STUDENT
INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

INTERN
Bemidji
KEEPING TALENT LOCAL
Congratulations on being a recipient of the Neilson Foundation Internship program. This program was created to help you build experience in your chosen career field. The Student Internship Toolkit is designed to provide resources for students to assist with developing and enhancing your internship experience.

• What is an internship
• Before you begin
• Before your first day
• Email Etiquette
• Making the most of your internship
• What success looks like
• Sample final review for intern
• Sample final intern evaluation of employer

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

“An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.” National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE).

An Internship is not doing tasks in a workplace, but rather learning and growing professionally.

The 10 top skills employers want most in recent college graduates:

1. Ability to work in a team structure
2. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
3. Ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization
4. Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell and influence others

Benefits to gain through an internship:

• Gain valuable experience in the professional world
• More attractive to prospective employers down the road
• Build your resume
• Expand your professional network
• Learn from people who are established in their profession
• “Test drive” a potential career
• Develop skills
• Explore other professional areas of interest
• Improve starting salary offers

More than 63% of students with internships (or other experience) receive a job offer by graduation. Less than 40% without experience get one.

Students with internship experience take an average of 2.5 months to find employment. Students without any internship experience will take an average of 6.2 months. (NACE)
BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Think about documenting your internship experience. Doing so will make it that much easier promoting your internship experience during an interview with future employers. One way to do this is through “Internship Portfolios” which usually consist of:

- Internship job description
- Learning contract (or agreement)
- Samples of work you completed during your internship
- Mid/final internship evaluation
- Letter of recommendation from internship supervisor
- Any other documents/information related to your internship experience

QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO STARTING:

- When do you start (date, time, number of hours per week, duration of the internship, etc.)
- Pay rate
- Where do you report
- Whom will you report to on the first day
- What is the dress code
- What should you bring the first day? (driver’s license, social security card, etc.)
- Be there 10-15 minutes before your official start time (If work begins at 8 a.m., do not show up at 8 a.m.)

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNSHIP:

Communication will be a large part of how successful your internship is.

To have a successful internship make sure you start by discussing with your supervisor:

- What your specific duties/responsibilities will be
- What will your supervisor’s responsibilities be
- How will your supervisor provide you with regular feedback, guidance and support
- What training will you receive
- How (and when) will you be evaluated
- Be expected to evaluate the internship or organization upon completion of the internship

Here is a sample of what you should have knowledge of after your first week:

- Hours and a copy of expectations
- Dress code
- Company policies and procedures
- Time keeping/breaks/lunch/time off requests
- Confidentiality agreement (if applicable)
- Progress reviews (30-60-90 day)
- Weekly progress reports with your direct supervisor
- End of the internship evaluation
- Requesting time off procedure
- Reporting structure of company
EMAIL ETIQUETTE TIPS:

• Treat email messages as any professional communication.
• Write complete sentences using proper punctuation.
• Begin EVERY email by addressing your recipients by their first name that you communicate with regularly. Otherwise Dear Ms./Mrs./Dr.
• Use a positive tone, and use your manners by remembering to say “please” and “thank you.”
• Don’t use emoticons (i.e., smiley faces).
• Avoid using all UPPERCASE letters, or all lower-case letters. Be professional.
• Never cc their boss or your mom (or any other relatives or friends) when communicating with employers.
• As a general rule, avoid text abbreviations and acronyms.
• Avoid sending messages when angry.
• Add a signature block with appropriate contact information (in most cases, your name, business address, and phone number).
• Edit and proofread before hitting “send.” You may think you’re too busy to sweat the small stuff, but unfortunately your reader may think you’re careless.
• Consider confidentiality.
• Never include any confidential information in an e-mail message.
• E-mail is not confidential.
• Deleted messages remain on the employers server, and can be recovered.
• If sending an email to all of the company’s clients, ask if you should Blind Carbon Copy (BCC), for confidentiality.

Example of what NOT to do:
To: steve-hodge@marketing.com
From: beerman@yahoo.com
Subject: First job!
Cc: mymom@hotmail.com

I JUST FINISHED THE FIRST THING YOU ASKED ME TO DO!

