and the work supervisor, the student needs to reflectively plan for the internship since it represents another aspect of his/her academic program. It should reflect a level of academic rigor similar to that encountered in the classroom.

- The student must complete all of the work set down in the original contract. This includes a complete evaluation of the internship that will be filed in the Provost’s office. Only when this report is complete will credit be given for the internship.

Faculty Coordinator
- The faculty coordinator serves as a mentor and facilitator to the student during the internship experience. The coordinator should meet consistently with the student at arranged times throughout the internship period to evaluate progress and give advice when needed.

- The faculty coordinator helps the student develop a learning contract or a suitable alternative that is relevant and workable. The student should play a major role in the initial planning and formulating stages of the internship in order to shape the learning goals to meet his or her individual needs and to fully understand the extent of his or her responsibility for the success of the experience.

- The faculty coordinator should make several contacts with the work supervisor during the internship. It is important to monitor the progress of the internship from a variety of viewpoints and to maintain close relationships with all participants.

- The faculty coordinator is responsible for seeing that all paperwork is completed by the student prior to submitting a grade for the internship. Individual departments may determine whether internships are given a letter grade or recorded pass/fail.

- No faculty member is obligated to take on the role of faculty coordinator or to find internship sites for students. The internship should be regarded as a student initiative with the faculty coordinator taking a supervisory role.

Work Site Supervisor
- The site supervisor must assist with and agree to the terms established in the learning contract.

- The supervisor should take an active role in mentoring and guiding the student to help meet learning goals, and be available for meetings or conversations with both the student and the faculty coordinator.

- The site supervisor should complete the evaluation forms in a timely fashion and return them to the faculty coordinator.
GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY COORDINATORS

As a faculty coordinator, you are providing a direct link between the university and the work place for the intern. In addition to the benefit of working closely with an individual student, supervising internships gives you an opportunity to observe practices and activities in a variety of employment settings and increase your knowledge of workplace trends.

Overview of role
Students are asked to begin the internship search process at least one semester prior to the internship, and should ask a faculty member to act as the coordinator as early as possible in this process. Though it is not your responsibility to find an internship placement for the student, any suggestions or personal contact names you may have can facilitate the process for students. A faculty coordinator helps the student formulate learning objectives, suggests academic work that supplements the internship experience, serves as a support system to the intern during the experience, and provides a formal evaluation after the internship has been completed.

Assistance with the learning contract
While it is the student’s responsibility to complete the learning contract, students need guidance from the faculty coordinator. The learning contract that is used for most Otterbein internships can be found in this manual. Faculty should pay special attention to the sections related to learning objectives and activities.

The learning activities should relate to the objectives. While many of the activities will be determined by the work supervisor, you may ask the student to follow through on other activities such as reading, research, or informational interviewing that will add an additional dimension to the internship. Faculty members often ask interns to keep a journal or log. It is important that activities are defined in a precise manner. For example, be sure the student understands whether a journal should be daily or weekly or take a summative or a critical assessment approach.

Contact with intern
Faculty coordinators need to play a supportive role in a student’s internship experience. Students require feedback and assistance throughout the internship. You should make a phone call to the intern within the first two weeks of the internship and again midway through to check on the student’s progress and provide any needed assistance. You are also encouraged to make on-site visits whenever feasible. These visits will help you to evaluate the student’s work.

Contact with work supervisor
Faculty coordinators are asked to make at least two phone contacts with the work supervisor over the course of the internship. An initial contact at the outset and a second call within week 8 or 9 should prove useful. In addition, a site visit would enable you to evaluate the placement for future interns.
GUIDELINES FOR WORK SITE SUPERVISORS

As supervisor for an Otterbein University intern, you are responsible for the intern’s work activity and schedule. You will facilitate the transition between academic studies and the work of the workplace.

Your willingness to provide an opportunity for an Otterbein student to expand his or her education beyond the classroom is deeply appreciated. Student interns have the potential to provide your organization with genuine assistance, as well as a fresh perspective and new energy and enthusiasm.

**Assistance with the learning contract**

One of your responsibilities as a work supervisor is to assist the student in developing the learning contract, which is an outline of what he or she intends to learn and accomplish during the internship. The learning contract is an effective way to establish agreement about mutual intentions and expectations for the internship, and develop criteria for supervision and evaluation. A sample learning contract is available in a separate section of this manual.

