

**Employer Guide
to the
Westminster College
Internship Program**



**WESTMINSTER
COLLEGE**

**CENTER FOR CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

**Internship Site Supervisors Manual
Westminster College
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INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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The purpose of this manual is to communicate information about the Westminster College Internship Program. This information is provided as a service and should not be construed as a contractual obligation. Users agree that the information may be deemed reliable but not guaranteed and therefore should confirm said information at the Internship Program Office. Westminster College reserves the right not to place students in the Internship Program at the College's discretion.

3/2018

What an Internship Is

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE):

- 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.
- There are **clearly defined learning objectives/goals** related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals

An Internship Is Not...

Guarantee of a Job Offer	Although some interns are offered part- or full-time employment because of contacts they make during internships, there is no guarantee that an internship will result in a job. Over 70% of employers prefer candidates with <i>relevant</i> work experience. Internships are an ideal way to build information and referral networks.
Go-fer	Interns are not expected to perform primarily routine work for an organization. Internships should be meaningful learning experiences; whether they are meaningful is a judgment student must make in conjunction with the faculty sponsor. Since most positions and projects involve some routine work, we recommend that it be limited to not more than 20% of the intern's time.
Volunteer Experience	Regardless of the financial arrangements, interns are not the same as volunteers. They are accountable not only to a site supervisor but to a faculty sponsor who evaluates the quality of the <i>learning</i> experience. A volunteer may perform the same tasks equally well but may or may not approach the internship as a learning experience.
A Job	Although interns work on projects for an employer, they should not view the internship as a job. Internships are, first, learning experiences. Some people learn more effectively through experience; internships provide that opportunity. The credit interns earn is based on what students can document they have learned, not solely on the evaluation of their performance at the site.
An Easy Grade	Most students report working just as hard, if not harder, on an internship as they do for classes on campus. Pursuing an off-campus internship along with several other classes creates a demanding schedule and requires a lot of time and energy. Students should be careful about planning internships during an otherwise heavy semester.

How to Utilize Interns

Some organizations have an organized internship program and hire a certain number of interns every semester or summer for specific projects. On the other hand, some organizations have a more random approach to interns. They might need someone every couple years for whatever project or need is current. Some ideas include the following:

- Research
- Statistics
- Marketing/Social Media
- Accounting
- Event Planning
- Communication
- Business/entrepreneurship
- Management
- Non-profit leadership
- IT/programming/web design

Roles

- **Students** are responsible for defining their own learning outcomes within the parameters of their work environments. During the internship, students are expected to become participating members of the sponsoring organizations. The academic component of the internship allows students to reflect upon and communicate the learning that is occurring. This might include a learning journal, guided readings, regular meetings with a faculty sponsor, and an extensive final project.
- **Faculty sponsors** provide academic guidance by helping students combine theory with experience. These sponsors meet regularly with students to raise questions, challenge assumptions, and offer guidance. The faculty sponsor also evaluates the experience and assigns credit. A faculty sponsor can be any full-time faculty, even those in their first year. In some instances, a member of the Professional Staff who has regular teaching duties may be the most qualified person to sponsor an internship. Adjunct instructors as faculty sponsors must be approved by the Dean of Faculty before the internship begins.
- **Site supervisors** play an important role in helping interns define realistic expectations for the experience and in providing training and on-site guidance. The supervisor regularly meets with students and provides feedback to the Internship Coordinator when needed. The supervisor's evaluations also provide valuable information on the student's progress.
- The **Internship Coordinator** is the connection between the faculty, the student, and the work site. The coordinator assists in the development of internships, prepares students, and maintains contact with all the people involved. The coordinator is available to assist students with any internship-related issue or task and may conduct a site visit mid-way through the internship when geographically feasible.

Benefits of Being Involved in an Internship

Benefits to **students** include the opportunity to:

- test and apply academic theory in a work setting
- develop and expand knowledge and skills in a specific field
- work with professionals in the field and learn from them in a professional setting
- feel a sense of accomplishment through their contribution to an organization
- clarify career goals

Benefits to **sponsoring organizations** include:

- the services of mature students who are highly motivated, achievement oriented, academically qualified, and eager to learn
- the opportunity to undertake special projects or short-term assignments

- the fresh perspective of current academic knowledge in specialized fields
- the opportunity to observe potential future employees

Time Commitment

Before the Internship

- Application review, interview
- Clarify responsibilities and work schedule, including start/end dates
- Review, edit (if needed), and approve online internship form (A link to the form will be sent from the Internship Coordinator.)

