

Making the Most of Your Internship:

How to learn everything you can, handle challenging situations, and make a great impression at your internship.



Congratulations, you have secured an internship! Now that you have the position, it's time to focus on how you can make the most of your time there and leave a lasting impression. Remember – the people you work with at your internship could be your future employers. Even if you never end up returning to work at the place you intern, the people you meet there can provide valuable job contacts and great recommendations. Enclosed you will find:

- Helpful hints for having a successful internship
- Tips on how to conduct a mid-internship check-in
- Mid Internship Check-In forms (for you and your supervisor)
- Guidelines on how to write a thank you letter to your sponsor
- Instructions on how to access the CORC Internship Feedback Form, and an overview of the kinds of questions you will be asked
- Guidelines about how to put your internship on your transcript

Helpful Hints

BEFORE YOU START

- Talk with your faculty advisors about your internship and how it will factor into your academic goals. If you are using the internship to fulfill a requirement, make sure you have faculty approval.
- If appropriate, write out your learning goals and communicate them with your internship supervisor.
- Secure your housing and make sure you have reliable transportation to the internship.
- Be clear about what day and time you will arrive, and the hours you are expected to work.

ON-THE-JOB

Timing and Attitude:

- The first day is always hard. At times you will feel inept, and even foolish. Expect it, and try to have a sense of humor and a positive attitude about it.
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early every day. Even if everyone else is late, this will show that you are responsible and dependable.
- Be respectful of the culture of your workplace. Do not be loud if the place is quiet. Observe how people around you behave and interact, and try to emulate the positive parts.
- Avoid complaining to your boss, your co-workers or to anyone at work about work-related matters such as tasks, people, or unfair situations. If you have a concern that needs to be addressed, speak with your immediate supervisor or someone you can trust in a calm and professional manner. If you would like to talk with someone at CORC about the matter, please contact us!

Staying Busy:

- There is always something that can be done. Look around. What needs to be straightened or cleaned? Volunteering for the tasks that nobody wants to do will let your co-workers know that you are willing and able to take initiative.
- Is there one person who is overloaded who would be receptive to your offer of help?
- If you truly cannot find something to do on your own, approach your supervisor when she seems relaxed and ask if she can think about projects that you might be able to devote energy to when you have downtime. Never declare, "I have nothing to do". It is important to remember that supervisors may be too overloaded to give you a job right at the moment you ask. Be considerate of their need to think about priorities and get back to you.

Mid-Internship Check-In:

- Half way through the internship, it is a good idea to have a formal check-in with your supervisor. If possible, schedule the check-in during the first week or two of your internship. More information about how to conduct a mid-internship check-in is included in this packet.

AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

- Before you leave the internship, ask your supervisor to give you a final evaluation letter. This letter is required if you plan to put the internship on your transcript. More information about the final evaluation letter is included in this packet.
- Write a thank-you letter to your internship supervisor. Information on how to write a memorable thank-you letter is included in this packet.
- Fill out the online internship evaluation at the CORC website. This will allow other students to learn from your experience and to possibly participate in the same internship.

YOU CAN ALWAYS CALL US AT CORC!

If something seems like it's going wrong and you'd like some help in dealing with it, we're here for you! Don't hesitate to email or give us a call.

CORC: 413-559-5445, corc@hampshire.edu

Mid-Internship Check-In

It is a great idea to conduct an on-site interview/check-in with your internship provider or immediate supervisor mid-way through your internship. The purpose of the check-in is to make sure that a) you are fulfilling your provider's expectations and that b) you are getting what you want out of the internship experience. If something is amiss, you can remedy it. If things are going well, you can ask about how you might become more involved or further develop your skills. This check-in will prove helpful in writing the final evaluation - both for you and the sponsor. Take good notes.

