

Internship Best Practices

Academic Internship Employer Handbook



ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook provides an overview of the Academic Internship Program at Bellevue College with criteria for creating an internship, best practices for onboarding, and samples of required documents (pages 6-10).

What is an Internship?

An internship is a form of experiential learning for students that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a work setting under the guidance of a professional in the field.

Advantages to Business/Organization

Student Interns:

- Are an excellent source of capable and qualified workers
- Help complete short term special assignments or projects which might otherwise be hard to find time to accomplish
- Can be available during peak season and are a flexible means to meet staffing needs
- Are an efficient way to bring in new talent to support ongoing projects
- Bring fresh and creative ideas
- Are motivated and enthusiastic
- Are a cost-effective way to both recruit and assess students' potential and employability with minimal risk or obligation
- Are an opportunity for the employer to be involved in the educational process which contributes to both the profession and the community

Advantages to Students

Students pursue internships because they want work-based learning experiences that link their academic coursework to their area of college study and career goals. Internships offer students opportunities to engage in projects and tasks that help them develop professionally while also contributing to the work of the internship site.

Overview of the Internship Process

The employer/organization develops a job description (see Checklist for Developing an Internship), advertises it to students (see Recruiting Students), and then screens and selects the intern. The selected intern contacts the internship coordinator who first determines if the position qualifies as an appropriate internship for the student's area of study, degree, or career pathway. If yes, the internship coordinator provides the appropriate training agreement for the student's area of study. The training agreement assures that the intern, the college, and the internship site have a shared understanding of expectations. The student completes a portion of the training agreement and gives it to their internship supervisor who

completes another portion of the agreement. The completed agreement is sent to the internship coordinator for additional signatures. Then the internship coordinator provides enrollment and class information to the student.

The main roles of the Internship Coordinator are to: Determine if an internship is worthy of college credit; ensure that a student is engaged in appropriate learning activities throughout the duration of the approved internship; help solve issues that may arise during the internship; ensure that the student internship experience is free from harassment and discrimination; and assign a letter grade for the student's learning at the end of the term.

Once the internship begins the student has a series of assignments that are reviewed and graded by the Internship Coordinator, designed to enhance learning at the internship site. One assignment is for the student to develop learning objectives based on their job description and it is recommended that the intern share these with the site supervisor who can help facilitate them. In the mid-point of the internship, the internship coordinator will have a short consultation with the site supervisor to check-in about the intern's performance and discuss and help resolve any issues that have arisen. The internship coordinator will schedule an in person or virtual site visit during the internship.

Toward the end of the internship the student will provide their site supervisor with an evaluation form entitled "Employer Evaluation of Intern". The supervisor completes the evaluation, returns it to the student, and personally reviews it with the student. The evaluation form is then turned in by the student as one of their assignments for the internship course. The supervisor is also expected to sign the intern's time sheet, verifying their attendance.

Internship Criteria

Legitimate internships—whether it is an in-person/on-site internship or one conducted remotely or virtually—meet all of the following criteria. The experience:

1. Must provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills developed in the classroom as well as exposure to industry knowledge and skills that extends those learned in the classroom
2. Must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer
3. Develops skills and/or knowledge that are transferable to other employment settings
4. Has defined beginning and ending dates
5. Provides a job description that clearly describes duties and responsibilities and desired qualifications
6. Must have supervision by a professional who has the expertise to guide and mentor
7. Has a routinely scheduled format for providing feedback such as weekly meetings
8. Offers the resources, equipment, and facilities that supports student learning

Checklist for Developing an Internship

1) Job Description

The job description outlines the intern's scope of work during the internship (sample job descriptions are at the end of this document)

- Brief description of your company and the nature of your business
- Description of the scope of work and tasks involved
- Paid, unpaid, or stipend; if paid, state wage per hour; stipend (\$ amount of one lump sum payment)
- Start and end dates
- Qualifications (education, skills and abilities)
- Location (i.e. in-person, remote, hybrid)
- Application process and deadline (for example resume, cover letter, writing samples, portfolio)
- Link for application submission
- Contact person

2) Start and end dates

An internship must have a beginning and ending date. Bellevue College uses the quarter system. Internships of 10-11 weeks that match BC's academic calendar are highly recommended.

3) Assigned Supervisor

Ideally the employee selected to supervise the intern enjoys teaching and mentoring, wants this role, and has the knowledge and experience to provide guidance.

4) Paid, Unpaid, Stipend

Paid

Paid internships attract a larger pool of qualified and motivated applicants. Paid internships offer more equitable access to the internship to all students and is not limited to only those who can afford a non-paid experience. It is recommended that internship wages should be over minimum wage, depending upon experience. Beginning January, 2023 employers must provide clear salary range or hourly rate on all job postings ([Washington Equal Pay and Opportunities Act \(EPOA\)](#)). As part of this updated law, employers can't ask for salary history.

Unpaid

Employers may offer unpaid internships as long as the internship meets the "primarily beneficiary" test set by the US Department of Labor (refer to Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>). Unpaid Bellevue College students are covered by the College's liability insurance policy. For Worker's Compensation coverage for unpaid interns, refer to <https://lni.wa.gov/insurance/insurance-requirements/volunteers/#student-volunteers-and-unpaid-students>.

