



Center for
**CAREER AND
ACADEMIC PLANNING**

Pre-Career Opportunities Toolkit For Site Supervisors

Questions? Connect with us at CCAP@sjfc.edu or (585)-385-8050

Pre-Career Opportunities Toolkit for Employers

Table of Contents

What is a Pre-Career Opportunity?	Page 3
Developing Professional Competencies for Students	Page 5
Internship FAQs	Page 9
Fair Labor Standards Act Information	Page 10
Best Practices for Internship Programs	Page 11
Sample Internship Description	Page 14

What is a Pre-Career Opportunity?

Pre-career opportunities (commonly referred to as internships) require a partnership between the student, employer, and if the opportunity is for academic credit, the campus faculty sponsor. In return, the experience offers these **advantages for the employer**:

- Establish a relationship with St. John Fisher College’s Center for Career and Academic Planning (CCAP) office and provide a path to recruit new talent.
- Develop and/or create new projects or programs.
- Survey and evaluate potential employees.
- Increase awareness of industry trends and innovative ideas in the field.
- Increase knowledge of current academic preparation students receive in their major programs.
- Participate in the preparation of future industry professionals by helping them develop the following professional competencies:
 - Communication skills
 - Self-confidence
 - Industry and business knowledge
 - Self-sufficiency
 - Personal organization
 - Customer service skills
 - Professional networks
 - Professional ethics

HOWEVER, pre-career learning opportunities extend beyond internships! The term “internship” likely makes you think of a full year, full semester, or full summer program. And while for many internships, these timelines are true, there are plenty of ways to engage with St. John Fisher College students in addition to offering internships. Here are some additional pre-career learning opportunities you and your organization could provide:

Short-term, “microinternship”

Perhaps you have a busy season that requires a lot of you and your staff. Whether it is a week or eight weeks, a short-term or “micro-internship” could be a great option for your organization. Much like a longer-term internship, you would still post the opportunity on Handshake and review resumes, but the opportunity would be focused to assist with critical workload. A student particularly interested in the work of your field would be exposed to an important aspect of the job or industry during a time of year that requires the most effort.

Job Shadowing

If members of different divisions of your organization are interested in showing students a “day-in-the-life” of what they do in their roles, job shadowing is an excellent opportunity to engage with students, start creating a talent pipeline, and give students an opportunity to see if the job is

one that they might be interested in pursuing. Shadowing could be a half day, full day, or even just a few hours.

Site Visit

It often helps companies and organizations attract more talent if students are able to visit your offices and get a sense of what their workplace could look like if they were to join your team. Site visits allow members of your team that may not be able to be involved with campus recruitment a chance to engage through a presentation or panel. It is also a chance to describe what it is like to work at your organization, share your mission and vision, and discuss the types of opportunities for which you typically seek out talent.

Developing Professional Competencies for Students

This toolkit provides you insights and suggestions for how to support competency development in your interns. Each of the following sections focuses on a singular competency outcome:

1. Communication Skills

Give your students an overview of the types of communication they can expect to be involved with and ask them their confidence levels with each. This will give you and your intern an understanding of their current capabilities and where there is room for growth.

Tips for internship site supervisors:

- Discuss how and when you prefer students to communicate with you;
- Talk to the student about their comfort level with different modes of communication;
- Challenge the student to stretch their capabilities by providing a variety of communication opportunities;
- Explain the culture in your workplace; typically contact is via telephone or in person;
- Help the student understand the tone of communication required by different stakeholders;
- Highlight to the student which types of communication are effective in different situations;
- Provide feedback to the student so they know where improvement is required;
- Demand high standards from the student, particularly around external communication to customers.

2. Self-Confidence

Regularly discuss expectations, responsibilities, and tasks with the student. Then follow up with the student to provide feedback on what exceeded expectations, what met expectations, and what should be improved. Provide clear and specific coaching on how to improve.

Tips for internship site supervisors:

- Recognize that you are the student's mentor;
- Listen to what strengths the student identifies and what areas they want to work to develop;
- Organize a thorough orientation to the organization and its clients;
- Provide a clear role description and instructions as to what their responsibilities entail;
- Discuss learning outcomes with the student and schedule an evaluation;
- Judge the student on their ability to improve over their ability to produce flawless results;
- Praise everyday work done well;
- Provide and invite feedback on a regular basis; ask how you can be a more effective mentor;

- Ask students to summarize your instructions if you feel they are unsure or do not completely understand your directions;
- Create opportunities for students to learn from others, e.g. job shadowing various roles;
- Request guidance from the College when you feel you need assistance.

