

Business Guide to Structuring a Successful Internship Program



Explore • Learn • Intern

AACPS Business Guide to Structuring a Successful Internship Program

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AACPS Business Guide to Structuring a Successful Internship Program

What is an Internship?

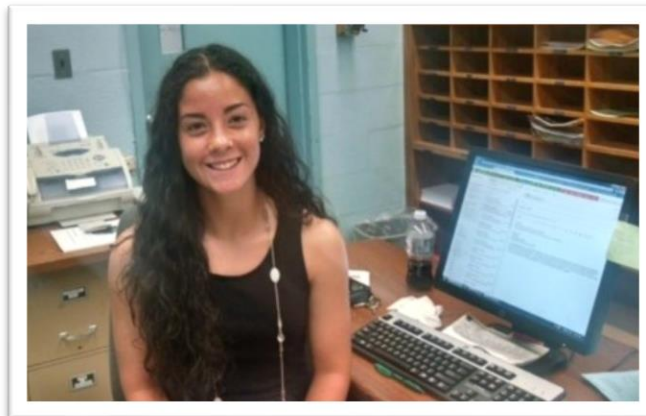
Internships are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as: “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.” In addition, an internship is a semester (fall, spring, summer) in duration, may or may not carry credit, may be paid or unpaid based on the US Fair Labor Standards Act.

A Typical Internship:

- Includes developing intentional learning goals that are structured into the experience and monitored by a professional with relevant and related background in the field
- Promotes academic, career, and personal development
- Includes observation, reflection, and evaluation
- Balances the intern’s learning goals with the organization’s needs
- Involves industry related and essential skills development
- Is carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit
- Provides adequate supervision in a safe environment

An Internship is not:

- Free help
- Meant to replace an existing or future employee
- Greater than 20% busy work (filing, covering phone, errands)



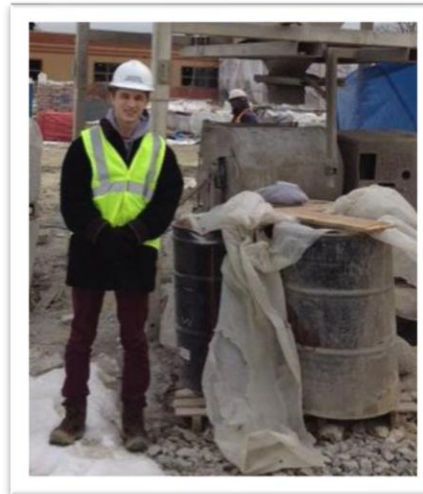
Values, Vision, and Mission of the AACPS Internship Program

The mission of the Internship Program is to provide high school students with a focused and challenging experience, to expose them to different professional options and to immerse them in a rich working environment. Internships are based on the research of mutual-benefit partnerships. The intern should produce a product or service that can be documented as a result of their experience. An internship is a great opportunity. It sets students apart on college applications, allows them to explore possible careers, helps them obtain scholarships, and gives them networking connections that can be lifelong. It can provide students with skills, knowledge, and abilities that are transferrable across disciplines.

Student Intern Benefits and Responsibilities

Students are seeking opportunities that stimulate their interests and provide real-world experiences. A meaningful, purposeful internship program will:

- Allow students to apply classroom knowledge in the workplace
- Develop skills to prepare students for the future
- Promote professionalism, responsibility, and essential skills
- Increase confidence and communication skills
- Provide students with insight into the career fields that interest them
- Offer valuable networking connections
- Bolster resume and college applications



Student Responsibilities:

- Internships are graded and follow the AACPS internship program guidelines.
- In order to receive academic credit, student interns must earn satisfactory evaluations on the internship and complete all required AACPS documentation on the internship portal.
- Students must work a minimum of 135 hours. Negative issues related to any of the following: attendance, performance, attitude, dress, technology use, etc. may jeopardize a student earning a satisfactory (S) grade for their internship.
- Transportation is NOT provided by AACPS, the internship program, the mentor, the business or organization hosting the internship or any other associated entity.
- Interns should comply with the standards related to workplace behavior, dress and other office policies.
- Interns are expected to behave ethically and responsibly in their internship at all times.

