

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Welcome to the Highline College Cooperative Education/Internship Program!

Congratulations on your decision to work with a Highline College Student Intern! This information will help you understand your role in the Cooperative Education/ Internship Program.

As you know, internships benefit both you and the student. Your organization gains motivated, qualified interns and students are able to enhance their education through the integration of on-campus study with practical work experience.

Highline College requires the student to develop measurable learning objectives in order to receive college credit for the work experience. Learning objectives relate to the student's job assignments, focus on improving job performance, solving specific problems, enhancing human relations skills, and new skill development. Your suggestions and guidance encourage students to become more productive, valuable employees. Achieving the learning objectives creates a basis for evaluation at the end of the work experience.

What are Everyone's Roles and Responsibilities?

Employers are expected to:

- Provide well-supervised, career-related opportunities for students.
- Review and approve learning objectives.
- Communicate periodically with the student and coop faculty advisor concerning the student's performance and progress.
- At the end of the quarter, the supervisor will be asked to evaluate the student's achievement of the learning objectives and personal work habits. Your input will provide valuable feedback regarding the student's progress and potential curricula improvements.
- Participate in a site visit with the coop faculty advisor and student.

Students are expected to:

- Develop learning objectives in consultation with the coop faculty advisor and employment supervisor.
- Adhere to all personal rules, regulations, and other requirements of the host organization, including regular and punctual reporting to work.
- Perform all assignments as required by the coop faculty advisor.
- Maintain communication with the coop faculty advisor and attend all meetings or seminars as required.
- Perform all assigned tasks to the satisfaction of the employment supervisor.
- Notify the coop faculty advisor of any problems or significant changes.

Coop Faculty Advisors are expected to:

- Determine that the student is adequately and appropriately prepared and that the work experience is appropriate.
- Review and approve the student's learning objectives.
- Provide guidance for the student including individual meetings, assignments, and employer visits as required.
- Maintain contact with the employment supervisor and provide appropriate assistance to maximize student learning experiences.
- Assess student learning and recommend a grade for the Coop work experience.
- Maintain records and documentation, and return forms in a timely fashion.

Paperwork:

See the coop website for forms: <http://coop.highline.edu/>

General Tips and Suggestions for Hosting a Successful Internship Program

Preparing to Host Interns

Identify Needs and Goals for the Internship Program

Conduct an internal audit by asking the following questions:

- **Can you provide meaningful work assignments?**
 - Short term projects that you would like to initiate or expand, a recurring event that you would like a fresh perspective on, or research that will enhance a service or a product are great areas to explore.
- **Are you prepared and able to invest time in interns?**
 - While the benefits of hosting an intern are many, it does take time to train, provide mentorship and feedback to an intern. Establishing an internship program structure or using the resources in this Internship Toolkit can help streamline the process.
- **Do you have adequate office space and equipment for interns (computer, telephone, email account, and desk)?**
 - Or will the intern work remotely... and how will you then offer support and ensure accountability?

Supervision

Identify a person to supervise an intern who is committed to developing students.

- The supervisor should have the time, capacity, and interest to work with an intern. Individuals who like to teach or train are often great candidates.
- Can you involve colleagues in some way?

- Explaining your organization's goals in bringing on an intern can create a positive environment for all involved and encourage input on how to best utilize and develop an intern.
- Hosting interns can help bridge the generation gap. If you have long-term employees, what can they teach millennial and Gen Z interns? What might a millennial or Gen Z intern be able to teach a long-term employee?

Should your Organization's Internships be Paid or Unpaid?

Highline **encourages paid internships** when possible. Internships require more work and commitment than most volunteer positions, so compensation is a fair expectation. Paid internships also tend to draw more committed, diverse, and qualified candidates.

For-profit organizations considering offering unpaid internships, need to carefully evaluate their internship program to ensure that interns have a valuable learning experience and that the program is aligned with the U.S. Department of Labor's "[primary beneficiary test](#)," which determines whether or not student interns are entitled to wages under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

How Much to Pay?

Internship wages vary by industry and job responsibility. The [National Association of Colleges and Employers \(NACE\)](#) maintains the most up-to-date wage information. Compensation can include discounted parking, stipends, free lunch, subsidized housing, and other benefits.

Academic Credit: How Does it Work?

Pursuing academic credit for an internship is determined by the intern and their academic institution. An organization cannot give academic credit for an internship. An organization can, however, be supportive of a student completing the internship for academic credit. Most of the required pieces in credit-bearing internships are best practices that organizations should consider implementing anyway (eg. learning agreement and the final evaluation). Highline students completing an internship for academic credit are responsible for the academic work outside of their internship hours. The items an organization must be involved in when hosting a Highline intern earning academic credit are:

- Approving the internship and agreeing to the site expectations.
- Reviewing and offering feedback on a Learning Agreement that the student prepares.
- Giving regular informal feedback and support.
- Completing a Final Evaluation and reviewing it with the intern.