Stipend

A stipend is a single lump sum payment directly to the student at the successful conclusion of the internship. Stipends help students pay for costs associated with the internship such as transportation to and from the internship site and the cost of enrollment in the internship course (over \$125 per credit). Stipends cannot equal the same dollar amount as minimum wage for the total hours of the internship and cannot be used as a way to evade wage and hour laws. Stipends are typically considered a business expense and are not a donation to Bellevue College nor are they processed through BC's Foundation.

Independent Contractor

In general, hiring student interns as independent contractors is discouraged because it puts the burden of taxation on a student who is not otherwise self-employed. This is the IRS's resource page to determine if someone is an independent contractor or an employee:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/independent-contractor-self-employed-or-employee>

If you choose to hire a student as an independent contractor, you must inform them of this in writing and clearly indicate that they are responsible for self-employment taxes. This is the IRS page for self-employment tax information:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/self-employed-individuals-tax-center>

5) Academic Credit

Students may earn college credit for their internships. It is highly recommended that employers require all students to be enrolled in a college internship course as a condition of the internship. Credit is based on the number of hours a student works [50 internship work hours equals one credit which is the minimum number of hours per academic term (quarter)]. Enrollment in an internship course is especially important for non-paid students because they are covered by the College's liability insurance and it helps employers meet US Fair Labor Standards for non-paid internships.

6) Work Hours

The Academic internship Program recognizes that a variety of work schedules are suitable to meet student learning and internship site preferences. Students and internship sites are expected to develop a regular work schedule at the beginning of the internship which is documented on the Internship Training Agreement.

For on-site internships, interns may work three or more hours per day (two hours is considered too short for learning to take place). Students engaged in partially or fully remote internships may schedule work hours to fit their schedule.

In situations where students work full time, the Internship Program recommends an eight-hour work day as the standard. The Academic Internship Program acknowledges that there may be circumstances where longer work hours are appropriate.

All internships should adhere to the following work hour guidelines:

- a) **Relevancy to Learning:** The number of hours a student intern works should directly align with the educational benefits they derive from their internship experience. Work days longer than eight hours must offer opportunities that are directly related to and contribute to the intern's learning and professional growth.

- b) **Transparent Communication:** Employers have the responsibility to inform prospective interns about potential situations that may require working beyond their established work schedule. This disclosure should occur before the student accepts the internship offer, ensuring that both parties are aware of the possibility of extended work hours as a condition of the internship.
 - c) **Right to Refuse:** Interns who are asked to work extended hours without prior notice have the right to refuse without facing any negative consequences. It is crucial to respect the intern's autonomy and prioritize their well-being and educational commitments. Interns should not face penalties or unfavorable treatment for declining to work beyond the agreed-upon hours, especially when the request is made suddenly.
- 7) **International Students**
International students are required to apply for special permission called “curricular practical training (CPT)” to do an internship, either paid or unpaid, and they must be concurrently enrolled in an internship course for college credit.
- 8) **Recruiting Interns**
Begin by setting up a Handshake account <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/careers/handshake/>), the College’s job and internship platform. Once your profile is approved, you can post your position. Send an email to the internship coordinator who can forward it to students and faculty. Screen applicants, interview appropriate candidates, and select an intern.

Best Practices for Onboarding Interns

Orientation

During the first month of the internship, the site supervisor or designee should describe the nature of the business, products, customers, and introduce the intern to team members. Invite interns to team meetings to familiarize them with current projects.

Work Plan

The site supervisor should develop a work plan with the intern to help them stay on track with tasks, projects, and expectations. The work plan can be a work in progress document that evolves if circumstances change.

Communication

Set up weekly meetings with the intern which gives the intern the opportunity to ask questions, seek guidance, set priorities, review the work plan, and for the supervisor to provide feedback.

Non-Discrimination

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; creed; color; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates. Bellevue College is prohibited from discriminating in such a manner by college policy and by state and federal law. **All college personnel and persons, vendors, and organizations with whom the college does business are required to comply with applicable federal and state statutes and regulations designed to promote affirmative action and equal opportunity.**

Sample Internship Documents for Employers

On the following pages are examples of two documents that internship employers will be expected to complete at different times during the internship. All internship forms are fillable PDFs.

Pages 6-8 are the three pages of a sample Academic Internship Training Agreement.

Pages 9-10 are the two pages of a sample Employer Evaluation of Intern form.

INTERNSHIP TRAINING AGREEMENT

This agreement, to be signed by the employer, the student, and the Bellevue College Internship Program Coordinator, is assurance that the participating student will gain quality on-the-job experience that may be awarded college credit.

