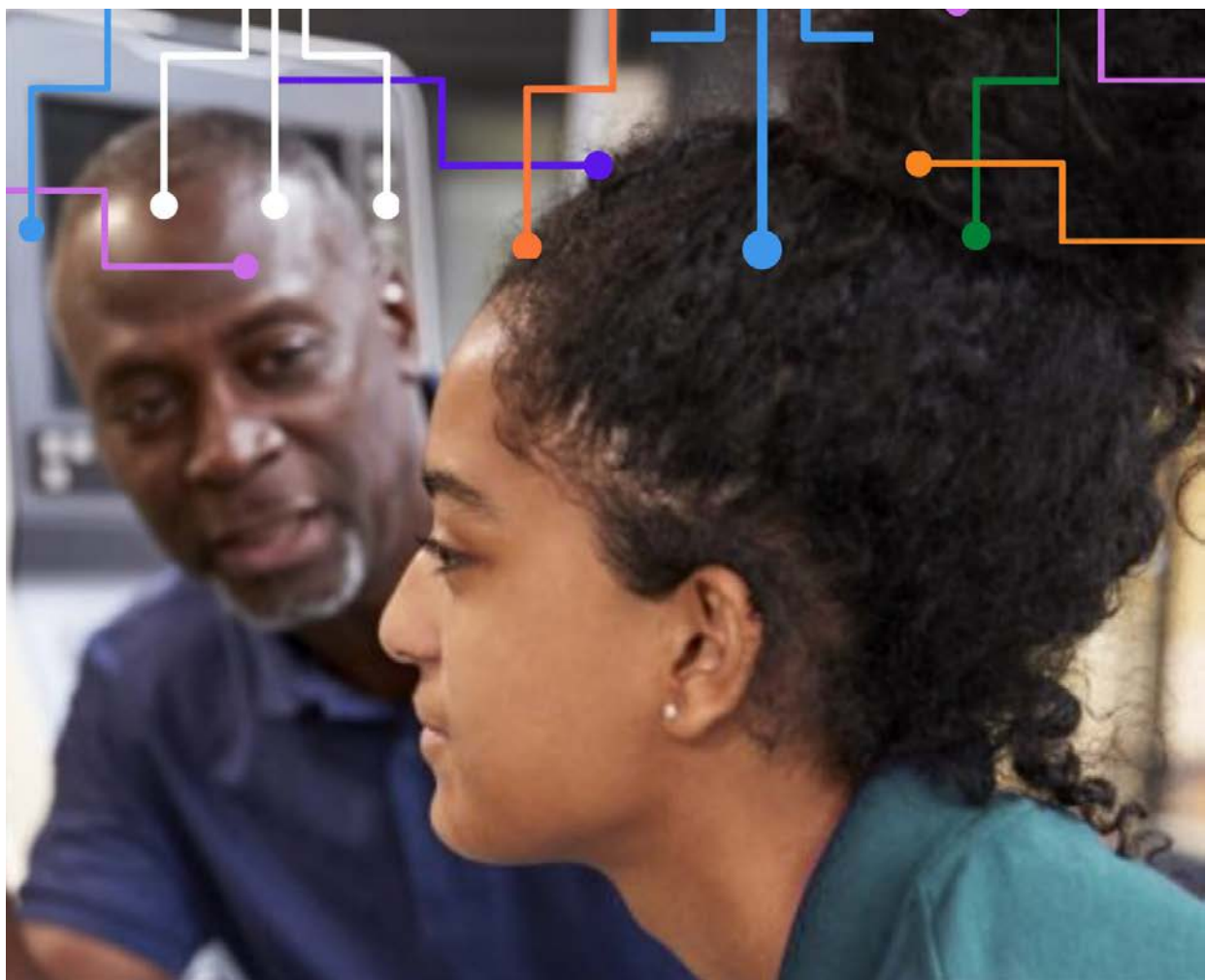
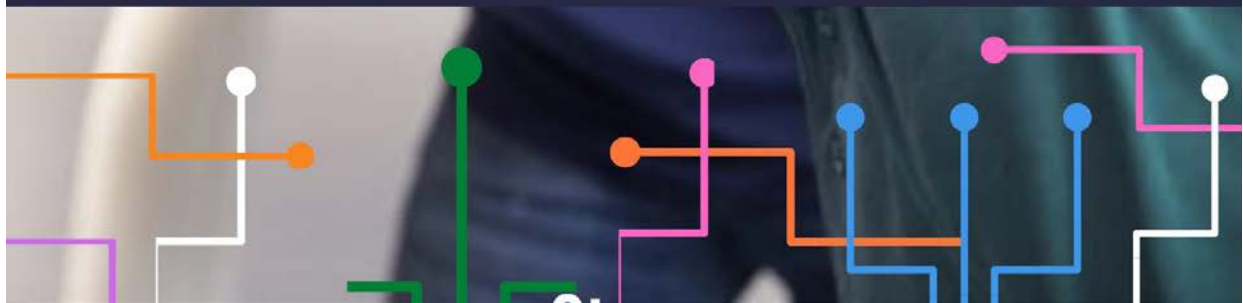




