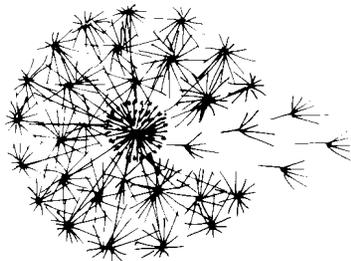


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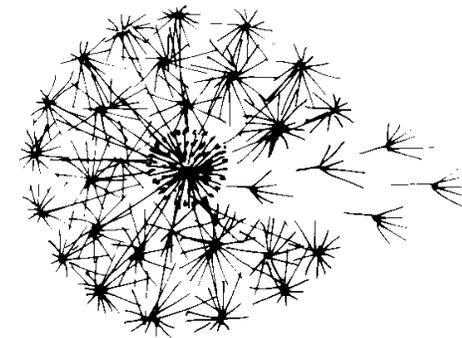
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# SUPERVISING AND ASSESSING STUDENT INTERNS

*A Handbook for Supervisors*



**John Mergendoller**  
**Carolyn Horan**

**School-to-Career Series**

**BUCK INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION**

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# SUPERVISING AND ASSESSING STUDENT INTERNS A HANDBOOK FOR SUPERVISORS

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## WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SUPERVISOR?

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Internships are a key way young people can learn about the adult world of work — the rules and expectations, the experience of contributing to the achievement of a common goal — and begin to think about their own future in that world. As a supervisor, you are responsible to make sure the young person receives guidance during the Internship. Some of this guidance will be practical — how to dress, how to answer the phone, when to take a break. Other guidance falls into the category of mentoring — coaching a student through difficult moments, listening and responding to their concerns, and showing interest in their progress. Finally, you are responsible for assessing the Intern’s performance and giving feedback about their accomplishments and suggestions for improvement.

*Specific responsibilities include:*

- Thinking through the tasks suitable for an Intern, and the skills and training necessary for the Intern to complete these tasks.
- Setting concrete goals for the Intern with specific performance criteria. Making sure the Intern understands these goals and what constitutes acceptable performance.
- Orienting the Intern to the rules, culture and common expectations of your workplace, the nature of the work done in your area and the way it contributes to the larger organization and the general nature of your industry or enterprise.

- 
- Observing and supervising the Intern’s performance and giving feedback to the Intern about this performance.
  - Reviewing and signing the Intern’s weekly time sheet.
  - Spending regularly scheduled time with the Intern and giving feedback about performance. More time is generally needed at the beginning and end of the Internship.
  - Communicating with the school’s coordinator of internships if unresolvable problems arise and the Intern needs to be terminated.
  - Being a role model.

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## HOW DO I ORIENT AN INTERN?

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Most likely, the Intern has little familiarity with your industry or enterprise, and what you and your fellow employees do each day is also a mystery. Many Interns will be unfamiliar with dress codes, workplace expectations and etiquette, and legal restrictions such as nondisclosure agreements. Finally, Interns will need help understanding the tasks they are to accomplish.

*Although the orientation of an Intern must be tailored to your particular situation, a general orientation could include:*

- Providing the Intern with a designated area in which to store personal belongings and complete work.
- Explaining the general nature of your organization. It may be helpful to have Interns read Annual Reports, employee newsletters, or other descriptive information.
- Explaining the specific work accomplished in your area and the way in which this contributes to the overall functioning of the organization. This is a good time to introduce the Intern to fellow employees and to explain the functions they perform.
- Explaining workplace expectations such as dress code, interpersonal and telephone etiquette, off-limit equipment or places. Clarify the hours during which an Intern is expected to be at work and procedures to be followed if an Intern cannot be at work or is late.

- 
- Explaining machine operation and the location of bathrooms, cafeteria, and any other relevant facilities locations.
  - Explaining the tasks you expect the Intern to complete, the training you have made available (if any), and the individual the Intern should turn to when questions and problems arise.
  - Establishing a supervisory relationship and common expectations for how frequently and for how long you will meet with the Intern, and what actions by the Intern require/do not require your permission.

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## HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT INTERNS HAVE THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR THEIR ASSIGNMENT?

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High school students vary in the skills, preferences, and attitudes they bring to an Internship. Before inviting an Intern into your workplace, it is important to think through the tasks you want that Intern to complete and the skills and attitudes necessary for completion. Sometimes supervisors are more interested in an Intern's attitudes, such as the willingness to demonstrate initiative by pitching in, and an eagerness to learn new things, rather than a set of specific skills. Other times, specific skills, such as written communication or computer operation, are paramount. Or, supervisors may seek a certain combination of both attitudes and skills. Whatever you are seeking, it is important to approach the selection of an Intern just as if you were hiring a new employee.

A complete and clearly written Job Description (see the Sample Forms at the end of this booklet) is the first step to selecting an Intern that will be able to contribute to your organization. This narrows the field and begins to specify the type of individual who will be successful in the Internship. A second step is to interview candidate Interns and ask them about experiences that are relevant to the qualifications you seek as well as examples of relevant work they have created.

