

Hosting a GCU Intern: A Step-by-Step Guide

Everything You Need to Know to Provide a Professional and Purposeful Internship Experience



GCU
CAREER SERVICES



MAXIMIZING YOUR INTERN'S EXPERIENCE

Congratulations! You've selected your intern and are ready to take your talent development game to the next level! At Grand Canyon University (GCU), we know that an internship is more than just a temporary position — it's a powerful opportunity to cultivate future leaders, foster innovation and build a strong talent pipeline for your organization.

This manual serves as a guide to making the most of your intern's time with you. From setting clear expectations and providing meaningful mentorship to fostering professional growth and measuring success, we'll walk you through the key plays that can lead to a winning experience for both your team and your intern.

By investing in your intern's development, you're not just filling a role — you're helping shape the next generation of professionals while gaining fresh insights and energized talent. Whether you're managing your first intern or looking to enhance your existing internship program, this guide can help equip you with key concepts to create a seamless, productive and rewarding experience. ***Let's help you turn potential into performance!***

PREPARING INTERNS FOR SUCCESS

A well-structured foundation is key to a successful internship experience. Many students are new to the nuances of a professional environment, from company culture to industry-specific expectations. Even those with prior work experience may not be familiar with organizational structures, confidentiality protocols, teamwork dynamics or business operations. This is where a thoughtful orientation and training program becomes essential in helping equip interns for success. By proactively planning their onboarding experience, you can help ensure they are prepared to contribute effectively and gain meaningful insights. ***Consider the following steps that can help you create a smooth and impactful internship journey.***

Step 1: Prior to Your Intern's First Day

The sooner interns understand your organization's mission, values and workflow, the sooner they can take on responsibilities and contribute meaningfully. Therefore, before your intern's first day, be sure to carefully consider the following key elements:

- ▶ **Define Clear Goals and Expectations:** Outline what success looks like for both the intern and your organization. Create a structured plan with key objectives and milestones.
- ▶ **Assign a Supervisor or Mentor:** Designate a point of contact who will guide, support and provide regular feedback.
- ▶ **Set Up Workspaces and Resources:** Ensure your intern has access to the necessary tools, software, logins and a designated workspace.
- ▶ **Create a Welcome Package:** Provide an overview of the company, team structure, workplace policies and any key books, course materials, supplies and equipment.

Printable checklist available for download [here](#).

Step 2: First Day – Conduct a Strong Orientation

- ▶ **Introduce Company Culture and Mission:** Help your intern understand the bigger picture and how their role contributes.
- ▶ **Clarify Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly communicate job duties, performance expectations and project timelines.
- ▶ **Outline Communication Protocols:** Explain reporting structures, preferred methods of communication and meeting schedules.
- ▶ **Review Workplace Etiquette and Policies:** Discuss professional behavior, dress code, work hours and any necessary compliance measures.

ORIENTATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Employers who invest time in properly orienting their interns from the start usually see increased productivity and effectiveness. To help interns integrate smoothly into the workplace, consider addressing the following orientation talk points:

A. Introduce the Organization's Mission

- What is the organization's history and purpose?
- What makes your product or service unique?
- Who benefits from your offerings?
- What are the company's current goals?
- How can the intern contribute to achieving these objectives?

B. Clarify the Organizational Structure

- Who reports to whom and who will directly supervise the intern?
- What are the responsibilities of the intern's department?
- How are decisions made within the organization?
- Which employees can assist with specific types of inquiries?

C. Review Workplace Policies, Rules and Expectations

1. Workplace Terminology and Communication
 - Are there any industry-specific terms or jargon interns should know?
 - How do communication systems such as mail, phone and email function?
 - What are the approved formats for internal and external correspondence?



2. Daily Operations and Procedures

- What are the standard procedures and work expectations?
- When and how can the intern access their supervisor?
- How should requests and approvals be handled?
- Is there a process for submitting completed work?
- Are there any required reports or forms to complete?

3. Professional Conduct and Appearance

- What are the company's dress code and workplace appearance standards?
- How should interns maintain their workspace and office environment?

