

**DSM USA**



# INTERNSHIP 101 GUIDE

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ONLINE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT  
[DSMpartnership.com/internships101](https://DSMpartnership.com/internships101)



**GREATER DES MOINES  
PARTNERSHIP**

# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Internships 101 Guide. This guide provides the tools needed to implement an internship program in your organization, and it includes links to comprehensive information on a number of relevant topics. We hope this guide will help you provide a great experience for future interns.



## WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships provide real-world experience to students looking to get into a particular career field. There are different types of internships; some of the more common types include:

**GENERAL EDUCATION INTERNSHIP:** A student will work in a business related to their degree or area of interest for a set period of time. This will often be for college credit.

**COOPERATIVE:** These provide an extended period of work experience related to the student's field of study, generally paid and full-time, and are often longer in length than the traditional general education internship. Also called a co-op.

**APPRENTICESHIP:** This allows a student to work directly under an individual to learn a highly-skilled trade or profession.

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITY:** Allows a student, generally in the education or human development fields of study, to work in a developed and organized service organization within the community.

**JOB SHADOW:** Allows students a short window to get a quick and general idea of what a typical workday looks like.

**CONTRACT INTERNSHIP:** This is a project-specific internship.

## WHY PROVIDE AN INTERNSHIP?

- Gives you a lead on a talented young professional who could someday work full-time for your organization.
- Helps prepare a more educated workforce.
- Increases likelihood that students will remain in or move to the region, and therefore the region's workforce, after graduation.
- Brings fresh ideas and perspectives into your organization.
- Helps students determine if this is the right career path for them.

## KEY QUESTIONS

To set up a framework for your internship, consider answering these questions, which we will touch on further in following pages:

- What is your goal?
- What is your initial internship program plan?
- How will you recruit interns?
- How many interns will you hire?
- How will you effectively manage the interns?

# 51.7%

of internships converted to full-time positions  
— National Association of Colleges and Employers Internships and Co-op Survey, 2015

# ESTABLISH A PLAN

## EVALUATE YOUR ORGANIZATION

An internship program should be seen as part of the overall hiring strategy for your company or organization. To ensure that potential interns have a good experience, you will need to conduct an internal assessment of your company's needs and resources. Think about the following questions while setting up your program:



- What meaningful work can you give to an intern?
- What types of projects can you assign to an intern?
- What is the ideal duration and time of year to host interns, and does that line up with the time that interns are available?
- How do you set up your physical space and equipment to accommodate additional individuals and make them part of the team?
- What legal considerations, such as minimum wage requirements, workers' compensation issues, etc., do you need to take into account?

## COMMUNICATE WITH CURRENT EMPLOYEES

The entire business must be on board to help an intern succeed — from the CEO to everyone else in the organization. Without that step, it will likely be a constant struggle to allocate resources to an internship program. A good step in this process is to talk with team members who will work with the intern about how they can ensure the implementation goes smoothly.

## PROGRAM DESIGN

Set up a comprehensive structure that includes:

- Learning objectives.
- Daily responsibilities.
- Short- and long-term projects.
- Supervisor assignments.
- Evaluation procedures.
- Policies and expectations.
- Orientation and off-boarding processes.

Iowa law does advocate that most interns be paid like any other employee. View our online Internship Compensation legality resource for more details or visit the U.S. Department of Labor for more information.

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

Sample Job Description

Sample Work Plan

Legal Considerations

Internship Compensation

# RECRUITING AND HIRING

## HOW TO ATTRACT THE BEST TALENT

Before hiring an intern, your organization will need to decide if you will pay the intern and if so, how much. Paying your intern a competitive wage can help your company attract the most talented interns and ensure they are motivated to work and excel in the position. Here are other things you can do to ensure you attract the best talent:

- Housing assistance.
- Opportunities for scholarships.
- Opportunity for academic credit.
- Weekly, bi-weekly or monthly stipends to help with living, travel and meal expenses.



## FIND CANDIDATES

There are a number of ways to find candidates:

- Proactively reach out to college advisors in your area to leverage their help in recruiting the right fit.
- Make your organization's information available at local college career fairs.
- Post the position on websites such as [Careers.SeizeDesMoines.com](http://Careers.SeizeDesMoines.com), [Internships.com](http://Internships.com) or local college internship portals.

## EVALUATE CANDIDATES

- Identify what specific skills, traits and training you are looking for.
- Devise a system for evaluating resumes to decide which prospective interns you will interview — similar to how you would hire for a full-time job position.

## INTERVIEW PROCESS

Similar to a full-time hire, the interview is an important step in the process to determine whether the candidate is the right fit for you and whether your company is the right fit for them. A good step is to make sure the direct supervisor has a say in selecting the candidate.

## HOUSING

After the hire, educate your interns on housing options in the area. Contact the Greater Des Moines Partnership for more information on local housing options.

