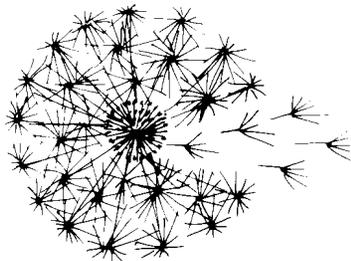

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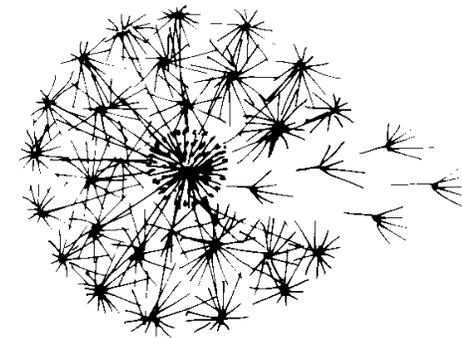


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DOING YOUR PART AS A STUDENT INTERN

A Handbook for Students



**Melissa Jaffe
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School-to-Career Series

BUCK INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION

DOING YOUR PART AS A STUDENT INTERN A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

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- Internship Supervisor’s Agreement
- Internship Performance Agreement
- Intern Assessment Form

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTERN?

Participating as an intern is a key way you can learn about the “adult” world of work – the rules and expectations, the experience of contributing to the achievement of a common goal – and start thinking about your own future in that world. Many of your responsibilities and the expectations for your performance will be outlined by your supervisor during your internship. You will learn other important things by paying close attention to your workplace environment and the activities of the people who work with and around you. Your supervisor will not only give you practical guidance, such as how to dress, how to answer the phone, and when to take a break, but should also be there for you as a mentor – encouraging and supporting your work and listening to your concerns.

However, this relationship will only flourish if you take an active role in cultivating it – by performing to the best of your ability and communicating well with your supervisor when questions or problems arise.

Your responsibilities include:

- Discussing tasks with your supervisor, and making sure you have (or will develop) the skills and training necessary to complete these tasks.
- Reviewing concrete goals with specific performance criteria which your supervisor has established, as well as understanding what constitutes acceptable performance.

-
- Becoming knowledgeable about and oriented 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.
 - Being open and accepting of your supervisor's feedback and constructive criticism about your performance.
 - Completing all forms required by the school and the organization providing your Internship.
 - Spending regularly scheduled time with your supervisor to receive feedback and voice any concerns or questions.
 - Communicating with the school liaison, and notifying the liaison if a problem cannot be resolved and you wish to end the Internship.

HOW DO I BECOME ORIENTED TO THE WORKPLACE?

Most likely, you have little familiarity or experience with the organization where you will Intern. You may not even be aware of the daily operations of the business or its employees, dress codes, workplace expectations and etiquette, and legal restrictions or confidentiality issues. And, of course, you will need guidance in understanding the tasks that you are to accomplish.

Although your orientation as an Intern will vary depending upon the organization, it could include:

- Being assigned a designated area in which to store personal belongings and complete work.
- Learning about the general nature of the organization. You may be asked to read annual reports, employee newsletters, or other descriptive information.
- Identifying the specific work accomplished in your area and finding out the way in which this contributes to the overall functioning of the organization. This may include meeting your fellow employees and asking about the particular functions they perform.
- Understanding workplace expectations such as dress code, interpersonal and telephone etiquette, or off-limit equipment or places. Make sure you have been informed of the hours you are

expected to work, and the procedures to follow if you can't be at work or will be late.

- Becoming acquainted with machines you will be using and the location of bathrooms, cafeteria, and any other relevant facilities.
- Learning about the tasks you will be expected to complete, the training you will receive, and the individual you should turn to when you have questions or problems.
- Establishing a relationship with your supervisor and common expectations for how frequently and for how long you will meet with him or her, and what actions require or do not require your supervisor's permission.

WHAT SKILLS WILL I NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN AN INTERNSHIP?