4. Safety, Security and Confidentiality

- What safety regulations must be followed?
- What security or confidentiality policies must be observed?

D. Define the Intern's Role and Responsibilities

- What will the intern's specific duties be?
- What projects will they work on?
- What resources and tools are available to support their work?
- Is any additional training required?
- How should the intern interact with clients and vendors?
- What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
- Do other employees understand the intern's role within the team?



Step 3: Ongoing Process – Provide Support and Engagement

- ▶ **Schedule Regular Check-Ins:** Meet weekly or biweekly to provide guidance, answer questions and offer constructive feedback.
- ▶ **Encourage Questions and Initiative:** Create an open environment where the intern feels comfortable seeking clarification and contributing ideas.
- ▶ **Assign Meaningful Work:** Give projects that align with their skills and learning goals, avoiding only administrative tasks.
- ▶ **Offer Learning and Development Opportunities:** Expose interns to networking events, training sessions or mentorship opportunities to help the intern articulate their experience on a resume and in interviews, as well as help the intern be able to quantify their accomplishments and value to the organization.



Step 4: Measure Progress and Offer Constructive Feedback

- ▶ Set Milestones and Assess Performance: Track progress based on agreed-upon goals and adjust as needed.
- ▶ Give Timely, Specific Feedback: Provide both positive reinforcement and areas for improvement in a supportive manner.
- ▶ Encourage Self-Reflection: Ask the intern about their experiences, challenges and takeaways to enhance learning.

PROVIDING REGULAR AND EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP EVALUATIONS

For an internship to be a valuable learning experience, constructive feedback is essential. A strong evaluation process should focus on the intern's initial learning objectives and assess both achievements and areas for improvement.

Interns rely on their supervisors and mentors to guide them in transitioning from the classroom to the professional world. To support their development, it is beneficial for mentors and supervisors to hold regular check-ins to exchange feedback. During these meetings, interns can:

- ▶ Update supervisors on project progress
- ▶ Understand how their work contributes to the company's goals
- ▶ Assess their strengths and accomplishments
- ▶ Discuss areas for growth and skill development
- ▶ Gain insight into upcoming tasks and expectations

Printable weekly evaluation form available for download [here](#).

Supervisors typically evaluate interns at the midpoint and conclusion of the internship. Before the intern's departure, employers are encouraged to conduct a final review, discussing the overall experience and providing constructive feedback. These evaluations help measure the intern's contributions and determine their potential for future internships or full-time employment.

Step 5: Conclude the Internship with an Effective Wrap-Up

- ▶ Conduct a Final Review: Discuss accomplishments, provide final feedback and collect insights on their experience.
- ▶ Encourage a Debrief and Reflection: Help them articulate key skills gained and how they can apply them in future roles.
- ▶ Offer a Recommendation (If Earned): Provide a letter of recommendation or LinkedIn endorsement to support their career journey.
- ▶ Assess and Improve Your Program: Gather feedback on what worked well and what can be improved for future interns.

Printable final internship evaluation form available for download [here](#).



GCU Career Services is Here to Help

Thank you for your commitment to mentoring the next generation of professionals. By engaging with Grand Canyon University interns, you provide students with invaluable opportunities for personal and professional development. Our interns are known for their dedication, servant leadership and professionalism, making them a valuable asset to any team. We are confident that collaborating with our talented students will bring fresh perspectives and meaningful contributions to your organization.



For more information, additional guidance or to schedule an internship-design meeting or a Co-Op discussion meeting please contact Career Services at:

CareerServices@gcu.edu

LinkedIn.com/company/GCUCareerServices

Ready to post your opportunity on our GCU Employer Network, Career Connections?

Visit gcu-csm.simplcity.com/, select Employer and follow the instructions to either sign in or create an account.



