What is an externship?
An Externship is a short-term, unpaid, 2-14 day, career exploration and problem solving opportunity for students hosted by an employer.

What’s the purpose?
The purpose of an externship is to provide an opportunity for employers to engage with students prior to their internship eligibility; allowing an exclusive opportunity to educate the student on your company’s brand, culture, various functions, and future internships and professional positions. Students are given the opportunity to understand the problems they will often be exposed if deciding to choose a career in your company’s field. NOTE: Any student classification can participate if desired.

Benefit to Employers:
✓ Gain exposure for your company.
✓ Identify potential job/internship candidates.
✓ Gain insight from a fresh perspective.
✓ Develop your mentoring/leadership skills.

Benefit to Students:
✓ Explore potential career field options.
✓ Gain first-hand experience on the job.
✓ Develop your critical thinking skills.
✓ Connect with local professionals.

What is my role?
**Externship Site Contact**: Employer representative who arranges the externship, including the pre-program logistics with the assistance of the Cougar Externship Coordinator, Kirsten Pratt.

**Professional Mentor**: Employer representative who is shadowed by the student mentee during their externship experience. *(Please note, the Site Contact and Professional Mentor may be the same person).*
- Provide a general schedule of activities and a problem to solve for the assigned extern(s).
- Be available by phone and/or email to discuss and make arrangements for the externship visit.
- Provide a learning and exploration experience for assigned extern(s). *See Activity Suggestions for examples.*
- Be available to answer questions related to the problem-solving assignment.
- Share expertise and knowledge on work, careers, and the field.

**Student Mentee:**
- Coordinate with Mentor and Site Contact a reasonable schedule that can be committed for externship.
- Participate in an Externship orientation meeting prior to externship start and practice professionalism discussed in orientation.
- Present an overall learning and solved-problem synopsis as completion of the externship.

**Cougar Externship Program Coordinator**
Kirsten Pratt, Career Development Specialist of Employer Relations, is responsible for guiding employers and students through this process. Contact Kirsten Pratt at 706-507-8764 or KMP@ColumbusState.edu.

**Best Practice**: Use a CSU alum as the Professional Mentor or a resource for the problem/project.
How to get started as an externship site contact:

1. DECIDE how many students to host and who their professional mentors will be. Will they shadow professional mentors individually or in a group?

2. DETERMINE which business function(s) the student(s) will learn about and what problem they may be able to work on within a reasonable time expectations.

3. SET the duration and dates of the externship and create a general schedule of activities for your externs.
   *Note: externships ideally last between 2-14 days.

4. MAKE arrangements for workstations and obtain appropriate clearance for the extern(s) as necessary.

5. CONTACT Kirsten Pratt at the CSU Center for Career Development to arrange a site visit and finalize your externship plans!
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & SUGGESTIONS

Notes of Expectations

- Students are not to be expected to have advanced knowledge about the company or established skills.
- Students will be expected to have professionalism and respect throughout the entire externship.
- Employers are not expected to attend the final presentation of the externship by the student (presented on CSU’s campus), but will be invited.
- Students and Employers both will be expected to provide and receive feedback from each other as well as about the program. This program is in the beginning stages and there may be kinks in the beginning.
- Students do not receive academic credit or compensation for the externship.

Externship Activity Suggestions

- Observation of the daily activities and challenges of a job(s) that relates to student area of interest.
- Schedule informational interviews with the professional mentor and/or other staff members.
- Provide a tour of the company and discuss company culture and work environment.
- Attend a business meeting or lunch.
- Describe future internship/employment opportunities within the company and your process for selecting the right candidates.
- Allow limited assistance with daily responsibilities as you see fit.
- Have the extern(s) meet current interns or new hires to get a realistic view of entry-level experiences within your organization.
- Setup an informal networking session for the extern(s) to network with various staff members.

Externship Problem-Solving Assignment Suggestions

- Create suggestions on how to market company’s product/services to college students.
- Figure out workflow plan of the business operations.
- Research who and why current and potential competitors are for the companies market.
- Allow to participate in the simulation of solving a common problem in the work environment.
- Assist in completing a short-term project that is a piece of a greater deliverable.
EXTERNSHIP AGENDAS

These are meant to inspire what the plan of action could look like specific to your company’s externship experience. Use this as a guide to figure out the best way to plan based on the project/problem and the timeline most conducive to your Externship Mentor’s schedule.

