VIRGINIA EMPLOYER READINESS TOOLKIT

A Blueprint to Develop Quality Internship Opportunities for Virginia's Talent Pipeline

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OVERVIEW

A MESSAGE FROM BARRY DUVAL, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE VIRGINIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
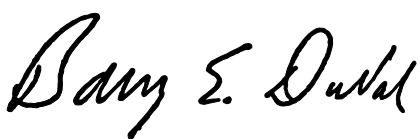
Virginia has long been recognized for its robust talent supply pipeline, world-class higher education infrastructure, and strong business community comprised of some of the nation's leading industries. Through the Employer Readiness Toolkit, it is our hope to foster greater connectivity between the education institutions, the student and parent population, and employers throughout the Commonwealth. Helping more students experience business as an educational pathway to a career will help position Virginia to continue to lead the nation in talent and workforce development.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many organizations and individuals who provided their insights for the development of the Employer Readiness Toolkit. I would like to specifically recognize the Virginia Chamber Foundation's Work-Based Learning Task Force and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's working groups for their leading efforts to build these recommendations.

While the Employer Readiness Toolkit is primarily focused on the development and best practices of internship and co-op experiences, many of the attributes of successful programs can be applied to other forms of work-based learning.

Together, we can ensure Virginia continues to improve and expand upon the available work-based learning opportunities for students – our workforce of the future - by providing greater equity, preparedness, and support.

Sincerely,

Barry E. DuVal
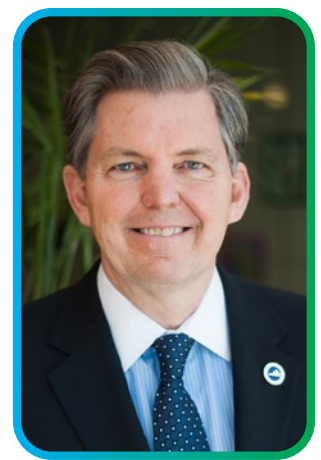
PURPOSE

The Virginia Employer Readiness Toolkit is a comprehensive document to aid the employer community in building and expanding internship and work-based learning opportunities for higher education students throughout the Commonwealth. The readiness toolkit provides information and key resources to employers as they consider implementing these programs either at their place of work or remotely. The toolkit helps employers with their readiness for interns to ensure quality of the experience for students, institutions, and businesses.

VIRGINIA TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Virginia Employer Readiness Toolkit is made available through the Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership (Virginia TOP), a public-private partnership formed between the Virginia Chamber Foundation and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Virginia TOP is tasked with creating greater connectivity between students, institutions of higher education, and the employer community to expand paid and credit-bearing internship and other work-based learning opportunities. Virginia TOP is organized through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program and administered by SCHEV.

HOW?

By connecting everyone, Virginia TOP gives the right tools to Virginia businesses, students, and higher ed. The end goal is to connect businesses with students who want to learn by doing.
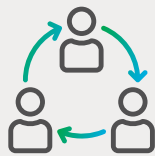
INCREASING OPPORTUNITY & VISIBILITY

We help businesses, students, and higher ed share work-based learning opportunities much more efficiently.

KEEPING GRADS IN-STATE

We encourage graduates to live and work in Virginia by creating more high-quality opportunities.

MAKING VIRGINIA #1 FOR BUSINESS

We help fuel Virginia's talent pipeline, an important aspect in keeping our state at the top of business rankings.

WHAT ARE STATEWIDE LEADERS SAYING?

"Virginia is the best state for business in part because of our world-class workforce, and we know that high-quality, work-based learning and internships are key to maintaining a strong talent pipeline and filling the in-demand jobs. By fostering greater connectivity between students and the opportunities that can lead to full-time employment, the Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership supports our shared goals of ensuring that every Virginian has equitable access to the resources, education, and experiences to thrive in our Commonwealth."

The Honorable Governor Ralph Northam

"The Innovative Internship Program creates a new pathway for Virginia's students, not only to meet current workforce needs and regional economic growth, but also to enhance job readiness and higher education affordability. The Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership is a significant public-private partnership to help accomplish the goals of the Program and complement other ongoing efforts to increase connectivity between students and employers around the commonwealth."

Peter Blake • Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

"Virginia TOP will ensure that more students have the resources they need to gain meaningful workforce experiences before graduation. Connecting more students to potential full-time, well-paying careers after graduation is immeasurably important for Virginia's economic future."

The Honorable Senator Siobhan Dunnavant

"The Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership will position our students to lead in an increasingly competitive landscape. By improving the readiness of students, businesses, and institutions of higher education, Virginia TOP will provide the connectivity needed to build our workforce of the future."