Here are some tips on how to conduct a mid-internship check-in:

1. **MAKE A TIME TO MEET:** During the first week of your internship, let your supervisor know that half way through the internship you would like to do a formal check-in. Ask if you can set up a tentative date and time – you should schedule at least an hour for the meeting. If your supervisor is reluctant to make an appointment so far in advance, you will need to be aware of when your halfway point is, and start trying to make an appointment at least a week before. This can sometimes be challenging, especially if you are at the height of a busy project. You will need to be both persistent and flexible. It's ok if your appointment gets delayed slightly, but make sure that it happens no more than a week after your mid-way point. Time will slip by before you know it!
2. **FILL OUT CHECK-IN FORMS:** Give the check-in form to your supervisor a few days before your meeting. This is a good way to remind her/him that your meeting is coming up. You should fill out your check-in form before the meeting. Be sure to write down everything you want to address with your supervisor – especially any concerns you have or skills you would like to develop. This is your chance to shape the remainder of your internship, so make the most of it!
3. **BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK:** Be ready to receive both positive feedback and constructive criticism. If you do receive some criticism, ask clarifying questions to make sure you know how you can improve. Accepting feedback with grace is a sign of maturity, and will show your supervisor that you are flexible and willing to learn.
4. **ADDRESS IMPORTANT ISSUES:** Approach important issues or concerns with an attitude of trying to solve a problem. Suggest projects that you would like to be involved in. Don't complain – offer solutions!
5. **TAKE GOOD NOTES:** Make sure to write down your supervisor's comments – both positive and negative. Pay especially close attention to suggestions for improvement, and make sure to write down your goals. If you are not able to write down everything, at least jot down a quick note to jog your memory later. After the meeting, go back over your notes and fill in the details.
6. **EXPRESS THANKS:** Thank your supervisor for taking the time to meet with you, and for teaching you skills, etc...Express positive feedback about specific things, if appropriate.

Career Options Resource Center
Mid-Internship Check In

Intern Form

1. What have you done well so far this summer? What specific accomplishments are you proud of?
2. What skills have you learned/improved upon?
3. How could you further improve your skills and/or performance?
4. What are your goals for the remainder of the summer?
5. Other comments:

**Career Options Resource Center
Mid-Internship Check-In**

Supervisor Form

Hampshire students are encouraged to do an on-site check-in with their supervisor half way through their internship. This check-in is a great opportunity for you to tell the intern what they are doing well and to discuss ways in which they could improve their performance. It is also an opportunity for both you and the intern to resolve any issues that may have arisen in the first half of the internship, and to agree on goals for the remainder of the summer. Jotting down some notes before or during the check-in will be very helpful when you are writing a final evaluation for the intern. Please use the following questions to help guide your mid-internship check-in.

1. What has the intern done well so far this summer? What are some of the intern's specific accomplishments?
2. What skills has the intern learned/improved upon?
3. How could the intern further improve their skills and/or performance?
4. Goals for the remainder of the summer:
5. Other comments:

Writing a Thank You Letter to your Internship Sponsor

Why should you do this?

Whoever your sponsor was or whatever their reason for offering an internship, the desire to contribute to your future in a meaningful way was sincere and worthy of your gratitude. The person who offered the internship will greatly appreciate hearing your reflections on the experience and how the opportunity made a difference to you. Equally important is that you are establishing your name and reputation in this field, and expressing appreciation in the form of a written thank you note will help you stand out and be remembered in a positive light.

Your letter should be detailed, specific, and written in either in a standard business format or handwritten on a nice card. Below is an example of a meaningful thank you letter, written in business format:

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER:

Hampshire College Box 000
893 West Street
Amherst, MA 01002

August 27, 2006

Sarah Alumna, Production Manager
Happy Intern Films
900 Venice Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 94887

Dear Ms. Alumna:

I am writing to thank you for providing an internship for me this summer. As a film and video Division II student at Hampshire, I was thrilled to have been chosen as one of this summer's participants.

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by film and the moving image. I came to Hampshire because I wanted to learn how to convey my vision of the world to large audiences using various media. Though I have gained some proficiency with Mac and PC editing tools, this internship was my first opportunity to gain exposure to the behind-the-scenes aspects of the entertainment industry.

As an intern with your organization I had the opportunity to gain new skills and significant insights into both the notion of documentary filmmaking and the challenges inherent in telling a story without major studio backing. I learned various lighting techniques, the importance of using a storyboard in filmmaking, and how to properly and accurately record data from location shots. I enjoyed my editing room duties the most, not only because I was able to improve my Final Cut Pro skills, but also because it was at this stage of production that I felt most useful. I began to see the results of everyone's hard work and gain perspective on the entire project.

