

Characteristics of a Quality, World Class Internship

Quality internship sites have the following characteristics:

- Provide substantive and challenging work experiences.
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- Planning and structure of position prior to student beginning internship (breadth and depth); (minimal "go-fer" clerical work); opportunity to apply principles learned in and outside the classroom; realistic goals/projects; predetermined outputs to make up a formal portfolio that the intern can show future employers as evidence of their work and accomplishments.
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- Strong training/orientation for student(s), including company culture, office procedures, etc. in addition to training for specific job duties.
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- On-going *structured supervision* by a primary supervisor that includes regularly scheduled (at least weekly) meetings; opportunities for feedback; adequate opportunities for students to ask questions; meet monthly to review progress on supervisor's and student's learning goals; ideally, a mentoring* relationship.
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- Opportunity to *observe professionals* in action: participate in staff meetings, client meetings, attend presentations and/or conference workshops, and talk with professionals in the department about their jobs and career paths.
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- Opportunity to *develop specific skills* (i.e. research, writing, computer, presentation skills).
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- Provide *evaluation* of overall experience; provide closure through recognition of intern contributions, reflection on learning experiences, and wrap-up on-going projects; provide follow-up if necessary (letters of recommendation, networking, etc.)
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- Some organizations provide *professional development opportunities* (e.g. presentations by upper-management to all interns within the organization, informational interviews, brown bag lunch seminars, etc.) and if there are multiple interns in a new location, some organizations provide social opportunities (picnics, movie night, etc.).
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- Encourage and provide *opportunities to read* professional and company publications.

*A mentor is someone who assumes the responsibility to develop, challenge, and guide the intern toward their goals.

Sources: Julie Agee Gillaspy, Southern Methodist University and John Sullivan, San Francisco State University