The Honorable Delegate Kirk Cox

"Business and higher education leaders know that collaboration works. It creates and grows pathways from school, to college, to good jobs and careers and helps ensure Virginia will continue to have one of the best workforces anywhere. Our Virginia Business Higher Education Council will continue to advocate for the resources needed for collaborative initiatives that work for Virginians."

Dennis Treacy • Vice Chair, Virginia Business Higher Education Council

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

DEFINITION

"An internship is defined as 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; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent."[1]

QUALITY

A quality internship or work-based learning opportunity challenges organizations to develop these opportunities as genuine learning experiences; and challenges students to apply their classroom knowledge to work-based tasks. Ideally, the organization benefits from the work that the intern produces and the ability to identify talent, while the student benefits from the professional development and/or compensation and class credit.

As defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the following key features must be met to ensure the intern experience is educational:

☑ 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 the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

☑ The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.

☑ The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.

☑ Learning objectives/goals are clearly defined and related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.

☑ Supervision is provided by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.

☑ Routine feedback is provided by the experienced supervisor.

☑ Resources, equipment, and facilities are provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

"Experiential Learning" is a term commonly used to broadly describe learning opportunities presented through experiences.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers defines experiential learning as, "A crucial component of a college education. Experiential learning encompasses a wide variety of enriching opportunities for students, including service-learning, volunteering, student organization leadership and campus involvement, faculty-led research and projects, experiential study-abroad, student employment/work-study, cooperative education, and internships."

More recently, entrepreneurship has become a viable experiential learning option to promote student growth and development in business creation and innovation.[2]

Due to the broad nature of the term experiential learning, this toolkit instead utilizes the terms "internship" and "work-based learning" throughout.

TYPES OF INTERNSHIP AND WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

During the early stages of exploring how to build a program, it is important to review the wide variety of internship and work-based learning structures to select the type of program(s) that will best fit the organization. The types of internship and work-based learning opportunities are:

- **Traditional Opportunities**
- **Flexible Opportunities**
- **Project-Based Opportunities**
- **Remote Opportunities**
- **Cooperative Experiences**
- **Cocurricular & Extracurricular Experiences**
- **High-Impact Practices (HIPs)**
- **Professional Development Opportunities**
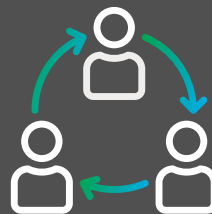
KEEP IN MIND:

The best programs are mutually beneficial to the student, employer, and educational institution.

Traditional Opportunities

▸ Allow for students to work for an employer through a formalized program or embedded with a specific organization or department.

▸ Typically follow a 12-16-week timeframe and coincide with an academic semester:

  ▸ Late August to early December for fall
  ▸ Mid-December to mid-January for winter,
  ▸ Late January to late April for spring, and
  ▸ Mid-to-late May to early or mid-August for summer.

▸ Can be part-time or full-time, depending on employer and student's needs.

▸ May qualify for academic credit and, if so, a faculty advisor will be involved.

Flexible Opportunities

▸ Can be offered year-round, based on employer need, and allow for students to work through a formalized program or embedded with an organization or department.

▸ Typically follow a 5-10-week modular timeframe.

▸ Colleges on a modular term calendar can offer prospective candidates when the employer has a need or can fit an intern in their schedule.

▸ Can be either part-time or full-time, depending on the employer and student's needs.

Project-Based Opportunities

▸ Focused on a specific goal or research project that the student completes over the duration of the internship.

▸ Timeframe varies widely, depending on the size and scope of the project and whether the project is linked to academic coursework or is part of a capstone or thesis.

▸ Provides the student with a tangible outcome or work product to add to portfolio at completion and the employer with direct support for a more focused objective.

▸ Also referred to as micro-internships and may involve a team of students, with the ability to include students from multiple disciplines.

▸ In addition to the traditional route to promote project-based learning, there are organizations dedicated specifically to connecting employers and institutions for project-based opportunities. *Examples of these type of organizations include Parker Dewey and MindSumo.*

Remote Opportunities

▸ Allow students and employers the flexibility to work together across geographic boundaries.

▸ Flexibility is the main strength to this approach and can help employers attract students from a wide variety of locations, backgrounds, and experience.

▸ Ideal for organizations that have limited office space.

▸ Employers should consider the technology that will be needed and whether they will provide that.

▸ Strong support networks and virtual connection opportunities are important to interns who will miss out on the personal touch and cultural insight of an in-person opportunity.

▸ Networking with other students and employees can be more difficult remotely and they do not get to see or experience the place of work (unless your organization is fully remote).

▸ Under this type of opportunity, employers should craft a strategy to maximize remote engagement.