CONNECTICUT STEAM TALENT INTERNSHIP TOOLKIT

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO HIRING & TRAINING INTERNS



Introduction

The **Connecticut STEAM Talent Internship Toolkit for Employers** is designed to help employers create new and refresh existing internships for students pursuing higher education certificates and degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) fields.

Managing the school-to-work pipeline is a challenge for employers everywhere. Hiring interns can be a key factor for businesses creating the future talent pipeline.

Connecticut communities are diverse and so are the needs and aspirations of the students entering the workforce we serve. Establishing an internship program is a positive step to meeting business needs, while at the same time supporting the State of CT by attracting and keeping the talent in the state.

The Governor's Council on Women and Girls, Education and STEAM Sub-Committee encourages employers to incorporate an Equity and Inclusion perspective into the planning, creating, and delivery of internship programs and services.

Read on to discover why hiring an intern is a win-win for the State of Connecticut, Colleges and Universities, and CT businesses and students.

The **Connecticut STEAM Talent Internship Toolkit for Employers**, a collaboration of the state and private sector aims to:

- Keep STEAM talent in CT
- Create a simple guide for employers to identify and hire talent
- Create an ecosystem of collaboration for CT businesses, colleges, and universities

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Connect with Connecticut STEAM Talent

Overview

What is an internship?

An internship is a hands-on learning experience for students in a professional environment.

Why hire an intern?

Provides businesses the opportunity to cultivate Connecticut's top STEAM talent

Train and grow a well-qualified, diverse workforce

Keeps talent in CT

How can you start?

Use this toolkit to help design and implement an internship program that meets your workforce needs.

Interns = Your Future Workforce

Connect with Connecticut STEAM Talent

Top Reasons to Hire an Intern



Cultivate Future Workforce

- Create and prepare a talent pipeline specific to the needs of your organization
- Provide a look before you buy



Fresh Ideas and Skills

- Interns encourage creativity and provide access to a workforce with diverse perspectives and knowledge of up-to-date technology.



Improve your Management Skills

- Give your mid-level staff members opportunities to manage interns
- Provide subject matter experts the opportunity to gain leadership and mentorship skills



Strengthen your Educational Ties

- Connect to Connecticut colleges and universities
- Connect to the talent pipeline



Enhance Diversity

- Access to a diverse workforce with knowledge of latest

Design Your Internship

Elements of a Strong Internship

- **Give Real-World Experience** – Give interns responsibilities and tasks that are equivalent to another employee, so they can begin to build transferable skills.
- **Provide Mentorship** – Couple interns with someone who can check in, answer questions, give training, and provide quality feedback that fosters their learning and offers solutions.
- **Be Inclusive** – Make time to meet with interns, invite them to company meetings, and keep them informed of changes to company policies and procedures. Make sure that your interns feel valued and welcomed.



What can you offer to an intern?

Think about your workplace culture. What are your strengths? When designing your internship program, try to incorporate the assets, processes, or climate information that makes your company stand out from the rest. Include the unique experience that an intern will receive from your company. Get interns excited about working for you!