Begin by looking carefully at the Internship job description. It should describe the skills needed. Most likely you will have an interview before being selected as an Intern. This will provide an opportunity to discuss your experience and interests to see if they fit the qualifications required for the Internship. Although some Internships require specific skills, nearly all supervisors and employers are impressed by a positive attitude and the willingness to learn new things.

An Internship is, above all, a chance to learn. An eagerness to learn and develop new expertise is probably the most essential skill for a successful Internship.

NOTES

INTERN ASSESSMENT FORM

Goal 2 _____

Evaluation _____

Goal 3 _____

Evaluation _____

What areas need improvement?

Other comments, commendations, or recommendations

WHAT KIND OF MENTORING AND SUPERVISION WILL I RECEIVE?

You have come to this Internship to learn about the world of work and develop skills and attitudes that will be useful to you throughout your future life. Your position as an Intern is a unique one, as you are neither a regular nor a temporary employee. While you will be expected to complete certain tasks and manage your responsibilities, you will also be involved in a learning process with your supervisor as a mentor. Your role as a student entails putting your best effort toward performance, as well as making mistakes from which you will benefit. The key to having an educational and worthwhile experience as an Intern is being receptive to the guidance and suggestions of your supervisor and being willing to look at issues or problems from a new perspective. In exchange, your mentor will try to propose suggestions that make sense to you and will be patient with you as you learn.

Successful interns are able to:

- Pay close attention and listen to the supervisor without interrupting or becoming defensive. Try to be open to and absorb the supervisor's feedback and suggestions.
- Respond in ways that communicate to the supervisor that you are listening and understanding. These can include maintaining eye contact or rewording what the supervisor has said. Do not hesitate to ask questions to clarify issues or to make sure you understand your supervisor's expectations.

INTERN ASSESSMENT FORM

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
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- Present opinions or ideas which are different from those of your supervisor in a way that demonstrates your understanding of the supervisor’s point of view.

- Accept the fact that supervisors vary in the amount of time they have to devote to mentoring Interns and their skill as mentors. Your supervisor’s first priority is the job he or she was hired to do. As a consequence, it may be difficult for this individual to give you as much attention as you would like to receive.

- Take both praise and criticism seriously and reflect on such feedback, but be careful not to overvalue subjective comments and opinions from your supervisor. Your Internship is meant to provide coaching and practice as well as a chance to contribute to a business or organization. Do not set unrealistic goals and expectations for yourself, and make sure you talk to the Coordinator of Internships at your school if you feel that you are not being treated fairly.

There are three forms at the end of this booklet that will help structure your relationship with your supervisor. The *Internship Supervisor Agreement* summarizes the responsibilities of your supervisor. The *Intern Performance Agreement* summarizes general expectations for the Internship and describes a specific Work Plan. Finally, the *Intern Assessment Form* may be used to summarize your accomplishments and designate specific areas for attention and improvement.

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:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
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

You should review these forms with your supervisor and make sure that both of you are on the same wavelength regarding the projects you will be working on. In addition, review the criteria by which your performance will be judged, because they may be different or be applied in a different way from those with which you are familiar. In this way, you may be able to avoid surprises or conflicts later.

**INTERN
ASSESSMENT FORM**

Name of Student

Name of Company/Organization

Name of Supervisor Completing this Form

Date

HOW DO I DEAL WITH CONFLICT?

No matter how much preparation and discussion you have had before you begin working, it is possible that some type of conflict will arise during the Internship. For example, you may think that you are not receiving enough mentoring and supervision and feel confused or resentful. Or, your supervisor may not agree with the way you are handling a specific task. There are many possibilities for misunderstandings or conflicts in this unique kind of employment situation, but they can be dealt with to avoid escalation into insolvable problems.

Try to approach conflicts in a manner that is direct, yet not aggressive or accusatory. One way of doing this is by making an “I” statement and listening carefully to the supervisor’s response. An “I” statement expresses what you feel or think, rather than a general criticism or assumption about what others feel or think.

