The University of Miami's Toppel Career Center believes that quality internships are an extremely effective way for organizations to test, train, and recruit potential full-time employees while, at the same time, offering students an opportunity to learn and gain practical work experience.

Step 1: Assess Your Organization

Gain an understanding of what internships will look like at your organization.

Ask Yourself The Following

- How can I/ my organization benefit from teaching an intern?
- How do we plan on compensating my interns?
- Can my company support more than one intern at a time?
- What type of meaningful work will interns have the ability to work on?
- How will the physical space accommodate interns?
- Does the organization require specific work authorization for interns and will they hire international students for internships?

Educate Yourself on Legal Issues

- Compensation requirements (Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act).
- Review safety and harassment policies.
- Review termination guidelines and company-specific policies pertaining to interns.
- College credit is the responsibility of the student; however, most institutions should be able to provide some form of verification of academic credit.

Step 2: Design Your Internship Program

It is important that you gain internal support for your intern and internship program; this is an endeavor of working with and supervising interns that will likely fall on multiple individuals within your organization.

Program Structure

Once you have an accurate assessment and clear understanding of how interns will benefit your organization, you can begin designing the structure of the program. Some things you should consider about your intern(s) include:

- Learning objectives/goals of the internship program
- Orientation/On-boarding processes
- Daily responsibilities
- Short-term or long-term projects (depending on the length of the internship)
- Intern supervision
- Opportunities for mentorship and interaction with other company members
- Evaluation procedures
- Opportunities for students and their supervisor to process and reflect throughout the internship

Step 3: Implement Your Program

Advertise the Position and Evaluate Your Candidates
- Develop a comprehensive position description and post via Handshake.
- Devise a system for how you will evaluate resumes to decide who you will interview: will it be one person or a team?

Interviewing, Hiring, Onboarding and Training
- Conduct your interviews, check references, and perform any necessary background checks (as required by your organization).
- Begin your on-boarding/orientation process by setting up a work area for intern(s) and determining necessary technology.
- Provide a tour of the facilities and introduce to fellow staff.
- Provide the interns with any relevant reading material (newsletters, annual reports, organizational chart).
- Share information regarding office culture (e.g. industry-specific jargon, work standards/ procedures, dress code, any additional relevant information).
- Establish a schedule (including any meetings they are required or encouraged to attend, one-on-one meeting time with supervisor).

Step 4: Assessment & Evaluation

Regular assessment will not only allow you to connect more effectively with students, but it will provide you with opportunities to discover future leaders in your field. Evaluation will encourage improvements to aid in satisfaction.

Assessments to Consider
- Is the internship program meeting the needs of your organization?
- Consider how it is meeting your intern's needs. Are they gaining the necessary experience in their field? Are they receiving real projects?
- Consider developing an exit survey for interns to complete.
- How many interns become full-time employees?
- Measuring the length of stay of employees who were previous interns compared to those who were not.

Benefits of Having an Internship Program
Discover Prospective Employees
- You are selecting individuals that exemplify the values and skills that best fit/represent your organization and you are spending time teaching them. This is a perfect pool to hire from later.
- Get a "sneak-peek" into a student's work ethic, skills, and abilities throughout their internship experience.

Supporting Students
- You are allowing students to develop and hone their skills, build their resumes, and assess their interests and abilities.

Toppel Internship Program
The Toppel Internship Program (TIP) provides an opportunity to gain academic credit for their internship experience. Learn more via our website.