

Initial Considerations

The first consideration is to identify possible cooperative education and internship opportunities in your organization. Then develop a job description and criteria for eligibility.

Developing a Job Description

SECTION 1: Brief paragraph describing your company or organization

- Summarize the company's mission, services, clientele, size, and any other details that give context to the internship position.
- The company description is also helpful for classifying and advertising the position.

SECTION 2: Summary of the internship position

- Define the intern's role within the team, unit, and company.
- Describe the general nature of the work.
- Specify the scope and range of duties and responsibilities and, if possible, the estimated percentages of time to be dedicated to specific areas of work.
- Include expectations for the application of technical and professional skills and knowledge.

SECTION 3: Preferred and required qualifications

- Describe preferred and required experience, skills, education, technical training, and physical requirements for the position.
- Add other pertinent information about the position, including schedule, work location, fieldwork, etc.

Internship Supervisor / Mentor

When developing a co-op/internship program, designate a site supervisor who will serve as a mentor to the intern and be responsible for overseeing the student's internship experience. In smaller organizations, it could be the immediate supervisor; in larger organizations, someone from Human Resources or the department hiring the intern could fill the role. Many large organizations are increasingly hiring full-time internship coordinators to recruit and manage their internship programs.

The site supervisor will be responsible for the development and direction of the experience within the company. The site supervisor acts as the liaison between the company and Montana State University Billings. Close attention must be given to the selection of the person chosen to provide direct supervision of the student. Emphasis should be on placing the co-op/internship student under a supervisor who recognizes his/her role as an "educator" as well as a supervisor.

Providing a mentor for the intern can be very helpful in developing the intern's skills and dedication to your organization. The mentor should be someone who the intern can comfortably talk to about the organization, ask questions, and discuss concerns and other issues. The mentor should provide valuable advice, support, and training to the intern to ensure their academic and professional growth.

Work Assignments

Fulfilling recruiting needs involves more than just determining the number of co-op/internship students required. It also involves the development of specific job requirements for each type of position. It is useful to prepare a short job description summarizing the requirements for each position the company plans to fill.

A successful co-op or internship program should provide students with a sequence of planned activities. The effectiveness of the total program hinges, to a large extent, on how effectively co-op/internship students are trained and used.

Alternating work assignments can be important to the success of the program. Rotation from one assignment to another gives co-op/internship students a sampling of the types of work performed in the organization. In turn, it provides supervisors with an indication of the kind of work the students are best equipped to perform following graduation.

Discussing the organization's mission, goals, and needs with students and how they relate to their internships can be very helpful. Giving interns meaningful work assignments is critical to the success of your organization's internship program.

Orientation

When bringing in a new intern, it is important that he/she is introduced to the organization and given an orientation. This may include a briefing on the mission, culture, rules, regulations, and expectations of the organization, meeting key personnel in the first week, and other relevant items. This will give the intern a better understanding of the organization and the intern's role in its success.

Evaluation

To help the intern learn and develop, we recommend that the site supervisor provide ongoing feedback that assesses the intern's performance, areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and other issues related to specific job duties. This feedback will assist the intern in their career and personal development. In addition, at the end of the semester, the site supervisor will receive an email from us with a link to evaluate the internship.

Internship Basics for Employers

Employers interested in hosting an MSU Billings intern can find more information about our academic internship process and requirements at https://www.msubillings.edu/careers/cooped/coop_emp_role.htm.

The organization agrees that no student will be denied work or subjected to different treatment under this contract on the grounds of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or marital status.

For questions, please contact:

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