During Internship

- Available to student as needed
- Mid-term and final evaluation (A link to the evaluation forms will be sent from the Internship Coordinator at the mid-point and end of the term.)

Contact with Internship Coordinator

- Inform immediately when problems develop
- Telephone, email or direct contact as needed

Hiring International Students

International students are eligible to intern in the U.S. while completing their degree. The internship must coincide with their area of study, and U.S. regulations state that they must earn credit. The student may petition do a non-credit internship if it coincides with the students major and has been approved by the Internship Coordinator and the Designated School Official. There is no cost or additional paperwork for the employer; the employer's only responsibility is to provide proof of the internship. Approving the online internship form will suffice for this proof. Some benefits to hiring international students are that they often provide a different perspective and they usually speak more than one language, which may appeal to certain clients.

Compensation

Non-profit organizations can decide internally about whether to pay interns, even if it's a stipend or gas reimbursement. The U.S. Department of Labor has a fact sheet for for-profit companies to use as a "litmus test" when deciding whether to pay interns. It can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/1nepxQH>.

Orientation and Supervision Of Interns

Internships are most effective and satisfying to both interns and site supervisors if the internship includes an orientation to the work site, good communication among the partners involved (intern, site supervisor, and faculty sponsor), and consistent supervision. Listed below are some suggestions for the orientation of interns, as well as information on key points in the learning process.

Orientation

1. Give the intern a tour of the office and introduce him/her to the people with whom s/he will be working. Share with these people the intern's role, assignments, and schedule. If possible, let the student know what role the co-workers play in the organization.

2. Explain the goals, functions, services, and procedures of the agency/department and its relationship to the larger organization or profession.
3. Introduce the student to brochures, manuals, reports, and/or journals pertinent to the organization and to the field.
4. Clarify what is expected of the student with respect to deadlines, dress, quality of work, degree of independence, and confidentiality of certain information.
5. Discuss the specific projects on which the intern will be working and explain how these projects fit into the larger picture and goals of the organization.
6. Determine the intern's work schedule. Provide a workspace.
7. Provide for the intern's safety. Students should not be placed in dangerous situations and should understand the risks involved in certain circumstances. Training should be provided on how to handle these specific situations.

Supervision and training

1. Schedule a regular meeting time (preferably weekly) with the intern to go over questions, discuss and evaluate progress on assignments, assign new responsibilities, and to evaluate the internship experience in general.
2. Give the intern an opportunity to attend staff, committee, or client meetings, when possible.
3. Explain to the intern how decisions are made within the department/organization.
4. Discuss career opportunities in the field, appropriate preparatory course work, and career paths of colleagues.

Setting Up A Work Schedule

Having a work schedule makes it easier for interns to manage their time; however, that is not always possible with every site. The number of hours per week that an intern is expected to devote depends on the number of credits for which s/he registers. They usually have 10-15 weeks to spend at an internship. If the employer cannot accommodate the intern for as many hours as the intern requests, the two parties should reach an agreement on expectations. The student may need to adjust his/her credit hours.

The chart below explains how many hours per week a student is expected to work depending on the number of credit hours for which s/he has registered.

# credits	Site hours	"per week" average* (based on 15 weeks)
1	35	2h 20m
2	70	4h 40m
3	105	7
4	140	9h 20m
5	175	11h 40m
6	210	14
7	245	16h 20m
8	280	18h 40m
9	315	21
10	350	23h 20m
11	385	25h 40m
12	420	28

The time requirements represent a recommended average. Additionally, students can work *more* than the above stated requirement if mutually agreed upon. An intern is not required to work all hours on site. Time spent on outside research, preparation, or meetings related to the internship may be included in the time requirement if the student and supervisor are in agreement. School holidays and vacations (such as Spring Break) should be discussed at the beginning of the internship to make plans and warn of absences. The intern will submit a time journal to his/her faculty sponsor as part of his/her assignments.

