



Internship Guide

Background

The Rockford Area workforce is a key element to the future economic prosperity of the region. Attracting and retaining young professionals to the Rockford region is important to have a more educated, more successful economy. Young professionals are the future of our workforce. The Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse was formed to connect regional employers to college students and recent graduates.

In the Rockford Region, only 20% of the current population over age 25 has a college degree, compared to the national average of 27%. This higher education deficit has a direct impact on the region's wealth. A recent study for the Federal Reserve Bank on the economic value of education illustrates the impact on the Rockford region. If we were at the national average of 27% of people with four-year degrees, we would have over \$2 Billion more in Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP), which is 15% more wealth annually.

The importance of attracting and retaining our educated professionals is key to improving the local economy. We encourage all local employers to contribute to the future success of our region by making a commitment to provide learning experiences for students through an internship. By creating a new internship program, you will give more opportunities for young, educated individuals to connect to the Rockford Area and to provide them with meaningful experience that will help them in their career search. The more we connect our young professionals to the Rockford Area, the more likely we will be able to retain and recruit young talent, which is important for the success of our economy.

What is an internship?

An internship is a period of supervised practical training at company or organization by a student or recent grad. Internships can be offered by any employer. Typically, students and recent grads do internships to gain real world experience, test possible interest within an industry, and to enhance their education. Many times students are extended a job offer at the completion of the internship.

Internships can be any number of hours per week and run along with the college's semesters. Internships may be full-time, part time, paid, or unpaid. You determine the salary and the hours and you may need to be flexible to work with the interns' schedule.

Internships have learning and performance goals, expectations, supervision, and evaluations. Many times, students participate in projects or work alongside professionals as they work on day-to-day challenges.

Benefits to students

- Work experience in a learning environment where they may develop skills
- Professional experience to make them more competitive when career seeking after graduation
- Able to apply the knowledge they learn from their courses to the workforce
- Connect to the community and network with business leaders

Benefits to the Rockford area

- Many interns return to the companies where they interned after graduation and can have a positive impact on the retention of college graduates in the area
- A large pool of knowledgeable workers is a strong tool for economic development and attraction for new businesses to the Rockford area

Six Simple Steps to Develop Your Company's Internship Program

1. Identify
2. Develop
3. Recruit
4. Implement
5. Mentor
6. Evaluate

1. Identify

The first step in creating an internship is identifying and assessing the internal needs of your company or organization. Your company's internship program must be customized to fit your specific organizational needs.

Ten benefits of hiring an intern for my company or organization

1. Reduce recruiting costs
Interns offer a highly motivated and skilled labor force to draw from by filling your talent pipeline
2. Complete project work
Projects that have been put off because your staff does not have the time to complete them are perfect for interns. Interns are motivated to produce quality work. They are developing their professional skills and experience and want to make positive contributions to your organization.
3. Increase your organization's productivity
Interns accomplish significant amounts of quality work with their time given, therefore freeing up staff to focus on other tasks
4. Test a potential employee before making a commitment to hire
You already know the quality of work and the talents and skills of an intern and know if they are a good candidate for employment
5. Begin training a potential future employee
Many interns return after graduation as full time employees to the company where they interned. These candidates already know your organization.
6. Cost-effective
Interns are working as trainees primarily for educational purposes, and you are not required provide pay and benefits as long as you follow applicable labor laws. Although many are paid, internships are typically less expensive than comparable full-time staff, and can increase the productivity of your staff.
7. Bring fresh, innovative ideas to your company
Interns enthusiastically bring new perspectives and access to the latest research.
8. Assistance during peak periods through the year
Hire extra interns during busier times of the year to assist with the work-load
9. Staff can get experience in management by working with an intern
Internships provide an opportunity for career and personal growth of full-time staff that has an opportunity to manage that may not be possible in other situations
10. Source of diverse employees
Interns from diverse backgrounds can bring new perspectives to your company

Would my company be able to utilize an intern?

- Do you have difficulty finding qualified, new employees for certain positions within your company?
- Does your company or organization require skills that are not typically learned in a classroom?
- Do you have employees that have special projects that could benefit from focused attention?
- Do you have appropriate staff to supervise an intern?