My internship experience has confirmed my career goal of becoming a documentary filmmaker. I found that I thoroughly enjoyed many of the hands-on aspects of working on location shoots, and was energized by the challenge of thinking quickly to find solutions to small problems with few material resources. In the future, I think it might be interesting to pursue a similar internship with a bigger studio, to see firsthand how a larger budget might impact production and creative freedom. Certainly the skills I gained at your organization will be instrumental to my Division III project, which I will design more completely once I am back at Hampshire. It is my hope that my Div III will lead to further opportunities to be involved in documentary filmmaking.

Working with the Golden Gate Project was a stimulating and deeply inspirational educational experience that has me feeling very excited about my future. I am sending along a copy of some pictures I took during my internship experience. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work with you, your advice about getting the most out of my Hampshire education, and for sharing your reflections about the project with me. Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

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Hadda Greatime

Recording Your Internship Experience

Once you finish your internship, we ask you to complete the CORC **online internship report**. Your evaluation of your experience will go into our database and will be tremendously helpful to other Hampshire students interested in participating in a similar internship in the future. Your report will include such topics as:

- a. The nature of your work, and the projects and products you worked on
- b. Challenges and difficulties
- c. Skills you were building or new information you learned

1. To access the form go to: <http://corc.hampshire.edu>
2. Click on "For Students."
3. Click on the "Share" link, on the left hand side
4. Fill out the form and submit!

Keep in mind as you complete your internship that you will have the chance to write about it! Here are some examples of the kinds of questions you'll be asked:

YOU AND THE ORGANIZATION

- Program name or position title
- Name and address of organization
- Department (ie: "production")
- Onsite Supervisor and Supervisor's Title
- Hours Per Week and Approximate Length (in weeks)

WHAT YOU LEARNED/DID

- What were your goals when you started this internship?
- What were your duties at the internship?
- What skills were you building? What new information did you learn? What insights did you gain?

WHAT YOU GAINED

- What were your accomplishments?
- How has this experience made a difference to you personally, at Hampshire and beyond?

EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

- What were some of the challenges and/or difficulties of this internship?
- Did you gain any new connections from this experience?
- Would you recommend this internship or one like it to other Hampshire students? Why or why not?
- What advice would you give to other students interested in this opportunity?

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- How did you find housing? Do you have advice for students looking for housing in this area?
- Will this internship be a part of your Division II or III? If so, how?

Final Evaluation/Getting “Credit”

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How do I get this internship onto my transcript?

To get your EIIP internship onto your transcript, give your final internship evaluation to Central Records and ask them to please include it in your transcript.

2. Is there a special evaluation form that my internship supervisor has to fill out?

No. Hampshire College does not have such a form, however there are certain criteria that your evaluation has to meet in order to be included on your transcript. Your evaluation must:

- Be on company letterhead, if applicable
- Include the dates and amount of time you interned (i.e.: June 1st through July 29th, 15 hours per week)
- Include a description of your duties at the internship
- Include some comments about your performance
- Be signed
- Be a hard copy - email versions are not accepted

3. I’m still a Div I student. What does my internship count for?

You can include your internship in your Div I as a “learning activity.” It cannot be counted towards your Div I requirements. If you are still in Div I, but you want your internship to count as part of your Div II, you can negotiate this later with your Div II committee.

4. How do I make this internship count as part of my Div II or Div III?

You need to talk with your Div II or Div III committee and decide how you will incorporate this internship.

5. If there’s no official Internship Evaluation Form, what’s that thing on the next page?

On the next page you will find a form that you can give to your supervisor to help them write the final evaluation. While this is not an official Hampshire document, it might help you get what you need from the final evaluation. Good luck!

Final Evaluation

Dear Internship Supervisor,

Thank you so much for providing an internship for a Hampshire student this summer. Hopefully it was a rewarding experience for you, as well as a great learning experience for the intern. In order to complete the experience, your intern will ask you to write a final evaluation. This will give the intern valuable information about their performance – what they did well and areas where they can grow. It will also allow them to include the internship on their transcript. Please print your evaluation on company letterhead, if applicable, and make sure to include the following information:

- Dates of the internship
- Approximate number of hours worked per week
- Duties of the intern
- Your comments about their performance
- Your signature

Again, thank you so much for providing this learning opportunity. We are looking forward to working with you again next year!

Sincerely,

Sharón Friedner
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Hampshire College
Amherst, MA 01002
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sfriedner@hampshire.edu