Make it a match

Determine what would be a good fit for your company by answering some of the following questions:

- What tasks would the intern be doing on a daily basis to help support your efforts?
- Who would the intern be checking in with or reporting to?
- Who are the mentors that will provide feedback and support?
- What steps will you take to include them in your workplace community?

Refine Job Description with Intern

Having a meeting with your intern to discuss and possibly refine the job description is beneficial to both parties. A refined job description gives the intern a say in what they will be doing on a daily basis. They use this time to gain experience on the duties and conditions of a job, or employment sector they are interested in. It is the employer's responsibility to provide that realistic perspective for them and ensure they are preparing themselves for the road ahead.

Using a checklist can help to make sure you have put the proper people and tasks in place for a successful internship.

Design Your Internship

Internship Checklist

1. **Determine program goals** – Determine the scope of work the intern will be doing by outlining
 - ☐ Tasks
 - ☐ Expected outcomes
 - ☐ Target skills. Example: Analytical, project management
 - ☐ Draft of job description outlined
2. **Appoint intern supervisor & mentor** – Appoint the person who is best suited to oversee and work with the intern. This person should be able to provide quality feedback and support the training and development of the intern's skills.
 - **Appoint a mentor to provide additional guidance, motivation, and role modeling.**
 - ☐ Supervisor appointed
 - ☐ Mentor appointed
 - ☐ Guidelines for check in schedule, goal setting, and feedback outlined
3. **Create job description** – Based on the needs of your company and the strengths you have determined, create a job description that will engage the right intern.
 - ☐ Final job description created
 - ☐ Placements for recruitment outlined
4. **Recruit interns** – Reach out to Connecticut colleges and universities to connect with candidates who can match your needs.
 - ☐ Communicate with career offices
 - ☐ Specific fields/disciplines of interest identified
 - ☐ Partner with corresponding departments
5. **Follow through with internship program** – Create a program that will offer the most reward to you and the intern.
 - ☐ Plan orientation and onboarding for intern
 - ☐ Outline schedule for training, meeting with, and supporting intern
6. **Evaluate and reflect** – Once the program ends, evaluate how well the intern worked, as well as how well the program worked. This will help to inform improvements the next time you take on an intern.
 - ☐ Outline questions for exit interview/survey
 - ☐ Establish survey/feedback form for employees and mentors working closely with the intern
 - ☐ Determine the next steps for improving and continuing internship program

Job Description Template

Company name, location, website

Company background

Internship job title_____

The ideal candidate for this position is

Internship description- reporting details, project/task responsibilities and deliverables, primary duties

Internship desired skills

Questions? Contact information

Provide a Pathway to Transferable Skills

Transferrable skills are not only fundamentals for a successful long-term career as they can be transferred from job to job, but interns with transferrable skills also elevate the CT workforce talent. CT businesses will have the advantage of keeping our talent in the state and the skills to grow our companies. Below are some important skills that most businesses need. Decide on the skills your intern will achieve by the end of the internship.

Problem solving – Train your intern on how to assess a business problem and create a plan. There will always be problems that arise in any business and its important to be able to resolve them as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Communication – Coach your intern to communicate effectively in a meeting and via email.

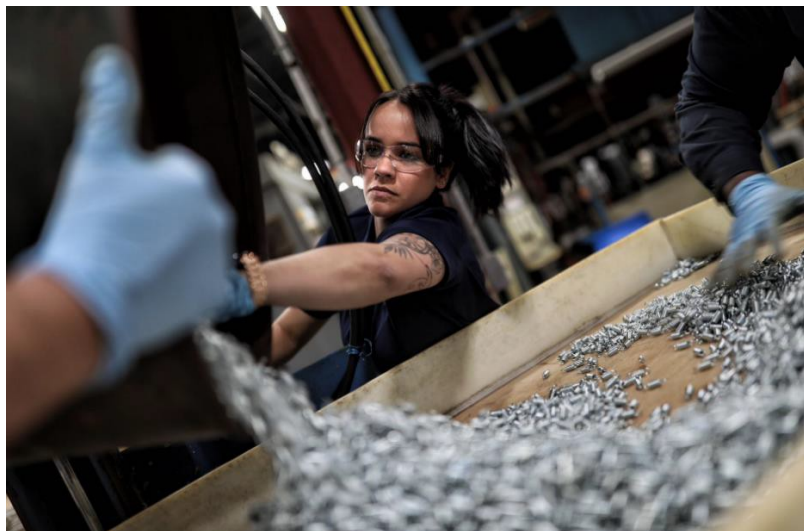
Selling – Demonstrate the ability to sell by having your intern shadow a skilled mentor in negotiations and other sales meetings. People tend to do business with people they like and trust.