2. Develop

Now that you have determined an intern would be beneficial to your company or organization, it is time to develop a program.

Employer Responsibilities:

- A planned training experience in which goals are established and executed
- The position should be substantial in the quality of work (not *only* clerical tasks) to provide students a chance to apply and expand their knowledge outside of the classroom
- The student must be working with a professional level employee in the organization
- Adequate training and continuous supervision are necessary
- The position should relate to the students interests and career goals
- Do not displace regular workers with student interns

The steps to developing a successful internship are:

1. Identify Internship Coordinator
2. Determine what you hope to accomplish with this program and set goals
3. Allocate resources to develop an internship program (paid/ unpaid, office space, supplies, computer, etc.)
4. Identify a mentor and/or project team as a supervisor
5. Develop a job description

Elements of an intern job description

A good job description outlines the responsibility of the intern, establishes qualifications for the position, describes the knowledge an intern could gain from working with the company or organization. See Appendix B for an Internship Description Template.

For a list of sample tasks and work activities for specific positions, please visit:

www.onetcodeconnector.org

Parts of the Job Description

1. Employer Name
2. Internship Title
3. Description of position
4. Desired Qualifications
5. Approx. # of hours per week
6. Semesters Available (Spring, Summer, and/or Fall)
7. Number of positions available
8. Compensation
9. Contact Info

Compensation

Some internships are paid and some are unpaid, it is up to you to decide what is best for your organization. Some industries, unpaid internships are common, and some industries, most internships are paid. Employers should determine what is appropriate for them or what the standard in the industry is. If you do not have enough budget for an hourly wage, you may pay a stipend to the intern, mileage reimbursement, or other compensation.

Providing a paid internship program typically is more appealing to students and you may have a larger pool to recruit from. Also, paid interns are typically more accountable in their role. Wage data by occupation for the Rockford area can be found at www.rockfordil.com/demographics/wages

See Appendix A for important information about FLSA.

Credit vs. Non- Credit

It is best to leave this decision up to the intern. The student may make his or her own arrangement with their college or advisor. The employer may be required to complete evaluation forms to provide to the students college. The requirements vary by college and by department.

Local colleges and universities are also a great resource to help you develop an internship program.

3. Recruit

You are now ready to begin recruiting candidates for your new internship. Start the recruiting process 3-4 months before you want an intern to begin working. Usually students register for classes in the beginning of November and April. It is a good idea to make offers before that time so the student can work an internship into his or her class schedule. Local colleges and universities are a great resource to help you recruit college students.

Here a few contacts to begin posting your internship opening with:

- Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse(www.rockfordareacareers.com or 815-316-4311)
- Local College Career Service departments
- On-Campus Recruiting
- Student and Professional Organizations
- Faculty
- Career and Internship Fairs
- Your company's website
- Other posting sites

Resumes

You may choose to view resume books online www.rockfordareacareers.com or at the colleges where you posted the internship. You may select candidates from the resumes that are posted on the sites.

You may also wait for students to respond to your posting. Once you begin receiving resumes, candidates for an internship will follow the same procedure as other potential new hires.

- Screen the applicants that meet your criteria
- Schedule an interview with your top candidates
- Evaluate interviews
- Make an offer and determine starting and ending dates and the hours that the intern is available to work
- Discuss compensation
- A good idea is to develop an internship agreement signed by you and the intern, documenting goals and expectations, compensation, hours, and the time frame of the internship.
- Notify Career Services and the Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse of your hire and to remove the position from the postings

4. Implement

Now you have your intern and they are ready to begin work. Just like a new employee you want to give the intern time to become oriented to the company and position. You may want to consider the following items:

1. Orientation

An intern should complete a basic orientation to get them acquainted with your company or organization and the rules. Also, a tour of the facility and introductions to other employees in the department or organization is important

2. Company Information

It is important to give the new intern any information about your company and industry to give them a better understanding

3. Resources

Make sure the intern has all of the necessary tools and space to do their job, such as a computer, phone, office supplies, etc.