How Organizations Benefit from an Internship Program

Developing an internship program is an excellent strategy for investing in your organization's future successes, often leading to discovering future employees and leaders.

Businesses can reap multiple benefits from hosting an intern. These include:

- Provide freedom for professional staff to pursue creative or more advanced projects
- Assist an organization in the application of the latest strategies and techniques in the field
- Maintain connections with the public school system
- Promote community involvement-excellent public relations tool
- Recruit other students and generate enthusiasm for the program
- Creates awareness of the field while connecting with students to build a pool of potential future hires
- Deliver a fresh and unique perspective

Designing an Internship Program

Prior to selecting an intern, a business/organization should determine how interns will fit within the company's goals and culture. Since organizations vary in culture, size, industry, and product/service, so too will internship activities.

Questions that may determine what kind of program will work best for you:

- What does your organization hope to gain from the program?
- Is your organization looking to fulfill a need on a specific project? Will this internship encompass one major project, or entail a variety of small projects?
- What tools and workspace are necessary to provide to the intern?
- What talents, academic background and experience do you want in an intern? Decide on qualifications early on to help you select the best candidate.
- Who will be primarily responsible for the intern(s)? Will that person be a mentor, supervisor, or both?

Role of a Mentor

It is important to identify a mentor for your intern(s) who will familiarize them with the organization, provide assignments, and serve as a contact person for questions. The mentor's focus is to provide oversight, general advice, and guidance for the intern as he/she progresses through the experience. It's recommended that the mentor be an expert in the type of work the interns will be performing to provide the appropriate guidance for the intern's assignments.

A mentor can expect to invest more time working with and guiding an intern at the beginning of the internship. For instance, a mentor might plan to meet with his/her intern in one-to-one meetings at least every two to three days at the beginning of the internship, but only once a week later in the internship.

A mentor's responsibilities will include:

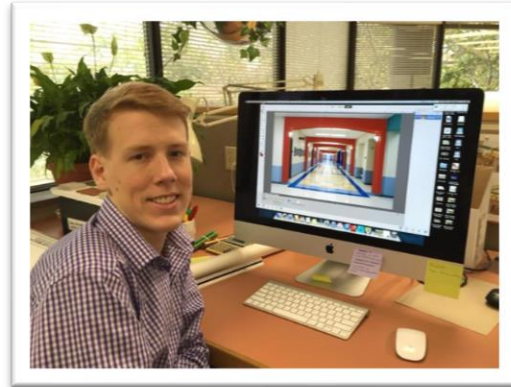
- Taking part in an intern's application, screening, and interview process
- Conducting intern orientation
- Developing learning goals
- Meeting with an intern regularly to evaluate performance, if needs/goals are being met, and assessing the internship program's success
- Sharing career knowledge leading to networking in the field



Paid vs Unpaid

If you are deciding between paid and unpaid internships, it is important to know if the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act applies to your organization.

The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act restricts employer's use of unpaid interns. This Act applies to businesses that have two or more employees directly engaged in interstate commerce as well as annual sales of \$500,000 or more. Interns who qualify as trainees do not have to be paid. If you find you cannot pay your intern, you must meet these six criteria for determining intern status (as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor):



Criteria for an Unpaid Internship:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training, which would be given in an educational environment
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship

Considerations for Paid Internships:

- Wages for most internship opportunities are usually determined before the intern is hired.
- Students in technical fields are generally paid more than nontechnical fields
- Pay for interns often varies by location, type of industry, size of organization, etc

The Internship Portal

The AACPS Internship Portal is a user friendly, multifaceted web-based program which connects students seeking internships to businesses seeking interns. This allows positions to be posted and applied for through the site as well as current internships to be monitored in the interest of creating a safe, productive, and efficient internship experience for all parties involved.