*Supervisors will generally be satisfied with an Intern's capabilities if they:*

- Carefully think through the tasks that will be assigned to the Intern.

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## NOTES

- Determine the skills and attitudes necessary for successful completion of these tasks.
- Complete a job description that specifies the skills and attitudes needed.
- Interview Intern candidates and telephone references — just as you would when selecting a regular employee.

---

## INTERN ASSESSMENT FORM

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Goal 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What areas need improvement?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments, commendations, or recommendations  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## HOW CAN I BE A MENTOR TO AN INTERN?

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It is important to remember that an Intern is a young person who has come to your organization to learn about the world of work and develop skills and attitudes that will be useful to them throughout their adult life. They are neither “temporaries” hired on during a crunch period, nor regular employees. Although you should set high expectations for Intern performance, it is unrealistic to expect immediate perfection. Most Interns will need guidance, coaching and practice, and this is where the role of mentor becomes crucial.

Good mentors are able to put themselves in the place of the Intern and understand the world from the Intern’s point of view. By taking the Intern’s perspective, they are able to propose suggestions that will “make sense” to the Intern.

*Good mentors are able to:*

- Maintain eye contact and listen to the Intern without talking or interrupting. Resist external distractions. Understand and be open to the Intern’s point of view.
- Provide patient guidance and suggestions that demonstrate you understand the Intern’s point of view, AND the requirements and realities of the Internship.
- Reframe the discussion in a way that gives the Intern a new perspective on the issue and suggests a new course of action.

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# INTERN ASSESSMENT FORM

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- Provide encouragement and counsel without being unrealistic.

1 No Growth Observed	2 Little Growth Observed	3 Some Growth Observed	4 Considerable Growth Observed	5 Tremendous Growth Observed	6 No Opportunity to Observe
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------	---	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

### III. Growth on the Job

Development of new skills ..... 1 2 3 4 5 6

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Knowledge of Organization ..... 1 2 3 4 5 6

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contribution to the workplace ..... 1 2 3 4 5 6

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### IV. Has the intern met the following goals stated in the Internship Performance Agreement?

Goal 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# INTERN ASSESSMENT FORM

Position or Description of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Using the six-point scale, please circle the number that best represents your evaluation of the Intern's performance:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Needs More Training or Education	Performance is Below Expectations	Performance is Acceptable	Performance is Above Average	Performance is Superior	No Opportunity to Observe

## I. General Workplace Performance

Attendance .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appropriate dress .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attitude .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
General work habits .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Acceptance of constructive criticism ....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to set priorities .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Asks appropriate questions .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Motivated and a self-starter .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

## II. Specific Job Assignment Performance

Sufficient knowledge to perform tasks ....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Analytical skills .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Oral skills .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Written skills .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organization skills .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technical skills .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Meeting timelines .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Completing tasks .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

# HOW DO I SUPERVISE AN INTERN?

Supervising an Intern requires a commitment of time and clear idea of what you expect the Intern to achieve. This must be communicated to the Intern, and the Intern must fully understand it. There are three sample forms in the Appendix that facilitate Intern supervision. The Intern Supervisor Agreement summarizes your responsibilities as a supervisor. The Intern Performance Agreement summarizes general expectations for the Internship and describes a specific work plan. Finally, the Supervisor Intern Assessment Form summarizes the Intern's accomplishments as well as areas designated for attention and improvement.

It is best to review these forms with the Intern, and make sure that both of you are on the same wavelength regarding the projects the Intern will be working on. It is important the Intern be aware of the criteria by which performance will be judged. These criteria may be different or be applied in a different way from those with which the Intern is familiar. By discussing these criteria in the beginning, you will avoid surprises later.

*Supervision entails:*

- Defining clear tasks the Intern is expected to complete.
- Maintaining realistic expectations for the Intern's performance, and explaining those expectations to the Intern.
- Monitoring the Intern's work and suggesting resources or alternatives when the Intern runs into difficulty.

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**INTERN  
ASSESSMENT FORM**

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- Pointing out inappropriate behaviors and suggesting specific changes.
- Acknowledging progress and accomplishments.

Name of Student

---

Name of Company/Organization

---

Name of Supervisor Completing this Form

---

Date

---

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## HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICT?

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It is likely that an emotional conflict will arise at some point in the Internship. For example, the Intern may feel that you don't spend enough time mentoring and supervising. This may lead the Intern to feel resentment. Or you may disagree with the way an Intern is completing a specific task. You may find yourself feeling apprehensive.

Conflicts are a natural part of human relationships. In general, it is better to deal with conflicts instead of ignoring them. It will probably fall to you as supervisor to initiate this process. The Intern will probably be intimidated by your age, experience and authority. The first step to managing conflicts productively is to bring the conflict out in the open so it can be examined. This can be done by making an "I statement" and listening carefully to the Intern's response. An "I statement" is an expression of personal feelings or thoughts, rather than a statement of criticism. It expresses what *you* feel or think. It does not express a general criticism or judgement.