4. Define Expectations

Ensure the intern has a clear understanding of your expectations and goals.

5. Direction

An intern will require, especially at first, clear instructions on the tasks they need to complete

6. Feedback

Give the intern feedback so they know how they are progressing. Also, encourage the intern to give your company any feedback or ideas that they may have.

5. Mentor

Throughout the internship, an intern will look to his or her mentor or project team for advice and to answer questions. The mentor should be prepared to offer guidance and instruction on tasks. The mentor should be committed to managing the intern.

Mentors are employees who are enthusiastic about the internship, good teachers, and are accessible to the intern. Mentors should spend at least a set amount of time every week to meet with the intern, to talk about current and upcoming work and advise the intern on any advice or issues. It is necessary for a mentor to visit an intern's desk on a regular basis to see if they have any questions or need any help.

6. Evaluate

Throughout the internship, employers should keep open lines of communication with the intern on feedback of the performance of the intern and feedback for the employer from the intern. Weekly or monthly feedback systems should be determined at the start of the internship and should include a discussion of the intern's performance, determine if additional training or assistance is necessary, a review of expectations, and feedback on the position from the intern.

At the completion of the internship, employers should complete an Evaluation Form (Appendix E) to evaluate the intern's work performance. The intern should receive feedback on their performance and a review of their completed work.

The intern should also complete an Employer Evaluation Form (Appendix D) to evaluate their experience with the company or organization. The intern should provide an employer with feedback on the skills that they learned, feedback on their mentor or project team, and if they view your company as a potential employer after graduation.

Appendix

A. Human Resource Issues

The employer is responsible for complying with all state and federal labor laws and regulations and for providing a safe environment for an intern to work. Whether interns are considered an employee is an important question that should be evaluated with the assistance of legal counsel or a human resource expert. Refer to <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/flsa/> for more information about the US Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or to <http://www.state.il.us/Agency/idol/> for the IL Dept. of Labor information. The Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse is not responsible for ensuring your compliance with labor laws.

Although, we strongly encourage paid internships, they do not need to be paid as long as the following criteria are met.

- Interns cannot displace regular employees
- Interns are not guaranteed a job at the end of the internship; however the employer may opt to do so
- Employer and intern understand there is no wage entitlement for the time spent in the internship
- Interns must receive training from your organization, even if other work is briefly hindered
- Interns must get hands-on experience
- Training must primarily benefit the intern, not the organization

International Students

International students bring new perspectives to your company or organization as an intern. They are eager to experience the professional world in the US and bring new insight from their cultures. Depending on the visa granted to the student, they may or may not be able to work off-campus. The student's college international department will help the student to determine the status and authorization to work. Refer to <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> for more information.

B. Internship Description Form

Employer Name:

Internship Title:

Description of position:

Desired Qualifications:

Approximate # of hours/ week:

Semesters Available: (Spring, Summer, and/or Fall)

Number of Positions Available:

Compensation:

Contact Info:

C. Sample Intern Evaluation Form (To be completed by intern)

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Start date: _____ End Date: _____

Employer: _____

Internship Title: _____

Rate yourself on the following items:

5- Exceptional Skill Level 2-Limited/ Minimal Skill Level	4- Above Average Skill 1-Lack this Skill	3-Adequate/ Above Average Skill Level N/A- Not Applicable
Communication		Motivation
Demonstrates oral communication skills required for the job	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Motivated & interested in assignments 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Writes clearly and effectively	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Displays good judgment and establishes priorities 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Willing to communicate and ask for clarification	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Makes efficient use of time 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Listens to feedback & works to improve	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Arrives on time and maintains agreed hours 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Problem Solving/ Decision Making Skills		Initiative
Offers creative solutions to problems	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Works independently without excessive supervision 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Resolves problems within adequate timeframe	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Seeks opportunities to learn 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Teamwork		Technical Skills
Makes a positive contribution to the team	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Sets and completes goals 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Shares information and resources Is willing to put in extra time and effort	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Produces high quality work 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
Cooperates and assists co-workers	1 2 3 4 5 N/A	Has technical skills required for the position 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
		Willing to learn new skills 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Please assess the responsibilities your employer assigned to you?