You can be especially helpful to the student in developing realistic goals and providing suggestions for possible activities, tasks, and projects to accomplish these goals.

**Orientation**

Listed below are some guidelines for helping the student adjust to the work setting.

1. Since the student is with you such a short time, it is recommended that company or organization literature be shared with the student in advance to save time. This material will help the student understand where his or her position fits in the “big picture.”

2. Please make whatever physical arrangements are necessary in regards to work space and equipment, and provide other appropriate materials.

3. You and the student should be in agreement about reporting time and place, hours, dress, degree of independence, on-the-job supervision, and confidentiality.

**Contact with faculty coordinator**

The faculty coordinator will be contacting you as the internship progresses. Some topics that might be appropriate to discuss are:

1. Is the intern performing as expected?

2. Are there major discrepancies between your perception and the intern’s?

3. Is the student developing appropriate professional behavior toward both staff and supervisors?

4. Is the student accepting direction, supervision, and constructive criticism?

5. Are there ways the internship could be improved?
If there are concerns, please feel free to contact the faculty coordinator so that problems might be resolved promptly.

**Evaluation**

A standard evaluation form is provided in a separate section of this manual that should simplify the written evaluation process. A prompt return of the evaluation to the faculty coordinator at the end of the internship will be greatly appreciated. Student interns are encouraged to discuss this evaluation with you to aid in reviewing their experience and clarifying comments made on the evaluation form.

Some topics that might be appropriate to discuss with the student are:

1. Did the intern perform as expected?
2. How did the intern’s performance compare with people in comparable positions?
3. What are major problems the student will face as a professional, and what sources of information can be used to address these problems?
GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Why do an internship?

What is it about an internship that is so valuable? Why should you consider doing one? What advantages will you have over students who do not participate in an experiential education experience? An internship:

- gives you a chance to explore career fields through first-hand experience.
- promotes development of confidence, maturity, responsibility, and skill in human relations.
- increases the development of decision-making and analytical skills through experience in actual work environments.
- creates a better understanding of theory by its actual application in practice.
- helps you develop a more positive attitude toward coursework as a result of seeing its usefulness on-the-job, which often leads to better grades.
- helps you gain professional experience to include on your resume, which can significantly improve your marketability to employers.
- increases the potential for a higher salary and greater advancement upon graduation as a result of previous experience.
- provides useful contacts that may lead to future employment.
- provides the support of a faculty mentor during the difficult first entry into a professional career.
- furnishes academic credit for learning that takes place on the job.

What are the basic requirements of the Otterbein internship program?

- In order to earn credit for your internship, you will need to work closely with a faculty member who will coordinate certain aspects of your internship experience. You may ask any faculty member in any department to be your faculty coordinator. Be sure that you make this request at least one semester before you intend to do an internship.
- A special registration form must be completed at the Registrar’s Office in order to receive credit for your internship(s). You may register for several internships in any subject area, but may not exceed a total of 16 internship credit hours.
- You will need to complete a learning contract with assistance from a faculty coordinator and input from the internship supervisor. A sample learning contract can be found in a separate section of this manual.
- You are expected to maintain contact throughout the internship with your faculty coordinator so that the progress of your work may be evaluated.
- You must evaluate the internship experience on the official evaluation forms or in a format approved by your faculty coordinator.
What steps are involved in finding an internship and participating in the program?

**STEP ONE: Decide what kind of internship experience you want.**

*Ask yourself the questions listed below. The answers can help you focus your search. If you need help processing these ideas, a staff member in the Center for Career & Professional Development or a faculty member can assist you.*

1. What are your personal interests and career goals?
2. What kind of work experience do you want?
3. What kind of skills would you like to acquire?
4. What kind of organization or work environment appeals to you?
5. What are your special skills/limitations and what kind of contribution would you like to make?
6. Where would you like to pursue your internship: Locally? Nationally? Internationally?

**STEP TWO: Ask a faculty member to act as your internship coordinator.**

Since you will be receiving credit for your internship, you need to work with a faculty member who can award that credit. Your faculty coordinator can help you decide what kind of experience you want, help you develop your learning contract, serve as a liaison between you and your work supervisor, and support you through the experience.

**STEP THREE: Gather information about internship opportunities.**

1. Your academic department may have established internships that are available to department majors each year on an on-going basis. Check with your department chairperson to find out if this is true in your department. If there are no previously established internships, or if you are not interested in those offered, you will need to research opportunities on your own.

