

Components of a Great Internship Program

Most employers and interns agree an internship is a great opportunity to build career-readiness for students while meeting the needs of employers. For those employers who are new to offering an internship, here are things to consider:

Organizational Readiness	Does the organization have a goal for making use of an intern? How well has the team been brought into the process so they see the intern as an asset (not a threat)? Where will the intern sit? Is there a computer for them to access if the work requires it? Are there other setup steps that need to happen before the intern arrives? Who will oversee the intern's day-to-day work (if different than the manager)? Start small and build from there. Include the student in planning experiences that would benefit them.
Internship Learning Plan	Have the manager take the time to think through how the intern will help the team, the projects they will work on and who will guide their work. While the intern should expect to help with the team's workload, it is also important to ensure the intern gets to work on at least one resume-building project. Even better, have the intern present their project at the conclusion of the internship.
Effective Onboarding	All new employees, including interns, need help getting acclimated to organizational norms (e.g. appropriate dress, work standards), the organization and the industry. How will you help them learn what they need to know to be effective? Who will help them get to know the team culture? Interns like to know how their contribution will add value to the organization.
Performance Feedback	Interns are interested in getting hands-on work experience. Feedback is important in helping them know where they are excelling and how to adapt to the organizational culture. Building soft skills is as important as the technical skills they will be using. Help shape their teamwork and career management skills through feedback.
Connections	An internship is a great way for an intern to begin building their network. What are formal and informal ways the intern can make connections with team members, organizational leaders and clients, where appropriate?
Conclusion	An intern can become a cheerleader for your organization. How they conclude their internship will leave a lasting impression. Seek the intern's input on their experience, and help them see the contribution they made to the organization's success.