3. Industry and Business Knowledge

Be prepared to teach your student how to use industry systems and software to set them up for success in their role as your intern.

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- Provide students tutorials on necessary computer software and management systems;
- Provide the student with an overview of the business as a whole, including the business plan;
- Expose students to skills that are necessary for success in your industry;
- Encourage the student to make a connection between theory and its application in the industry.

4. Self-Sufficiency

Ask your students many questions and encourage them to think for themselves by making decisions on their own when appropriate.

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- Indicate to the student that you will be asking them for their opinions throughout the experience;
- Brief your team to encourage the student to share thoughts and ideas when opportunities arise;
- Provide feedback on the strengths and limitations on the student's ideas but try not to dismiss them completely;
- Challenge the student to think about how they could go one step further;
- Expose the student to brainstorming and decision-making processes in your organization;
- Encourage the student to look for answers before relying on you;
- If the student comes to you with a question or a problem, first ask the student what they think they should do;
- Ensure the student has the information and resources necessary to do their job;
- Clarify when you want the student to review things with you/seek your approval;
- Allow the student, where appropriate, to have some leeway to learn from their mistakes.

5. Personal Organization

One area students can benefit from in an internship setting is learning how to keep organized in a professional setting. This will allow them to develop their own system of personal organization as they begin their career.

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- Ensure goals and expectations are understood correctly from the start;
- Demonstrate to the student how you personally organize your time;
- Provide any templates or ideas that can be used to help the student remain organized;
- Review the student's organization plan and help them consider what may be missing;
- Guard against the student becoming overwhelmed by agreeing which tasks should be given priority;
- Agree on realistic deadlines with the student;
- Set high expectations for the student who should be aiming to perform at a professional level

6. Professional Networks

Ask students what their career aspirations are and then expose them to networks that may help.

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- Recognize that this internship experience is probably the beginning of the student's career;
- Provide the student opportunities to build their network and connect them with influential professionals;
- Ask the student about their career ambitions and then expose them to networks that may help them in the long-term.

7. Professional Ethics

Have clear expectations for the students about professionalism, and the organization's values. Ensure there is a good process in place to orient the student with the values and expectations of the organization. Model high ethical standards: *be the value you want them to develop.*

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- Be a role model by presenting yourself as you expect the student to;
- Provide information about the workplace culture/values/codes of conduct;
- Explain what professionalism means in your organization;
- Observe and provide feedback on the student's professionalism throughout the internship experience;
- Discuss the typical dress code and the advantages to following the dress code;

- Acknowledge when the student is making an effort to earn your trust and respect.

8. Reflecting on the Internship Experience

Reflection should be an explicit learning objective of internship experiences. The objective of reflection is to learn by experience by reflecting an action and thorough reflection after an event. Internship site supervisors should encourage students to undertake the following stages of reflection:

Tips for Internship Site Supervisors:

- **Work Description:** Describe their experience in detail, including: what they were doing, what other people were doing, the context of their internship, and the overall outcome.
- **Evaluation:** Reflect on what was learned from the experience.
- **Conclusion and Synthesis:** Connect the experience to their academic learning and their future career ambitions.

Internship FAQs for Employers

What is necessary for an experience to be considered a legitimate internship?

- The experience should be educational with clearly defined learning objectives related to the student's academic program.
- The experience is primarily for the benefit of the student, however, the work experience may also provide benefit to the employer.
- The student works under close observation of a regular employee or supervisor.
- There is supervision and routine feedback by a professional with educational/professional background relevant to the internship.
- The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student.
- The student is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.

Does a student need to receive academic credit for the internship?

- No, St. John Fisher College does not require that a student receive academic credit for an internship. Requesting academic credit is optional (for most majors) and the decision to evaluate the internship and award credit hours is the responsibility of the academic department in which the student is enrolled.

Does the intern need to be paid?

- Unpaid internships need to ensure they are not in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (see additional information below regarding the FLSA).
- If an unpaid internship appears to be in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the student should be paid at least minimum wage.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act makes special exemption for individuals who volunteer for state and local government agencies, or other non-profit charitable organizations.

What are my responsibilities as an employer?

- Employers are all expected, regardless of compensation, to provide basic workplace protections consistent with all laws, ethical considerations, and sound business practices.
- Employers should also create a work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, age, or other protected status. Students are protected under the 1972 Title IX regulation.
- At minimum, the employer is required to complete a midterm and final evaluation of the student's performance at their internship. More frequent formal, constructive performance evaluations are strongly recommended.