Analysis – Upskill your intern on how to synthesize data and extract the key points to share with others.

Project management – Familiarize your intern with the process of mobilizing a team to accomplish a meaningful goal.

Talent Acquisition - The skill to attract and develop good talent does not only depend on your managers. Employees and workplace culture plays a valuable role. Show interns that being coachable is as important as getting the job done.

- **Internet leverage** is a skill that your intern may already possess. However, technology skills such as assembling and presenting an effective PowerPoint or deciphering credible data is usually learnt on the job.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is essential to the process of recruiting interns. To maintain a diverse workforce, take measures to make your recruitment process inclusive and equitable to candidates of all backgrounds.

How can DEI initiatives strengthen your workforce?

- **Innovation and problem solving** – DEI increases the likelihood of innovative ideas, research, and solutions by involving interns with a wide range of perspectives and experiences.
- **A larger candidate pool** – Welcoming a diverse range of candidates increases your hiring options, thus maximizing the chances of finding the ideal interns for your company.
- **Company culture** – DEI in the workforce encourages a more open-minded, accepting work culture and fosters a sense of fairness and loyalty among employees.



How can DEI be incorporated into the recruitment process?

- **Paying your interns** – Adequately compensating your interns is key to creating an inclusive and equitable recruitment process. Unpaid internships tend to attract candidates from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds while disproportionately discouraging candidates of color and those with disadvantaged backgrounds from applying. Paid internships are more accessible to candidates of all socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Creating inclusive and equitable spaces** – The quality of working conditions and workplace climate determine your desirability to interns. Make your workplace comfortable for a diverse work pool. Encourage employees to have conversations related to DEI and provide DEI education and training. Give opportunities for employees to express their concerns about the workplace and actively listen to their feedback. Many interns also face work-related obstacles such as travel, engagement, and communication. Providing accommodations such as breaks, extra guidance, and work from home opportunities will attract more talent and improve work quality.
- **Recruit on diverse platforms** – Diversifying the platforms on which you recruit interns can help you to expand your reach to more candidates from underrepresented backgrounds. You can connect with a more diverse candidate pool by recruiting in schools with large minority populations or on job boards that specialize in identifying candidates from specific backgrounds.
- **Highlight your company's diversity** – Highlighting your company's commitment to having a diverse workforce can help encourage people from various backgrounds to apply for your internship. You can demonstrate the diversity in your company and communicate diversity initiatives in your company's job postings, website, and social media.

Recruitment Guidelines

Identify places that will help reach underrepresented individuals in STEAM, particularly women and people of color – see resources below:

Diversity job boards

- Diversity: <https://diversity.com/>
- DiversityJobs: <https://www.diversityjobs.com/>

People of color job boards

- BlackJobs: <https://www.blackjobs.com/>
- HBCU Connect: <https://hbcuconnect.com/>
- iHispano: <https://www.ihispano.com/>

Women job boards

- FairyGodBoss: <https://fairygodboss.com/>
- PowerToFly: <https://powertofly.com/>

LGBTQ+ job boards

- Out in Tech: <https://outintech.com/>
- Campus Pride: <https://campuspride.jobs/>

Disability job boards

- Recruit Disability: <https://www.recruitdisability.org/>
 - Enable America: <https://enableamerica.org/>
- 

