

ORIENTING AND TRAINING INTERNS

Many students are unfamiliar with the activities, environment and objectives of the professional workplace. The sooner your interns understand what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. You can help this process by planning an orientation to set them up to be successful. Consider the following:

Prior to the First Day

- Set up an organized work area for the intern
- Set up phone, voicemail, PC, email, and internet access and/or other resources necessary for them to accomplish the tasks you have stipulated in the internship position description.
- Outline work expectations for the duration of the internship
- Prepare any forms that need to be signed, including a confidentiality agreement, if necessary

Training Format and Activities

- Take your interns on a tour of the facilities and introduce them to other employees
- Give your interns company materials to read such as newsletters, annual reports, an organizational chart, or memos from leadership
- Encourage your interns to spend break and lunchtimes in places where employees gather
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with them
- Give interns opportunities to observe(or participate in) professional meetings
- Allow the interns to interview company personnel
- Encourage the interns to walk around and observe others at work

Topics to Address

- Company organization and reporting relationships
- Access to the supervisor (days, times, duration)
- Tasks that can be completed without supervision and procedures for signing off completed work
- Productive interactions with others at the work site
- Personnel who can answer different kinds of questions
- How the organization wants the intern to deal with clients, customers, vendors
- Specific work standards and procedures
- Work processing requests and timeliness
- Email, mail, telephone systems
- Periodic forms or reports to be completed
- Security and confidentiality issues, if relevant
- Special industry jargon
- Acceptable dress and appearance
- Maintaining the premises and work station

Key Points

- Develop a thorough orientation and training plan to be implemented when interns begin work, so they will learn quickly and become productive members of your team
- Invest supervisory time to establish an important bond with interns and set a crucial tone for the internship experience



ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Experience shows that employers who take adequate time at the beginning of the internship to orient the student reap productivity and effectiveness more quickly than those who don't.

- **Explain the Mission of the Organization**
 - How did the organization start? Why?
 - What is unique about your product or service?
 - Who benefits from your product or service?
 - What are the organization's current objectives?
 - How may the intern contribute to those objectives?
- **Explain the Organization Structure**
 - Who reports to whom?
 - Who, specifically, is the intern's supervisor?
 - What is the intern's department responsible for?
 - How are decisions made?
 - Which personnel can answer different kinds of questions?
- **Outline Organizational Rules, Policies, Decorum and Expectations**
 - Is there special industry jargon?
 - What are the specific work standards and procedures?
 - What access to the supervisor (days, times, and duration) does the intern have?
 - How should they process requests?
 - How do the mail and telephone systems work?
 - What are the approved forms for correspondence?
 - By what safety regulations must they abide?
 - Is there a procedure for signing off completed work?
 - What periodic forms or reports need to be completed?
 - What local, state, and/or federal guidelines or laws apply to their work?
 - Are there security or confidentiality issues the intern should be aware of?
 - What is acceptable with regard to dress and appearance?
 - How should they maintain the premises and their work area?
- **Define the Intern's Responsibilities**
 - What is the intern's role?
 - What projects will be assigned to him or her?
 - What resources are available to the intern?
 - What training is necessary?
 - How does the organization want the intern to deal with clients and vendors?
 - What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
 - Do other employees understand the intern's role?
- **Monitor the Intern's Adjustment and Understanding of What is Expected**
 - Make yourself visibly available to the intern
 - Assign someone who can periodically "check-in" with the intern
 - Provide feedback and constructive criticism
 - Encourage the intern to ask questions