<http://www.aacpsstudentinternships.org>

A complete business guide for navigating the portal can be found by selecting the **Resources** tab



Writing an Internship Description

The first step is to determine why you need an intern. Make a list of the tasks and responsibilities that will be expected of the intern. Consider collaborating with other staff members who will have the role of mentor to ensure the list is complete. Businesses are competing to gain a student's interest and stand out among the rest. It is important to write the description in a way that capture the attention of a high school student.

Questions to consider before writing the description:

- Why will students want to apply for your opportunity over others?
- Does your description illustrate how your opportunity will be a unique experience?

Writing an internship description is essential to recruiting the right individual. Write the description in clear, everyday language that will help the student understand the position and your organization's culture. If the opportunity offers a broad exposure to many elements in your organization, be sure to state that in the description. Interns appreciate knowing the expectations upfront.

An effective internship description:

- Outlines the intern's responsibilities and potential tasks/projects
 - Describe skills that will be developed
- Illustrates the necessary qualifications
 - Skills (computer, analytical, design, communications, etc.)
 - Courses/focus
- Clarifies the duration of the internship
 - Hours required per week
 - Paid or unpaid

Choosing the Right Intern for Your Organization

It is best if you can interview a few applicants before making a final decision based on their education, experience, and qualifications.

- Prepare a list of questions ahead of time.
- Focus your questions on abilities, interests, and experience.
- Remember to follow interviewing and hiring laws for your internship just as you would any regular employee. Choose the best fit.

It is important that businesses realize that school and classes must remain a top priority for interns. The internship position should enhance their learning experience. Understand that for most interns this is a new experience and they may need support in balancing their schoolwork and internship. Most interns typically complete 10-20 hours a week.



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Interviews can take place in a variety of forms such as:

- Phone Interview (Skype)
- On-Site Interview
- School Site Interview

Making an Internship Offer

When you feel you have found the candidate with the appropriate experience, professionalism, maturity and who is a mutually beneficial fit for the organization, make an offer. Just as in a permanent full-time job search, students may be applying and interviewing for internships with multiple organizations. It is best to make an offer as soon as a decision has been made. At this time, a work schedule should be set, compensation (if any) agreed upon, and appropriate paperwork completed for human resources and the student's internship requirements., The AACPS Internship Portal makes this step easy for all to navigate.

Providing an Internship Orientation

It is very important that interns be warmly welcomed and introduced throughout your organization, just as you would welcome a new full-time employee. Not only are interns new to your organization in many cases, they are new to the professional world of work.

Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment and objectives of your organization. Even though your interns may have worked part-time these experiences may not have exposed them to organizational politics, the need for confidentiality, the importance of teamwork, or the profit-making nature of business. It is during the orientation and training that these issues and information about the organization are addressed.

The sooner your intern understands your organization and how it operates, the sooner he or she can assume assigned responsibilities and contribute. Expectations can vary based on the size of your organization, but in general, an orientation should include:

- Review of the job description
- Day to day duties
- Tour of office/location
- Work Schedule
- Dress Code
- Procedures (calling in sick, inclement weather, etc.)
- Safety regulations and requirements



Monitoring the Intern

This doesn't mean to watch their every move but do make sure you know what's happening with their daily tasks. Watch for signs that the intern is confused or bored. As often as silence means that an intern is busy, it also could mean that he or she is confused and shy about asking for help. It's easy to be intimidated in a workplace full of older strangers who all know each other.

Paying attention early helps you head off problems and bad habits early on. Along those same lines, it's important to give them lots of feedback. Especially if your interns have never done this kind of work before. They'll want to know if their work is measuring up to your expectations. No matter what the level of experience, they need you, as a more experienced worker, to let them know if their work is officially "okay."

