

Internship Guide for Employers & Interns

Industrial Distribution

Revised 12/2023

Internships provide students with professional and applied learning experiences in their respective industries. Students log work hours at your company while completing academic course requirements. Typically, students seek academic internships when they have one or two semesters of coursework remaining and have taken course prerequisites in their major subject area. The College of Business and Technology offers programs in the following areas, programs requiring internships are bold.

Business
Accounting
Agribusiness
Economics
Finance
International Business
Management
Marketing
Supply Chain Management

Cyber Systems
Business Intelligence
Computer Science
Cyber Security
Information Tech & Networking

Industrial Technology
Aviation
Construction Management (summer)
Industrial Distribution (summer)
Interior & Product Design

Elements of a High-Quality Internship

Diverse learning experiences

The internship is an extension of the classroom, providing exposure to many facets of the business. Learning objectives related to the student's degree program are clearly defined.

Defined start and end date

Students work 10 weeks within the academic semester. Each semester there are designated start dates based upon when the semester starts (students begin the first, second, or third Monday of a semester, finishing in 10 weeks)

Value to the business

Through projects and meaningful work, internships are mutually beneficial.

Culture of Mentoring

The internship supervisor provides guidance, evaluation, and feedback to facilitate the learning process while also challenging the student.

Benefits of an Internship

Employer

- Expose business 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

Industrial Distribution Internships

UNK Industrial Distribution students are required to complete an internship for 6 academic credits during the **summer term** (mid-May to mid-August). The purpose is to provide students with professional and applied learning experiences in the industry. Students will be involved in required industry experience in addition to academic course requirements while working for your company for 10 weeks. Actual hours of work must be at least 375 work hours, working 40 hours per week with flexibility for holidays.

Providing internships to UNK ID students is significant in recruiting for full-time positions. Graduates who pursue full-time employment in the industry return to their internship company 50% of the time and 80% of the time their full-time position is secured with a company involved in our internship program.

The Industrial Distribution program at UNK works with manufacturers and distributors who:

- Represent the following industrial product market sectors: electrical components, electronics, fluid power, automation/motion control, building products, power transmission, pipe valves and fittings (PVF), industrial tooling, industrial safety products, material handling, and/or maintenance, repair and operation (MRO) supplies.
- Provide technical solutions
- Are market leaders and innovators
- Focus on technical sales

These companies typically offer services in:

- Engineering
- Applications engineering
- Integrated supply
- Industrial product training for customers
- Supply chain solutions

Our graduates often land careers in:

- Sales Leadership Training Programs
- Sales Management
- Applications/Sales Engineering
- Branch Management

Required Internship Components

Industrial Distribution internships are with industrial distributors or manufacturers meeting the criteria listed above, that provide business to business experiences for the intern in most, if not all of the following areas:

- Inside sales
- Outside sales (includes spending at least 40 hours with outside sales)
- Operations
- Customer service/technical support
- Management
- Marketing
- Product and/or materials management
- Product training

UNK Industrial Distribution Program Competencies

Graduates of the ID program will be able to:

1. Select, define, and properly use Industrial Distribution terminology.
2. Demonstrate appropriate business etiquette and professionalism that is congruent with current industry standards.
3. Propose, demonstrate, and defend sales, management, and leadership practices that are effective in Industrial Distribution.
4. Interpret and apply the appropriate financial reporting metrics and operational practices commonly used in Industrial Distribution.
5. Create, propose, and defend solutions to technical problems found in the industry.
6. Apply and practice professional written and verbal communication skills.
7. Apply proper industrial safety policies and procedures.

Steps of the Internship Process

1. Develop an [*Internship Proposal*](#).
 - Utilize the template on the website - unk.edu/cbt_internships for Industrial Distribution.
 - Each degree program has a template reflective of program required learning objectives.
2. Post position on [Handshake](#) and notify the [Career Center](#) and/or Industrial Distribution program.
 - Handshake website - <https://unk.joinhandshake.com/login>
 - A resource on setting up Handshake and posting a position is available by request or found on our website.
3. Attend [UNK Career Events](#), specifically the Industrial Distribution Career Fair.
 - Career Events are found on our website – www.unk.edu/cbt_careers
4. Review applications and interview students. Utilize best practices of hiring including background and reference checks, drug test, and request for university transcript.
5. Select and notify the student. Provide the student with the ***Internship Proposal*** signed by a company representative.
6. Student reviews the ***Internship Proposal***, signs, and forwards to the Career Center indicating as the internship position to be reviewed for approval for their academic internship.
7. Career Center informs the student of approval or reaches out to the company for additional information.

Employer Responsibilities during Internship

Training Plan – Work with intern to develop goals for experience, due end of week 2.

Project – Provide a meaningful project (recommended for all, required by some majors)

Supervisor Evaluations - Complete midterm evaluation at the end of week 5 and final evaluation at the end of week 10. The student will provide these forms.

Site Visit / Conference Call – Student coordinates with their supervisor and schedules a time with the instructor. This purpose includes appraising the progress of internship goals and gaining feedback on skills and development.