**TIP: Make sure to work with local colleges and universities throughout your internship hiring process to determine their rules on how a student is able to obtain college credit through an internship program. For example, some institutions require students to work a certain number of hours or work an unpaid internship to receive class credit.**

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

[Benefits That Will Set You Apart](#)

[Housing Options](#)

[Local College and University Contacts](#)

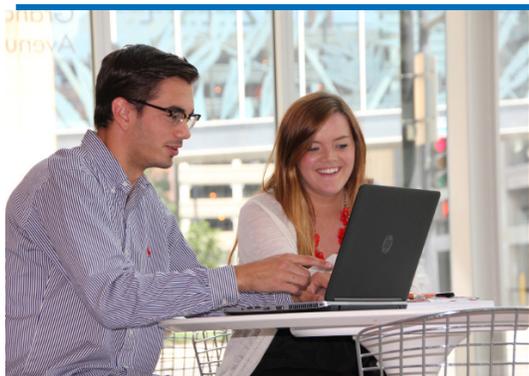
[Sample Interview Questions](#)

# MANAGING YOUR INTERNS

You have set up the program; you have hired the right fit; now it is time to make sure your intern or interns have a fantastic experience.

## ORIENTATION

Orientation is the intern's first working experience with your company. It is important to make a good first impression. Here is an abbreviated checklist of things you should go over in an orientation process:



- Explain the mission — How did the organization start, why did the organization start, what is special about your products or services?
- Explain the structure — Who reports to whom, what department does the intern work for, who makes final decisions for the department?
- Organization rules, policies, expectations — What are workplace standards and procedures, how do the phone and email systems work, what is the work dress code?
- Intern responsibilities — What is the intern's role, will the intern need to complete or work on any projects, what can the intern do without supervision?
- Monitoring and evaluation — How often will an evaluation take place? What kind of feedback will be given?

## INTRODUCE INTERNS TO THE CITY

A great way to help your interns make the experience valuable is by connecting them to the city. Many interns will come from around the region and country, and may be unfamiliar with Greater Des Moines and everything it has to offer. A great way to get your interns engaged with Greater Des Moines is The Partnership's Seize the City internship program, which allows interns to meet fellow interns and learn from community leaders. Learn more at [DSMpartnership.com/SeizetheCity](http://DSMpartnership.com/SeizetheCity).

## MEANINGFUL WORK

- Identify a steady, but not overwhelming, amount of work that an intern can take on.
- Teach your interns that the quality of their work is as important as the quantity of work they are able to do. Encourage them to take extra time, when possible, to ensure that their work is exceeding expectations. Also encourage them to ask questions and look for ways to improve on their work.

# 74%

of Seize the City interns surveyed said they enjoyed their experience.

**Another great way to introduce your interns to Greater Des Moines is to have them use the Greater Des Moines Partnership's CarpeDM Seize Des Moines web portal at [SeizeDesMoines.com](http://SeizeDesMoines.com), which includes information on resources and things to do in the region.**

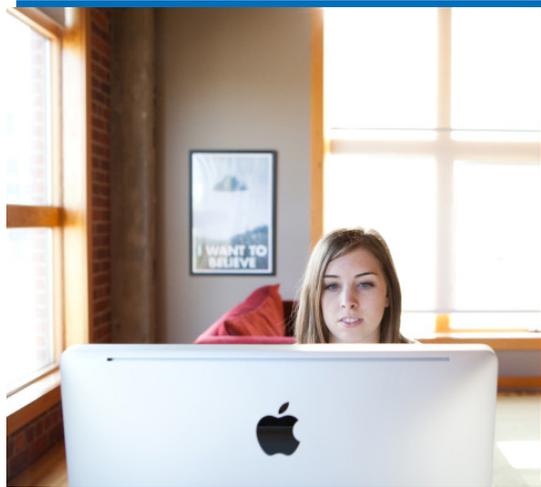
### ONLINE RESOURCES:

Tips for Helping Your Intern Fit In

Top Ten Intern Concerns

# MANAGING YOUR INTERNS

- The best internships provide interns with work that challenges them, helps them grow and gives them a real sense of what it is like to work in that company. Internships are a valuable opportunity for a student to really learn what it takes to work in a given field.
- Make sure to give your interns at least one project that they can claim as a success and put on their resume.
- Oftentimes interns will not take advantage of programs that are available to them as they are apprehensive about missing time from the regularly-scheduled workday. Encourage a flexible environment for your interns.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[DSMpartnership.com/Internships101](http://DSMpartnership.com/Internships101).

Sources include: Ames Economic Development Corporation's Employer Intern Guide, Internships.com, Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania and LookSharp.com.

## HOW TO MANAGE PROBLEMS WITH AN INTERN

Unfortunately, sometimes problems arise with the intern you have hired. It is best to know how to handle every situation.

- If the intern is not enjoying the work:
  - Discuss why they are not enjoying it, and ask questions to better understand the situation.
  - Investigate the intern's working environment to discover possible problems with other employees.
  - Evaluate whether work is meaningful and consistent with the agreed-upon job description.
- If the intern is not a good fit:
  - Be clear and open with the intern when communicating the issue at hand.
  - Be sure all problems are addressed.
  - If possible, avoid dismissing the intern to avoid any potential bad publicity; you may consider decreasing the length of employment instead.

## HOW TO WRAP UP THE INTERNSHIP

Before your interns leave, consider asking them to evaluate your program so you can improve it for the future.

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

Sample Employer and Student Evaluation Forms