▸ Virtual coffee meetings, informal social gatherings conducted virtually, and access to optional educational opportunities are just a few examples of remote engagement.

Cooperative Experiences

▸ The Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA) notes that, "co-op experiences are either full-time (40 hours per week) alternating periods (semester, quarter) of work and school or part-time (20 hours per week) combining work and school during the same time period."

▸ NACE relates that "the typical program plan is for students to alternate terms of full-time classroom study with terms of full-time, discipline-related employment. Since the program participation involves multiple work terms, the typical participant will work three or four work terms, thus gaining a year or more of career-related work experience before graduation."

Cocurricular & Extracurricular Experiences

▸ The National Association of Colleges and Employers acknowledges that both "extracurricular" and "cocurricular" are necessary to successfully maximize the potential of experiential learning. The distinctions of each as defined by NACE are:

  ▸ **Cocurricular:** contributes to gaining skills and abilities that are part of the core competencies, and/or outcomes established by the institution and its governing bodies.[3]

  ▸ **Extracurricular:** provides the opportunity to engage with the institution and that connect students to others within the community in meaningful ways.[4]

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

▸ Active learning practices that promote deep learning by promoting student engagement as measured by the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE).[5]

▸ Experience must satisfy the definition established by George Kuh (2008, Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013) and his colleagues at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U): achievement of deep learning, significant engagement gains, and positive differential impact on historically underserved student populations.

Professional Development Opportunities

▸ Holistic learning opportunities that allow students to not only support the employer's mission and vision, but also allow younger students to have exposure to areas critical to their career path.

▸ An example is shadowing an executive for a project or client facing meeting.

▸ Help students hone their critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, and other professional development-based exposure.

▸ Professional development can lead to future internship or work-based learning opportunities with an employer and provide exposure to see if a student is interested in pursuing that career.

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Through the internship and work-based learning pathways defined above, employers are also encouraged to collaborate with other employers within their industry to share best practices and discuss the possibility of rotating interns between organizations, when possible.

Industry collaboration allows students to be exposed to additional experiences within their field of interest and allows employers to collaboratively recruit, train, and gain valuable assistance from the talent pool.

COMPENSATION CONSIDERATIONS

Compensation for interns varies widely with some being unpaid or solely earning the student course credit for a degree program, and even certain circumstances where an institution may not permit students to accept unpaid opportunities or pay.

Compensation can depend on several factors including the employer, geographic location, cost of living, industry type, and job role. Below are some considerations when deciding on a compensation model:

Paid vs. Unpaid

- Similar to other labor markets, internships and work-based learning opportunities are competitive for students. They are often competitive for employers as well, as they compete for top talent.

- Offering competitive compensation can help attract top talent and a diverse applicant pool.

- Some employers may not have to offer compensation to students who are not "employees." Regardless, all employers are required to abide by and should consult with HR and legal counsel to ensure all federal and state laws are being met.

- Paid opportunities are recognized as the preferred best practice. Course credits should not be considered a substitute for pay.

THE STATS ON PAID INTERNSHIPS

Students who had paid internships were nearly **twice as likely to receive a full-time job offer** as those who had unpaid internships or who had no internships at all, according to a 2013 NACE survey.

The survey also found that students who had unpaid internships were paid less on average in their first full-time job than those who had no internships at all.

63.1% of students who had paid internships received at least one job offer, compared to only 37% of those with unpaid internships – a negligible 1.8 points more than those who had no internships at all.[6]

Course Credits

- Some educational institutions will allow students to participate in work-based learning opportunities or internships for course credits as part of their degree programs or credentialing.

- Employers must coordinate with the student and the educational institution to ensure that the internship program is compatible with academic program requirements.

Regardless of the compensation an intern receives, a key characteristic of an effective internship is clearly communicating the benefit structure whether that be a paycheck from the employer or course credit arranged through a partnership with the institution of higher education the student attends, according to the NACE.[7]

The primary goal as a business community should be to expand paid and/or credited opportunities as much as possible.