Here's the difference. The following remark expresses a general criticism and is likely to be met with resentment or passive resistance: "Your responses when asked to run errands are rude. You'd better change your attitude!" You can approach the same issue using an I statement. "I'm feeling uncomfortable about the way you respond when asked to run an errand. I think it makes our department look unprofessional, and I fear it will lead others to lose respect for our Intern program. What do you think about this?" This opens the door to a discussion about the Intern's self-perception, and allows the Intern to enter into the conversation and discuss

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# INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

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why he or she may be responding in a certain manner. Perhaps no one had commented on the Intern's responses, and the Intern wasn't aware of going beyond the limits of acceptable behavior. Or, maybe the Intern has received inappropriate requests from some coworkers.

Whatever the case, the next step is for the supervisor and the Intern to arrive at a solution. The best solutions are often arrived at through collaborative problem-solving and/or compromise. Other tactics include pulling rank ("I'm the boss and I say so!") or deferring to the Intern ("I don't really like the way you responded to requests to run errands, but given what you've just told me, I'll speak to the others about their requests.") While invoking your own authority may require less time and energy to achieve results and may provide an adequate resolution to situations that require immediate settlement, the collaborative problem-solving approach will be more effective for long-term solutions.

*Successful conflict management builds on:*

- Recognizing there are always multiple points of view, and that an Intern is entitled to an opinion.
- Getting the conflict out in the open so it can be addressed. "I statements" often are a useful way to make this happen.
- Listening carefully to the Intern's point of view, without judging its rightness or wrongness.

Internship Goals:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

General Intern Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Specific Projects and Products \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Specific Resources and Strategies to be Used \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

AGREED TO BY:

Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Intern \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

# INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

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Internship Site \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERNSHIP HOURS:

Mon      Tue      Wed      Thur      Fri      Sat      Sun

\_\_\_\_\_

## INTERNSHIP DATES:

Begins \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_      Ends \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Final Evaluation Conference Scheduled for \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Planned Absences \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- Focusing on ways to resolve the conflict.
  - Making sure both the supervisor and the Intern understand the solution.

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# INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to abide by the

following conditions:

1. To be in regular attendance and on time for the duration of my Internship.
2. To conform to the regulations of the organization in which I am working with regards to dress and demeanor.
3. To notify my supervisor in advance if I must be absent.
4. To notify the Coordinator of Internships should any problems or concerns arise regarding my Internship.
5. To complete the required time sheet and turn it in to the Coordinator of Internships on the 1st and 15th of each month.
6. To inform parent(s) and teacher(s) of Internship placement and experiences.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## HOW DO I ASSESS THE INTERN'S PERFORMANCE?

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Assessment is an ongoing process, not just something to be addressed at the end of the Internship. Assessment is an essential part of supervision. It is helpful for supervisors to reflect on “how’s the Intern doing?” while observing day-to-day work. This not only provides a sense of the progress an Intern is making, but provides specific incidents for discussion. Depending upon the nature of the incident and its importance to the Intern’s overall development, these discussions might take place during the regular meetings between the supervisor and the Intern. They may also be used to document growth and/or areas for continued improvement in the final evaluation conference.

Assessment should be confined to the areas specified in the Internship Performance Agreement (See Sample Forms at the end of this booklet) signed by the Intern, the supervisor and a parent/guardian. It should address the specific tasks agreed upon at that time. As far as possible, the assessment process should introduce the Intern to the performance evaluation systems typical of the workplace. The evaluation should have both a written and an oral component. It is generally useful to have the Intern perform a self-assessment at the same time as the supervisor’s assessment.

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## INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR'S AGREEMENT

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I agree to supervise \_\_\_\_\_ as a student Intern working \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week from the period \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_.

*We will provide:*

- Assignments and duties that are in accord with student learning goals and/or classroom projects.
- Regular supervision and mentoring.
- Assessment and feedback to the Coordinator of Internships at the end of the semester.
- Notification at any time to the Coordinator of Internships if work performance is unsatisfactory or there are any problems with the placement.

I agree to work with the Coordinator of Internships to improve or revise the internship program.

Placement Site \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

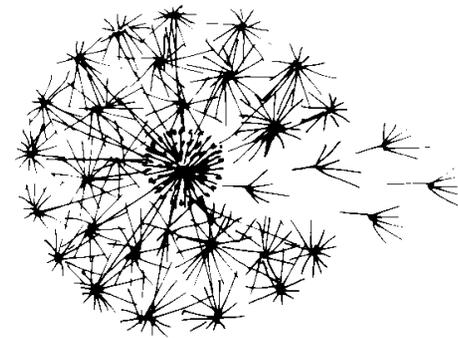
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# **SAMPLE FORMS**



**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**INTERNSHIP  
SUPERVISOR'S AGREEMENT**

**INTERNSHIP  
PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT**

**INTERN  
ASSESSMENT FORM**

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**INTERN  
JOB DESCRIPTION**

---

Task(s) to be completed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Skills Needed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Considerations \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Schedule \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_