To be completed by the STUDENT:

Student's Name: _____ Student ID : _____
Student's Email: _____ Student's Phone: _____
Program of Study : _____ Est. Graduation (Month/Year) _____ / _____
International Student : Yes ☐ No ☐
Race (Check one): ☐ Native American/Alaska Native ☐ African American/Black ☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Asian/ Pacific Islander ☐ Hispanic/Latinx ☐ Multi-racial/Other
Internship Start Date: _____ Internship End Date: _____
Have you taken an internship before: Yes ☐ No ☐ Will enroll in _____ # of credits during **F W Sp Sm** Term (circle one)
Total number of hours to be worked (must be 50 hours minimum): _____
Work Schedule (days of week, hours per day): _____

I agree to work as shown above to meet the established learning objectives and course objectives of the Bellevue College Academic Internship Program. I will keep the Internship Coordinator informed of any change in my work or school status. I realize that if placed in an internship position by the college, I may not be able to file an unemployment claim against my employer at the end of the placement.

As a student representative of Bellevue College, I understand that the highest ethical and professional standards code of conduct is expected of me at all times. I agree to comply with Bellevue College's Student Code of Conduct. Failure to comply may lead to withdrawal from the program.

Student's Signature: _____ Date : _____

To be completed by the EMPLOYER:

Company Name: _____
Company Address: _____
Supervisor's Name and Title (must be an employee of the company): _____
Supervisor's Email: _____
Supervisor's Phone: _____

Student's Working Title: _____ Department : _____

The internship is **paid** / **unpaid** (highlight one). If paid, how much? _____

a. What are the work duties of the intern? (may attach additional documentation)

b. What specific things will you help the student learn from this internship?

Training Agreement:

It is understood that the internship is temporary and the employer is under no obligation to continue the internship or make any offer of permanent employment to the student. Any agreement to continue the position after the date stated above is a negotiation between the student and the employer. The employer or student may terminate the agreement at any time, and the employer reserves the right to discharge the student for just cause. However, the College requests that the employer consult with the Internship Program and the student prior to such action. **Please contact the Bellevue College Academic Internship Program at (425) 564-2279 if you wish to terminate the agreement before the date stated above.** The College may also terminate the agreement if, after a consultation with the employer and the student, it determines that the internship no longer accommodates educational requirements.

Appropriate safety instruction will be provided by the employer. The employer shall evaluate the student in writing on a form supplied by the College within two weeks after the conclusion of the internship on the date stated above. If the internship is paid, the employer shall place the student in the same employment status as that of comparable employees with regard to Social Security, the Industrial Insurance Act, and compliance with labor laws, including the hourly minimum wage as established by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Unpaid positions are exempt from these requirements; however, the employer agrees that they shall provide workers' compensation coverage for the intern (<http://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F213-023-000.pdf>); intern shall not displace a regular or a laid off employee; and that the student will register for the Academic Internship Experience course (EXPRL 191, 192, or 193).

Anti-discrimination Clause: The above employer affirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; color; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion or creed; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or veteran status. Internships and work-based learning programs, whether they occur on or off campus, are educational programs of the College and thus covered by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibit any form of gender-based discrimination (see <http://bellevuecollege.edu/titleix> for more details).

Employer Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by the Internship Coordinator *(for internal use)*

1. Signature of Internship coordinator _____

Date: _____

Note : The training agreement and internship job description must be reviewed and approved by the internship coordinator before a student can be approved to register for the EXPRL 191 Academic Internship class.

For any questions, please refer to:

Internship Coordinator, Tamara Pinkas, Center for Career Connections/RISE, U 304
tamara.pinkas@bellevuecollege.edu

The Academic Internship Program

Center for Career Connections, RISE Learning Institute
Bellevue College 3000 Landerholm Circle SE, U304, Bellevue, WA
98007-6484 internships@bellevuecollege.edu (425) 564-2279



EMPLOYER EVALUATION OF INTERN

Thank you so much for supervising a Bellevue College student intern! Please complete this evaluation, provide a copy of the evaluation to your intern, and review it with them. Your feedback is an important part of their learning. **This evaluation will not impact the student's grade.**

Please complete this form and give it to your intern.

The Academic Internship Program, Center for Career Connections, RISE Learning Institute
Bellevue College, 3000 Landerholm Circle SE, U 304, WA 98007-6484

Intern's Name: _____
Company Name: _____
Supervisor's Name: _____
Supervisor's Phone: _____

Overall Performance	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
How do you rate your intern's overall performance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basic Work Skills & Professionalism	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Time management: keeps busy & uses time effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Punctuality & attendance: if late or ill, notifies supervisor and rearranges schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Behavior & attire are appropriate for job setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionalism & Communication	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Works well with other employees; shares in workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accepts feedback & suggestions graciously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is courteous and helpful with the public/customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skill Development	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Motivated & interested in learning new skills & tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asks questions when needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shows continual improvement & increasing speed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quality of Work	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Follows directions carefully and accurately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is a creative and independent problem solver	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The general quality of the intern's work products was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. What specific skills did the student acquire or hone during the internship?

2. In what areas did the student excel?

3. In what areas does the student still need to improve?

4. Do you have any suggestions for improving our internship program?

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date : _____

Thank you very much for your time. If you have questions or would like to make comments about the Academic Internship Program, please contact Tamara Pinkas Internship Coordinator, tamara.pinkas@bellevuecollege.edu