VALUE-ADD FEATURES

Internships and work-based learning opportunities, done well, are extremely beneficial for all stakeholders involved - businesses, students, and higher education institutions. Below are some of the specific benefits each stakeholder group receives in a mutually beneficial internship or work-based learning opportunity program:

Employers	Students	Higher Ed
‣ Evaluate prospective future employees during the internship.	‣ A study found that students with paid internships received nearly 50% more job offers than those who had unpaid internships or none at all.[8]	‣ Creates a more collaborative work environment between the institution and the broader employer community.
‣ Provided with a fresh way of approaching business challenges by students applying knowledge from the classroom to the workplace, including new technologies and processes.	‣ Can apply academic coursework to real-world experiences.	‣ Illustrates the practical application of coursework, which may result in an increase in student satisfaction and retention.
‣ Help support ongoing efforts to keep top talent in Virginia after graduation by exposing them to enticing career opportunities.	‣ Provides with the opportunity to enhance their resume with hands-on experiences in high-demand industries.	‣ Greater connectivity with the business community helps to raise the profile of the institution throughout the state and in high-demand fields.
‣ Support ongoing efforts to promote workplace diversity and equity by providing underrepresented students the opportunity to consider careers.	‣ Able to fulfill degree requirements and earn credits (depending on the educational institution).	‣ Have the ability to enhance curriculum through career relevance assessment and student feedback.
‣ Provide real-world management training experience for current employees by serving as internship mentors or supervisors.	‣ Able to expand their professional network in career-related fields.	‣ Increased student interest and engagement validates the value of pursuing a career based on the institution's curriculum.
‣ Gain access to a year-round source of highly motivated pre-professionals that are flexible, cost-effective and do not require a long-term employer commitment.	‣ May have the opportunity to work with equipment and technology that may not be available on campus in real-life scenarios.	
	‣ Gain unique experiences that may lead to full-time employment stemming from the internship or relationships built during the experience.	

BENEFIT OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Career services offices at institutions of higher education are available to partner and provide assistance for employers at all stages of internship development. Please review the current contact list on the Virginia TOP website.

Throughout the Commonwealth there are many leading industry groups, associations, and initiatives focused on supporting Virginia's talent pipeline. In addition to increasing connectivity with students and higher education institutions, employers should also consider connecting with other groups to highlight and enhance available internships and work-based learning opportunities.

By increasing collaboration, employers will expand their network, allow for the possibility of rotating interns between several employers within an industry sector, and have the ability to introduce interns to the wider industry cluster and to develop industry-specific procedures.

Some of these organizations and initiatives include:

▸ State, local, and regional chambers of commerce

▸ Virginia Small Business Development Centers

▸ Career services offices at institutions of higher education

▸ Business and industry associations and initiatives, like GO Virginia, Growth4VA, Virginia Association of Colleges and Employers, VA BIO, or the Virginia Space Grant Consortium

▸ Internship programs, like RVA NOW, the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, or the Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program (CSIIP)

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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The key to building a successful internship program is to ensure the employer has the necessary organizational structure in place to enhance the experience for all involved. The priority for employers should be to provide an intentional, supervised, and well-planned experience.

EVALUATE AREAS OF NEED

Evaluating the areas of need within the company or organization is a key first step and question to consider before promoting future opportunities.

Consider the following questions:

▸ Are there projects that the company would like completed but are unassigned or not a quarterly priority for current employees?

▸ Would current employees benefit from an additional team member to complete important projects?

▸ Are there employees that could benefit from additional management experience?

▸ Are you looking to diversify your organization and hiring opportunities? See "Access and Equity in Opportunity" for more information.

If the answer to one or more of these questions is "yes," then the business or organization is primed to take advantage of the benefits of an internship or work-based learning program.

EVALUATE PRACTICALITY

Once the need has been identified, an employer must decide which type of internship or work-based learning program to create and then set up the internal structure needed. Budget, staff capacity to supervise, and robust planning are all important factors to consider when evaluating business readiness to successfully manage an internship or work-based learning program.

BUILD A STRUCTURE

The next step for an employer is to build a framework to support the internship program. An employer should create a timeline, clearly define roles, identify project work, and appoint supervisor/mentors within the organization to guide the students through their experience.

Below are some of the steps needed to build a structure to manage an internship or work-based learning program:

Role of Intern

☑ Determine schedule, workspace, and supervisor.

☑ Clearly define responsibilities, tangible goals, and company policy on social media and dress code as it applies to interns. Examples of responsibilities that are clearly defined are below:

- ▸ Primary Responsibilities
  - ▸ Preparing budgets and financial reports
  - ▸ Developing audiovisual presentations
  - ▸ Performing laboratory tests
  - ▸ Creating promotional materials for an event
  - ▸ Drafting content to be used by an organization
  - ▸ Research for projects, departments
- ▸ Secondary Responsibilities
  - ▸ Filing financial reports
  - ▸ Scheduling presentation locations and dates
  - ▸ Preparing/cleaning lab area
  - ▸ Conducting follow-up phone calls to confirm RSVPs
  - ▸ Monitoring and responding to blog entry comments

Role of Supervisor

☑ Overseeing the work product(s), assigning ongoing assignments, and serving as primary point of contact for all work-related questions.

☑ Connected to the type of work the intern will perform to provide appropriate guidance.

☑ Prepared to provide regularly scheduled performance feedback.