Example of what TO do:
To: steve-hodge@marketing.com
From: john-smith@dfwmarketing.com
Subject: Sunsplash Flyer

Dear Steve,
Attached, you will find the first draft of the updated design along with the edits for the Sunsplash event flyer we discussed yesterday.

Please let me know when you have an opportunity to meet with me to discuss the design so that I could make the needed edits. Thank you for the opportunity to take the lead on this redesign. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Graphic Intern
DFW Marketing
EXPECTATIONS

How you behave and act during your internship can determine your future job prospects. You will most likely put this internship on your resume and future employers will likely call your internship supervisor or others at the company to ask about your performance. Think of EVERYONE you interact with at the company as a potential reference for you.

- Conducting yourself in an ethical and professional manner, with honesty, punctuality, courtesy, a cooperative attitude, appropriate dress and a willingness to learn at the workplace.
- Arriving to work ON TIME (better yet, 10 minutes before your scheduled start time) every day and don’t abuse your lunch hour and always work complete days. Nobody is going to appreciate someone who comes late and leaves early.
- Complete your tasks and responsibilities assigned by your supervisor.
- If you have any downtime, always ask what else you can do. TAKE INITIATIVE! If your supervisor is busy, ask a fellow colleague. Never use work time on social media. Do not snap, post, tweet, shop or use the internet in any non-work related way. You have only a short window to make a good impression.
- Respect confidentiality.

IF PROBLEMS ARISE

We all hope to have an amazing internship experience, unfortunately, that doesn’t always happen. If you run into a problem during your internship, you should talk immediately to two people.

1. Your internship supervisor
2. BSU’s Internship Coordinator- Molly Aitken-Julin at maitken@bemidjistate.edu or 218.755.2406

Both should be able to help you figure out a plan for moving forward.

COMMON CHALLENGES & HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM:

- **Not enough work**: Speak up! Talk to your supervisor and ask if there are other tasks that you could do. Or, another department within the company you can assist with.

- **Not enough direction**: It’s easy for supervisors to forget that you may need more direction than the employee in the cubical next door. Don’t be afraid to ask for help or for more direction if anything is unclear. Employers would much rather have you ask then make up an answer.

- **Not enough feedback**: If you’ve been there a few weeks and haven’t received any feedback, good or bad, set up a meeting with your supervisor and ask how you’re doing.

- **Longer hours than you agreed to**: If your work is taking you longer then expected or your supervisor is asking you to work longer hours than you agreed to, then you should have a conversation with your supervisor. If you are wondering how you can initiate this conversation, contact BSU Internship Coordinator.

- **More “busy work” and less “real” work than you anticipated or agreed to**: If this happens, reach out to the BSU Internship Coordinator and she will help you come up with a plan for requesting more meaningful work. Some ideas will include, ask to sit in on meetings with your supervisor or shadow another department.

The most important thing that you can do is ask questions! Never assume you have the correct answer. Asking questions shows your supervisor and other employees that you are curious, interested, and willing to learn. These are all qualities that they will look for in future employees.
PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Your appearance and attire are an important part of making a positive first impression with employers at career fairs, job interviews and networking events. Often employers complain that students are under-dressed when attending these events.

Now that you’ve landed your internship, one of the first steps is to determine what the appropriate dress code is for your company that you’re interning at. Because dress codes vary greatly, it is important to research to ensure you know what is acceptable dress within that organization. If you are uncertain, simply call the receptionist to ask about the company dress code, and lean towards the conservative side.

Types of Dress

Business Professional
This is the most conservative type of business clothing commonly expected as daily dress in conservative businesses such as financial firms. Business professional dress is also typical for job interviews in organizations that dress in business casual style on a daily basis such as corporations.

Expectations for Women
• Business suit (pant or skirt) in black, dark grey or navy; fabric of both top and bottom should match.
• Skirts length should be no more than 2 inches above your knee.
• Shirt in a solid color; shirt necklines should be near your collarbone to ensure they are not too revealing.
• Tights or nylons are worn with closed toe, closed heel, and low-heel dress shoes.
• Hair and nails should be neat, clean and not distracting.
• Jewelry and make-up should be subtle.

