

College of Lake County's Internship Program

Employer Handbook

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Benefits of Offering Internships

Successful internship programs provide benefits to everyone involved, including students, employers, and the educational institution. For the employer – referred to as Internship Sponsor throughout this handbook, internships can provide a training ground for potential employees to work and learn. Internships have proven to be an excellent way to recruit and evaluate potential employees. In fact, according to marketplace.org, 60% of students who completed an internship received a job offer from the same company upon completion of the internship. Employers often find interns to be a cost-effective work force that do not require a long-term commitment. Interns can also bring unique skills and fresh, new ideas to benefit your business. Additionally, offering internships to local students promotes positive visibility on campus and in the community.

CLC's Internship Program

Internships are available in almost every major, especially accounting, graphic design, marketing/sales, information technology, culinary, and manufacturing. More information about our program can be found on our website, www.clcillinois.edu/cjpc.

How to Register

Application Process

To get started with CLC's Internship Program, companies should visit our website LancerJobLink powered by HandShake at <https://clcillinois.joinhandshake.com/> to register. The more specific a company can be with their job description, skills needed, and other details, the easier it is for us to find the best potential matches for you. We also ask Internship Sponsors to complete the LancerJobLink Employer Application which will be completed in your LJI portal.

Things to Consider

Pay

The majority of our internships offer salaries of \$12-18 per hour. Typically, companies simply hire the student as a part-time employee, subject to their payroll procedures and taxes. It is up to the Internship Sponsor to ensure they are competitive with other companies. We will list employers unpaid internships as volunteer opportunities, with the exception of non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships are becoming increasingly rare, (and more difficult for companies to offer legally) as most students will desire some type of compensation for their hard work. Please keep in mind that many CLC students are paying for their own education and are often supporting themselves and their families.

Students are often simply unable to take unpaid internships. For more information about the legal side of paid and unpaid internships, please visit

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>.

Cooperative Education

At the completion the paid internship, the Internship Sponsor may have the opportunity to fill out a Company Reimbursement Form dependent upon the status of the State of Illinois' budget. As part of the Illinois Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) Cooperative Work Study Program Grant, we will process qualifying partial reimbursements (approximately 40-50% of the intern's salary). This program adheres to specific grant guidelines and may not be available to all companies.

"For Credit" Internships

College of Lake County does have options for many of our students (depending on their major/field of study) to receive college credit for their internships. Some students may also choose to get credit for their paid internship, perhaps to fulfill a degree requirement or to have it appear officially on their academic transcript. If a student chooses to receive credit for their internship, nothing additional is usually required by the Internship Sponsor (the same paperwork that is used by the Internship Program will be shared with the student's faculty advisor). The student will have additional requirements to fulfill for their faculty advisor (e.g., a process paper about their experience).

Duration and Hours

The College of Lake County Internship Program does not have any required start/end times, deadlines, or required lengths for our internships; rather, we work cooperatively within the needs of the specific student and Internship Sponsor. The majority of our internships last between 10-20 weeks, but we have arranged internships as short as 4 weeks and as long as over a year. We suggest an internship be approximately the length of a semester (about 14-16 weeks). We dissuade "open-ended" internships, as one of the benefits of an internship (over part-time employment) is that both the Internship Sponsor and the student are only locked into a specific length of time. If, at the completion of the originally designated internship period, the Internship Sponsor and the intern are interested in extending the internship, they can then choose to renew the partnership. We also encourage Internship Sponsors who wish to continue employing their intern after a period of 12-18 months to make the student a permanent employee (rather than an intern), even if they are still at a part-time status.

Matching Process

Once we receive your completed, online registration, we will review it and let you know if we have any further questions. We reserve the right to perform a site visit of any new Internship Sponsor to our program before approving you as an internship site. Once approved, we will list your position on LancerJobLink and begin advertising it to our students. All interested students must first go through a pre-screening process with our Career Specialist. Approved students will express interest in LJI. From your LJI account you are able to see applicants to schedules them for an interview. Notify us once you make your selection, so that the Career Specialist can create the Internship Experience (required) in LJI. From your LJI account you are able to see applicants, and schedule interviews with them. Please notify the Career Specialist once you have made your selection to so that the Career Specialist can create the Internship Experience (required) in LJI. Please note that because we work on an "open admissions" process (no start/end dates to our program), we have no way to know how long it may take us to identify a potential candidate or how many candidates we may be able to identify for you. We encourage employers to look at each candidate on an individual basis as they receive the résumé/cover letter rather than wait for a pool of candidates.