Role of Mentor

☑ Familiarize the intern(s) with company culture, provide professional guidance, and serve as an additional contact on projects when the supervisor is unavailable. Networking and mentoring are critical parts of professional development. Choosing the right mentor, someone who is passionate about working with students, can increase retention, engagement, performance and outcomes.

☑ In advance of the start date for an intern(s), employers should schedule time to discuss this role with the identified mentor(s) to ensure familiarity with the associated responsibilities.

☑ Throughout the Commonwealth, there are many organizations that offer mentorship training, such as local and regional chambers of commerce and industry associations. Employers are encouraged to foster greater collaboration within their region and industry. (See page 13.)

Preparing your General Workforce

▸ Employers should plan to not only prepare individuals who will be directly connected to the internship program for the onboarding process, but also prepare the general workforce, including those who may not be directly connected to the student(s).

▸ While supervisors, mentors, and human resource officers are typically well prepared, sometimes employees that are not directly connected with the program are unsure how to engage with interns.

▸ Providing all employees with information and best practices about how to engage with interns, even if they are not directly connected to the internship program, helps to support an internship-friendly environment.

  ▸ Employees should be encouraged to reach out to an intern's supervisor for collaboration on projects and educational opportunities, when possible.

  ▸ Employees should also be encouraged to introduce themselves and identify engagement opportunities, such as an informal coffee meeting, for interns to connect and network with a wider range of staff members and fellow interns.

▸ By providing training and/or information on the internship program to the general workforce, employers can support a more positive working environment and improve the student's overall experience.

RECUITMENT

TIMELINE

An intern recruitment timeline should reflect the needs of the employer, while being mindful that each of the different types of work-based learning opportunities will attract a diverse group of prospective students. The varying types of work-based learning opportunities may operate on different timelines.

Traditional internships track along with the semester and summer schedules that traditional students have, i.e.

- ▸ 12-16-week timeframe and coincides with an academic semester:
  - ▸ Late August to early December for fall,
  - ▸ Mid-December to mid-January for winter,
  - ▸ Late January to late April for spring, and
  - ▸ Mid-to-late May to early or mid-August for summer.

Appropriately named, **flexible internships** allow for more adaptability and can occur more frequently with just a few weeks' notice.

Project-specific or **remote internships** can also provide greater flexibility not only for students, but also for employers whose internships do not line up with the timeline of a traditional semester Providing opportunities like this can open the door for non-traditional students such as those participating in part-time programs.

Consider allowing departments to submit intern request forms by a certain date to company leadership, including the human resources department. Each proposal should come with detailed information on the work to be completed by the student including workspace, supervisor, hours, and compensation. Leadership will be able to analyze the need within the organization and ensure that all students brought in for the year or specific project will have a specific focus and ensure an exceptional experience.

Keep the lines of communication open with higher educational institution's career services offices, especially if the currently offered promotional opportunities (such as job fairs and related networking events) do not align with the project timeline needs. These offices can be advocates and connectors to the student population at target schools.

DEVELOPING A CLEAR AND CONCISE INTERNSHIP POSTING

Posting an internship or work-based learning opportunity is a critical step in attracting talent. An employer should make the posting attractive to potential interns, while also being truthful to the actual work that the student will engage in and the compensation offered.

Employers should promote opportunities six – nine months in advance, when possible, to allow for ample time to attract talent and encourage communication before the formal interview process begins. While recruiting tends to occur during the late summer/early fall time periods and again in the early spring, be mindful that not every work-based learning opportunity will fit into this schedule. Allowing for flexibility will support greater access and equity for available opportunities.

Develop the Posting

Did you notice the checkboxes? Feel free to print pages 18-24 and use them as you complete development, hiring, and onboarding processes.

▸ Organization Overview

☐ Develop a clear and concise internship posting that is appealing to prospective student applicants.

☐ Provide applicants with an overview of your organization, beyond what is publicly available on your website.

☐ Include the mission and/or vision, highlight achievements that would be attractive to prospects (ex: recognition as a top place to work, community service initiatives, social media accounts), and include organization information specifically pertinent to the posting.

▸ Position Title

☐ Develop an appropriate title that is specific to the scope of work.

☐ Identify the type of internship or work-based learning opportunity. (See pages 7-10.)

☐ Move beyond generic "intern" titles to provide students with a greater sense of belonging, like:

  ▸ Community Engagement Internship
  ▸ Digital Marketing and Graphic Design Internship
  ▸ Risk Analyst Internship
  ▸ Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering Internship
  ▸ Investor Relations Internship
  ▸ State Policy and Government Affairs Internship

▶ Eligibility Criteria

☐ Review current eligibility requirements to decide what should be considered a "requirement" and what can be considered a preference.