20 Sample Interview Questions

1. What interests you most about interning with us?
2. If someone asked you what our organization does, what would you say?
3. What do you think of our website?
4. What 3 words would you use to describe yourself?
5. What are your interests outside of work?
6. Tell me a time that you had a large workload and how did you manage it.
7. Have you ever had to meet a short deadline? How did you manage it?
8. Tell me about a time you had to explain a complicated or technical idea or process to someone who was not an expert?
9. Describe your experience working in groups, the benefits and challenges?
10. What about this internship might be the most exciting and most challenging for you?
11. What are your strengths in this industry and what are your weaknesses?
12. How will your experience and your skills be of value to our company?
13. What is something about yourself or an experience you've had that relates to this internship that we have not talked about?
14. Tell me about a time you failed to meet a goal, what did you learn from that experience?
15. How do you typically resolve conflict (in the workplace or in life)?
16. Tell me about an accomplishment you are proud of?
17. How has COVID impacted the way you work in the workplace?
18. Where do you want to be in 5 years?
19. How would your student friends describe you?
20. What question(s) would you like to ask me?

Implement Your Program

Now that you have picked an intern, you need to provide a quality program to foster their learning and prepare them for the workforce.

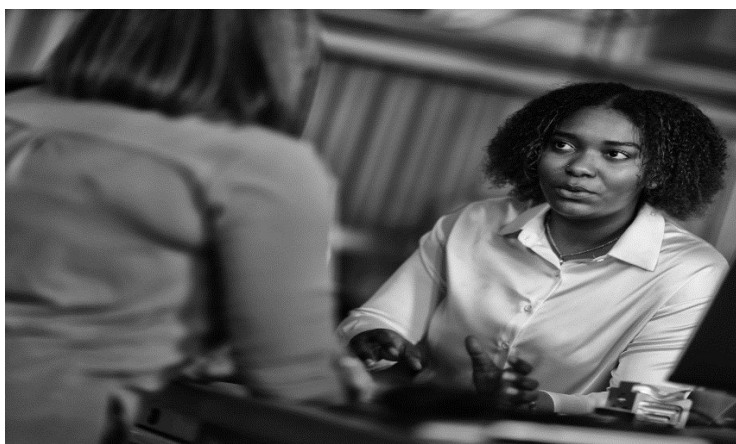
Prepare your intern to work at your company – see orientation checklist

This is your opportunity to share all the important policies and procedures with your intern. In some cases, it may be very similar to the onboarding you do with your other employees. This might be an area where your HR department already has an onboarding procedure in place, but also a way to adjust to fit the needs of an intern. Since this will often be a student's first professional job experience, it is important to explain important policies and procedures. Some information to consider might be:

- Where to park
- Dress code
- How to get into the building
- Time keeping information
- Who to check in with or ask questions
- Workstation and break information, including where they will work and take breaks, bathrooms, use of an office fridge, places to eat or buy lunch
- Computer usage information including email, IT help desk, important company sites
- List of key organization contacts

Not only will this help to make your intern feel more comfortable in their new environment, but it will also give them information they may be uncomfortable asking or had not thought of previously. It is also a chance to review the program you have created with the intern. Some information to go over might be:

- Review refined job description
- Identify main tasks and projects
- Plan and outline a schedule to continue to guide and support the intern
- Schedule lunches and/or meetings with supervisor, mentor(s), and/or co-workers to encourage building and strengthening connections.



Implement Your Program

Create an Agreement with the Intern – see sample agreement

Come to an agreement with your intern to ensure that their work both helps your company and provides them with valuable learning experience. A tracking sheet to create an agreement may help to follow through with this plan. Information to keep track of may include:

- The intern's personal and professional goals
- Next steps to help meet the intern's goals
- A schedule to meet about the intern's work and progress towards their professional goals



Aligning your goals with the intern's will help to show off the strengths of your company and inspire the intern. Routinely checking in will also show that the work assigned to the intern is meaningful to the company and that you would like to see them succeed.

Following through on your agreement

Once you have come to an agreement with your intern, make sure to follow through with the plan you have established, and the action steps you agreed to take. Setting a schedule will make ensure that both you and the intern stay on track for completing work and meeting goals. Checking in will also allow the intern an opportunity to ask more questions, ask for more support, and clarify goals. Checking in will also allow you the opportunity to provide quality feedback to the intern on the level of their work. This is a time for you to provide feedback that is specific, while also providing solutions or more training in areas where they may need support.



Example of Orientation Checklist

Use this Sample Orientation Checklist to help plan onboarding and training for your intern.