2. Look for advertised openings for internships. This method will uncover only a fraction of the opportunities available, so combine this strategy with other methods listed below. Lists of internship openings may be found by doing an on-line search using a search engine or checking web job boards or specific company or organization websites. The Center for Career & Professional Development website links to Cardinal Careers, a site that lists local internships. Academic departments may also keep lists of internship vacancies.

3. Look for lists of companies or organizations that have offered internships in the past. These are good sources of potential current openings. Information about past internships may be found under “Resources” on the Center for Career & Professional Development website.

4. Develop your networking skills by contacting faculty and staff, friends, relatives, fraternity or sorority contacts, neighbors, etc. who may know of, or be employed by, organizations that have sponsored student interns or might consider doing so. Use resources connected to student professional organizations. There are also alumni contacts who are very good sources of information about internships. Ask about them in the Center for Career & Professional Development.
**STEP FOUR: Contact potential organizations for more information about internship opportunities.**

1. If you find an advertised internship opening that interests you, apply according to the instructions detailed in the position posting.

2. To explore potential internship possibilities in organizations you have identified (10 to 20 is a workable number), contact them to gather information about their internship programs, application requirements and procedures, and deadlines. These inquiries can be made by phone, email, or letter.

3. If a particular organization does not have an official internship program, but you still want to intern with them, contact the HR office or the individual who works in the area of interest to you. Ask if you could meet with them to discuss the possibility. A reference letter from a faculty member often helps your inquiry receive the proper attention.

**STEP FIVE: Choose your target organizations.**

1. You now have to make some choices based on the information you have gathered. Refer back to the objectives you set in Step 1 to determine which organizations will offer you the type of experience you desire. Choose between 5 to 10 companies to which you wish to formally apply.

2. Methods of application may vary. Some companies have on-line applications that you can access on their web site. If you have a company email address, you may send an inquiry to the appropriate person and attach your resume.

3. You may also use a more traditional approach by sending a letter of inquiry and your resume through the mail. The Center for Career & Professional Development can assist you with writing a resume and cover letter, as well as other forms of written and electronic communication.

**STEP SIX: Prepare for interviews.**

*Many internship programs require an interview, and you may receive such a request. To interview successfully, you need to be prepared!*

1. A Center for Career & Professional Development staff member can help you prepare for the interview by discussing typical preparation strategies and frequently-asked interview questions. You may also be interested in doing a “mock” interview in preparation for the real thing.

2. Organizing your thoughts ahead of time, researching the company, being neat and well-groomed, and communicating your enthusiasm for the position are all important factors for a successful interview.

**STEP SEVEN: Accepting/rejecting offers.**

*If you have followed through on several applications, you must be careful in the timing of your acceptance or rejection of offers.*

1. Be careful to assess each internship offer, taking into consideration all the issues involved, so
that you can make a wise decision. Once you have accepted, you have made a commitment to a lot of people. Pulling out later, because a “better” offer comes along, is unprofessional and can have a negative effect on your reputation.

2. If you find yourself being asked to accept or reject one internship before you hear about another, be open and honest. Tell the company with the deadline about your dilemma and ask for an extension. Most companies are willing to give you a short extension. If they are not, you can call the company you haven’t heard from and ask where they are in the application process. Tell them you have an offer with a deadline. They may be able to tell you if you are seriously being considered as a candidate or not. Once you have gathered this information, you have an important decision to make.

**STEP EIGHT: Develop the learning contract.**
*Once you have landed an internship, you are required to develop a learning contract (available on the CCPD website) with the help of both your faculty coordinator and the work supervisor.*

1. Learning contracts are outlines of what you intend to learn and accomplish while you are on your internship. They are effective tools for gaining agreement between you and your work supervisor and your faculty coordinator on your mutual intentions and expectations for the internship, both educational and work-related, as well as criteria and techniques for grading and evaluation at the internship’s conclusion.

2. Learning contracts may differ depending on the specific requirements of each department or internship, but the sample learning contract in this manual should be used as a guide.

**STEP NINE: Evaluate your internship.**
*The end of an internship is not the end of your learning experience. Through self-evaluation, and the evaluation of your work supervisor and your faculty coordinator, you can assess how you have grown and what you have gained.*

1. One of the easiest ways to accomplish this is to have your work supervisor fill out the forms designed for this purpose, samples of which are provided in this manual. Read carefully what he or she writes and discuss any points you do not understand, disagree with, or would like clarified.

