

Advances in Understanding Internships

- ▶ What makes for a “good” WIL experience?
Various perspectives



Student Perspective



Student perspective on a “good” assignment

- National sample (2,400 completed an internship or co-op)
- Approach based on socialization of newcomers and psychological contracts
 - “implicit and explicit promises made between employer and employee”
 - If fulfilled, assignment satisfaction is higher and higher rate of conversion to full-time employee

Were promises fulfilled during internship assignment

The following “promises” are listed from most fulfilled to least fulfilled

Respect private life

Pleasant work environment

Provided assignments with responsibilities

Provided feedback on performance

Provided interesting/challenging work

Supervised work

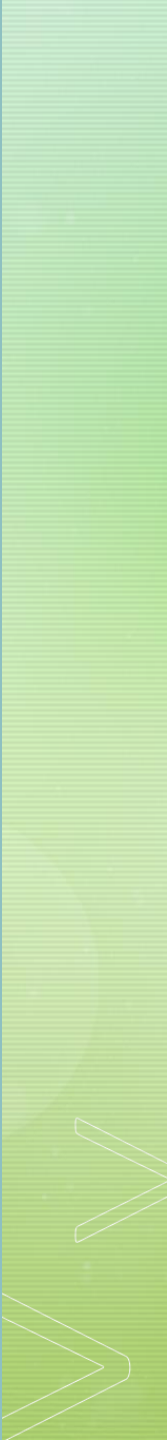
Offered competitive pay

Offered career advice

Provided training



Some interesting findings

- No difference between men & women, type of school, gpa
 - Engineers rated employers higher on fulfilling expectations
 - Health, liberal arts/Humanities & Social Science – consistently rated lower levels of fulfillment
 - Troubling: lack of training – leads to all kinds of problems
 - Confusing: offering career advice – more on this in a moment
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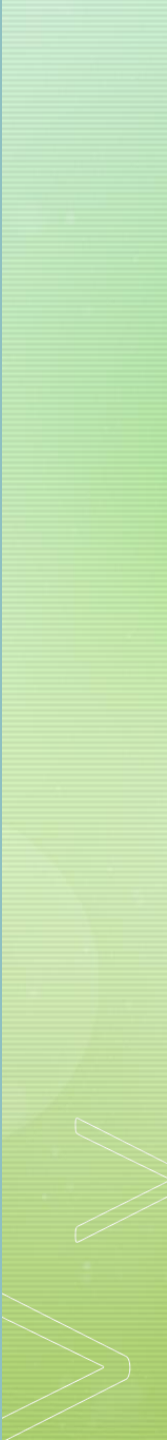
Support from supervisor: critical aspect of any assignment

- Respected me
- Appreciated my work
- Easy to talk to (accessible)
- Responsive to questions
- Provided feedback
- Could be relied on in tough times
- Made life easy for me
- Discussed career opportunities

Listed most supported to least supported



Some interesting findings

- No major differences men & women, gpa, type of school, major
 - Seniors rated their supervisors higher than juniors (likely more experienced & mature)
 - Supervisors from government agencies rated higher than other supervisors
 - What is the deal with discussing careers? From an on-boarding study, employers are hesitant to talk about careers when opportunities are limited
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What about the conversion to full-time employee?

- High level of satisfaction with assignment but accepting a full-time offer not so easy (for employers)
- Overall: reasonably interested in accepting a full-time position; 25% outright refuse. Highest acceptance in Information Services, Finance & Government. Lowest acceptance in Retail and Non-profits
- Employer Obligation: being paid and receiving competitive/fair compensation higher rate BUT sufficient responsibility (leads to higher levels of confidence) and respected me – likely to turn down offer
- Supervisor Support: providing feedback and answering questions leads to higher acceptance and for those few supervisors who do it well – providing career advice



Final thoughts on conversion

- Men less likely than women to accept full-time offer with their host organization
- White, non-Hispanic less likely to accept offer with their host organization
- Interned at a non-profit less likely to accept an offer



Employer Perspective



Employers' perspective on a “good” internship experience

- Joint project with colleagues at University of Waterloo, Canada
- Survey two groups of employers: hiring managers and internship program leaders seeking talent & assignment supervisors
- Asked two questions
 - What do host organizations believe students are in the organization to do?
 - Learner vs. Employee
 - Who benefits for arrangement?
 - How do host organizations define a successful work term?

