An introduction to Applied Learning and Internships for Faculty Sponsors

Applied Learning and Internships require a three way partnership between the student, the employer, and the faculty sponsor. In return, the experience provides faculty sponsors to achieve the following:

- Improve the educational process for students
- Enhance your department’s professional preparedness for students;
- Develop networks with professionals in the field;
- Inform organizations about the latest research and development in the field;
- Help students to develop personal and professional competencies in the following areas:
  - Communication Skills
  - Self-Confidence
  - Customer Relations
  - Workplace Etiquette
  - Industry and Business Knowledge
  - Self-Sufficiency
  - Personal Organization
  - Professional Networks
  - Professional Ethics

Communication Skills

Tips for Faculty Sponsors:

- Organize opportunities with the Career Development Center for students to learn and practice their professional communication skills;
- Require students to make formal presentations on what they are learning in their applied learning experiences;
- Provide guidelines for writing professional emails, formal letters, or reports before students begin their applied learning experiences;
- Encourage students to enroll in courses and undertake opportunities that will help them further their communication skills.

Self-Confidence

Tips for Faculty Sponsors:

- Explain to students that they need to be patient in a new environment, unlike the classroom environment where performance is quantified by grades, the student’s performance will be subjective;
- Promote shared constructive feedback in class, to prepare students for it in an applied learning setting;
• Listen to students concerns and try to understand what is jeopardizing their confidence;
• Discuss examples of when students have previously overcome new situations and environments;
• Invite graduates to talk about their experiences and the confidence gained during their internship;
• Recommend ways of creating a positive, critical, and reflective environment to the site supervisor;
• Discuss workplace performance reviews and how employers typically measure staff performance;
• Provide constructive feedback so students realize that mistakes are natural and will help them learn.

Customer/Client Relations

Tips for Faculty Sponsors:

• Teach students that to be successful they need to be able to orient their products or services to what the customer/client wants or needs;
• Discuss organizations that provide and thrive on great customer service;
• Encourage students to think about a day in the life of their customers/clients;
• Role-play different scenarios with different types of customers/clients.

Workplace Etiquette

Tips for Faculty Sponsors:

• Discuss with students the expectations that will be required in their particular industry;
• Discuss the importance of punctuality, attention to detail, and being prepared each day for their applied learning experience;
• Manage students’ expectations of what will be required and expected of them throughout their experience;
• Ask students to consider how they will cope with aspects of the experience they are not looking forward to;
• Challenge students to write and discuss their own individual goals to be incorporated in their learning outcomes.

Industry and Business Knowledge

Tips for Faculty Sponsors:

• During outreach to applied learning site supervisors, ask about key skills and knowledge students need or will need to learn to be successful in the industry. Utilize this material to refresh content provided to students;
• Link theory to practice by utilizing case studies, especially examples you may have from personal experience;
• Supply examples of systems, software, and other industry knowledge students will be faced with from practical examples in the organizations where students will be hosted;
• Encourage students to apply their knowledge gained in the classroom to their applied learning site experience.

Self-Sufficiency
Tips for Faculty Sponsors:
• Work with the student to set goals and learning outcomes for their applied learning experience;
• Highlight the difference between asking for help and approval seeking;
• Ask the student to analyze past successes and missteps and how what they learned from each experience could be applied to their internship;
• Create scenarios that develop student decision making and problem solving ability.

Personal Organization
Tips for Faculty Sponsors:
• The Career Development Center can organize a workshop on time management skills in the workplace and preparing for an applied learning experience;
• Discuss prioritizing, asking supervisor for clarity on prioritizing work;
• Require students to write a formal plan for their internship experience;
• Reinforce the importance of managing deadlines;
• Schedule appointments with students to meet one-on-one to discuss the progress of their applied learning experience.

Professional Networks
Tips for Faculty Sponsors:
• Organize functions that allow students to showcase their experience and what they learned. Invite industry professionals to allow for students to develop professional networks;
• Organize site visits to allow students to be exposed to their industry. The Career Development Center can assist in this process;
• Encourage students to attend annual Career Fair starting early in their college experience to develop contacts and get a better understanding of what employers are looking for in candidates;
• Organize an assignment for which the presentation is not just to the class, but to other interested stakeholders from the community.

