



# **Career Intern Program**

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## **HELPFUL HINTS FOR SPONSORS**

A number of sponsors have requested suggestions on orienting Interns to their operations and on making preparation within their organizations for bringing the Intern "on board." The following ideas have been collected from previous sponsors, previous interns, and from intern site staff experiences:

### **A. Preparations in Advance of Intern's Arrival**

1. The sponsor will need to decide how the Intern is to be perceived by the staff. In some situations, the sponsor may decide that the Intern should be seen as a special assistant rather than a high school student.
2. Discuss the Intern's arrival at a staff meeting and explain what the Intern's role will be. Everyone should understand that the experience is career exploration and educational in nature, and that the hands-on activities are to assimilate the knowledge gained rather than to do non-educational productive work. The Intern should also have the opportunity to attend meetings and should be treated as an adult professional.
3. The sponsor should decide how the Intern is to relate to the clerical staff. The cordiality of secretaries will be particularly important to the Intern's experience. Besides a general briefing for clerical staff, it would be helpful for the sponsor to arrange for the Intern to relate to a particular secretary for on-going assistance in completing any special assignments, getting supplies, etc.
4. The sponsor should arrange for the Intern to have a specific desk and telephone, unless the internship experience is a rotating one.
5. If the internship experience is a rotating one, from area-to-area or department-to-department, a flow chart for the semester would be very helpful.
6. It would be helpful for the sponsor to collect a package of information about the organization for the Intern to read.

### **B. The First Few Weeks**

1. The first day: This initial day is very important to the Intern and may set the tone of expectations for the entire internship. The sponsor should make certain that the Intern is personally welcomed, introduced to the staff, briefed, and made to feel a part of the organization. Nothing is worse than for the Intern to arrive at the intern site and find that he or she is not even expected.

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2. The Intern will want specific information about the following, as soon as possible:
  - a. Hours - mutual agreement.
  - b. Appropriate Dress - for the setting.
  - c. Flow Chart - if necessary.
  - d. Role the Intern Should Play at Meetings - when to speak, observe, what to look for, etc.
  - e. Meeting Policy - May the Intern assume he or she is invited to all meetings unless specifically asked not to attend? (This is the most cordial policy, and it avoids the necessity of having to ask permission to attend each meeting or event.)
  - f. Lunch - When to eat and where? Many of the Interns eat lunch before the internship, although some go to their site right from school. Some Interns tend not to eat lunch unless told they may do so. Is it acceptable for the Intern to bring a lunch and eat where the staff eats? Will the sponsor pay for business lunches to which the Intern is invited? Make this clear, or the Intern will refuse such invitations, because they know that restaurant meals are expensive.
  - g. Names of Key Staff - Introduce the Intern to staff with whom the sponsor interacts on a regular basis. All key staff should be known even if the Intern never meets them.
  - h. Office decorum - Do people relate on a first-name basis? Are individuals with certain titles addressed in a special way?

### **C. Some General Notes**

1. Sponsors sometimes do not have sufficiently high expectations for the work that their Interns can produce and may not give sufficiently challenging assignments. These Interns are very capable so please work them! It is important during the first weeks to test the Intern's capacities and explore his or her interests in undertaking some special assignments that will have real value for the organization and the Intern. At the same time, adequate directions and explanations must, of course, accompany the development of any such project.
2. If the Intern is not meeting the sponsor's or sponsoring staff's expectations, the sponsor should consult with the Intern and make the program coordinator aware as soon as possible.

Although problems seldom arise, this procedure will ensure a meaningful educational experience for all involved!

**For questions, please contact:  
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