

## Tips for a Successful Site Visit

The benefits of visiting a student at her or his internship site are many. It gives you an opportunity to ensure that the student is having a good learning experience and is accomplishing the goals outlined in the Learning Agreement.

The site visit allows you to **discuss any problems or issues** in the internship. It equips you to better **evaluate the site as an appropriate placement** for your students, and it **helps you to advise future students** about that internship. Above all, the site visit is **excellent public relations** for your department and the University.

So, what do you actually **do** on a site visit? While not inclusive, the tips below may help you arrange and carry out a successful site visit.

- Schedule the visit at a time when both the student and the supervisor(s) are working. Ask the supervisor to allocate 30 minutes for the visit (although visits may last longer than that), and ask if there is anything she/he would like you to know/prepare for before the visit.
- Before the visit, contact the student to review Internship Learning Goals. Ask if there are any specific issues, problems or concerns that should be discussed during the visit. If appropriate, ask the student to put together samples of her/his work for you to see during the visit.
- Take the Internship Job Description and a copy of the student's Internship Learning Agreement to the visit (copies are available in the Cooperative Education Office). If this is a first-time visit, also take information about your department/program and the College (hey, a little PR never hurts).
- Begin the visit by reminding both the student and the supervisor that this is an informal meeting designed to focus on what the student has been doing and learning and to discuss what will happen during the rest of the internship. It is an opportunity for both student and supervisor to be open and candid about the internship experience. Each site visit is unique and should be allowed to take on its own "life." Additionally, there may be nuances within your department or a particular site that create special issues to discuss.
- Think about questions you might ask the **Supervisor**:
  - In general, how are things going so far?
  - Is the internship following the Internship Description, or have there been changes? If so, why? What are they?
  - What is in the future for the internship? What new projects or assignments will develop? What would you like to see the student focus on in his or her own development?
- Here are a few questions for the **Student**:
  - What have you been learning so far? (Don't accept "A lot" as a response!)
  - What surprises have you had about the internship, the organization or yourself?
  - What skills or tasks would you like to continue to develop?
  - What would you like to learn or do that you haven't yet done?
  - Is this experience sending you messages about what you would—and would not—like to do in the future?
- At the end of the visit, ask the supervisor if s/he would be interested in working with another intern in a future semester. If so, be sure they know the planning dates and have the opportunity to review the Internship Description on file with Cooperative Education.

If you have questions about these issues or about conducting site visits, please contact Cooperative Education/Internship Specialist at 657-1717. Have fun on your site visits and let me know if you would like me to join you!