To help orient your intern, make sure that you have a comprehensive program planned to ensure your intern understands company policies and procedures.

- ☐ Review organization's vision and department missions
- ☐ Go over any paperwork left for interns to fill out before beginning their tasks
- ☐ Provide intern with important information including:
 - ☐ Dress code
 - ☐ Where to park
 - ☐ How to get into the building
 - ☐ Where their workstation will be
 - ☐ Attendance, schedule, and work hours
 - ☐ Important calendar dates and meetings
 - ☐ Break areas and use of office equipment
- ☐ Review employee policies
- ☐ Go over expectations and overview of internship
- ☐ Give information about staff to know
 - ☐ Important people in department
 - ☐ Relevant coworkers
 - ☐ People to ask for support or to see for training
 - ☐ Mentors
- ☐ Go over intern goal setting and provide intern with supervisor information
- ☐ Allow time to answer any questions interns might have
 - ☐ Encourage participation in activities and events inside and outside of work to help interns feel welcome and build a community
 - ☐ For interns not familiar with the area, support identifying resources outside of the organization
- ☐ Give a tour of the facility and introduce the intern to staff
- ☐ Set up meeting for intern and supervisor to plan goals and action steps



Intern Agreement

Use this Sample Intern Agreement Guide to help build measurable goals and action steps to help your intern get the most of their experience.

Before starting tasks, determine what your outcomes and goals for this internship will be. With the help of your employer, come up with next steps the company can provide you to help reach these goals. You should also work with your employer to find a supervisor to meet with to help track your progress towards your goals.

Intern Name: _____

Assigned Supervisor: _____

Learning Goal #1:
Action Steps – How will the company help you reach this goal?
Measurement of Goal – How will you determine that you have met this goal?
Rationale – Explain why this goal is important to you.

Learning Goal #2:
Action Steps – How will the company help you reach this goal?
Measurement of Goal – How will you determine that you have met this goal?

Rationale – Explain why this goal is important to you.

Learning Goal #3:

Action Steps – How will the company help you reach this goal?

Measurement of Goal – How will you determine that you have met this goal?

Rationale – Explain why this goal is important to you.

Once you have made your goals and met with your supervisor to determine next steps, plan when you will meet with your supervisor to check in on your progress. You should plan to meet on a more consistent basis. It is recommended that you meet at least once a month.

Date	Progress Towards Goal
	Progress Made: Next Steps:
	Progress Made: Next Steps:
	Progress Made: Next Steps:

Evaluate and Grow Your Program

Bring your internship to a strong finish and continue to grow your workforce.

Offboarding

Provide a formal conclusion to the internship and collect feedback to help inform future improvements to your program. An offboarding process may consist of:

- ☐ **Final Presentation** – Celebrate the accomplishments of your interns and give them an opportunity to share their experience in a supportive environment.
- ☐ **Intern Evaluation and/or Exit Interview** – Strengthen your program and learn what it takes to recruit and retain strong technical talent by providing your interns a voice. This is also a chance to inspire your interns to share their experiences with others, motivating future candidates to apply and boosting public perception of your company. Refer to the Sample Intern Evaluation on Page 18 to help guide this process.
- ☐ **Academic Credit** – If applicable, complete the necessary procedures to ensure that your interns receive academic credit for their time with your company.

Collect Supervisor Feedback

Support your future interns by following up with the intern supervisors. Intern supervisors also have valuable insights to share that can help guide how the internship program will evolve and help determine whether each intern has a potential future at your company. Refer to the Sample Supervisor Evaluation on Page 19 to help guide this process.

Reflection

Reflect on whether your program was successful in meeting your company's goals. Internally evaluate what worked well and what could be improved. Consider doing the following:

- ☐ Review intern and supervisor evaluations.
- ☐ Debrief with your team and discuss program changes to implement in the next internship cycle.
- ☐ Determine the next steps for each intern. Will you consider offering permanent employment? If you do not have any positions available now, how will you keep in touch with potential candidates for hire?
- ☐ Track metrics of success and prove the value of your program:
 - Number of intern applicants
 - Number of interns that become permanent employees
 - Number of interns who return for another cycle
 - Number of requests for interns from employees within your company

Stay Connected

Continue to build your intern network and keep in touch with past interns, new candidates, and schools:

- ☐ Share internship success stories.
- ☐ Develop your next internship program.
- ☐ Cultivate your relationships with college/university contacts that support intern recruitment.
- ☐ Start recruiting for your next internship cycle.