Intern Evaluations

An internship can only be a "true" learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. An effective evaluation will focus on the interns initial learning objectives identified at the start of the internship. Supervisors should take time to evaluate the student's positive accomplishments as well as any areas for improvement.

Interns will look to their mentors and/or supervisors to help them transition from the classroom to the workplace. It is recommended that mentors regularly meet with the interns to discuss feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings the students may:

- Report on a project's status
- Learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- Participate in evaluating their strengths
- Discuss areas needing growth and development
- Get insight about what work lies ahead

Mentors are asked to complete evaluations on the Internship Portal at the midpoint and end of the internship. Mentors are encouraged to review the evaluations with the intern before he or she leaves. Evaluations are helpful when determining the intern's success within the organization for future internships or employment upon graduation.

Internship Forms

All required internship forms as well as helpful guides can be found in the resources tab on the internship portal located at www.aacpsstudentinternships.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is expected of the hosting organization?

The hosting organization is expected to provide an educational experience within a professional setting, where a student may learn about professional practice in their field. While some administrative tasks are necessary, we ask that hosts keep these to a minimum. A balance of actual work that goes beyond busywork will better provide educational opportunities to the student.

How long should the internship last?

Students must intern a minimum of 135 hours to receive academic credit. Most internships continue over the course of an academic semester or over the summer. Sometimes, students continue to work at their internship site beyond the required hours needed to receive academic credit.

What schedule is expected for the intern?

The schedule is determined between the intern and internship sponsor, and usually occurs during regular office hours, which can include evenings and weekends.

What if there is a problem with my intern?

If you have any problems with your intern's performance, please be sure to give the appropriate feedback directly to the student. You may also contact the student's Internship Facilitator to discuss the problem and get feedback on how best to approach the issue. We are here to support you through the internship process.

What if my intern is a huge success and I would like to host another student?

Let the Internship Facilitator know of your interest! We can show you how to duplicate your opportunity on the Internship Portal.

Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in mentoring an intern. Your participation provides students the opportunity for both personal and professional growth. Our student interns have been commended for their diligence, work ethic, and professionalism. We are confident that you will find them a welcomed addition to your staff.

Just because the internship should focus on the student first does not mean the business does not gain from the experience. Students and recent grads make great workers. They are excited, energetic, and looking to make a difference. If you can offer an opportunity to do so in your organization, your time and money investment in an intern will pay you back multiple times over.

Contact Information

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Internship Opportunity Descriptions

Student Series Internship

Required Skills:

Skills Required:

- Ability to professionally represent our company and its mission
- Capacity to confidently speak with educators regarding key messages and values of the campaign
- Excellent communication skills and phone etiquette
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and team player
- Ability to collect and organize data effectively
- Strong organizational skills
- Knowledge of MS Office Suite and databases
- Comfortable with money counting and handling
- Comfortable with elementary level audiences

Maryland Provisional Driver's License and reliable transportation is highly recommended. *

By the end of training, students should be able to or acquired the skill of:

- Collaborate with Mission Team ensuring success of patient access, education, public policy and advocacy and research.
- Proficiency with MS Office Suite and in database management.
- Capability in managing multiple priorities effectively.
- Good communication and organizational skills.
- Demonstrated knowledge and use of digital, social media & emerging online channels.
- Detail-oriented and highly organized.
- Professional and solid judgment.

Description of Opportunity:

Student Series is about changing students, by helping them develop life skills and connecting them with science, research and advocacy. The intention is to inspire the cancer researchers of tomorrow in teaching them about things like leadership, teamwork and the importance of giving back. This includes changing their understanding of blood cancers through provided hands-on experiential activities and lessons that meet common core standards.

Interns will be trained by Student Series staff to effectively execute the following tasks within their communities. Interns will have the opportunity to manage and promote their neighborhood feeder schools

Role:

- Develop/modify marketing materials using marketing guidelines (brochures, recruitment, promotional flyers, and pledge forms) to promote the fundraising campaign.

