

# **INTERNSHIP STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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# **INTERNSHIP**

***An internship gives the student an opportunity to enhance academic learning through hands on application while learning about the workplace and chosen field of study.***

The purpose of this guide is to help Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) internship students, site supervisors, and College supervisors prepare for and conduct student internship site experiences. FVCC Internships offer unique learning experiences that earn college credit.

Hours at the worksite are determined according to academic guidelines based on the number of course credits, with 1 credit allotted for every 45 hours, depending on the student's program of study. For example, interns spend around 135-140 hours at their worksites for a 3 credit course usually working about 10-30 hours per week. Internship courses generally take place after the student has completed at least two semesters of classroom learning, so they have the skills needed for the workplace. Work schedules vary dependent upon the needs of the business and the student's schedule.

As a member of the National Association of Colleges & Employers, FVCC follows the NACE recommended definition and standards for Internships:

***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.***

To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the NACE definition, all the following criteria must be met:

- 1) The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom.
- 2) It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- 3) The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- 4) The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- 5) There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- 6) There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- 7) There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

# **BENEFITS**

## **For Students**

- Integrate classroom theory with workplace practice
- Learn new skills, use industry specific equipment and technology
- Clarify academic and career goals and learn more about local business and industry
- Gain experience and confidence
- Opportunity to get a “foot in the door” and network with potential employers
- Receive references or referrals to other potential employers

## **For Internship Site**

- Opportunity to try out trained, potential employees, working under faculty supervision and support, who have demonstrated dedication and interest in an industry or occupation
- Gain a fresh perspective and learn from interns with a wide range of ideas and skills
- Share input with college about the quality and relevance of FVCC’s curriculum to fit your workforce needs
- Assists in recruitment, selection and retention of employees
- Higher retention rates among employees hired via internship programs (NACES 2009)

## **For College & Community**

- Demonstrated relevance of education to “real world” increases student motivation, retention and future employment potential
- Helps meet the training needs of the community while providing a larger range of learning opportunities
- Helps fulfill college’s mission of preparing our students for the workforce
- Provides college/faculty with information on skill demands and employment trends
- Establishes partnerships between business/industry/organizations and academia

# **GETTING STARTED**

- Talk to your Program Director and tell them you are interested in internship. Some instructors have specific employers they are already working with. If they don’t, ask them for ideas and then meet with Career Advisor for ideas and process info at LRC 129.
- Fill out Internship Application
- Begin your search
- Get Job Description from employer (no more than 25% clerical work)
- Meet with Career Advisor
- Apply for Internship – Need help with resume and cover letter? Call Career Advisor
- Accept Offer - Follow application instructions
- Final meeting with Career Advisor
- Register for Internship with paper registration sheet available at registration/admissions

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## STUDENT:

### 1) Eligibility/Application

- Discuss your eligibility with your Faculty Advisor.
- Complete the pre-requisites noted in the catalog for your program of study. *Most internships require completion of 30 credits or more, so the student has the skills and knowledge to apply.*
- Read the information available on the FVCC website and in the Student Internship Handbook.

STUDENTS interested in signing up for an Internship must complete an **APPLICATION** the **prior semester**.

#### **Recommended Deadlines for:**

- Fall Semester –July 1
- Spring Semester –November 1
- Summer Semester – April 1

#### **Register on FVCC Job Board**

- Attendance at an Internship Orientation is required – this can be a one on one or group session, as the need arises. Internship Orientations are scheduled a few weeks before INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS are due. During the Orientation you will gain further information on how to get your internship setup and receive assistance with your application and the **required attachments – RESUME, REFERENCES and SITE LIST**. To sign up for an Internship and orientation, make an appointment with Career Advisor Cathy Allard by calling 756-3803 or stop by the Learning Center, LRC 129.
- **Turn in Application to Career Advisor LRD 129. Attach your resume, references, and list 4 potential internship sites.**
- Apply for and interview with prospective, approved internship sites. If accepted, complete and sign INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT, available under INTERNSHIP FORMS on FVCC website.  
*Note: No internship hours will be counted until an INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT has been signed by all 4 parties and the original signed agreement has been turned into the Career Advisor.*
- Register for the course – signatures are required, so you will need to do a paper registration form, available at the FVCC Registration office, BH 115 or LRC 129.

