Lake Erie College Internship Program  
Internship Site Information Guide

Lake Erie College values its relationship with all employers involved within the experiential learning program. We see this as a true partnership in the education of our students. Because of this, it is important that our students have meaningful work assignments, closely related to their chosen field. The ultimate success of this program occurs when the student makes the connection between the classroom and the workplace, and the employer develops a pool of qualified graduates ready to accept positions of responsibility.

Employers will be successful in their use of experiential learning programs if they adhere to the following procedures:

- Each employer interested in participating in Lake Erie College’s experiential education program must submit a detailed job description. Employers can submit these posting online in advance to Career Services online job database through the web site: www.lec.edu/career

- Employers are responsible for the screening, interviewing and hiring of students. Career Services is available to aid in securing a location if an employer wishes to interview on campus.

- It is important that the employer provide feedback to Career Services on students’ response to calls and interview performance. The Office of Career Services & Internships does not condone lack of response or inappropriate preparation for interviews from students.

- Students may not begin their internship until all parties have signed the Application & Agreement Form. In the event that the employer prefers a different form, or has additional agreements for the student to complete, they should contact the office of Career Services & Internships.

- Negotiation of salary and benefits is left solely to the employer and the student. Lake Erie College will, in no way, attempt to influence negotiations.
Once the student begins his/her experience, it is the employer’s responsibility to:

- Provide an orientation for the student covering the following areas:
  - Facility tour
  - Worksite policies and procedures
  - The organizational structure
  - The corporate culture
  - Introduction to co-workers

- Provide the student with adequate workspace including a desk, chair, telephone, office supplies, and a computer (where appropriate).

- Keep an eye on the intern. The employer should watch for signs that the student is confused or bored. As often as silence means that an intern is busy, it could also mean that she/he is confused and shy about telling the employer. Paying attention early helps to head off problems and bad habits early on in the experience.

- Make sure the intern has a mentor or supervisor to provide guidance. Make it someone who truly likes to teach, and the experience will be even better for everyone.

- Be aware of the number of hours the student must complete at the job site to receive academic credit. The employer is responsible for verifying the accuracy of all hours worked by the student.

- Insure that the student is not required to work more hours than is stipulated in the intern agreement.

- Complete a midterm evaluation (form provided) at the midpoint of the academic semester and submit it to the office of Career Services & Internships. This is does not apply to clinical observation students. Employers can fax or mail these forms.

- Communication is the most important aspect of the partnership between the employer, the student and the college. The office of Career Services & Internships requests immediate notification from the employer should the following situations occur:
  - Failure of a student to report for the assignment
  - Excessive absenteeism
  - Unexplained or continual tardiness
  - Improper dress
  - Uncooperative attitude
  - Insubordination or any other disciplinary issues
Upon completion of the internship period, communication on the following topics is requested of the employer:

- A **complete final evaluation** (form provided) of the student’s performance. It is asked that this form be completed and submitted to the office of Career Services & Internships in a timely manner, as it affects the awarding of the student’s final grade.

- Students may request a letter of recommendation. If it is within the company’s policy to provide one, please do so.

- If the employer intends to make the student an offer for a permanent position, it should be communicated to the student at the earliest possible date. This will prevent uncertainty on the part of the student that may lead her/him to solicit other positions.

**Dismissal Procedures**

While we hope there is never a need to sever the business relationship prior to the scheduled ending date, it is always a possibility. Prior to dismissing a student from her/his assignment, we ask that the following procedure be observed (The employer may feel free to supply us with a copy of the company procedure):

- Notify the office of Career Services & Internships of the difficulties surrounding the student assignment well in advance of the decision to dismiss.

- The director (and if appropriate the faculty sponsor) will meet with the employer and the student separately, then together if necessary. (Depending on the location, a virtual meeting might be necessary.)

- The employer should provide documentation of the student’s actions leading to the dismissal. This is important in order to facilitate communication with the faculty sponsor in terms of the student’s grade.

We want all Lake Erie College students to represent themselves and the college well, in addition to providing the employer with much needed skills and a willingness to learn. This can only occur successfully if every member of the partnership works together.

**Legal Issues**

**Do you have to pay interns?**

The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which applies to all companies that have at least two employees directly engaged in interstate commerce and annual sales of at least $500,000, severely restricts an employer’s ability to use unpaid interns or trainees. It does not limit an employer’s ability to hire paid interns.
You don’t have to pay interns who qualify as trainees. The U.S. Department of Labor has outlined six criteria for determining trainee status:

1. Interns cannot displace regular employees.
2. Interns are not guaranteed a job at the end of the internship (though you may choose to hire them at the end of the experience).
3. Interns are not entitled to wages during the internship.
4. Interns must receive training from your organization, even if it somewhat impedes the work process.
5. Interns must get hands-on experience with equipment and processes used in the industry in which they intern.
6. Interns’ training must primarily benefit them, not the organization.

Workers’ and Unemployment Compensation

Workers’ compensation boards have found that interns contribute enough to a company to make them employees. It is wise to cover interns under your workers’ compensation policy even though it is not required. Student interns are not generally eligible for unemployment compensation at the end of the internship.

Keep in Mind

Even if a student is working through a school program for which he or she is being “paid” in college credits, the student still has the right, under the FLSA, to be paid unless the employer is not deriving any immediate advantage by using him/her.

Paid interns make ideal workers—hungry to learn, eager to make a good impression and willing to perform a multitude of tasks. The relatively small amount of money employers spend on intern wages and benefits is a good investment, because it often produces future, long-term employees.

The employer should identify the specific terms and conditions of employment (e.g., dates of employment as an intern, including internship end date; compensation; organizational and/or reporting relationships; principle duties, tasks or responsibilities; working conditions; and any other expectations), and should discuss these with the prospective intern, so that there is no misunderstanding regarding the relationship.

Any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Kostiha Smith, Director of Career and Internships at skostihasmith@lec.edu.