Here is an example that illustrates the difference. Suppose your supervisor criticizes you for failing to place an important document in the day’s mail. This angers you, and you respond: “You never told me that I was responsible for getting the mail ready before 4:30, so your report didn’t go out.” Such a statement may well be interpreted as disrespectful and rude. A better way to handle the situation is to express your concern and frustration using an “I” statement. An “I” statement focuses on your perceptions and feelings. For instance, you could say, “I didn’t understand that you wanted me to make sure the reports were in the mail before 4:30. What can I do to be clearer about mail deadlines?” This reframes the issue

INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

as a misunderstanding and expresses your willingness to clarify the issue and avoid future repetitions of the situation.

Regardless of the cause of the problem, the crucial step is for you and the supervisor to arrive at a solution appropriate to the environment in which you are working. In some cases it may be wise to discuss potential solutions with the Coordinator of Internships before talking with your supervisor.

Successful conflict management builds on:

- Recognizing there are always multiple points of view and that you are entitled to an opinion.
- Getting the conflict out in the open so that it can be addressed. “I” statements are often a useful way to make this happen.
- Listening carefully to the supervisor’s point of view, without being judgmental or defensive.
- Focusing on ways to resolve the conflict.
- Making sure both you and the supervisor agree on and understand the solution.

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

Internship Site _____

Supervisor _____

Phone _____

INTERNSHIP HOURS:

Mon Tue Wed Thur Fri Sat Sun

INTERNSHIP DATES:

Begins ____/____/____ Ends ____/____/____

Final Evaluation Conference Scheduled for ____/____/____

Planned Absences _____

HOW DO I ASSESS MY PERFORMANCE?

Self-assessment is an ongoing process, not just something to do when your Internship is over. It is an essential part of being a good Intern. Because your supervisor will be observing and assessing your progress as well, it will be natural for you to take time to reflect on how you feel you are doing. You can discuss specific incidents or overall progress during your regular meetings with your supervisor and use these discussions to document growth and/or areas for continued improvement in the final evaluation conference.

You can use the Internship Performance Agreement as a guide for the areas in which you should perform a self-assessment, but you should also think about more personal areas of development. Your self-assessment can be less formal than the evaluation systems typical of the workplace, serving as a supplement to your supervisor's assessment of your performance. It may be especially helpful to compare the two assessments and discuss the mutual ideas about your strengths and weaknesses. Try to separate your feelings about your performance from your feelings about other factors which may have influenced your performance (your opinion of your supervisor or other employees, your feelings about the company or type of work it does, etc.) Finally, make sure that you make an honest assessment of your work according to realistic workplace and personal expectations. Only this type of assessment will serve as an educational tool and expose you to the kind of demands you will face in your future places of work.

INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to abide by the

following conditions:

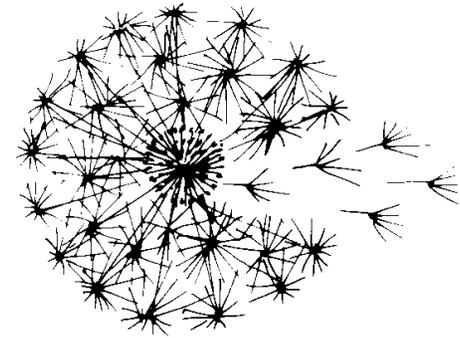
1. To be in regular attendance and on time for the duration of my Internship.
2. To conform to the regulations of the organization in which I am working with regards to dress and demeanor.
3. To notify my supervisor in advance if I must be absent.
4. To notify the Coordinator of Internships should any 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 _____

SAMPLE FORMS



**INTERNSHIP
SUPERVISOR'S AGREEMENT**

**INTERNSHIP
PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT**

**INTERN
ASSESSMENT FORM**

INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR'S AGREEMENT

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 _____