As the internship ends, your technical talent pipeline grows – stay connected, grow your internship program, and continue cultivating your future workforce!

Intern Evaluation

Use this Sample Intern Evaluation as an example of how to gather data on your internship program from those who are most closely involved with it. Make sure your evaluation uses language understandable to the intern and covers all relevant aspects of the program.

Aggregate intern feedback to identify which parts of the program succeeded and which parts need improvement for future iterations. Intern supervisors and other involved stakeholders should regularly work on implementing improvements based on intern feedback.

Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Intern Name: _____

Intern Job Title: _____

Internship Start Date: _____

Internship End Date: _____

Please take some time to fill out this form. When filling in your answers, please be specific with your feedback. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

Please respond to each of the following items using the following rating scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree	
The responsibilities you were given allowed you to use knowledge and skills.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Comments:	
You received thorough information on the tasks and expectation of the internship.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Comments:	
I was assigned a supervisor who supported me and answered my questions.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Comments:	
The training I received helped to prepare me for my future career.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Comments:	
The company followed through with their steps to help me reach my goals.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
Comments:	

- 1) Were you able to initiate work outside of the tasks you were assigned?
- 2) Describe the strengths of the internship program.
- 3) Are there any areas the company could improve on the internship program? If yes, please describe.

Employer Evaluation

Thank you for participating as a supervisor for an intern, and for taking the time to complete our internship evaluation form. The purpose of this evaluation is to obtain your candid assessment of your student intern's performance. The evaluation is required for the student to fulfill the program's internship requirement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact: _____

Interns Name: _____

Intern's Job Title: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Supervisor's Contact Phone: _____

Supervisor's Email: _____

Please provide a brief job description.

Please list key tasks performed by the intern.

Please assess the intern on the following skills and abilities.

[illegible]

	Excellent (1)	Above Average (2)	Average (3)	Below Average (4)	Poor (5)	No Basis to Judge (6)
Industriousness (12)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confidence (13)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Initiative (14)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reliability (15)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Punctuality (16)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional commitment (17)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What do you believe are the intern's most positive qualities and skills?

Which of the intern's qualities or skills do you believe require improvement?

How likely would you be to recommend this intern for a full-time position in your organization? (This is a hypothetical question. Your response will not be construed as a real or implied commitment for employment.)

- ☐ Extremely likely (1)
- ☐ Very likely (2)
- ☐ Somewhat likely (3)
- ☐ Not very likely (4)
- ☐ Not at all likely (5)

Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to make?

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What level of compensation is typical for an internship?

A: For a paid internship, hourly wages can vary depending upon experience and the work performed but cannot be less than the minimum wage. Monthly, semester-based, or project-based stipends are also options to consider.

Q: Do interns work 40-hour work weeks? Do they typically work five days a week?

A: Internships are flexible. The hours and days of the week that a student will work will vary based on their class schedule, so it is important to discuss this with the intern in advance. If you require an intern to be available on specific days or during specific hours – or, conversely, cannot accommodate interns during specific days or hours – it is important to make this known upfront as part of the job posting.

Q: How does a student obtain academic credit for internship experience?

A: Credit requirements for internships vary by school. It is the student's responsibility to manage this, but you will want to have a general understanding of what the requirements are and what the student is expecting to get from their experience.

Q: I like my intern and would like to extend the internship/offer full-time employment, how do I go about this?

A: This is at your discretion and is something your organization can coordinate directly with the student near the conclusion of their internship term.



Thank You to Our Team Members

We would like to thank the following stakeholders, colleagues, partners and friends who helped successfully complete this Connecticut STEAM Talent Internship Toolkit for Employers.

Lead: Janice Floyd, **Department of Motor Vehicles**

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Shaun Formica- **Department of Motor Vehicles**

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