How do I hire an intern from St. John Fisher College?

- Post a position via Handshake: <https://www.joinhandshake.com/>
- Attend our Career and Internship Fair (March)
- Contact the Center for Career & Academic Planning for additional information: ccap@sjfc.edu, (585)-385-8050

Fair Labor Standards Act Information

As an employer, if you are considering developing an **unpaid** internship, it is important to consider how this may impact your organization under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Generally, a student in an internship experience may be considered an employee, unless meeting the criteria listed below. Interns for governmental entities and some charitable non-profits are not considered employees for FLSA purposes. In general, internships at for-profit entities are subject to FLSA. [Courts have set forth what is known as the *Primary Beneficiary Test* to help evaluate whether an intern is an “employee” for purposes of the FLSA.] If an intern meets **all** of the criteria below, they would not be considered an employee:

- The intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee.
- The internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
- The internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or receipt of academic credit.
- The internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
- The internship duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
- The intern’s work complements rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
- The intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

Generally, interns should be paid at least minimum wage, especially if the intern will be adding value to your organization, non-profit and governmental employers are exempt from this guideline. If your organization is considering developing an unpaid internship, it is important to keep the above factors in mind to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Additionally, if you are looking into developing a paid internship, the intern should be paid at least minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek. If you are interested in developing a paid or unpaid internship, and have questions, please contact our office at ccap@sjfc.edu or (585)-385-8050.

Best Practices for Internship Programs

- 1. Prepare before posting or hiring:**
 - a. St. John Fisher College hosts a training session before each semester begins for Employers seeking to create or enhance their internship programs. For more details, please contact us at ccap@sjfc.edu.
- 2. Provide interns with real work assignments:**
 - a. Providing interns with real work will help ensure your program's success. Interns should be doing work that is related to their major, challenging, recognized by the organization as valuable, and fills the entire work term.
- 3. Hold orientations for all involved:**
 - a. It is important that everyone be on the same page. This can be facilitated by holding an orientation session for managers and mentors as well as a session for students. Orientations ensure that everyone starts with the same expectations and role definitions. This is time well spent - the effort you put into these sessions will pay off throughout the program.
- 4. Provide interns with a handbook and/or website.**
 - a. Whether in a paper booklet or presented as a special section on your website, a handbook serves as a guide for students, answering frequently asked questions and communicating the "rules" in a warm and welcoming way.
 - b. A separate intern website serves many of the purposes of the handbook, but has the advantage of being easy to change. You can use your website as a communication tool, with announcements from the college or even articles of interest.
 - c. Ideally, the website (or handbook) will also readily provide contact names for people within your organization who are ready to help the intern acclimate.
- 5. Provide housing and relocation assistance.**
 - a. Few employers can afford to provide full paid housing for interns, but you'll find that you get a lot of appreciation if you offer any kind of assistance toward housing expenses. If that's not possible, provide assistance in locating affordable housing. For those relocating to the job site, the prospect of finding affordable, short-term housing can be daunting. Easy availability of affordable housing will make your opportunity more attractive to students, broadening your pool of candidates.
 - b. If you pay for all or some of your interns' housing, be sure to design a clear policy detailing who is eligible. This will eliminate any perceptions of unequal treatment. In addition, be aware that employer-paid or employer-subsidized housing could be considered a taxable benefit. Check with your internal tax department on exceptions to this.
 - c. You will also want to consider the issue of relocation, which is separate from housing. Many organizations pay some or all of their interns' relocation expenses to and/or from the job site.

6. Offer Scholarships.

- a. Pairing a scholarship with your internship is a great way to recruit for your internship program-and this is especially true if you are having difficulty attracting a particular type of student with a specific skill set to your program. Attaching a scholarship can increase your pool of candidates with the desired qualifications.

7. Offer flex-time and/or other unusual work arrangements.

- a. Students mention flex-time as one of their most desired features in a job. A flexible time schedule during their internship eases their transition into the workplace.
- b. If you think about how students spend the day on campus (varied schedule each day, with varied activities such as work, class, social time), you can understand that 8am-5pm Monday-Friday is a bit of an adjustment. A flexible schedule can make them feel less chained in by an unchanging routine.
- c. Other work arrangements that have been found successful with students include keeping them on as part-time, remote employees after they go back to school (depending on the type of work they do for you and whether they have a willing manager), and having them come back and work over school breaks for a few weeks. These are excellent ways to keep communications open and build a stronger bond.