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- Develop positive volunteer interactions through recruitment and mentoring. Provide comprehensive support for volunteer leadership and participants to develop and achieve personal fundraising plans, while focusing on the mission.
- Oversee logistics, timelines and other operational elements for assigned fundraising campaigns.
- Provide input into the development of a strategic plan for the fundraising campaign, including fundraising goals, budget recommendations, vendors, volunteer goals, and timelines.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the on-going fundraising campaign(s), including fundraising efficiency (cost/expense), community engagement, event satisfaction, and overall success of the campaign.
- Maintain a working knowledge of the mission and programs to promote the fundraising, research, and patient initiatives.

Project Planning Intern

Required Skills:

- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong research and analytical skills
- Motivated self-starter able to work independently
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment
- Flexibility and desire to work on varying planning projects

Description of Opportunity:

Provides support to company planner, assists staff in collecting and preparing data for various planning projects, manages a full meeting calendar, creates and mails committee meeting packages, conducts field work, collects parcel data and searches land records, prepares maps and planning reports of limited or variable complexity, researches funding sources and writes grant proposals and conducts basic office functions as needed, such as data entry, file management, and customer service.

Web and Database Development Internship

Required Skills:

Required Skills (highly desired skills*):

- Proficient knowledge of Microsoft Office, including Excel and Word
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to coordinate and work in the cloud (meet-ups, version control repository, etc.)
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally
- *Knowledge of Front-End and Back-End development tools

*Front-End development tools:

- HTML
- CSS



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- JavaScript (not exclusively front end)

*Back-End development tools:

- Ruby
- Python
- SQL

Description of Opportunity:

Interns will work with mentors to develop website and database that will interact to allow profiles of teachers, students, volunteers, etc. to be uploaded into a template design and then allow technology to be dynamic for a variety of educational purposes. This project will include the creation of profile templates as well as the ability to ‘tag’ each profile based on various attributes and archive material and data for collection of all the great things happening in AACPS educational programs.

Marketing Intern

Required Skills:

- Verbal Communication - Speaks clearly; Listens and gets clarification; Responds well to questions; Participates in meetings.
- Written Communication - Writes clearly and informatively; Edits work for spelling and grammar; Able to read and interpret written information.
- Planning/Organizing – Prioritizes and plans work activities; Uses time efficiently; Sets goals and objectives; Organizes or schedules other people and their tasks; Develops realistic action plans.
- Productivity – Meets productivity standards; Completes work in timely manner; Works quickly.
- Teamwork - Balances team and individual responsibilities; Exhibits objectivity and openness to others' views; Gives and welcomes feedback; Contributes to building a positive team spirit; Puts success of team above own interests; Supports everyone's efforts to succeed.
- Adaptability - Adapts to changes in the work environment; Manages competing demands; Changes approach or method to best fit the situation; Able to deal with frequent change, delays, or unexpected events.
- Proficient computer skills with familiarity or ability to learn Microsoft Office software and Adobe Acrobat Writer.

Description of Opportunity:

Provides support for the Marketing and Communications department and communications initiatives. Undertakes a range of ad hoc and ongoing activities and assigned projects, including but not limited to assisting with project coordination and implementation and deliverables distribution.

Software Developer

Required Skills:

Experience, knowledge, or familiarity with any of the following languages:

- Java
- JavaScript
- jQuery
- Python
- C++
- PHP
- SQL

Description of Opportunity:

Join one of three agile development teams working on several real-time big data analytics applications for federal, state, and local agencies. Summer interns will work on specific development tasks under oversight of the team Scrum Master. Interns will be expected to commit source code to version control repository and assist in integration of their code into production branches to be deployed to the customer. Interns will have an opportunity to work with professional full-time staff, undergraduate, and graduate student developers who will provide mentorship, guidance, and help.

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Interested in learning more about this valuable program?

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Ready to partner with us?

Start the process at:

www.aacpsstudentinternships.org