How to Write an Internship Description

- Treat the job posting as an opportunity to showcase the internship and your company.
- Provide an accurate overview of the internship position's responsibilities, work assignments, and time frame. Clearly outline expected outcomes.
- Here are some helpful resources as you develop your internship position:
 - [Creating an Internship Position Overview](#)
 - [Sample Position Description](#)

How Highline Can Help with Your Recruiting Needs

- You can post your internship position(s) for free through the Career Center
- Or you can connect directly with the department coordinator or program manager of a Highline academic department.

Skillfully Managing Interns and Your Intern Program

Orientation

Providing orientation for interns makes them feel welcome and sets them up for success. Before they arrive, make sure you have:

- Notified everyone on your team that an intern is starting and explain what the intern's role will be and what it will not be.
- Set up the intern's workspace including a computer, phone, mailbox, and email.
- On the first day/week consider the "[Intern Orientation Checklist](#)" for thoroughly orienting the intern to your organization and their role.

Mentor or Contact (other than supervisor)

The use of a mentor can contribute to the intern's motivation and performance and enables an intern to acclimate more quickly to the organizational culture. Is there someone in your organization that would be willing to connect a couple of times with an intern?

Learning Agreement

Students should set learning goals for the internship experience that the supervisor reviews and, if necessary, assists in revising to reach a consensus about what the internship will look like. Having an intern articulate what they hope to gain from the experience and a supervisor provide their input benefits both the student **and** the employer because it ensures everyone is on the same page—literally and figuratively— from the start. Highline offers an "[Internship Learning Agreement](#)" you can use for this purpose.

Checking in with Your Intern

Providing feedback to your intern is a critical component of a successful internship program. GenZ, which is the generation born after 1996, highly values feedback. Here are some suggestions about how to incorporate feedback into your internship program:

- **Informal Feedback:** Meet with interns on a regular basis to answer questions and to provide feedback about projects. Highline offers the "[Checking in with Your Supervisor](#)" form to guide students prior to their meetings with a supervisor.
- **Mid-point Check-In:** Consider a more formal mid-point check-in. Highline offers the "[Mid-Point Internship Evaluation](#)" for students to explain their progress mid-way through their internship. Reviewing this with an intern provides an opportunity to Highlinerify goals, encourage progress, and reinforce expectations.
- **New Opportunities:** Offer the opportunity for interns who are excelling to complete stretch projects or connect interns to other departments of interest for [informational interviews](#).

Ending Internships Skillfully

Tip Sheet/Intern Folder

Think about having the intern write a tip sheet or create a resource folder for future interns. This will alleviate work for you and provide a peer voice for the next intern.

Final Evaluation

Receiving feedback about their efforts is a large part of the developmental process for interns. As a supervisor, you both work in the intern's chosen career field and have seen a significant sampling of the intern's work making you a good judge of what the intern has done well and where the intern can improve.

- Highline provides a worksheet designed for the supervisor to give interns a formal written assessment.
 - **Part I** of the form gives you the chance to evaluate the intern (on a scale of 1 to 5) on the ten [Core Career Competencies](#) that signify career readiness, as well as "Self-Management Skills and Professionalism."
 - **Part 2** of the form, you can offer more qualitative feedback for the intern by completing the "[Internship Evaluation by Employer Supervisor](#)" form.

Provide closure

In the final weeks of the internship, you'll want to provide closure for the experience for the benefit of the intern and your organization. Here are a few ideas on how you can finish strong:

- As the internship comes to an end, ask your intern to reflect on their experience through a presentation, poster project, or final report.
- Plan a celebration for the intern's contributions.
- Offer to write recommendations for the intern if appropriate or encourage them to apply to any job openings that might be a good fit.

Program Evaluation

After going through the process of preparing for, managing and skillfully closing the cycle of hosting an intern, evaluate your program. Ask the question: What went well? And how can it be improved? Here are some guidelines for evaluation:

- Interns who have completed an internship at your organization can offer the best assessment of your internship program. Hold an exit interview to gather suggestions for improving your internship program.
- Review the intern job description, supervisor experience and reach out to colleagues who interacted with the intern to gather their thoughts. Essentially, ask the question: What went well and how could it go better?
- Keep in mind that interns are the best way to build (or harm) your reputation on-campus.

Share Success Stories

Capturing internship success stories at your organization can be a great marketing tool for recruiting

future interns or employees. Your organization could:

- Share the story (internship success stories) with Highline
- Post on social media
- Collect and share intern recommendations
- Create marketing materials with photos of an intern in action

Internship Resources For Students

Encourage interns within your organization to take a look at some of these resources for making the most of their internship.

- [Internship Site Expectations](#)
- [Creating a Position Description](#)
- [Internship Orientation Checklist](#)
- [Internship Learning Agreement](#)
- [Checking in with Your Supervisor](#)
- [Mid-point Internship Evaluation by Student](#)
- [Internship Evaluation by Employer Supervisor](#)
- [Highline Career Readiness Internship Guide: *Making the Most of Your Internship*](#)