



INTERNSHIP GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

Overview and benefits of internship programs:

- Internships are programs offered by employers to help potential employees gain necessary work experience. Interns are typically students (high school, undergraduate or graduate), and internships can last anywhere from one month to one year, but most last the duration of a college semester, which is about three months. Some internships are unpaid; however, the majority are paid. Many internships are 40-hour-per-week positions; however, some employers offer part-time or even virtual internship options as well.
- Healthcare internships give an employer the opportunity to receive support with daily work and projects, while providing education and training to the intern. This is also a great way for employers to evaluate a potential future employee if they end up hiring the intern in the future. Many college graduates or students are eager to pursue an internship in healthcare to build their experience and often already have strong skill sets directly applicable to working in the field — such as performing diagnostic tests, recording medical histories, utilizing productivity software, spreadsheets and social media — learned throughout college. This prior skill set varies based on the prior clinical versus non-clinical training and type of position they are pursuing.

How to structure and successfully develop an internship program:

- **Determine if the position will be paid or unpaid**
— First, determine if your state has specific legal requirements on paying interns. In general, many nonprofit employers choose to pursue unpaid internships if the applicant is still receiving the appropriate training/education. In healthcare, students often seek paid internships but may be willing to go without pay for the right kind of experience.
- **Identify your organizational goals**
— It is important that you have a plan for whom the intern will work with and the type of work they will learn and do. This will help avoid a situation in which you bring someone on only to do menial busy work. For example, it will not help the intern if they aspire to become an administrator but end up sorting mail.
- **Determine the intern's educational expectations**
— It is critical that your organization's goals align with those of any potential applicants. This will help ensure that the intern remains passionate toward the work they are assisting with and that it aligns with the mission, vision and values/behaviors of the organization. In some cases, interns also receive course credit for the time they spend with a company.
- **Establish a set schedule**
— A set work schedule and shift needs to be identified and implemented. This should be put in writing along with the intern's goals, as you would when developing an employee's performance plan.
- **Create boundaries for who assigns tasks**
— For the intern and your team, it is important to identify who can assign tasks and duties to the intern. This will prevent issues with prioritization of work and issues that can arise when someone is simultaneously reporting to numerous supervisors. Do not let staff pass work off to the intern without prior approval.
- **Education and learning are key**
— Block time on the supervisor's and intern's schedule to teach them about the critical aspects of your business and the work you perform. Taking this time will make the experience far more rewarding and will help the intern produce high-quality work for your organization throughout the internship.
- **Keep it professional**
— To prevent potential issues such as harassment, supervisors and staff members should avoid inappropriate relationships in the same manner they would with any employee.