☐ Include a GPA requirement, if applicable, but be mindful that candidates also should be measured on additional qualities.

☐ Foster greater inclusion in requirements which allows employers to attract a candidate pool with strategic emphasis on interests, experiences, and skillsets.

☐ Include the number of expected hours for the opportunity.

☐ Include specific skills the ideal candidate should have an interest in developing. These skills may apply directly to classroom learning.

▶ Responsibilities and Measured Outcomes

☐ Provide as much detail as possible in relation to the tasks, projects, and responsibilities associated with the position.

☐ Prioritize the responsibilities of the position based on importance to the role and the experience gained by the student.

☐ Include language to allow for additional opportunities based on the candidate's interests, when possible.

☐ Provide information on how progress and outcomes will be measured.

☐ Provide information on how in-classroom learning can be applied to hands-on experiences and what interns should expect to gain from an educational perspective.

▶ Timeline

☐ Provide a clear overview of the time frame for the opportunity and communicate flexibility, when possible.

☐ Allow for flexibility in the timeline which provides ideal candidates who may not fit into the traditional 12-16-week model to apply for opportunities they might otherwise not be eligible for.

☐ See "Types of Internship and Work-Based Learning Opportunities" on pages 7 - 10.

☐ Communicate if the position will be part-time or full time and include the preferred number of hours per week a student should be willing to commit to the opportunity.

☐ Be mindful that a student will need a certain number of hours to receive educational credit from their institution and communicate a willingness to discuss this with the ideal candidate.

☐ Clearly communicate the application deadline, if applicable.

▶ Additional Information

☐ Include information regarding whether the role is paid and/or credit-bearing.

  ▶ Provide specific information on pay rate, if possible, to allow students to have as much information in advance of the formal interview process.

- ☐ Include information on any available stipends (transportation, housing, meal, etc.).
- ☐ Include information on any additional "value-add" features.
  - ▸ Ex: networking opportunities, volunteer/service opportunities, educational and professional development opportunities.

Post the Opportunity

- ▸ Decide when and where to post the opportunity
  - ☐ Target specific schools or geographic areas by working with career services offices at universities or community colleges. Many localities also have job boards and posting locations for employers.
    - ▸ Consider the length of time to receive applications. Will it be on a rolling basis? Fixed application period?
    - ▸ How will you communicate with applicants about the process?
  - ☐ Increase connectivity with educational institutions through the following channels:
    - ▸ Career/Internship Fairs
    - ▸ Social media and LinkedIn
    - ▸ Higher ed emails, website, job portals (i.e., Handshake, Symplicity, College Central Network)
    - ▸ Volunteer to serve as a guest speaker for introductory level courses.
    - ▸ Contact former interns to identify prospects.
    - ▸ Communicate with fellow industry organizations.

Access and Equity in Opportunity

- ▸ Broaden the group of applicants by considering the following factors:
  - ☐ Post the opportunity publicly, rather than distributing only to a small number of contacts.
  - ☐ Move beyond immediate and familiar regional boundaries.
  - ☐ Ensure that messaging is socially and culturally inclusive and speaks to the diverse experiences of every prospective applicant.
  - ☐ Revisit the model of the ideal candidate; understand that individuals bring a diverse body of lived experiences that can significantly improve work outcomes for prospective employers.
    - ▸ For example, does a hard-working student balancing multiple extracurricular activities or a part-time job and a full-time course load exhibit desirable qualities not represented

in their GPA? Many students that aren't exposed to internship opportunities possess a special set of skills that aren't reflected in their academic achievements. Tests only measure one dimension of success.

- ▸ Does the ideal candidate need to have a specific GPA range, or could the scope broaden to be more inclusive? Could the GPA range be a preferred qualification, rather than a requirement?

- ☐ Take steps to combat implicit bias toward the Limited English Population (LEP)

  - ▸ When possible, provide verbal and written language assistance for services and resources for Limited English Population (LEP) students.

- ☐ Seek out additional channels to communicate available opportunities.

  - ▸ A significant issue in connectivity between students and the business community is a lack of knowledge of the available opportunities. Develop a robust campaign that exposes students to internship opportunities in often overlooked spaces from faith communities to HBCU's (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and DEI and LGBTQA offices at public and private institutions of higher learning.

- ☐ Be flexible in available opportunities.

  - ▸ Provide remote opportunities for students who may not have the means to relocate temporarily to accommodate the internship.

  - ▸ Investigate shared-work spaces throughout the Commonwealth that might allow students to have a dedicated workspace and the necessary technology.

