



Information for Prospective Internship Host Sites and Supervisors

Academic Internships

Only for-credit (academic) internships are recognized by the College as internships. Other work-related experiences, e.g., part-time or summer employment, or job shadowing, are valuable in their own right but should not be confused with the internship experience.

- Academic internships are a three-way educational partnership among the College, the employer or host site, and the student. They emphasize professional projects and activities rather than clerical duties. Internship tasks and responsibilities should enable students to draw upon, apply, and expand the knowledge/skills they have developed in their coursework at Penn State Altoona.
- Interns work a minimum of 40 hours on-site per academic credit. Psychology related internships are generally 3 credits @ 120 hours on site, or 6 credits @ 240 hours.
- Internships last a minimum of eight weeks. The actual length of an internship may be determined by your organization and the student's needs and schedule.
- Internships may be paid or unpaid.
- Internships can be arranged for Fall, Spring or Summer semesters.
- If approved, student-interns register for course credit under the direction of a faculty member. The faculty member helps the student to structure the course, communicates regularly, and evaluates his or her academic performance.
- Academic credit is granted not for work per se, but rather for successful completion of assignments that integrate the workplace experience with classroom knowledge. Thus it is important that student-interns be exposed to processes, operations, etc., that will enable them to use the skills, concepts, and/or theories developed in their course of study.

- Students should contact a host site for a meeting and tentative approval prior to completing the formal Internship Proposal. The proposal must be approved by the faculty member overseeing the student's internship **before course registration and the internship may begin.**

Expectations of Your Organization

An intern's host site supervisor is the most important member of his or her learning network. Ideally, this individual will have the time and inclination to actively mentor the intern. At a minimum, the site supervisor should:

- **Review and assess** the student's Internship Proposal.
- **Provide** professionally-relevant, challenging work assignments that have real value for the organization.
- **Meet** weekly with the intern to address questions and concerns. Even if you talk informally over the course of the week, set aside a regular time specifically to discuss questions, problems, or progress with your student-intern.
- **Facilitate** the intern's introduction into relevant professional networks.
- **Formally evaluate** the intern's performance by responding to contact from the faculty supervisor.

When planning an intern's work tasks or projects, always ask...

- What can be learned from performing the task or completing the project?
- What potential ties are there between the assigned tasks and what the student-intern is studying in college?



Expectations of the Student-Intern

Students are expected to display a high degree of professionalism in all aspects of the work experience. In addition, they identify specific academic learning objectives in consultation with a member of the college faculty. They produce written and/or oral work that ties the workplace experience to the classroom, as directed by their faculty instructor. Interns may make formal, public presentations about the internship.

Expectations of the College

To ensure that the experience is working to the benefit of each party, the college maintains regular contact with the student-intern and host site supervisor throughout the internship. The Psychology faculty internship supervisor is available to assist with issues, concerns, and problems that may arise during the course of the internship experience.

How Early Field Experiences Differ From Internships

- Psychology Early Field Experiences are considered academic experiences which are similar to an internship.
- Field Experience is intended to provide students with a first exposure to a professional work setting related to Psychology. Students will assist a professional to gain insight and experience they will reflect on and relate to an academic focus.
- The experience is intended only for sophomore or junior students and is available only as a three credit course.
- Field Experiences require 120 hours on site within the 15 week semester. Generally students schedule 8 hours / week on site; however they may compress their required hours into a shorter time frame.

Best Practices For Internship / Field Experience Host Sites

#1: Provide interns with challenging work assignments that have real value for the business or organization

#2: Hold orientations for all involved

#3: Provide interns with an organization handbook or other references to orient them to your history, mission, etc.

#4: Facilitate interns' access to your company's executive ranks through lunches, special events, etc.

#5: Offer training and professional networking opportunities.

#6: Offer internship scholarships, if possible' if not, consider other forms of meaningful compensation.

#7: Showcase interns' work through presentations to top management.

#8: Conduct exit interviews

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