

# The Sierra College Internship Program—Employer Info Sheet

Welcome to the Sierra College Internship Program—we're happy to be partnering with you. The following information outlines what you need to know and do as we start to work together. The most successful internships are created and maintained through on-going communication with all parties involved: you, the student, the faculty supervisor and, when needed, the Career Connections staff. Please call whenever you have questions or concerns.

## Definition of an Internship:

- An internship is a student-focused learning experience. An internship exists primarily for the benefit of the student—not the site. The intern cannot replace or supplant any employee or position.
- Interns must work and learn under regular supervision of a professional employee of the host company/organization.
- While working and learning at an internship site, our students are required to enroll in an internship course. This requirement enables the faculty to provide oversight regarding the students' activities.

## Pay:

- While most students prefer paid positions, Sierra College does not require that students be paid for their internship. We do encourage awarding stipends for excellent work.

## Hours:

- One unit of academic credit requires a minimum of 75 hours per semester (approx. five hours per week for 15 weeks). Sixty hours (60) are required if the position is unpaid. Students may earn up to four units per semester.
- Please refer to your copy of Form 1-A for the minimum hours required for this student's internship.
- You (the site) are agreeing to provide the opportunity for the student to work the agreed upon numbers of hours.
- You will be asked to sign an Internship timesheet at the end of the session confirming the intern's hours worked.

## Appropriate Internship Activities

- Interns can work in almost any capacity that directly relates to the professional position to which they aspire.
- Unpaid interns may have additional restrictions imposed by Federal labor law; we will discuss any issues with you once we have reviewed your position description and learning objectives.
- The majority of the intern's tasks should be directly related to completing the agreed-upon learning objectives.
- Clerical/non-professional tasks must be limited to 25% or less of the intern's total duties and/or time.

## Student Safety and Risk Management

- Paid interns (those on your payroll) are required by law to be covered by your Workers Comp insurance.
- Unpaid interns are covered through the Sierra College Workers Comp policy (see Form 1-C for specifics) as long as the intern is in good-standing and performing tasks within the realm of his/her internship duties.
- Remember to train interns in any required and/or internal safety and emergency plans and procedures.
- The intern is provided with two copies of Sierra's WC policy and procedures. One should be kept in an accessible location at the worksite, the other is for the student to keep.

## College Oversight:

- The College does play a significant role in the internship. The instructor will review the learning objectives proposed by the site and determine whether those objectives are of sufficient rigor and accountability to constitute college level learning.
- The college is obligated by State regulation to visit the site in person at least once during the internship period.
- An additional check-in at the end of the placement, either in person, by phone or by e-mail, will be conducted to solicit input from the mentor regarding the intern's progress towards achieving the learning objectives and overall employability skills.
- The instructor or a representative from Career Connections is available to address additional needs or concerns.

## Grading:

The intern will be earning college units and a grade for their internship experience.

The grade is determined by assessment in three areas:

- 1) minimum hour requirement for unit amount met (refer to Form 1-A),
- 2) progress toward meeting the two individual learning objectives as outlined in Form 1-A; and
- 3) work ethic and employability skills including but not limited to attendance, punctuality, attitude, appropriate dress and manner.

# Guide to a Successful Internship Program

Many companies and organizations have found internships are 1) an effective means of identifying, assessing, and developing future career professionals; 2) a method for accomplishing meaningful work; and 3) a strategy for developing the managerial skills of the employees who work directly with interns. However, these goals will be accomplished only if the program is well planned and organized from the beginning. Below are some guidelines to setting up a program that works both for your organization and for our students.

## 1. Conduct an internal audit

- Can you provide meaningful work assignments?
- Are you prepared to invest time teaching and training interns?
- Is there a staff person who wants to mentor interns? (Note: the question is not who wants to have an intern.)
- Do you have sufficient office/work space for an intern?

## 2. Select the intern mentor

- Is this person committed to and capable of developing people?
- Does this person have the professional content expertise necessary to effectively coach and/or mentor students in the content area?
- Does this person have the time to work with interns?

## 3. Develop work activities

- Will these activities be appropriate for a college student at the freshman or sophomore level or those with technical skills not yet at entry level?
- Are there projects and tasks that will benefit your organization and at the same time provide a student with the opportunity to develop professional skills?

## 4. Develop position descriptions

- Provide an overview of the internship position - work assignments, time frame, and application procedures.
- Clearly identify any necessary occupational or academic background or qualifications.
- Clearly outline expected outcomes.

## 5. Selecting interns and preparing for their arrival

- Do not automatically accept intern candidates without interviews.

- If approached by a student not referred by Career Connections, please refer him/her back to our office. We will confirm that the student is eligible for the internship program and start him/her in the application process.
- Select intern(s) and notify the college internship contact person.
- Discuss start and end dates.
- Provide interns with information regarding work attire, and agree upon a work schedule.
- Notify employees that interns will be starting and provide them with background information about the projects interns will be doing.
- Set up a workspace for interns.

## 6. Supervise the intern

- On the first day, introduce interns to all staff with whom they will be working.
- Orient students and get them started on assignments.
- Provide any necessary training/access (computer systems, equipment, specific company procedures, etc.).
- Meet with interns on a regular basis to provide feedback and insure projects are on track.
- Speak with the college internship contact to share information about progress.

## 7. Evaluation and assessments

- Ask interns to complete an evaluation regarding their experience with your organization.
- Evaluate the intern's performance and discuss it with him/her.
- Write a letter of recommendation if appropriate.
- Bring closure to the internship period, not only for the student, but also for the organization.
- Identify improvements to your internship program.
- Inform Career Connections of any changes in the position description as well as any issues to be addressed before another intern is placed.