General findings to Question 1

- Supervisors are more likely to see students as learners
- For both recruiters and supervisors – place a balance on learner & employee in terms of who benefits
- Supervisors feel much stronger that students are the beneficiaries in the arrangement (but the organization ought to benefit)

A more detailed look: two-step cluster analysis about roles and benefits

For recruiters 4 groups emerged

- Employee/learner, mutual benefit -- 34%
- Learner/employee, mutual benefit – 32%
- Learner/employee – organization benefits – 18%
- Learner, organization – 14%

For supervisors 2 groups emerged

- Learner, organization ought to benefit -- 61%
- Learner – mutual benefit -- 39%

High scores indicate student role and student beneficiary

What makes for a successful work experience – the criteria

- Student
 - Genuinely interested in work assignment
 - Acquires knowledge/skills for the future
 - Experience is meaningful
- Supervisor
 - Little training required
 - Lessen workload
 - Comparable to an employee
- Organization
 - Complete work others not able to
 - Enhances company with students present

What determines success?

- In general, student criteria most important and the supervisor least important
- For supervisors: student criteria most important and supervisor criteria more important than organization – can the intern get the work done
- For recruiters: student criteria most important and organization criteria more important than supervisor – brand the organization for full-time conversion.

Implications

- Different messages be sent at different times
 - Recruiter – intern will be a part of organization (employee), paints a bigger picture (motivated by organizational benefits – talent acquisition)
 - Supervisor – all about abilities and quickness in learning – responsible for getting the job done
- Emphasis on outcomes different
 - Supervisor focused on task socialization – getting work done; ignores the broader skills/abilities that can be developed
 - Recruiter focuses on broader range of socialization (social integration, teamwork, networks, etc) – possibly misaligns expectations of the student (work in this area underway).



Utilizing Campus Resources



Utilizing campus resources to reflect and integrate on my experience

- Based on survey response of over 20,000 students (6,000 internship/co-op completers)
- Sought what was expected from home institution: contact, documentation, evaluation & what actually happened
- How students expected and actually utilized campus resources after returning from assignment

“My expectations before setting forth on my internship.”

During my assignment:

Contact with Faculty


Contact with my faculty/advisor



Anticipated	Actual
33% none	40% (C) 46% (I)
40% an email	30% (C) 24% (I)
25% regular 10% visit	16% (C) 16% (I) 14% (C) 14% (I)

“My expectations before setting forth on my internship.”

During my assignment:



Document my learning experience

Contact with Faculty

Anticipated	Actual
33% not required	33% (C) 45% (I)
25% optional	5% (C & I)
42% required	27% + 35% (C) 19% + 32% (I)

“My expectations before setting forth on my internship.”

During my assignment:

Contact with Faculty

Performance evaluation




Anticipated	Actual
13% not expected	20% (C) 40% (I) none
40% optional	3% (C) 6% (I) accepted
47% will be provided	77% (C) 54% (I) received

Interactions upon returning to discuss experience

Interacted with	Expected to discuss (%)	Return: Co-op – no inter. (%)	Return: Co-op – Career progress (%)	Return: Intern – no inter. (%)	Return: Intern – career progress (%)
Faculty	60	56	10	52	10
Academic Advisor	63	59	9	52	9
Intern/co-op advisor	63	37	13	42	13
Career advisor	53	65	8	71	6
Close friends/peers	73	36	18	35	18
Parents	77	31	27	29	31



Interesting differences

- Not by gender, gpa, nor ethnic affiliation
 - Interns with the lowest level of post-interaction with faculty/advisors
 - Business, Engineering & Social Science
 - Interns with the highest level of post-interaction with faculty/advisors
 - Education, Health, Physical & Biological Sciences & Communication
 - Interns with lowest level post-interaction with parents
 - Education & Health
 - Interns with highest level post-interaction with parents
 - Communication, Business, Engineering and Physical & Biological Sciences
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Questions, Discussion & Where to go from here!