Expectations for Men
• Business suit in black, dark grey or navy with the jacket and pant fabric matching.
• Button-down dress shirt and a tie both in subdued colors. (If you don’t know how to tie a necktie, simply look online for tutorials.)
• Always wear an undershirt under your dress shirt.
• Always wear a belt and knee-high dress socks (not white athletic socks). Belt, socks and shoes should all match (black or brown).
• Hair and facial hair should be clean, and neat. Shorter styles are common.

Business Casual
Is the most common type of dress. Business casual dress is slightly less conservative type of dress commonly expected as daily dress in businesses such as insurance companies and marketing firms.

Expectations for Women
• Dress pants or skirts in brown, black, grey or other conservative colors. (Skirts should be at or just above your knee. Longer is also acceptable.)
• Tops can include button down shirts, blouses, sweaters and/or jackets; jacket fabric does not need to match the fabric of the pants. As with business professional, shirt necklines should be near your collarbone to ensure they are not too revealing.
PROFESSIONAL DRESS (CONTINUED)

Business Casual (Continued)

Expectations for Men

- Dress pants in brown, black, grey or other neutral colors.
- Button-down dress shirt with or without a tie, sweaters with a collared shirt beneath, and/or blazers. Dress polo’s are also acceptable, jackets are optional and the fabric does not need to match the fabric of the pants.
- Shirts are always tucked in and wrinkle-free.
- Always wear a belt and knee-high socks. Belt, socks and shoes should all match (black or brown).

Casual

- Casual dress is less conservative type of business wear and is common as daily dress in businesses such as design firms, schools, and some environmental organizations.
- Expectations for women & men are nice jeans, corduroy and khaki pants are common.
- High quality tops, sweaters and polo shirts are typical.
- Avoid jeans with holes/tears and avoid wearing sweatpants or wind pants unless you are in a field which requires athletic apparel.
- Avoid “beach wear” type items such as shorts & casual flip flops.

Other Considerations

- Ensure all clothing fits well and is neither too tight, too revealing, nor too baggy.
- Some employers may have a negative reaction to tattoos or piercings. Consider covering tattoos or removing piercings prior to interviews until you know more about the organizational culture.
- Women wearing hijab should simply select fabrics in dark colors for career fairs and job interviews.

Shopping Smart

- Choose neutral and classic items instead of trendy items, such as a pair of black pants which can be worn with a variety of shirts, ties, and jackets.
- You don’t need to shop for your business attire at name brand, expensive stores! Quality and professional items can easily be found at consignment shops, outlet malls, and discount stores such as Target, JC Penney, TJ Maxx or Kohl’s (check online for the widest selection).
**WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:**

**Be Reliable**
- Be on time every day and do not skip over anything that is expected of you. In fact it’s best to do more than expected. Build your reputation as someone who can be counted on to finish a project!

**Bring Energy and Enthusiasm**
- You are a new member to the team and you want to be a positive addition. Be grateful for the job and the opportunity to prove yourself. Don’t be afraid to bring new ideas to your supervisor. Remember, you are looking at things from a new perspective and that is a main reason companies hire interns! Fresh thoughts and fresh ideas are great for business.

**Balance Self-Sufficiency with Asking Questions**
- Show up with some confidence and skills of your own but know that an intern, or any new employee, is expected to have questions. Be sure to show gratitude and prove that you are learning quickly.

**Dress Well**
- Look around the office, even though some may dress casually, look up to the leaders in the office. Your clothing reflects your status in the company and dressing for success will give your co-workers a positive perspective of your potential.

**Participate**
- Show initiative and seek out opportunities. Participating in internal and external meetings, even as an observer, exposes you to the bigger picture and offers more opportunity for networking. However, avoid any negativity or office gossip.

**Stay Flexible**
- You may be moved around a lot within the workplace. Be willing to do whatever work is asked of you, even if you feel it’s beneath you. Gladly taking on projects that no one else wants is an opportunity to make something out of nothing.

**Attention to Detail**
- Check over your work thoroughly and be conscious of your progress. You are being evaluated as a potential employee and you don’t want to make mistakes that could have easily been prevented. Never use text language. Spell-check emails, double-check numbers, and make sure you are spelling names correctly.

