

## **EMPLOYER HANDBOOK**

# **COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

ACCOUNTING | AGRIBUSINESS | ECONOMICS | FINANCE | FAMILY STUDIES | INTERIOR DESIGN

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS | MANAGEMENT | MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS | MARKETING | SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

### **INTRODUCTION**

UNK College of Business and Technology students may choose to supplement their education with an internship experience. The internship may take place during the fall, spring, or summer semesters, and the purpose is to provide students with professional and applied learning experiences in the industry. Students will log work hours at your company while completing academic course requirements. Typically, students in favorable academic standing seek internships when they have one or two semesters of coursework remaining and have taken course prerequisites in their major subject area.

Many advantages exist for companies in hiring interns. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, about 70% of interns pursuing full-time employment will return to the company of their internship upon graduation. Additionally, employers report a 40% higher retention rate among employees hired from their internship programs than those hired through other recruitment methods.

Each academic program in the College of Business & Technology at UNK meets rigorous standards of excellence required by leading national and international professional accrediting organizations. UNK business programs including accounting, agribusiness, economics, finance, management, management information systems, marketing, supply chain management, and the Masters of Business Administration degree, are among only 30% of business programs in the United States that are accredited by AACSB International. The Family Studies program is certified by the National Council on Family Relations, and the Interior Design program is one of only seven across the nation to be accredited by both the Council for Interior Design and the National Kitchen and Bath Association.

### **HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIPS**

Many students and employers can be confused at the difference between an internship and a part-time job. ***An internship must include specific learning objectives.*** The student deliberately sets out to gain knowledge, skill, and/or further understanding of a particular industry. Unlike classroom learning, the student gains this not from lectures, reading, and exams, but from on-the-job experience. For this reason, internships are often referred to as “experiential learning”.

In general, there are two aspects necessary for an internship to constitute a high-quality learning experience :

1. ***Diverse learning experience*** – The internship should be a diverse experience that compliments the student’s degree program. The position is within the student’s area of study, and they bring to the internship the knowledge they’ve acquired through their education while gaining from exposure to several facets of the business.
2. ***Mentoring*** – The internship supervisor provides guidance, evaluation, and feedback to facilitate the learning process while also challenging the student. The student and mentor engage in ongoing contemplation of learning objectives throughout the course of the internship.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers has defined internships as having seven essential criteria<sup>1</sup>:

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

So what does this mean for employers and site supervisors? Make sure the learning and mentoring components are primary when planning and managing your internship program.

## **BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIPS**

### Employer

- Expose your industry to talented young people
- Work with students eager to learn and apply their skills
- Preview skills and work performances of potential full-time hires (a semester-long interview)

### Intern

- Apply classroom knowledge to real world experiences
- Evaluate areas of interest for full-time employment
- Network with experienced professionals

### University

- Develop and strengthen partnerships with business and industry
- Gain feedback from industry for program development and enhancement

## **HOW TO GET STARTED WITH YOUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

1. Working in consultation with the UNK Director of Business Internships, create a description of the internship (see appendix for sample job description).
  - Include the areas where the intern will be training. Assign work activities pertinent to the professional development of the intern. Keep in mind that the internship should be mutually beneficial to both the business and the student. The intern needs a well-rounded experience exposing them to the many aspects of your industry, including some time shadowing various positions within the organization. Provide the student with at least one special project. (See appendix for examples.)
  - Include what type of student best fits the job profile (major/emphasis areas, coursework completed, skills).
  - Include the wage and/or any other support (i.e. housing). Internships with for-profit businesses and agencies are typically paid internships.
  - Include a start date, duration of the internship (12 weeks required), and suggested hours worked per week.
  - List how to apply for the internship and an application deadline.
2. Submit the internship description to UNK College of Business and Technology's Director of Business Internships and Experiential Learning. The internship will be advertised to all students in the programs that fit the position.

*NOTE: We also recommend that you attend UNK's career events in October and February (see UNK Academic & Career Services website for details and to register: <http://careers.unk.edu>).*

3. Interested students will apply directly to the company, typically by submitting a resume and a cover letter.
4. Interview students. The interview is an important part of the internship experience for the student as they develop and polish the professional skills necessary for obtaining full-time employment. Follow up with the student and/or make offers in a timely manner, typically within two weeks of the interview. It may be an added benefit to the student if you choose to share a critique of their interview, resume, and cover letter.
5. Student should enroll in an internship course through UNK's College of Business & Technology in order to receive academic credit for their experience.
6. Set a start date. Currently, internships may start and stop at any time during the year but must be for a minimum of 12 weeks.