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Appendix





Internship Preparation and Planning Checklist

I. Define Clear Goals and Expectations

- ☐ Identify the primary purpose of the internship (e.g., pipeline for future talent, project assistance, fresh perspectives)
- ☐ Develop a structured internship description with key duties and learning outcomes
- ☐ Define specific, measurable objectives for the intern (e.g., complete three client reports, design a social media campaign)
- ☐ Identify milestones and deadlines (weekly goals, project checkpoints)
- ☐ Establish mutual expectations (hours, communication style, work pace)
- ☐ Determine how success will be measured and evaluated
- ☐ Schedule a goal-setting meeting during the first week

II. Assign a Supervisor or Mentor

- ☐ Designate a primary supervisor or mentor with the time and interest to support the intern
- ☐ Clarify the supervisor's responsibilities (onboarding, training, evaluations)
- ☐ Schedule weekly check-in meetings to review progress and address questions
- ☐ Encourage the supervisor to provide constructive, ongoing feedback
- ☐ Prepare the mentor to offer professional development advice (career tips, resume feedback, networking support)

III. Set Up Workspaces and Resources

- ☐ Reserve or assign a physical workspace or confirm remote access setup.
- ☐ Ensure intern has access to:
 - ☐ Company email and calendar
 - ☐ Necessary software and platforms
 - ☐ Login credentials for internal systems
 - ☐ Phone, printer, ID badge, etc. (if applicable)
- ☐ Provide any equipment needed (laptop, headset, etc.)
- ☐ Test technology access before Day 1
- ☐ Provide training or documentation on key tools or systems



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Internship Preparation and Planning Checklist

IV. Create a Welcome Package

- ☐ Include a welcome letter or message from leadership or the intern's team
- ☐ Provide an internship overview (timeline, goals, expectations)
- ☐ Share an organization chart or team directory
- ☐ Include a company overview (history, mission, values, key initiatives)
- ☐ Outline workplace policies (attendance, dress code, remote work policy)
- ☐ Provide instructions for logging in and using tools
- ☐ Suggest first-week tasks or training materials
- ☐ Offer a list of contacts for support (HR, IT, supervisor, mentor)



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WEEKLY PERFORMANCE CHECK-IN

Please evaluate the intern's weekly performance in the areas below:

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	N/A
Completed assigned tasks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintained professional communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrated initiative and responsibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Showed enthusiasm and interest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Asked appropriate questions/sought help	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Worked well independently	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborated well with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Met deadlines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

WEEKLY FEEDBACK AND DEVELOPMENT

1. What were the intern's strengths this week?

2. What areas need improvement or more support?

3. What coaching or resources could help the intern succeed?

4. How does the intern's work support the team or company goals?

5. Additional comments or observations:

SIGNATURES *(Optional for Informal Reviews)*

- Supervisor Signature: _____
- Intern Signature: _____



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INTERNSHIP EVALUATION FORM

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC YEAR: 20__ – 20__

Thank you very much for providing a supportive internship opportunity for a Grand Canyon University student. Please take a few minutes with the student intern to conduct an exit interview and discuss the outcomes of the internship experience. Rate the intern in the left column as it relates to their fitness for the position and the industry they worked within. Thank you for your participation in our students' professional development!

Student Intern: _____

Student my.gcu.edu email address: _____

Date: _____

Please rate the intern in each of the following categories by placing an "X" in the appropriate box.

Tasks, Duties, Responsibilities and Accomplishments	Unable to Evaluate	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Needs Improvement
Verbal communication						
Written communication						
Computer/technology skills						
Critical thinking						
Integrity/ethics/honesty						
Reliability						
Working with others						
Working independently						
Application of instruction						
Decision making ability						
Mathematical/analytical skills						
General business awareness						
Knowledge of specified field						
Receiving constructive criticism						
Ability to troubleshoot						
Overall rating						



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Other comments:

Is this internship for college credit?

No

Yes

☐☐

If you answered yes, please fill out the below:

Class Title: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Supervisor's name and title: _____

Supervisor's email address: _____

Total applicable hours worked: _____

Supervisor's signature: _____

Email the student's instructor directly at the email provided to you by the student or email CareerServices@gcu.edu with the instructor's name.