2. Filling out the Student Evaluation form will help you to review your internship experience, evaluate your most significant accomplishments, and focus on areas in which you need improvement or would like additional experience.

**Getting the Most Out of Your Internship**

**Working Tips**

1. Make a good first impression
   - Dress appropriately
Always be prompt.
Maintain a positive attitude---it is one of your greatest assets.
Find out about and follow company regulations.
Respect the time of others.

2. Orientation
If there is no formal orientation program for you, try to give yourself one by:
- Reading everything you can about the organization.
- Introducing yourself to your co-workers (keep notes so you can connect names and faces).
- Making lists of questions so that you can use your supervisor’s time wisely.

3. Getting the job done
- Schedule your time; keep a to-do list.
- Space out your tasks; one big task can be broken down into stages.
- Pace your energy. Too much enthusiasm at first may overwhelm you and leave you burned out at the end.

Problems with Work Assignments

You may encounter some of the following challenges in your internship:

1. “Go fer” work. As a member of a team, you will want to help with routine tasks occasionally, but you don’t want them to become your permanent job. A good learning contract should prevent this problem, but if you feel your work activities are not challenging enough, consult your work supervisor. Make sure that if you ask for additional assignments, you have demonstrated your capacity to handle them.

2. Pressure. Meeting deadlines is your responsibility, but if the pressure to finish assignments on time begins to overwhelm you, let your supervisor know. The quality of your work is as important as the time element. The best planning can fall through, so don’t be afraid to say you can’t finish on time or think that the project is too much for you to handle.

3. Overtime. You may be asked, or feel pressured, to work late or on weekends, and working extra hours may help you learn more by experiencing roles or situations not otherwise available. Your commitment to your supervisor and your organization may demand that you put in the extra work. However, you are an independent person, and everyone has a personal life to maintain. So, if you feel confused about work hours and time, talk to your supervisor and negotiate a solution that takes into account both your needs and those of the organization.

4. Discrimination or Harassment. If you feel you are truly being discriminated against because of your age, race or gender, you will have to check this out with the people involved. Don’t over-react. Realize that people may feel threatened by you, just as you feel threatened by them. Consider the problem from all angles before you consult your supervisor, but don’t let the problem fester.

If you feel you are being sexually harassed on the job, inform the person immediately and politely
about behavior you find offensive. Optimistically, the situation could resolve itself, but it could remain a problem unless you take action to resolve it. Ask for help from co-workers if you need it, and consult your supervisor or faculty coordinator.

**Keeping a Journal**

A journal can be one of the most effective learning tools in an internship, helping you to monitor your own learning, record problems and solutions, and keep track of new information. Some faculty coordinators include journal writing as part of the learning contract. Even if not required, you should seriously consider journaling if you wish to get the most out of your internship. The following format is suggested by Helen Graves in *Political Internships: Academic Components*:

1. A log. (Time frame of activities.)
2. Recording of questions. (No fewer than 3 each day.)
3. Recording of perceptions. (What did you observe? How does your position fit into the entire system? How well does your academic theory coincide with reality?)
4. Recording of feelings. (Most interns go through several phases from being the uncertain observer to feeling “part of the establishment,” to experiencing boredom and inertia, to assessing the placement as a critical outsider.)
5. Discussion section. (Take one facet of the week’s experience and deal with it in detail, or view the week’s experience in its totality.)
6. New language recording. (Each internship environment has its own specialized language. Recording it assists you to understand and communicate more carefully.)

**Gathering Career Information**

An internship is an excellent opportunity to explore a career of your choice. You will be able to gather information, clarify how you feel about specific work environments, and test your abilities as you learn which skills are essential for various positions. You can also develop professional contacts that can be used once you actually begin your post-graduation job search.

You will no doubt discover much career-related information during the hours you work each week. A systematic effort to obtain information, however, can yield an even greater dividend.

1. Each week, ask several co-workers a few questions about their careers and compare answers. You will reap the benefit of learning about a particular career field from many different viewpoints.

2. Schedule several 20- to 30-minute “information interviews” with selected co-workers throughout the experience.

3. If possible, get involved in company activities, training sessions, or professional development seminars. You may also want to participate in social events planned for employees to learn more about the culture of the organization.

4. Use a scheduled evaluation meeting with a supervisor at the end of the internship to discuss career concerns.