### **WORK HOURS REQUIREMENT**

- **Business Internships** – Accounting, Agribusiness, Economics, Finance, International Business, Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, and Supply Chain Management
  - Must be at least 12 weeks in length AND work hours required depends on academic credits enrolled
    - 3 credit hours = 200 work hours
    - 6 credit hours = 300 work hours
    - 9 credit hours = 400 work hours
    - 12 credit hours = 480 work hours
- **Family Studies & Interior Design Internships**
  - No minimum weeks required AND must work 40 work hours per each 1 academic credit hour enrolled

### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPLOYER**

Once the internship has begun, there are a few other activities required in order to meet the academic component of the internship experience.

- **Training Plan & Agreement** – The student will work with business to develop a formal training plan (goals for experience). The student will bring the form to the work site with them, make a copy for your records, and then the student will submit the training plan to the Director of Business Internships.
- **Site Visit** – It is the responsibility of the student intern to set up a time for the Director of Business Internships to visit the internship site about halfway through the internship. The Director will visit with the student and their direct supervisor together.
- **Supervisor Evaluation Form** - Complete a final evaluation of the student intern. The student will bring the form to the work site with them and then will submit it to the Internship Program Director.

## ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The student will also complete a couple of other requirements.

- **Journal** – The student intern will post weekly entries in a journal on the internship course website. The journal entries will reflect on learning and application of knowledge. Other student interns and the Director of Business Internships can read and comment on the journal entries.
- **Reflection Paper** – The student intern will submit a short paper to the course instructor which reflects on their experiences during the internship.

## KEYS FOR A VALUABLE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

- **Carefully select the intern's supervisor.** Make sure this person is a professional member of your staff who is committed to and capable of developing people. Can this person commit time to administering the intern's program? The supervisor should **meet with the intern** to discuss progress at least once each week. Consider providing the intern with a **mentor** in addition to their direct supervisor.
- **Develop a timeline of learning activities.** This will help the supervisor and intern to have a plan to follow.
- **Introduce** the intern to members of your organization during their first day. Make sure others within your company **recognize the valuable contribution** they are making to the career development of a young professional. On behalf of UNK, please thank your employees for providing valuable experience and guidance.
- Provide the intern with a **well-rounded experience** that exposes them to the many aspects of your business and industry. Make sure the intern has been assigned work activities that are pertinent to their professional development, and also allow the intern to **shadow** various positions including their direct supervisor and positions that are inside and outside of their department. **Minimize time spent working alone.**
- Develop with the intern a **project** which will contribute to their learning experiences as well as benefit the company. (See appendix for examples.)
- Expose the intern to your **company culture** through company outings and inclusion in a variety of meetings.

## PROVIDING A MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

One of the most detrimental employer errors, and one of the most common intern complaints, is assigning interns responsibilities that do not contribute to a meaningful, diverse learning experience. Some employers may utilize interns for primarily repetitive labor – making copies, running errands, filing papers, answering phones, and even cleaning offices – believing that assigning monotonous tasks maximizes their company's investment by helping them accomplish work that no one else wants to do.

But in truth, assigning interns mostly menial work can have a number of negative effects on your organization:

- It creates disgruntled interns. These interns give negative reports about your program to their peers. Once your internship program gets a reputation for only assigning unwanted work, you will struggle to entice the top student talent.
- It undermines your ability to effectively assess intern skills. Knowing that an intern can organize your filing system doesn't tell you much about their collaboration, problem-solving, or strategic-planning skills. Essentially, you've traded in the long-term benefit of evaluating the intern for full-time employment for short-term gains.

- It cheats you out of the knowledge and insight the intern has to offer. Interns can be a source of novel solutions and new perspectives. You may be missing out on a mind that is full of fresh ideas.

Remember, the primary characteristic of an internship program is a focus on *learning*. Interns are looking for guidance, to gain skill, and to hone their education with hands-on work that will increase their understanding of the industry and prepare them for the workplace. So does this mean you can *never* ask an intern to create a filing system for you? Of course not. As long as the *majority* of work provides a more meaningful learning experience, assigning duties like phones, errands, and filing is completely acceptable.

## RECOMMENDED HIRING PROCEDURES

We recommend that your company conduct the following prior to hiring an intern or full-time employee from UNK.

- a. Background check
- b. Drug test
- c. Request and review university transcripts

We suggest that offers contain a statement such as “this offer is contingent upon the results of a background check, drug test, and transcript review.”