  - ▸ Shared-work spaces are especially beneficial for virtual opportunities and to promote greater inclusion for students who may not have the necessary infrastructure at home (high-speed internet, a computer, etc.).

  - ▸ Explore the idea of developing or partnering with an internship incubator center.

- ☐ Provide additional benefits for work-based learning opportunities, when able.

  - ▸ Does the program have the ability to pay the tuition associated with a credit-bearing internship, especially if the intern is not also being paid?

  - ▸ Does the program have the ability to provide a parking and/or meal stipend as an additional benefit?

  - ▸ Does the program have the ability to offer housing to a student who may need it?

  - ▸ Connect with a local college or university to investigate the use of summer/off-season housing as an option.

  - ▸ Does the program have the ability to provide interns with a dedicated laptop for virtual opportunities?

- ☐ If the organization has a larger internship program, decide how to best bring together a diverse group of students from different regions, institutions, and backgrounds to allow students the opportunity to engage with others from different viewpoints and experiences.

INTERVIEWS AND HIRING

The hiring process should evaluate the criteria and considerations listed on the job posting for the position. Some of these considerations are:

▸ Educational factors

- ☐ Academic achievement
- ☐ Level of education
- ☐ Major/Minor; relevant coursework
- ☐ GPA

▸ Work-Based Experience

- ☐ Does the student have other relevant work-related experience? (Keep in mind that internships are sometimes a student's first work-based learning opportunity)
- ☐ Consider factors like volunteer experience and extracurricular activities

▸ Application, Resume, and Cover Letter or Writing Sample

- ☐ Have an applicant expand on content that they included in the application in the interview.
- ☐ As an alternative to a formal cover letter, or in addition to it, requesting a writing sample provides employers the opportunity to gain additional insight for the prospective intern and measure their written skills organically. Another alternative is to encourage applicants to include an electronic portfolio providing a way to demonstrate what they have learned in the classroom, as well as their co-curricular involvement.

▸ Student Reneges on Commitment

- ☐ If a student is offered and formally accepts an internship but later reneges on their commitment for an inexcusable reason, the employer should have a plan in place.
- ☐ Inform the institution where the student is currently enrolled.
- ☐ Employers should also consider if students who make the decision to renege on their commitment will be eligible for any future employment opportunities and maintain all records.

▸ Make the process as inclusive and equitable as possible by considering the following factors and removing room for bias:

- ☐ Think creatively about the ideal candidate – major, GPA, schooling, age etc.
- ☐ Internship programs can be a low-risk way of evaluating different types of talent that an organization may not have considered before.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

INTERN PROCESSING

▸ Intern Onboarding Process

☐ Set tangible goals and clear expectations.

☐ Ensure information is readily available and accessible.

☐ Develop a FAQ guide that is comprehensive of the most important information for the on-boarding student(s). This approach helps students adjust more quickly, therefore increasing the chance for a successful experience that will shape their future academic and professional endeavors.

☐ Include any information related to a dress code, if applicable, in advance to ensure on-boarding students feel fully prepared to meet the expectations.

☐ Dedicate specific time for on-boarding students to express their expectations of what they hope to learn throughout the process, what opportunities they hope to be exposed to, and what skills they seek to improve.

☐ Provide on-boarding students with these materials in advance of their expected start date and ensure they have access to the appropriate contacts, should they have any questions.

▸ Orientation

☐ Review the job posting description to ensure clarity of the internship role and responsibilities.

☐ Outline how outcomes are measured for the role.

☐ Develop an orientation process that is helpful for the student to learn beyond their role.

☐ Allow the opportunity for interns to engage with a variety of staff members to discuss the vision of the organization, learn more about how the different roles interconnect, and ask questions.

☐ Be mindful to not overwhelm incoming students with too much information on their first day.

  ▸ As mentioned above, send as much information in advance and allow the opportunity for incoming interns to ask questions prior to their start date.

  ▸ Connect incoming interns with outgoing or past interns to create a peer mentorship program.

☐ Opt for one-on-one informal meetings when possible and be mindful of the incoming intern's comfort level throughout the orientation process. While some students may dive in and fully adjust within the first few days, others may need more time.

☐ Allow dedicated time for on-boarding interns to engage with their fellow intern colleagues, if applicable.

▸ Engagement

☐ Ensure interns have access to a wide range of networking and connection opportunities outside of those in their specific cohort.

☐ Offer extra-curricular opportunities currently available to staff members, such as book clubs or volunteer opportunities, to ensure interns feel "connected" to your organization.

☐ Allow for continued engagement opportunities with fellow interns and staff members throughout the process to maximize engagement potential.

ACCESS AND EQUITY IN OPPORTUNITY

▸ Throughout the internship, employers are encouraged to review the "Access and Equity in Opportunity" section under "Developing a Clear and Concise Internship Posting" to ensure the opportunity is equitable for all interns.

