

How You Can Benefit from Offering a High School Internship Program

Why offer internships?

The main goal of internships is to train students in a particular field of work. Internships are highly successful at preparing homegrown talent for the future workforce, while building a leadership pipeline within your organization. Students gain valuable experience in their fields of interest; make connections; build “soft skills” like teamwork, critical thinking, and adaptability; and use the knowledge gained from their internship to structure their future education.

Employers report many benefits from internship programs, including:

- immediate support for temporary or seasonal projects
- ready access to a pool of potential hires
- opportunities to evaluate prospective employees over an extended period of time
- new perspectives and viewpoints
- staff and workplace energized by interns’ enthusiasm and desire to learn
- creation of mentors and leaders within the organization
- enhanced company image through its contribution to education
- stronger organizational efforts to create a diverse workforce

Internships also provide enormous benefits to students, including:

- real-world experience inside a specific industry that helps inform the intern’s future educational and career plans
- development of realistic expectations about workplace demands and rewards
- development of valuable power (soft) skills necessary to be productive in the workplace
- increased self-confidence
- competitive advantages over job applicants without internship experience
- opportunities to showcase skills and value over an extended time period
- opportunities to build a network of contacts in the working world who can serve as mentors and references

How to set up an internship program?

A quality internship is executed in such a way that it provides meaning to interns and mentors. To do this, you will need to:

- determine in which department the intern should be placed
- determine the intern’s job responsibilities
- set the pay rate for the intern
- write a description of the internship to be displayed on the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) website including the above information
- identify an employee that will serve as a mentor for the intern

Other items to consider:

- most summer internships last four to eight weeks and can be part time or full time
- interns should earn at least minimum wage

What makes a good mentor?

An internship program is a great way to build leadership within your organization, but it requires time and patience.

A good mentor...

- is an employee looking for a new challenge
- is willing to share skills, knowledge, and expertise
- has a positive attitude and values ongoing growth and learning in the field
- empowers the intern to develop their own strengths, skills, and personal attributes
- provides guidance and constructive feedback to help interns grow
- respects the opinions and values of others, enabling them to work well in a team environment
- is someone the employer might want to move into a leadership position
- motivates those around them by setting a good example
- is well-respected by colleagues and supervisors

Testimonials:

“You have no idea (the value the intern added)! It was like having two additional admins! We were able to get to things we NEVER have time for! We miss him already!”

–Karen B., Mentor

“I definitely learned a lot...about how the business world differs from high school and the power of communicating effectively and networking.”

–Intern, Summer 2018

“I gained organizational skills, patience, persistence, and creativity... I also learned to pay attention to key details.”

–Intern, Summer 2018

For more information on developing an internship program, please contact

Tina Smith: tsmith@smcoe.org, (650) 802-5457 and
Vera Jacobson: vjlundeberg@smcoe.org, (650) 802-5605



SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

101 Twin Dolphin Drive • Redwood City • CA • 94065 • www.smcoe.org