Schedule Must Include Components:

1. Brief of the company (goals, target market, organizational chart –departments- and how they interact).
2. Brief of the department/area/role (goals, connection to overall company, and day-to-day work/projects/interactions)
3. Project/Problem explanation (what it is, what resources available, expectations of when can be completed – schedule/timeline).
4. Networking with leadership in business atmosphere (lunch, staff meeting, offsite visits, etc.)
5. Feedback/Question check points with professional mentors.

AGENDA EXAMPLES

Full Days (2-3 days total)

This schedule has the student on site for 6-8 hour day. There are planned items the entire duration of the visit. Days do not have to be consecutive. However, if this is the schedule selected, it is encouraged to do this within the first week of externship (week before classes start). *Best Practice: For shorter, full days, it is best to host 2 students that can work together on the problem.

Day 1: 1. Overview of company/field 2. View/Participate in Business Happenings (see Externship Activity Suggestions for ideas) 3. Lunch with leadership or network group 4. Time allotted to work on the assigned Problem/Project.

Day 2: 1. Fun activity 2. Networking/understanding other areas and what they do 3. Meet with department heads or 1:1 time with mentor for questions may have around problem 4. Work on problem and preparation for presentation

Flexible, short Days (3-14 days total)

This schedule has the student on site for an average of 2 -3 hours for multiple days. There are planned items the entire duration of the visit. Days do not have to be consecutive. However, if this is the schedule selected, more flexibility and time will need to be allotted on the timeline of the problem being completed.
Day 1: (2-3 hours) 1. Overview of company/field 2. View/Participate in Business Happenings (see Externship Activity Suggestions for ideas) 3. Brief Explanation of Timeline and Problem to Solve. Depending on company this may take 1-3 days.

Day 2: (2-5 hours) 1. Meet with Relevant Department contacts (to get resources for problems or understand business interactions). 2. Given time to begin on problem/project. 3. Given time to ask questions. Depending on company or time allotted for this, this may take 1-3 days.

Day 3: (2-5 hours) 1. Participate in an interactive activity related to the work (staff meeting, outing, event, lunch with leadership, etc.) 2. Work on problem/project.

Day 4: (2 hours) 1. Check in with mentor to ask questions and get feedback on current status of problem.

Day 5: (onsite or offsite) 1. Work on problem and presentation. Depending on company and/or problem, this may take 2-5 days.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evacuation piece of this process is the most important component as mentees thrive on feedback as a way of growth and learning. Students are able to provide a more critically considered solution to the given problem if they are provided some structure in understanding how the solution will be evaluated. Most students may not have yet worked in a business environment to understand the full scope of the effects of implemented solutions. It is important as a mentor to help the student understand how the solution will be utilized and its effects on the business as a whole in order to understand the realistic relevance and application of solutions to problems of this business’ type.

Each externship site coordinator and professional mentor can evaluate the student additionally based on the evaluation process normally applied within your business. However, at minimum the evaluation process will follow the Rubric of Columbus State University’s Quality Enhancement Plan focus, “We Solve It”. On page 6 is the report guidelines the student(s) will be given to map out how to solve the problem and reflect on the problem-solving process. Professional mentors are able to provide resources and direction to students, but the goal is to have the student go through this process on their own. It is encouraged they use their current education knowledge, personal background/experience, and available company or research resources to complete the problem/project. If it makes sense, a resource can be an individual from another department.

Professional mentors can utilize the “We Solve It” Rubric (included) to provide feedback on the completed presentation of the problem solution.
We Solve It! Report

Student Name ___________________  Student ID ________________
Course#  __Concourse Externship Program______  Semester  __Spring 2017_______
Title of Assignment/Location ________________________________________________

DISCOVER
1. What was the real-world problem that you or your team addressed? In what way(s) might this be a problem?

2. What are some possible causes of this problem?

DESIGN
3. How did you or your team examine possible solutions? What information, processes, and/or collaboration did you or your team use to understand the problem and its challenges?

4. What could be done to try to solve this problem? What were the creative solution(s) you and your team developed for addressing the real-world problem you identified?

5. What are the strengths and limitations of these possible solutions to this problem?

DELIVER
6. How did you or your team communicate the proposed solution to the real-world problem?

7. Describe the audience(s) to whom your presentation was made

REFLECT
8. What new learning or insights did you or your team gain through this real-world problem solving process experience?

9. What would you or your team do differently to improve real-world problem solving skills in the future?

OVERALL
10. How would you rate your or your team’s problem-solving abilities on a scale of 1 (extremely weak) to 5 (extremely strong)? Please explain your or your team’s self-rating.

For more information on the Cougar Externship Program, please contact: Kirsten Pratt at 706.507.8764 or KMP@ColumbusState.edu.