Interview Process

After informing the Career Specialist of your desire to interview a student candidate, you may then contact the student directly to set up either a phone or an in-person interview. Interviews should always be held at the internship location, unless health and distancing guidelines prevent from doing so. On campus interviews are encouraged.

Possible Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself
2. How would your boss/friends/co-workers, etc., describe you?
3. What three words would you choose to best describe yourself?
4. Why do you consider this to be a good opportunity?
5. Who is the worst (best) boss/subordinate/classmate you have ever worked with?
6. What kinds of people do you find it difficult to work with?
7. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
8. What are you most proud of?
9. Why are you interested in the internship?
10. Why should we consider you?
11. Why are you interested in this industry/company?
12. Tell us about your knowledge of this company.
13. Give an example of how you dealt with a conflict with another person/customer/classmate/professor, etc.

Making a Hiring Decision

If you decide to hire the student and they accept, you will notify the Career Specialist who will then meet with the student to go over all the necessary paperwork and LJI requirements (listed below).

Hiring Paperwork

Site Agreement

This document ensures all parties to an internship understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of others. The duration of the internship should be worked out and agreed upon by all parties before the internship begins and these dates should be written in the space provided. If at completion of the internship both the student and the Internship Sponsor would like to extend the internship, contact the Career Specialist to see if that can be approved.

Learning Agreement

This document addresses the duties and activities to be completed during the internship as well as the expected learning outcomes and how the intern will be evaluated. We suggest that the student and Internship Sponsor complete the Learning Agreement together to ensure that both parties are on the same page with expectations of work performed and skills the intern hopes to learn. We ask for a basic job description, several objectives the student hopes to learn or gain from the internship experience, and how the student's learning will be evaluated. Most of our students and employers will simply use

CLC's evaluations to give feedback, but feel free to add any additional ways in which the student's learning will be evaluated.

Schedule

To ensure that our students who are completing internships will be provided with the appropriate number of hours and to be able to better plan site visits, we ask the Internship Sponsor and student fill out a general schedule. Although hours worked may vary occasionally throughout the internship experience, please give us the most typical work schedule. Only one schedule needs to be submitted throughout the internship. If the intern's schedule changes, please notify the Career Specialist.

Tips for Success

Characteristics of a Quality Internship

Just as interns commit time, energy, and skills to work and achieve benefits for the Internship Sponsor, so must the Internship Sponsor devote the same to the intern's growth and learning in the workplace. Internship Sponsors should remember that an important element that distinguishes an internship from a short-term job is that the internship should be educational in nature, provide adequate training and supervision, and strive to achieve measured learning objectives set by the student and Internship Sponsor. Communication is also an essential component. Internship Sponsors should make sure job descriptions and expectations (e.g., job performance, dress code, attendance) are clearly laid out to the student before the internship begins. If issues arise, Internship Sponsors should immediately seek to communicate and solve the problem with the student intern and should involve College of Lake County's Career Specialist if any problems persist.

Orientation/Setting Expectations

Once an intern is hired, a component for success involves the need for a proper orientation for the intern. This process is done so that the student fully understands work hours, rules, office procedures, the company policies and handbook, dress code, and standards for professional and ethical conduct. The student should receive a tour of the facility and be introduced to other employees and staff. Within the first two weeks of the internship, we ask that the student and Internship Sponsor meet to complete the student's Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreement, and Schedule.

Supervising

The Internship Sponsor must remember that an important element that distinguishes an internship from a short-term job is that an internship is a **Learning Experience**. Interns are hired to do more than just "work" — they should also be working to learn by getting the opportunity to apply what they have learned in their classroom to practical activities, learning new techniques and skills, and receiving quality supervision committed to helping them learn. The student and Internship Sponsor will set learning agreements at the beginning of the internship and these should be revisited often, especially if the student is completing the internship to receive college credit.