8. Have an intern manager.

- a. Having a dedicated manager of your intern program is the best way to ensure that it runs smoothly and stays focused on your criteria for success. Unfortunately, the size and resources available to most internship programs mean that this isn't always possible. If your program isn't big enough to warrant a full-time dedicated staff member, an excellent short term solution is to hire a graduate student to be your intern and put this student in charge of the daily operation of your internship program. For this to work, you have to plan the structure of the program in advance, and be very accessible to your graduate student intern.

9. Encourage team involvement.

- a. Involve your college recruiting teams-whether volunteers who participate in college recruiting, staff members dedicated to college recruiting, or both-in your intern program. They can sponsor social or professional development events, and help to orient the interns to your company culture.

10. Invite career services staff and academic faculty to visit interns on site.

- a. In general, career staff and academic faculty have relatively few opportunities to visit employer work sites to see first-hand the types of experiences their students are getting. By inviting them to your site, you will build a better working relationship with these groups, which can lead to more student referrals, enhance campus visibility, and increased flexibility on their parts when your business needs it.

11. Hold new hire panels.

- a. New hire panels are one of the best ways to showcase an organization to interns as a great place to work. These are panels of five to six people who were hired

as new grads within the last three years. They act as panelists in a meeting of interns, giving a brief summary of their background and then answering questions from the intern audience. Your interns get insight about your organization from your new hires-people who they perceive are like themselves and who they consequently view as credible sources of information.

- b. It is also fairly consistent that the new hires will offer other types of advice to your interns, such as how to handle personal finances in their first few years out of school.

12. Bring in speakers from your company's executive ranks.

- a. One of the greatest advantages to students in having internships is the access they get to accomplished professionals in their field. Consequently, speakers from the executive ranks are very popular with students-it's a great career development and role modeling experience for interns.

13. Offer training.

- a. Providing students with access to in-house training-both in job related skills areas, such as a computer language, and in general work skills areas, such as time management or professional email etiquette, is a tangible way to show students you are interested in their development.

14. Conduct focus groups/surveys.

- a. Conducting focus groups and feedback surveys with representatives of your target group is a great way to see your organization as the students see it. Focus groups in particular can yield information about what your competitors are doing that students find appealing.

15. Showcase intern work through presentations/expo.

- a. Students work very hard at completing their work and are generally proud of their accomplishments. Setting up a venue for them to do presentations (formal presentations or in a fair-type setting) not only allows them to demonstrate their achievements, but also showcases the internship program to all employees.

16. Conduct exit interviews.

- a. Whether face-to-face or over the phone, a real time exit interview done by a staff member is an excellent way to gather feedback on the student's experience and to assess their interest in coming back. Having the students fill out an exit survey and bring it to the interview gives some structure to the conversation.

Sample Internship Description

Example: Social Media Campaign Strategy Intern

General Information:

Provide the applicant with general information regarding your organization

Are you obsessed with finding and sharing stories online? Do your friends look to you on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for the latest trends, ideas, and online memes? Social Media Corp is based in NYC and one of the premier websites for sharing online content. Social Media Corp has a fast paced work environment and we seek talented employees who crave learning new skills and aren't afraid to tackle big projects. As an intern, you will get to work with closely our staff, contributing to real projects that will help us grow. Our ideal candidate is someone who walks into a room of people and can't leave without making a few friends. Someone who has a passion for social media and is creative and thoughtful when interacting with online communities and building relationships.

What You Will Learn:

Provide in detail, information about what the intern will learn from the experience

- How to create a long term social media plan and marketing calendar
- Relationship building with our online community by maintaining Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and other social media accounts
- How to track social media analytics using HootSuite and other software, and report results and new ideas to our marketing team
- Create compelling content that will be shared by influencers
- Create feedback and viral loops between our social media accounts.
- Assist our Director of Social Media Marketing in building and presenting social media strategy

What We Require:

Provide information of what qualifications you are looking for in your applicants

- Background in Marketing, Communication, or other related discipline
- Strong communication skills.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite
- Organized, with an ability to prioritize time-sensitive assignments
- Familiarity with social networking sites desired, but we will also train
- Interest in nonprofit management and community development

How to Apply:

Provide information about compensation, duration of internship, hours per week, and how to apply

- The position begins May 31st and ends August 20th. You are expected to work 15 hours per week and will be paid \$12/hour.
- To apply, please submit your resume to John Doe (johndoe@email.com)