**Network**
- Meet everyone you can while you are interning. The people you work with have a lot of connections themselves. If you make contacts, you will have more people willing to help you out professionally in the future.

**Send Hand Written Thank You’s**
- Show your gratitude for the little and big things to those around you. To get started, please send a thank you letter to the Neilson Foundation for providing you with this opportunity. (George W. Neilson Foundation Board Post Office Box 692, Bemidji, MN 56601)

Contact the Career Services Office if you have any questions regarding your internship before, during or after your experience. We are here as a resource for you, and want you to have a successful internship experience.
SAMPLE FINAL REVIEW - Supervisor’s Evaluation Form

This is provided as an example, courtesy of North Country Business Products of a final review they use for their internship program.

During the last week of the Intern’s assignment, please complete this evaluation, review it with the intern and return it to Human Resources. Please give a copy to the intern.

Name ____________________________ Date ____________________________
Evaluator ____________________________ Semester ____________________________
Location ____________________________ Internship Area ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
<th>3 Points</th>
<th>2 Points</th>
<th>1 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement Needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dependability**
1. Attendance is regular
   1 2 3
2. Punctual for work, meetings, appointments, etc. Completes projects by specific deadlines
   1 2 3
3. Consistently produces quality work (accurate/complete)
   1 2 3

Comments: __________________________________________________________

**Behavior**
1. Is willing to learn
   1 2 3
2. Demonstrates initiative
   1 2 3
3. Seeks to understand the goals of the organization
   1 2 3
4. Accepts and makes constructive use of suggestions Is adaptable to changing circumstances/objectives Is courteous and friendly
   1 2 3

Comments: __________________________________________________________

**Relations**
1. Works effectively with supervisor
   1 2 3
2. Works effectively with co-workers
   1 2 3
3. Works effectively with the public/customers
   1 2 3

Comments: __________________________________________________________
**Self-Management**

1. Conducts self professionally (manners and appearance)  1  2  3
2. Manages time and resources efficiently  1  2  3
3. Makes informed decisions  1  2  3
4. Able to work without supervision, sees things to do  1  2  3
5. Seeks further assistance/information when appropriate  1  2  3

Comments: __________________________________________
________________________________________________________

**Learning**

1. Demonstrates skills needed for assigned tasks  1  2  3
2. Applies classroom knowledge to the job  1  2  3
3. Understands company expectations  1  2  3
4. Catches on fast, follows detailed instructions  1  2  3

Comments: __________________________________________
________________________________________________________

**Overall Performances**

Please rate the students overall performance  1  2  3

1. What are the student’s strengths? What skills, knowledge and personal attributes does the student have which will help him/her to be competent in his/her chosen field?

2. In what areas could the student improve? What suggestions do you have regarding how he/she might make these improvements?

3. Please make any additional comments regarding the student’s performance and development and/or your experience with this internship.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Supervisor’s Signature  Date  Student’s Signature  Date

(Source: North Country Business Products)
FINAL INTERN EVALUATION OF EMPLOYER

At the end of the internship period, Bemidji State University will be submitting similar evaluations to student interns for feedback. You may use this tool to help develop your internship program.

Student Name ___________________________ Dates of Internship ______________________
Internship Title ___________________________ Semester ______________________________
Employer ________________________________ Internship Area _________________________

1. Did you feel the work provided a valuable experience in relation to your academic studies/ career goals?

2. Were you given responsibilities that enabled you to apply your knowledge and skills?

3. Were you allowed to take the initiative to work beyond the basic requirements of this job?

4. Did the organization and/or supervisor work with you regularly? Were they able to answer questions when necessary?

5. Briefly note new skills, techniques and knowledge gained in this position.

6. Discuss the weak points of your internship experience and ways they may be improved.

7. Discuss the strong points of your internship experience.

8. Was there anything that was not covered that should have been covered during the internship experience?

9. Do you think your academic program has prepared you for this internship?

10. If you had any aspect of your internship to do over, what changes would you make?

11. Would you recommend this organization to other students?

Comments about your internship not mentioned above: ________________________________