



SAWDC
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STUDENT INTERNSHIP GUIDE



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This Internship Guide is designed, developed, and published by SAWDC AlabamaWorks with the assistance from industry and education partners.

At SAWDC we are committed to assisting our partners develop workforce solutions by partnering with businesses, organizations, and schools to create successful internship programs. We are committed to addressing the challenges related to the demand and availability of a highly-skilled workforce. A knowledgeable workforce — of both students and professionals can be a strong tool for economic development and attraction of new businesses to our region.

Employees are a company's most valuable asset. Internships can be seen as an extended job interview, allowing both the student and employer to familiarize themselves with each other. This interaction enables the student to gain insights into job responsibilities, career paths, and employer expectations. At the same time, the employer can assess the intern to determine their long-term compatibility with the organization.

The rise in competition for a talented and innovative workforce brings opportunities for Southwest Alabama businesses to gain a competitive edge. Developing an internship program is an impactful strategy for investing in your business's future successes.

Internship programs provide the answers to some of businesses' most challenging issues including increasing labor costs, gaining fresh perspectives, and even discovering future business leaders. An internship program is an often overlooked, untapped resource among businesses. Creating and maintaining an internship program is not as time-consuming or difficult as you may think.

Internship opportunities can be offered by any type of company or organization- ranging from large corporations to start-up firms, and even small businesses with just a single intern position.

HOW BUSINESSES BENEFIT FROM OFFERING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Businesses offering internship programs gain a variety of benefits. One of the more significant advantages is the opportunity to select and develop your future talent. About four out of every five businesses using internships as a recruiting strategy report a 'good' to 'excellent' return on investment. Internships also provide an opportunity to evaluate and screen students before making a full-time position offer, which can save your business money. If hired in a permanent position, previous interns assimilate faster to their new roles and have shorter learning curves than external hires.



Proper planning will lead to the successful launch of your internship program, and ongoing evaluation can help you improve your program once you have begun.

WHY HIRE AN INTERN?

Innovative Ideas

Interns bring fresh ideas, valuable skills, and diverse perspectives.

Pipeline for Recruitment

Effective method for identifying future employees.

Higher Retention Rates

Converting Interns into full-time employees results in increased retention rates.

Brand Ambassadors

Interns act as advocates in recruiting other students.

Stay Connected to the Schools and the Community

Helps maintain connections with schools and increase visibility on campus. Promotes community involvement; excellent public relations tool.

Students are seeking opportunities that stimulate their interests and provide real-world experiences. A meaningful, purposeful internship program will ensure the assignment of challenging tasks.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR STUDENT INTERNSHIP

This Guide can be a great resource — walking you through these critical steps in planning, executing and evaluating your program. We recommend that you start planning five months prior to the internship starting. This will allow time for developing the job description, determining wages, posting the position, and interviewing. During this planning phase, it's essential to identify the key objectives and outcomes you wish to achieve with your internship program.



TIMELINE & TARGET DELIVERY DATES

Dates	Tasks	Notes
	Develop Intern Application	
	Determine Pay Rate, Hours, School(s) Included	
	Provide Job Descriptions to SAWDC & Career Coach	
	Provide Promotional Flyer	
	Student Application Period	
	Review Applications Provided by Career Coach	
	Conduct Applicant Interviews	
	Extend Intern Job Offer	
	Schedule pre-employment Requirements (Background check, drug screening, physical exam, safety training, and etc.)	

ACTION ITEMS

BUSINESS

DETERMINE:

- Number of Interns Needed
- Length of Internship
- Grades that will be considered (Juniors, Seniors etc.)
- Location for Interviews
- Location for Signing Day

CREATE:

- Intern Job Descriptions
- Promotional Flyer (include date range of internship, rate of pay, hours, company logo, application timeline, student grade)

SAWDC

- Develop/Distribute Internship Timeline
- Coordinate Introduction Meeting with SAWDC/Business/Career Coach

CAREER COACH

DETERMINE:

- Location for Interviews
- Location for Signing Day

CAREER COACH/BUSINESS

DETERMINE:

- Student Application Acceptance Period
- Application Review Period for Career Coach
- Application Review Time for Business
- Interview Date(s)
- Offer Date
- Signing Day Date

CREATE:

- Internship Application
- Plan for Promoting internship Position(s)

INTERN APPLICATION & JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SAMPLE INTERN JOB APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- Full Name
- Contact Information — Email, Phone Number, & Address
- Position Applying for
- Name of High School
- Favorite Courses
- School Activities, Clubs, or Sports
- Previous Employer, Job Title, Job Responsibilities
- Volunteer or Charitable work completed
- Why did you apply for this internship?
- What are your plans after high school?

INTERN JOB DESCRIPTION KEY COMPONENTS:

- Intern Job Title
- Job Duties & Tasks
- Knowledge Requirements
- Ability Requirements
- Job Skills Needed

ONBOARDING

After selecting your interns, prepare a comprehensive onboarding plan. This should include an orientation session where interns are introduced to the company culture, policies, and their specific roles and responsibilities. Providing them with a detailed schedule and access to necessary resources will set them up for success from day one.

CREATE A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Prior to hiring an intern, a business must understand how the interns will fit within the company's goals and culture. A clear understanding of the company's needs and goals will help make the internship most valuable for the student, as well as maximize the benefits for your company.

Throughout the internship, continuous evaluation and feedback are vital. Schedule regular check-ins to discuss their progress, address any concerns, and provide constructive feedback. Encourage interns to share their experiences and suggestions, as their insights can help improve the program for future cohorts.

Finally, at the end of the internship, conduct a thorough evaluation of the program. Gather feedback from both the interns and the team members who worked with them. Assess whether the objectives were met and identify areas for improvement.

BUILDING & CREATING A SUCCESSFUL INTERN PROGRAM

Project Milestones	Assigned To
Assign a supervisor or mentor to support and guide the intern(s)	
Meet regularly to discuss progress and address concerns	
Provide frequent feedback to intern(s)	
Gather Feedback from intern(s)	
Balance the intern's learning goals with the specific work the organization needs to be completed.	

By utilizing this guide, you can create a robust internship program that not only benefits your organization but also provides valuable learning opportunities for the interns, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.

If you are interested in starting an internship or need more information, please contact Bridgette Young at byoung@sawdc.org.