Difficult to achieve Challenging, but attainable Not challenging

How would you describe the overall educational value of your internship experience?

Very valuable Generally worthwhile Of some value Very limited value No value

How would you assess your overall performance?

Outstanding Above average Average Below average Unsatisfactory

What suggestions do you have to improve the quality of this internship?

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Please give a completed copy to your employer and to the Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse at 308 W. State St., Ste 190 Rockford, IL 61101 or info@rockfordareacareers.com

D. Sample Employer Evaluation Form (To be completed by Internship Supervisor)

Employer Name: _____ Employer Phone #: _____

Supervisor Name: _____ Title: _____
 Email: _____

Intern Name: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Please provide an evaluation of this student's performance or skill level in each of the following areas. We encourage you to share this evaluation with the intern and Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse. Feel free to write a letter of recommendation for the intern. Use extra pages as necessary for additional comments.

Rate the intern on the following items:

5- Exceptional Skill Level 4- Above Average Skill 3-Adequate/ Above Average Skill Level
 2-Limited/ Minimal Skill Level 1-Lacks this Skill N/A- Not Applicable

Communication

Demonstrates oral communication skills required for the job 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Writes clearly and effectively 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Willing to communicate and ask for clarification 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Listens to feedback & works to improve 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Problem Solving/ Decision Making Skills

Offers creative solutions to problems 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Resolves problems within adequate timeframe 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Teamwork

Makes a positive contribution to the team 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Shares information and resources Is willing to put in extra time and effort 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Cooperates and assists co-workers 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Motivation

Motivated & interested in assignments 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Displays good judgment and establishes priorities 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Makes efficient use of time 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Arrives on time and maintains agreed hours 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Initiative

Works independently without excessive supervision 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Seeks opportunities to learn 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Sets and completes goals 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Produces high quality work 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Technical Skills

Has technical skills required for the position 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Please discuss whether this intern completed the learning objectives you discussed and if your expectations were met or exceeded.

Please list any skills or activities this intern should work on to make them more suitable for the workplace.

Do you recommend this intern for hire? Why?

How would you rate the intern's overall performance?

Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Unsatisfactory

Did the intern receive academic credit for this internship?

Was this a paid or unpaid internship?

Any additional comments?

Supervisor Signature: _____

Supervisor Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for completing this final internship assessment. Please provide a completed copy to the intern and to the Rockford Area Career Clearinghouse.

E. Top 10 concerns of Interns

1. We want real work!

The top complaint from interns is that they are doing grunt work. Some amounts of clerical work come with any internship, but please try to find good learning experiences for your interns. Take advantage of their ideas and assess their abilities. Give them good projects to work on and they will shine.

2. Lay out your expectations

Be honest with your interns about what they can expect from their experience and what you expect from them. Discussing your expectations up front will help avoid miscommunications and hard feelings in the long run.

3. Give feedback

Interns can't improve their performance if you don't help them learn from their mistakes and congratulate them on their successes.

4. Include us in company events

Is it possible for the intern to attend a staff meeting, a project meeting, or a social lunch with office-mates? Including them in the daily life of the office helps them feel welcome and gives them a better perspective on the organization.

5. Explain what you mean

Give a detailed explanation of projects you assign to help the intern understand the purpose of the project.

6. We need mentors

Find a staff member who truly likes to teach and help new professionals to provide guidance to the intern

7. Give us your time

Interns might not speak up if they are feeling ignored or have questions. The mentor/ supervisor should schedule time to spend with the intern.

8. Be prepared

Create a job description, inform others in the office, and find time to spend with the intern on the first day

9. Arrange the details of our arrival

Interns will need a place to sit, a computer to work at, and a phone. If you want to get a job done, give the intern appropriate tools to do so.

10. Every little bit helps

Not every employer is in a position to pay their interns, but if you can offer an hourly rate, a stipend, meals, parking, travel reimbursements, you'll be greatly assisting your intern.