Professional Ethics
Tips for Faculty Sponsors:
• Set clear expectations about student behavior before they begin their experience;
• You are encouraged to use the attached Internship Liability Form which explains to the student, the employer, and the faculty member what the rights and responsibilities are for each participant in the applied learning process;
• Discuss with students ethical considerations, case studies, and any code of ethics for your profession;
• Prior to the commencement of an applied learning experience, require students to attend a meeting dressed professionally;
• Remind students that while on site, they are not only representing themselves, but also SUNY Plattsburgh.
Crafting Learning Outcomes

As a faculty sponsor, you will likely need to work with your student to craft learning outcomes the student hopes to attain from the experience. This should be done before the student begins their experience, so they are able to work with their site supervisor to ensure the intended learning outcomes are attainable in the experience.

1. Begin by creating a list of personal/professional strengths and areas for improvement. Include both technical and professional skills and personal attributes.
2. With this list in hand, ask yourself these questions:
   - What technical skills would I like to acquire during this applied learning experience?
   - What do I do well and can contribute to the organization? (manage a work project, analyze a problem, write a technical report, work well in a diverse team….)
   - What “employability” skills would I like to improve upon? (self-confidence, communication, accepting constructive criticism, leadership or organizational abilities.)
3. Other questions to consider include:
   - What career or functional areas would I like to learn more about during this co-op work session?
   - What does the job market look like in terms of growth or opportunity in my chosen area of study?
4. CAREFULLY READ THE POSITION DESCRIPTION. Make sure your learning objectives are in line with the actual duties and responsibilities of the job. Once you get have some time on the job you may find you want to refine or redirect some of your learning objectives. Do this with your employer.
5. Review your learning objectives with your supervisor frequently. These discussions will help you understand the employer expectations, allow you to ask for specific assistance, and make sure you are participating in meaningful work.
6. Last, but not least, as you develop learning objectives, make sure you and your supervisor have some concrete ideas for how you can specifically achieve your goals. Attaching a realistic and attainable indicator of achievement will ensure that you are able to meet your learning objectives.

Sample Learning Objectives and Measures of Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives (Skills and Knowledge Sought)</th>
<th>Measure of Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To understand the functional areas of the company and how the engineering divisions supports the company’s products and services</td>
<td>Will create an organizational chart with roles/functions of primary areas based upon interviews with managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To become proficient in laboratory safety rules, standard operating procedures and precautions</td>
<td>Will be able to explain and demonstrate general safety rules and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek clarification and assistance when presented with unfamiliar tasks</td>
<td>Will initiate bi-weekly meetings with my supervisor and present written questions and possible approaches to new tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain greater confidence in ability to present information and concepts in a group setting</td>
<td>Will develop a presentation for my supervisors, colleagues, and other interns on a major project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Applied Learning Proposal

1. **Contact Hours**
   - How many hours you will be working on the site per week and the total number of hours you will be completing for the applied learning experience.
   - Provide a schedule of what days of the week you will be at the experience and what times during each day you will be working.
   - Starting and ending date of the experience

2. **Applied Learning Experience Description and Training**
   - Describe what you will be doing during your experience, including any projects, assignments, or duties you will be assigned.
   - Describe how and when training will take place

3. **Mentoring/Site Supervision**
   - Who will be your site supervisor?
   - Describe when you will meet with your supervisor during your experience and how your progress will be evaluated.
   - Will you have the opportunity to conduct informational interviews with your supervisor and other staff members?

4. ** Marketable Skills**
   - Describe what marketable skills you will develop by completing this experience
   - Talk with your supervisor to discuss any technical skills or soft skills you will gain in this experience.

5. **Connecting Applied Learning Experience to Major/Career Interests**
   - Describe how your internship relates to your academic major/career interests
   - Explain how your academic coursework relates to your selected applied learning experience

6. **Expected Learning Outcomes from this Applied Learning Experience**
   - Describe what your expectations are for this experience. What do you hope to learn?