▸ Additional considerations to promote greater equity in opportunity can be found below.

▸ Take steps to combat implicit bias toward the Limited English Population (LEP).

▸ Implement diversity and inclusion training that actively includes dialogue on multicultural workforce issues for all employees through internal employee resource groups, which often offer comforting mental-health support for its workers.

▸ Expand access to – and consumption of – its services among multicultural student or workforce by providing international language translation (spoken by a fast-growing population, which also represents the nation's largest buying power by 2023, according to a popular study in Multicultural Purchasing Power by the University of Georgia.).

STUDENT RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

During the onboarding process, ensure that interns are provided with a written copy of the organization's human resource information, policy guidelines, including any social media code of conduct or dress code requirements, and worker protections.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Employers should plan to check with the Human Resources Department and legal counsel to ensure that all federal, state and local rules, regulations and laws have been considered as part of the internship program. See below for a partial list of the issues each employer should consider before bringing a student on board:

- ☐ Does our workers' compensation insurance cover interns? Does the answer change if the intern is unpaid? Does it change if the intern is under 18?

- ☐ Can we hire interns who are under age 18? Does the answer change if the intern is unpaid?

- ☐ Are interns subject to our processes for disciplining employees? How do I terminate an intern if it doesn't work out?

- ☐ What protections do we have against liability if an intern is injured while working, is discriminated against or otherwise experiences an unfortunate incident?

- ☐ What protections do interns have under our company policies?

- ☐ Do our non-disclosure agreements or other confidentiality policies for permanent employees apply to interns? Under what circumstances can we make exceptions so that students can write about their internship experience for their capstone requirement or thesis?

- ☐ Do our policies regarding intellectual property ownership apply to interns? Under what circumstances can we make exceptions for students who create something for us during their internship or as part of a project-based learning experience?

- ☐ In addition to the guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Labor in Fact Sheet #71, what else do we need to consider about the Fair Labor Standards Act and how it applies to interns?

- ☐ Can an intern drive a company car? Does the answer change if the intern is unpaid or under age 18?

- ☐ If the paid internship will be done remotely, are there visa considerations if an international student is living in the U.S.? Does that change if the internship is unpaid?

- ☐ If the paid internship will be done remotely, can an international student who is living in their home country (or elsewhere outside the U.S.) be hired without needing a visa?

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) OWNERSHIP

This primarily occurs in project-based opportunities where students are tasked with developing a new solution where the solution could be patented.

Discuss within the organization if there is a need to create an IP policy and, if so, ensure transparency with prospective interns.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS (NDAS)

If employers expect interns to sign NDAs, it should be made transparent.

Please evaluate if the NDA would limit the intern's ability to write up their experience as part of a thesis or capstone project and, if so, ensure early transparency with prospective interns.

FURLOUGHS AND LAYOFFS

Due to unforeseen circumstances, there may arise a situation when the supervisor, mentor, or another employee is furloughed, laid off, or terminated. The Human Resources Department should develop a guideline, should this situation ever occur, to ensure the student(s) is assigned new contacts and remains supported throughout the process. Providing students with connection to more than one employee helps to support this transition, should it be necessary.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF INTERNS

☐ Throughout the internship program, it is important to continually monitor the student's progress and assess how well they are learning and applying their coursework to their role and responsibilities.

☐ During the orientation process, discuss how your organization will measure the outcomes to ensure connectivity between the intern's coursework and work responsibilities.

☐ Provide a forum for interns to discuss their competencies in the beginning of the

internship and schedule regular check-ins to discuss progress and strategies for improvement.

☐ Develop an onboarding survey for students to describe their expectations and provide the student with an opportunity to review their responses upon the conclusion of their internship to evaluate progress.

☐ Schedule an exit interview to collect feedback before the internship concludes.

  ▸ Consider developing a survey to ask questions covering all aspects of the internship including office space, project or scope of work, supervisor and mentor involvement, and likelihood student will return for another opportunity.

  ▸ Be sure to include specific questions like "After completing this internship, do you feel that you know more about your chosen area of interest, and/or feel more confident about major/career choice?"

☐ Analyze the information from exit interviews and discuss how it can be integrated to improve the student experience.

CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT POST-INTERNSHIP

☐ Host networking opportunities for past interns to provide continued engagement opportunities for students throughout their collegiate experience.

☐ Offer past interns the opportunity to mentor future interns.

☐ Continue to connect with past interns about their career aspirations and share information on post-graduation career opportunities.

☐ Engage with past interns to provide a testimonial about their experience for future marketing and promotional materials.

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