### 2) After Acceptance of Internship

- Review the course syllabus available from your instructor and/or posted in the online course in Eagle Online. *(Most faculty use Eagle Online to augment the learning at your internship site to post reflection assignments, time sheets and evaluations.)*

- Have a discussion with your internship provider and meet with your faculty instructor during the first week of your internship to complete your LEARNING OBJECTIVES assignment and have it signed by your faculty instructor and training mentor.
- Work to accomplish those objectives. Your progress toward accomplishing those LEARNING OBJECTIVES will be evaluated on your MID-TERM, FINAL and SELF EVALUATIONS.
- Complete all course assignments by due dates noted including learning objectives, activity logs, time sheets, site visit setup and evaluations. Turn in MONTHLY TIME SHEETS initialed by your site supervisor by the 1st of the following month.
- Follow professional standards of conduct, organizational policies and safety standards. *Violations of professional ethics, insubordination, unexcused absences, breaches of confidentiality, or failure to turn in assignments on a timely basis are cause for termination, removal from the internship site and will result in an "F" grade.*
- Share any concerns regarding your learning or assignments with your Faculty Instructor.
- Report any accidents to the Training Site Supervisor immediately and notify FVCC's business office at (406) 756-3821.

## COLLEGE:

### INSTRUCTOR:

- Sign off on the INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT form.
- Meet with interns either individually or in groups to go over syllabus.
- Advise and assist the student in the development of clear, concise, measurable learning objectives and sign off on their FINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES during the first few weeks of the internship.
- Monitor and provide feedback during the student's internship experience through activity logs, journals, discussion and monthly time sheets, either in person or via an online course.
- Turn in all student intern's MONTHLY TIME SHEETS by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month to the Career Advisor.
- Meet with the student, in person, at least two times during the term, at least **once at the work site**.
- Contact the internship site supervisor at least twice during the term, with an introductory phone call in the beginning of the semester and an in person site visit to discuss progress with the student and internship providers.
- Assess learning and student progress toward meeting learning objectives and assign grades.

### CAREER ADVISOR/INTERNSHIP OFFICE:

- Provide businesses, faculty and students with information about the FVCC Internship Program and internship opportunities available.
- Discuss opportunities for learning and relevance of job description to major, degree area and intern's career goals with potential internship sites.
- Ensure that internship site has adequate resources – work space, training time, and mentoring to enable the student to complete their learning objectives in an environment conducive to learning.

- Review legal guidelines re: compensation, employment status, worker's compensation and other employment laws with prospective internship sites.
- Maintain internship listings, database and provide assistance to help students locate internship sites with quality learning opportunities.
- Teach Internship Orientation sessions covering internship process, development of application materials and how to research potential internship providers.

## **INTERNSHIP SITE MENTOR:**

- Follow your organization's procedures for hiring an employee or provide for volunteer compensation coverage for internship meeting work-based learning criteria.
- Verify the ability of the business to provide meaningful mentoring and opportunities for intern learning and skill practice.
- Review resumes, interview prospective interns and inform candidates of hiring decisions.
- Train and orient student to all **health and safety practices** and organizational policies and procedures applicable to the internship.
- Assure that the students will be accepted and given assignments without regard to age, handicap, national origin, race, marital status, parental status, religion or sex.
- Provide adequate working space, training, supplies and equipment for student training and learning.
- Discuss internship process, learning components and legal issues including wage, compensation and worker's compensation with the **Career Advisor**.
- In unpaid internships, verify that the internship will meet the **Department of Labor Fair Standards Act** criteria (see legal guidelines).
- Complete an internship listing that includes internship overview, project tasks, minimum skills and qualifications. Enter positions into the FVCC online Job/internship Board.
- Provide input to student in developing **specific learning objectives**, then provide assistance and training necessary to help student meet those learning objectives, along with training to learn industry specific skills.
- Establish a regular meeting time and meet with the intern at least weekly to provide direction and feedback.
- Participate in an **on-site visit** from the Internship Instructor and assess student learning by verifying hours and completing and returning a mid-term and final evaluation noting progress toward accomplishment of learning objectives.
- Contact the FVCC Instructor or Career Advisor if any questions or problems arise.

## **FYI**

### **STUDENT ELIGIBILITY**

Most internships have pre-requisites to ensure that the intern has classroom knowledge and skills to put to practice in the workplace. Check the **Flathead Valley Community College catalog** to verify eligibility for specific courses. Students will need their advisor's instructor's signature to register for the course, attend the internship orientation and complete their pre-internship assignments and have a signed **INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT** in place **BEFORE** they can start at an internship site. Internship sites must be visited and approved by the **CAREER ADVISOR or INSTRUCTOR**.

## **TIMELINES**

Since the real world doesn't usually run on semesters, internship beginning and end dates do not need to fall exactly within the semester time frame. Financial aid time frames/rules apply the same as for any other course. To earn 3 credits, students put in a total of 140 hours at the worksite not including the mandatory attendance at orientation and time to complete assignments. Usually interns work 10 to 30 hours per week. Scheduling is done according to what works best for both the student and the employer. Schedules need to be turned into your **INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR**.