Feedback

An essential component of successful supervising is providing constructive feedback to the student and providing opportunities for the student to ask questions. This feedback is especially important in the early stages of the internship because many students can be initially shy, confused, and/or intimidated by a veteran supervisor. New interns want and need to know if they are meeting your expectations, so offering positive or constructive feedback is essential. It should be remembered that for some students, the internship experience may be their first exposure to a real job.

Communicating with a Career Specialist

The Career Specialist will check in with you throughout the internship. If you have any problems with your intern, questions, etc., do not hesitate to call a Career Specialist. If a student is not fulfilling your expectations (whether it be for job performance reasons, lack of necessary skills, attendance, behavior, etc.), we encourage you to first speak to the student, but then notify the Career Specialist in a timely manner. Although rare, there are times when the intern and Internship Sponsor are not good matches or the student is not a good fit for the position's needs. In such instances, the Career Specialist can help both parties end the internship in a neutral way.

Evaluations

We ask for the student and Internship Sponsor to each complete a mid-term evaluation (approximately halfway through the internship; this requirement may be waived if the internship is less than 8 weeks in duration) and a final evaluation. Our evaluations give both the student and Internship Sponsor an opportunity to reflect on the experience and provide one another with feedback regarding job performance and learning separately and then meet to discuss the results. Students and Internship Sponsors are welcome to keep copies for their own records, but the originals should be returned (by the student) to the Career Specialist.

Evaluations are an important way for students to receive feedback and for Internship Sponsors to evaluate their programs. Evaluations are also used by Faculty Advisors of any student doing the internship for credit; without an evaluation, the student cannot receive college credit for their internship. Also, any Internship Sponsor that offers a paid internship and qualifies for partial reimbursement through our IBHE grant will be required to have an evaluation on file before the reimbursement can be processed. Our grant requires quarterly updates and yearly final reports and the information we gather from our evaluations is essential to ensuring we continue to receive this funding.

Conclusion

Establishing a successful internship program may take a little planning and effort, but it is not difficult and results in numerous benefits to the employer, student, and school. If an employer establishes a successful internship now, they will have a distinct, competitive advantage in recruiting the most highly motivated workers for the future. Internship Sponsors will benefit from interns who are already trained, familiar with their workplace, and have proven their skills and work ethic on the job, which may greatly reduce an Internship Sponsor's recruitment and training costs.

LancerJobLink Employer Application

Company name _____ Date _____

Address _____
STREET CITY STATE ZIP CODE

Type of business _____

Briefly describe your company _____

Company web address _____

Name of hiring contact _____

Contact telephone number _____ Contact e-mail _____

Have you worked with CLC's Internship Program in the past? No Yes (if yes, when) _____

Internship title _____

Name and title of the person who will supervise the intern _____

Supervisor telephone number _____ E-mail _____

Projects/activities to be assigned to intern. Please be thorough and specific. Attach a job description if available.

Preferred field of study/major and skill sets _____

G.P.A. Requirement _____

Training opportunities _____

(Continued on next page)

Educational/learning opportunities provided _____

Benefits available outside intern's assigned job duties (e.g., networking, workshops/speakers, mentoring)

Software/equipment intern is expected to use _____

_____ Is training provided? Yes No

Duration of internship (typically 8-16 weeks) _____ Preferred start date _____

Hours per week (typically 1-20), list preferred days/hours _____

Hourly wage (\$11-18)? If wage varies based on experience, list range _____

NOTE: Unpaid internships are difficult to fill and are often illegal. See U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71 for more information.

Check the three most important characteristics you are seeking in an intern:

Skill set that matches/exceeds those listed on job description

Career goals in line with position/company

Level of education/amount of credits earned

Specific classes completed (*please work with Career Specialist to identify*)

Academic performance

Related past work experience

Personality/Drive/Enthusiasm

Maturity/Professionalism

Verbal communication skills

Written communication skills

Leadership Ability/ Ability to work independently

Teamwork skills/ Ability to work well in groups

Reliability

Trainability

Other (please list): _____

Questions:

Career and Job Placement Center, Room C111 Grayslake Campus, Email cjpc@clcollinois.edu