

CAREER PATH INTERNSHIP (CPI) PROGRAM

DEVELOPING WORK ACTIVITIES AND MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A large part of developing effective position descriptions involves the establishment of challenging work assignments that complement students' academic programs and professional pursuits. We suggest that you and your department design a preliminary list of work activities that will fit the needs of your department. This document should be aimed at helping you develop a detailed description of internship tasks that will help you to promote your internship, as well as screen the right candidates for the position.

AS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, CPI INTERNSHIP WORK ACTIVITIES SHOULD FOCUS ON PROJECTS SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE ACADEMIC MAJOR, THE DEGREE THE INTERNS EXPECT TO RECEIVE, AND/OR THE STUDENT'S PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS.

While many students work (or have worked) at part-time jobs to finance their education, an internship does not fall into the category of a job. It should be viewed as part of their academic program and should offer every opportunity to link classroom learning to workplace experience.

CPI INTERNSHIPS SHOULD ALSO HELP PREPARE THE STUDENT FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION.

Employers have identified four career readiness competencies considered essential when identifying potential job candidates. When developing tasks and duties, the CPI supervisor should work to ensure that the below competencies are incorporated into each internship position.

- Critical thinking/problem solving
- Teamwork/collaboration
- Professionalism/work ethic
- Oral/written communication

MANY STUDENTS EXPECT AND APPRECIATE CLEAR DIRECTION REGARDING WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM AND FREQUENT FEEDBACK CONCERNING WHAT AND HOW THEY HAVE DONE.

In their academic environment, clear direction and periodic feedback is essential. CPI internship evaluation forms are available on the CPI website to assist with this feedback (isu.edu/career/cpi-program).

A common concern when developing an internship position is how to combine the needs of the department with the academic and professional pursuits of the student. The CPI Office understands that some of the interns' responsibilities will involve repetition, because all work involves some repeated activity. We suggest that the internship be designed to best maximize both the student's academic and professional pursuits and the needs of the department.

Sample tasks that undergraduate students have provided for their sponsoring departments or organizations include the following:

- Performing laboratory tests
- Writing handbooks or manuals
- Designing posters, charts, graphs
- Generating financial forecasts and cost recovery reports
- Performing software/hardware modifications
- Conducting studies and surveys
- Developing video presentations
- Compiling technical reports
- Creating academic lesson plans
- Conducting research
- Generating marketing plans
- Conducting training packets
- Preparing budgets and financial reports



Developing challenging work assignments relative to the students' abilities is a major aspect of the position description. Your final internship or field experience description will incorporate the needs of your department or organization as well as the abilities and academic goals of the students you employ.

KEY POINTS

- Describe challenging, but realistic tasks students can accomplish within a two-semester period.
- Work with faculty to establish specific learning objectives for students.
- Identify outcomes or expected products.
- Be willing to incorporate the students' particular strengths
- Show how this work relates to the overall efforts of the department or organization

SUPERVISING THE INTERN

As the intern supervisor, you will use all the skills necessary in any effective supervisory relationship:

- Providing leadership
- Motivating
- Delegating
- Communicating
- Developing and training
- Evaluating

Additionally, the students will look to you as a mentor who will assist their transition from the classroom to the work environment. Since the internship is an extension of the learning process, you will need to provide opportunities to bridge the two experiences.

We suggest that you meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings, the students can:

- Report on the status of a project
- Ask questions
- Learn how their work is contributing to the department/organization
- Participate in an evaluation of their strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Get a sense of what kind of work lies ahead

At the same time, you will have an opportunity to coach, counsel and reinforce positive attitudes and performance.

You should anticipate some interaction with the CPI program staff through telephone calls, email communication, and online surveys and evaluations. The CPI program staff encourages all supervisors to work with the

intern to try to resolve any issues that may arise. However, CPI program staff are here to help you find a solution if difficulties cannot be resolved (intern attendance or punctuality problems, low motivation, unsatisfactory work, or personal conflicts). Please contact the CPI program staff if the following internship changes need to occur: change in supervisors, a significant change in the internship duties, the intern changes majors, or termination is required.

Encourage your interns to keep a portfolio of work accomplished during their experience. Keeping a weekly "internship journal" is a great way for students to track their internship accomplishments. In addition, it provides an opportunity for discussion of how both the intern and the internship progressed. Specific work documents to include in a portfolio or internship journal could include:

Job Descriptions

Proposals
Manuals
Citations & Awards
Contracts
Company Newsletters
Performance Appraisals
Charts/Graphs
Correspondence
Press Releases
Certificates
Financial Reports
Displays & Exhibits
References
Survey Reports
Cost Analyses
Computer Printouts
Program Outlines
Research Report
Marketing Material
Office Memos

KEY POINTS

- Maintain an open channel of communication with formal and informal meetings.
- Keep the interns busy and directed towards their learning objectives. **Students rarely complain of overwork, but they do complain if they are not challenged.**
- Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility.
- Encourage professionalism by assisting the interns in developing human relations skill, decision-making abilities, and managing office politics.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Develop connections.