## **STUDENT ORIENTATION**

To start your internship process, students need to attend an approximately one-hour one-on-one or group **INTERNSHIP ORIENTATION** with the Career Advisor to explain process and responsibilities. Stop in LRC 129 or call 756-3880 to do so. The session will cover:

- Internship definitions, benefits, how an internship works
- Application materials: resume and references and other materials requested by worksite
- How to find an internship site relevant to their major that will help meet their career objectives?
- Students may attend without registering for the class

## **SITE SETUP**

The **Career Advisor** may refer the student to the **CONNECT** online job/internship board for internship listings and other referral sources, then as one of their assignments the student will develop a list of preferred sites. The Career Advisor will discuss these potential sites with the student, provide feedback and offer suggestions.

The **Career Advisor** will then contact and visit potential sites to determine willingness to train, availability of supervision and compliance with employment law and if sufficient opportunity exists for learning applicable to the student's major and career goals.

Worksite supervisors are provided an **INTERNSHIP PROVIDER HANDBOOK** with information regarding roles and responsibilities of all parties, legal information, and paper or e-work requirements, along with suggestions on how to provide a quality learning experience.

The **INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR** will contact the worksite mentor to introduce themselves in the beginning of the semester and then will be conducting a site visit about mid-term.

## **LEARNING & DOCUMENTATION**

- **INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT:** Before you can count any hours at your internship site, an **Internship Agreement** must be signed by the Internship Site Mentor, the student intern, and the Career Development Coordinator. Although you may FAX this or submit it electronically, the original document with signatures must be received by the Internship Office within one day after starting at your internship site.
- **TIME SHEETS:** Students must keep track of their internship hours on a **Monthly Time Sheet** due in the Internship Office by the 1st of the following month. Signatures are required from the student, site mentor and **INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR**.



## ASSIGNMENTS

- **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** A Learning Objectives assignment helps the student set specific discipline related goals for their internship which helps to keep everybody on the same track. Objectives should be directed at extending classroom-based occupational learning and must represent new or expanded responsibilities or learning opportunities. Information on developing S.M.A.R.T Learning Objectives is found within the course. Learning objectives are developed by the student in conjunction with their site mentor, reviewed by their INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR, and then the student has an opportunity to make revisions. **The finalized version must be signed by the student, the site mentor and the INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR. Please make sure your site mentor has a copy of your completed, signed Learning Objectives.**
- **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:** Your instructor may give you additional assignments to develop your career and skills to prepare you for transfer and or the workplace.

## SITE VISITS

The INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR will visit you at least once during your internship at the worksite. Additional visits may be requested by the student, the worksite, the internship instructor or the Internship Office. It is the student's responsibility to arrange the time for the site visit after completion of approximately 50 hours at their worksite. Note the rubric for grading criteria. Plan for approximately 45 minutes. The INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR will observe your performance when possible, ask to see demonstrations of your work and verify your progress toward accomplishing your Learning Objectives.

## GRADES

The internship is a letter graded course based on points earned on assignments and evaluations. The internship instructor will assign the final grade. The grade will also be turned into the Internship Office.

## EVALUATIONS

**INTERNSHIP PROVIDER MID-TERM and FINAL EVALUATIONS** are located within the online course and/or the Student Portal or within your paper manual that you purchased in the bookstore. Students are responsible to provide these to the Internship Site Mentor upon completion of 70 hours and 140 hours. Please allow your site mentor at least one-week advance notice to complete these. Your site mentors should go over these with you.

**STUDENT SELF-EVALUATIONS** allow a student an opportunity to reflect upon their performance. Please be honest with yourself – a student earns full points if they fully answer the questions and honestly reflect upon their performance. It's important that you know and understand both your strengths and weaknesses, only then can you make changes for improvement. **Evaluations** total approximately 40% of your final grade and must be turned in before you can be given a grade for the course. They are due on the last day of class for the semester.



## **INCOMPLETES**

Failing to turn in assignments, get your internship site set-up and/or complete your internship hours within the semester will result in an F grade unless you have instructor approval and the guidelines for an incomplete as noted in the college catalog are met including:

- Student has been in attendance and doing passing work up to 3 weeks before the end of the semester (Completion of at least 70% of the coursework or 100 hours at the internship worksite)
- The student is unable to complete the requirements of the course due to extenuating circumstances. -- documentation may be requested.
- Instructor and student signatures, along with a due date and plan for completion is required.  
A grade of Incomplete may affect your ability to retain your Financial Aid eligibility. See the Financial Aid office located in Blake Hall to determine how an incomplete may affect you.

### **QUESTIONS?**

**Call FVCC Career Advisor at 406.756.3880  
or email [callard@fvcc.edu](mailto:callard@fvcc.edu)**