Student Responsibilities during Internship

Reflective Journal – completed weekly

Training Plan – submitted end of week 2

Self-Evaluations – submitted end of week 5 and week 10

Project – identified and Project Charter submitted by end of week 3

Onsite Photos – submitted end of week 10

Final Presentation – completed the week before Fall classes begin

Recommendations

Orientation and onboarding - 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. Follow-up with training or guidance during the first weeks.

Engaged supervisor – Individual is committed to and capable of developing people. The supervisor should meet with the intern to discuss progress at least once each week. Some companies provide the intern with a mentor in addition to their direct supervisor.

Timeline for the 10 weeks – Assists both the supervisor and the intern to reach the goals set for the experience.

Exposure to company culture – Include in meetings, company outings, trainings, and other activities unique to the organization.

Meaningful work - Provide the intern with a well-rounded experience that exposes the student to the many aspects of the business. Assigned work activities and projects are pertinent to their professional development and expose intern to many positions in the organization. Limit menial tasks as much as possible to provide a focus on experiential learning.

Keys to a Great Experience

A time for training and development as well as recruiting for full-time career opportunities.

- 1) **Well-rounded experience** exposing to the many aspects of wholesale distribution. An ID internship provides experiences in the areas of warehouse, counter sales, inside sales, outside sales, purchasing, customer service, quotations, marketing, or other operations functions.
 - Actively participate in or **shadow** various positions within the organization.
 - Exposure to **outside sales** as this is the career path a high percentage of students aspire to follow.
 - time with a top salesperson
 - time with a new salesperson
 - time with a sales manager
 - Extension of the classroom including items such as:
 - spend a day with a customer to learn applications of your product
 - meet key people in your organization
 - immerse in your company culture
 - visit other locations / corporate office
- 2) **Involved supervisor**, willing to provide guidance in setting goals, sharing life lessons, and providing feedback.
- 3) **Valuable and impactful project** (refer to examples from past internships).

The Project

ID interns are required to have a project and we recommend a project with a **sales focus**. The project must challenge the student and be of a topic relevant to an Industrial Distribution major. The project should be new and not repeated from a previous intern. Projects include using good judgment, creativity, and knowledge of the industry. Measurable results and impact need demonstrated by the end of the internship experience, hopefully with continued value to the company beyond the conclusion of the internship.

- 1) Company develops possible project ideas (prior to making offers – include on the **Internship Proposal**).
- 2) Supervisor and intern collaboratively prepare the **Project Charter** (first weeks of internship) – Due to Internship Instructor at the end of Week 3. Includes project objective, project scope, project milestones (timeline), impact statements, budget, roles and responsibilities, risks and mitigation strategy, and measurements of success.
- 3) Intern leads the project, throughout the summer
- 4) Intern presents to company representative on the outcome of the project
- 5) Intern includes information on the project in Final Presentation to Internship Director and program faculty.

Examples of Internship Projects

Promote New Product Line. Research product, promote to customers, and track results.

Sales Analysis of Traditional Distribution vs. National Accounts - Perform a sales analysis on products that sold through both the distribution chain and to national accounts

Develop and Document Incentive Program – For the sales division, take a vendor incentive program and develop a tracking and promotion method for the sales team.

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Collect and Organize Bid Sheet – Develop and maintain a spreadsheet to email to all salespeople each week on current jobs out for bid, bids the company submits, and bids accepted and how they are progressing.

Analyze Sales Team – Gather information on sales expenses and profits for individual reps, including analyzing current sales territories and going on sales calls.

Opportunity Analysis - Seek potential accounts in specified sales territories and present data at monthly sales meeting by providing break down for each salesperson's territory.

Promote CRM - Enter and monitor leads and opportunities for each of the salespeople while also promoting the value of using the system to increase sales.

Strengthen an Existing Account - Identify an existing customer with potential for sales growth. Meet with customer, research products, and provide new solutions (products as well as services available).

Develop Templates for Sales Team– Develop quoting templates for all of the sales force to utilize on key products and services. Work with accounting, marketing, product specialists, and the sales manager.

Promote Energy Solutions – Contact new and existing customers to promote energy audits which would lead to increased sales of LED lighting, power factor correction and variable frequency drives. Develop a script for initial contact by phone, brochure, packet to deliver, and sales calls.

Increase Company Footprint - Research underserved market sectors to find contact information for development of a contact list, call customers and go on sales calls.

Surplus Inventory Reduction – Identify no value/dead stock/surplus inventory, determine how best to sell, develop promotion, and make contacts with customers as well as other branches.

Customer Analysis / Sales Potential- Research companies on revenue and industry specialties to determine if they meet qualifications to pursue as a customer

Adding New Line of Products – Generate new POs, add product to system, work with vendor rep to learn about product, and go out with sales team to promote.

Product Guide - Prepare a guide of products for training purposes to be used by sales force or customers.

Develop Content for Company Intranet – Gather information on products and procedures and add to the training module of the company's intranet

Transportation Cost Reduction – Develop a system to track and monitor money spent on transportation and develop solutions to reduce the cost to the company.

Internship Activities Not Considered a Project

Activities that will not satisfy the requirements of the Project but could be included in the learning experience include planning a golf tournament, creating or cleaning databases of contact information, planning an event, moving sections of a warehouse, documenting warehouse operations, or developing a showroom promotion.

Internship Program Contact Information

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