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If you have additional questions, please contact:

Janice Woods, Director of Business Internships & Experiential Learning  
308-865-8979 | [woodsje@unk.edu](mailto:woodsje@unk.edu)

## SOURCES

1. National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011. Position statement on U.S. internships: a definition and criteria to assess opportunities and determine the implications for compensation. [www.naceweb.org](http://www.naceweb.org)

## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE INTERNSHIP PROJECTS

- Create a customer database
- Research companies to determine if they meet qualifications to pursue as a new customer
- Develop a customer survey
- Train employees to use a new online payroll system
- Design a spreadsheet to project weeks of stock
- Research patterns of high employee turnover
- Introduce a recycling program
- Redesign current website or build a new website or social media page
- Plan a special event from start to finish
- Design a financial spreadsheet or trend analysis
- Complete a study on an issue relevant to the business and present the findings
- Administer a focus group, analyze results, and present findings to executive committee
- Research best practices and write a standard operating procedure for processing loan applications
- Develop a training manual for a position
- Re-write and format job descriptions to comply with auditing agency
- Complete a comparison project of the two payroll systems currently in use
- Prepare and present a seminar or class for the community
- Research policies and update employee handbook
- Create training presentations



## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

**XYZ Corporation**  
**1234 Main Street**  
**Kearney, NE 68845**

#### MARKETING INTERN

**Description:** This position is responsible for working with customer marketing programs, organizing promotion and sales materials, and creating programs for customers, sales teams, and brokers. Duties include website and Facebook page maintenance, direct mailings creation, customer information management, and other marketing including research and customer service. Requires work in Microsoft Excel, data research, creating PowerPoint presentations, and assisting distribution customer marketing managers in various projects.

**Date of internship:** mid-May through mid-August. Hours are M-F, 8 am – 5 pm for 12 weeks.

**Requirements and skills:** Junior or senior majoring in Marketing or Business Administration with a marketing emphasis is preferred. Preferred minimum 3.0 GPA. Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills as this position interacts with the Director of Marketing, Brand and Channel Managers, Product Managers, and customers. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office applications including PowerPoint and Excel. Must have strong analytical skills, be able to multi-task, be a team player, and be a self-starter.

**Wage:** \$8.50/hour

**Application deadline:** February 15

**To apply, please submit resume and cover letter by email to:**

Ms. Jane Smith, Brand Manager  
XYZ Corporation  
308.555.1234  
[Jane.Smith@xyzcorporation.com](mailto:Jane.Smith@xyzcorporation.com)

# APPENDIX C

## INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

### ACCOUNTING

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Students in the Accounting emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

*Tasks to reinforce or build on classroom instruction, including:*

- Completion of tax returns
- Preparation of journal entries
- Preparation of reports and schedules
- Completion of audit procedures
- Learning new software or accounting applications of software
- Data analysis
- Documentation of business processes and internal controls

*Opportunities for professional growth, including:*

- Interaction with clients
- Active participation as part of a team
- Attendance at management meetings
- Leading projects
- Researching solutions to problems and/or problem solving

### FINANCE

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Students in the Finance emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Banking operations
  - Credit analysis
  - Customer relations
  - Deposit/investment options and regulations
  - Loan origination
  - Loan documentation
  - Loan servicing
  - Marketing strategies
  - Teller operations
- Investments
- Real Estate
- Insurance
- Trust
- Financial analysis
- Wealth management

## **MANAGEMENT**

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Students in the Management emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

### *Individual Effectiveness*

- Communication – listen, write, and speak effectively.
- Analytical/Research – assess a situation, seek multiple perspectives, and gather information as well as identify key issues and appropriate solutions.
- Computer/Technical – demonstrate a basic understanding of software programs, especially word processing and spreadsheets.
- Time Management – improve productivity by learning to manage multiple priorities/assignments.
- Planning/Organizing – plan, organize, and implement projects.

### *Getting Work Done Through Others*

- Interpersonal Abilities – use a collaborative, problem-solving approach when working with co-workers and managing conflict.
- Teamwork – recognize co-workers' talents and work with them towards a common goal.
- Leadership – take charge, motivate, and inspire others.

## **MARKETING**

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Students in the Marketing emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Sales and merchandising
- Market segmentation
- Forecasting
- Pricing
- Product development/launches
- Channel management
- Market research activities
- Buying or purchasing
- Public relations activities
- Customer service
- Social media
- Event planning
- Advertising
  - Strategy or account planning or creative or media buying
  - Presentation or writing skills

## **SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

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Students in the Supply Chain Management emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Transportation and distribution planning
- Product management
- Procurement
- Sales
- Exposure to contract negotiation
- Supplier, distributor, or vendor assessment
- Production scheduling

## **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

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Students in the Management Information Systems emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Must be directly related to the major of Management Information Systems
- Must provide a meaningful and challenging hands-on work experience
- Must provide interaction with clients and active participation as part of a team
- Project leadership experience is preferred
  
- Some representative examples are:
  - Research solutions to business-oriented problems using technology
  - Development of a project plan using the phases of the system analysis and design
  - Use of data analysis to support the decision-making process
  - Provide planning and training for a software implementation project
  - Use of appropriate software development tools

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

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Students in the International Business minor should seek internships which provide opportunities to develop appropriate competencies.