Learning Goals

The intern will develop learning goals at the beginning of the internship of what s/he hopes to accomplish/learn through the internship. These are documented on the online internship form that the student completes at the beginning of the internship. When the site supervisor reviews the internship form, s/he has a chance to review those learning goals. Suggestions and possible amendments are encouraged at any point during the internship. As the site supervisor reviews the intern’s learning goals, the following should be checked:

- Are the intern’s goals reasonable, appropriate, and realistic in this setting?
- Do the learning goals parallel the work assignments?
- What additional learning opportunities might be recommended?

Internship learning goals generally fall into the following categories:

SKILL DEVELOPMENT	Learning, improving, testing specific skills (e.g. technical writing, legal research, computer programming, economic analysis, accounting, and interpersonal communication).
BROADENING KNOWLEDGE	Expanding knowledge of a specific field, process, population, etc.
CAREER EXPLORATION	Learning about job descriptions, necessary training/qualifications, marketability of specific professions.
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	Developing confidence, assertiveness, poise, political savvy, empathy, or other qualities.

Goals are broad statements of what the intern expects to accomplish, while **strategies** are very specifically stated activities or tasks that will accomplish the goals.

Performance Evaluations

Formal evaluations take place twice during the internship. The Mid-Internship Performance Appraisal and the Final Internship Performance Appraisal are sent via e-mail at the mid-point and end of the internship. The intern will receive similar forms to evaluate his/her own performance. It is important that the intern and supervisor meet to discuss responses.

Feedback is most valuable when offered frankly, objectively, and in a supportive, encouraging manner. An intern needs to hear not only that s/he is doing a good job, but specifically in what areas, and in what ways. On the other hand, helping an intern to see a personal or professional area which needs improvement and assisting the intern in developing a plan to do so, is equally helpful. Too frequently,

critical comments are left until the final evaluation when the student can no longer use the practical setting of the organization for improvement. Some supervisors hesitate to criticize an intern's performance out of concern for the student's final grade. **The intern is ultimately graded on the basis of the learning derived from the work experience, not from the successful performance of work assignments alone.** Be sure to solicit insights and suggestions from the intern about the assigned projects or about the organization's operation currently. When invited to do so, interns often contribute helpful information.

Please contact the Internship Coordinator if you have any questions about the evaluation process at 573-592-5382 or at mandy.plybon@westminster-mo.edu.

Site Visit

If it is geographically feasible and schedules permit, the Internship Coordinator may schedule a site visit. This is an opportunity to let the College know more about your organization and to discuss the student's responsibilities and progress.

Common Supervisory Concerns

The key to effective supervision is communication. If clear channels of communication are set in place from the beginning of the internship, chances are that no problem or misunderstanding will grow beyond the point of possible resolution. Regular meetings with the intern are essential. We suggest that these meetings be held weekly.

No two interns are alike. For the first few weeks of the internship, both the intern and the site supervisor will be getting to know each other's work and learning style, as well as personalities. Developing ways of communicating and working together, which incorporate and respect differences in styles, is a challenge worth taking on.

If problems occur, and they sometimes do, the best strategy is usually to talk directly with the intern. If the site supervisor feels uneasy or unsure about bringing up a problem, placing a call to the Internship Coordinator may be helpful. S/he will be glad to listen to the situation and offer support and/or suggestions. If the problem involves the faculty sponsor, contacting him/her is recommended.

Keep in mind that interns generally take at least three other courses and sometimes have outside jobs along with their internships. One of the challenges of an internship is to make the most of a time-limited experience. Setting realistic goals and revising those goals when needed is an important part of the learning/negotiating process in an internship. There is no one correct way to solve each problem.

Closing Remarks

Westminster College sincerely appreciates your participation in the Internship Program and trusts that hosting an intern will prove beneficial to both the student and to your organization. This manual is designed to serve as a useful tool and reference guide to you in your important role as site supervisor. We welcome feedback on the experience of supervising an intern and any suggestions on how the process or the program may be improved. Again, thank you for participating and providing a valuable learning experience for Westminster College students.