______________________________________________         ________________
Student Signature                                           Date

______________________________________________         ________________
Faculty Sponsor Signature                                   Date

______________________________________________
Site Supervisor Signature                                   Date
Sample Internship Expectations

Employer Expectations While Hosting a SUNY Plattsburgh Intern

I. Purpose: Internships for students at SUNY Plattsburgh provide an educational opportunity that complement a student’s academic preparation with direct applied experience. Combining productive work experience with an intentional learning component is a proven method for empowering the academic, personal, and career development of students.

II. Terms:
   A. Faculty Sponsor: The SUNY Plattsburgh faculty member, or Career Development staff member (for non-credit experiences), who sponsors student internship experience and evaluates student learning outcomes.
   B. Internship Site Supervisor: The internship site staff member who coordinates training and assignment of projects and tasks at the internship site to advance student learning goals.

III. Responsibilities:
   A. Students conducting an internship experience are responsible to:
      1. Attend any required orientation sessions from either academic department or Career Development Center.
      2. Comply with internship site policies and procedures.
      3. Initiate and maintain contact with faculty sponsor during the internship experience.
      4. Engage the academic work required by the internship site and the academic sponsor.
      5. Work toward the goals developed in the student learning proposal.
      6. Report problems including safety and/or personnel problems to appropriate avenues of support at the internship site, and/or the academic sponsor or Career Development Center Personnel.
      7. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and in ways consistent with SUNY Plattsburgh’s Code of Conduct and in compliance with the internship site’s personnel policies.
   B. The University is responsible to:
      1. Designate a faculty sponsor with responsibilities to assist in setting learning objectives in a Learning Proposal, confer with the internship site supervisor as needed, monitor student progress, and to evaluate the academic performance of the student.
      2. Certify the student’s eligibility to participate in an internship experience.
      3. Assist the intern in creating learning objectives that must be met while interning at a selected site. These objectives will be stated in the Internship Learning Proposal Form which the faculty sponsor will approve.
      4. Establish guidelines and standards for internships and make these guidelines and standards available to the internship site supervisor.
      5. Clarify SUNY Plattsburgh policies and procedures for the internship site sponsor, as needed.
   C. The Internship Site is responsible to:
      1. Coordinate with the SUNY Plattsburgh faculty sponsor and student to help the student develop learning goals and objectives and to describe internship activities that will support those goals and objectives. Encourage and support the learning goals and objectives of the student’s internship experience.
      2. Designate an employee to help orient the student to the organization and its culture, assist in the development of learning objectives, confer regularly with the student and the academic sponsor as needed, and supervise and monitor the progress of the student.
      3. Provide orientation to the student intern at the commencement of the internship experience, to include safety and security, provide supervision for the student, and assign duties that are career-related, progressive, and challenging.
4. Make available equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the student to perform his/her duties.
5. Provide safe working facilities free from health and safety concerns including all forms of harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, or veteran status in the selection process of interns and once the intern has begun service.
6. Ensure that regular workers are not displaced by student interns.
7. Notify SUNY Plattsburgh academic sponsor of any changes in the student’s intern status, schedule, or performance.
9. Communicate internship site standards and policies to SUNY Plattsburgh personnel and to the student intern.
10. The internship site will comply with all applicable employment laws including but not limited those related to Occupational Health & Safety (OSHA), and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA).

IV. Terms of Arrangement

An internship arrangement for each student will be one academic semester, summer or winter session, or a period agreed upon by the site sponsor and SUNY Plattsburgh. In the event that the agency is dissatisfied with the performance of a student, termination of the internship arrangement can be requested by the agency via the academic sponsor. If a student presents an imminent health or safety concern at the internship site, the site may immediate remove the student. The internship site would then be asked to consult with the faculty sponsor as soon as possible. Conversely, SUNY Plattsburgh may request termination of the internship arrangement for any student not complying with SUNY Plattsburgh guidelines, procedures, or the Student Code of Conduct. In such situation, internship site supervisors will be notified in advance.

____________________________________________________   ________________________
Internship Site Supervisor                        Date

____________________________________________________   ________________________
SUNY Plattsburgh Faculty Sponsor                   Date

____________________________________________________   ________________________
SUNY Plattsburgh Student                           Date