### *STUDENTS WILL:*

- Work in a multicultural, international business environment
- Experience significant cross-cultural, business-related immersion, such as visiting and engaging with businesses abroad or in the multinational organizations within the United States
- Experience international commerce, finance, trade, banking, supply chain, and other aspects of international business

### *LEARNING OBJECTIVES:*

- Learn the processes involved with foreign currency financial transactions
- Understand compliance procedures as they relate to imports and exports
- Assess international suppliers, including compliance
- Develop skills in identifying 'knock-off' products from abroad
- Understand the global dimension of piracy of intellectual properties and trademark infringement
- Research solutions to international business issues/problems
- Become familiar with regulatory requirements in the global sector
- Learn to communicate with international suppliers and/or clients
- Plan transportation and distribution in the global supply chain
- Work with international contracts
- Learn documentation of processes and controls and preparing reports relating to exports and imports

## ECONOMICS & AGRIBUSINESS

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Students in the Economics or Agribusiness emphasis should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Must be directly related to the major of Economics or Agribusiness
- Must provide a meaningful and challenging hands-on work experience
- Must allow the intern to apply and enrich knowledge pertinent to economics and/or agribusiness
  
- *Agribusiness internships expose students to any of the following:*
  - Agricultural price analysis and marketing
  - Farm, ranch, or agribusiness decision-making process with respect to production and financial resources
  
- *Economics internships expose students to any of the following:*
  - Economic decision process
  - Money, banking, and finance
  - Economic analysis with respect to labor, environmental quality, health care, transportation, and other relevant economic issues

\*The department strongly discourages internships at the student's family-based business.

## FAMILY STUDIES

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Students majoring in Family Studies should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following Family Life Education Content Areas as outlined by the National Council on Family Relations:

- **Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts** - An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society.
- **Internal Dynamics of Families** - An understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other.
- **Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan** - An understanding of the developmental changes of individuals in families throughout the lifespan. Based on knowledge of physical, emotional, cognitive, social, moral, and personality aspects.
- **Human Sexuality** - An understanding of the physiological, psychological, & social aspects of sexual development throughout the lifespan, so as to achieve healthy sexual adjustment.
- **Interpersonal Relationships** - An understanding of the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.
- **Family Resource Management** - An understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including time, money, material assets, energy, friends, neighbors, and space, to meet their goals.
- **Parent Education and Guidance** - An understanding of how parents teach, guide and influence children and adolescents as well as the changing nature, dynamics and needs of the parent/child relationship across the lifespan.
- **Family Law and Public Policy** - An understanding of the legal issues, policies, and law influencing the well-being of families.
- **Professional Ethics and Practice** - An understanding of the character and quality of human social conduct, and the ability to critically examine ethical questions and issues as they relate to professional practice.
- **Family Life Education Methodology** - An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of family life education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate such educational programs.

## INTERIOR DESIGN

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Students majoring in Interior Design should seek out internships which provide opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Global Perspective for Design
  - Exposure to contemporary issues affecting interior design
  - Exposure to a variety of business, organizational, and familial structures such as for-profit or non-profit businesses
  - Opportunities for developing knowledge of other cultures
- Human Behavior
  - Appropriately apply universal design concepts or design environments to be useable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design
- Design Process
  - Identify and define relevant aspects of a design problem (goals, objectives, performance criteria)
  - Gather, evaluate, and apply appropriate and necessary information and research findings to solve the problem (pre-design investigation)
  - Synthesize information and generate multiple concepts and/or multiple design responses to programmatic requirements
  - Demonstrate creative thinking and originality through presentation of a variety of ideas, approaches, and concepts
- Collaboration
  - Engage in collaboration, consensus building, leadership, and team work
- Communication
  - Express ideas clearly in oral and written communication
  - Use sketches as a design and communication tool ; produce competent presentation drawings across a range of appropriate media
  - Integrate oral and visual material to present ideas clearly
- Professionalism and Business Practice
  - Exposure to various market sectors and client types
  - Exposure to the role and value of legal recognition for the profession, professional organizations, life-long learning, and public and community service
- Space and Form
  - Apply elements and principles of design to two- and three-dimensional design solutions, including board layout, models, and digital presentations.
- Color, Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment, Finish Materials, Lighting, Acoustical Control
  - Appropriately select and apply color effectively
  - Select and apply appropriate materials and products on the basis of their properties and performance criteria, including ergonomics, environmental attributes, and life cycle cost
  - Lay out and specify furniture, fixtures, and equipment
  - Select and apply luminaires and light sources and appropriate strategies for acoustical control
- Interior Construction and Building Systems
  - Read and interpret construction drawings and documents
  - Understand how design solutions are impacted by building systems
- Regulations
  - Understand how laws, codes, standards, and guidelines impact the design of interior spaces