

# Agency or Organization Responsibilities for Hosting an Internship

1. Orientation & Training: Provide relevant orientation and training for the student intern. Communicate the organization/agency's mission and purpose, mandates, policies, programs, rules, and regulations to the intern.
  2. Plan work activities that strengthen the student intern's knowledge, skills, and competencies and enhance their understanding of professional work in your area. These activities should be planned jointly by the site supervisor and the student intern for the mutual benefit of the organization/agency and the intern. The activities will be documented on the MPA Internship Work Plan.
  3. Provide Supervision & Feedback: Supervise and evaluate the intern's performance and provide *regular feedback* throughout the term of the internship.
  4. Two formal meetings with the intern should be completed; one near the mid-point and another near the end of the internship. Supervisors should meet with intern(s) to discuss activities and objectives documented on the Work Plan and the intern's overall progress.
  5. Performance Issues with the Intern:
    - a. Notify the Graduate Programs Manager and Instructor immediately of any significant issues with the intern in the areas of performance or professionalism.
    - b. Together with the intern, document the issue in writing and compose a written plan containing necessary steps to remedy the issue.
    - c. If a decision is made to terminate the internship, provide a written report to the Graduate Programs Manager and Instructor stating the reasons for intern's termination.
  6. Submit the Internship Supervisor Evaluation to the Graduate Programs Manager in a timely manner (near the end of the intern's experience).
  7. Review the *Best Practices for Internships* (information below).
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# Best Practices for Internships

## **BEST PRACTICE #1: ORIENT INTERNS TO THEIR ROLE & TO THE ORGANIZATION**

Hold a formal orientation session or dedicate time during the intern's first week to orient and train the intern. Continue to train and re-orient interns throughout their time with your organization. Interns want to learn the structure and culture of your office.

- A. Present your organization's mission and goals.
- B. Provide a handout or handbook outlining pertinent policies and procedures.
- C. Review the Learning Objectives & Activities on each intern's Work Plan.
- D. Identify measurements for success.
- E. Take interns on a tour of the facility.
- F. Introduce them to other staff members.

## **BEST PRACTICE #2: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SUBSTANTIVE WORK**

- A. Provide substantive work, defined as projects or tasks that require skills in research, analysis, summarizing data, writing, presenting information visually and orally, brainstorming, investigating, planning, organizing, implementing programs and services, problem solving, thinking critically, influencing and persuading, and decision-making.
  - B. Allow students opportunities to develop professional skills such as teamwork, effective communication, social interaction and professional networking, an understanding of business procedures, leadership, and critical thinking.
  - C. Provide sufficient work, and, in the case of a break in work duties, provide clear options for what the intern should do to spend their time in a meaningful manner.
  - D. Provide clear direction for how interns can get their questions answered:
    - 1) To whom they should go for different types of questions
    - 2) How they should ask their questions (phone, email, in person)
    - 3) When they should ask (right away or first compile a list of questions)
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### **BEST PRACTICE #3: INTEGRATE INTERNS INTO THE ORGANIZATION**

- A. Encourage other staff members to interact with the interns and establish a mentor relationship with an intern, when appropriate.
- B. Invite interns to attend meetings, participate in conference calls and opportunities to interact with key members of the organization.
- C. Invite interns to off-site meetings or events.
- D. Provide opportunities for interns to participate in social events, when appropriate.

### **BEST PRACTICE #4: PROVIDE REGULAR FORMAL PERFORMANCE & WORK PLAN REVIEWS**

- A. Give candid feedback:
    - i. Be specific about professional skills interns are exhibiting and areas where they need to improve.
    - ii. Provide direct and constructive feedback so that students can learn and improve their performance.
  - B. Use the sandwich approach: 1) offer praise on work accomplished, 2) add some feedback about improvement, 3) give more examples of their strengths.
  - C. Review the Work Plan to discuss what Learning Objectives are being met, which ones still need to be addressed, and see if there are any additional responsibilities, duties, or opportunities that the intern would like to experience or perform.
  - D. Show appreciation for the work that the intern is performing.
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