



NEW MEXICO

STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE



Summer Internship Program 2022 Toolkit for Mentors: Managing & Guiding an Intern

Toolkit for Mentors: Managing Interns

The State of New Mexico Internship Program is underway and soon you will be Mentoring, working with, and guiding your summer Intern(s)! Thanks to you, high school and college students across the state have an opportunity to get an inside view of the State of New Mexico as a rewarding career path while gaining valuable work experience.

Mentors play a critical role in the quality of a student's internship experience. This toolkit is designed to help SoNM Intern Mentors learn best practices on how to manage, support, motivate, and set clear performance expectations for Interns to allow for a structured and meaningful internship experience for both the Intern and Mentor.



Onboarding Interns

A meaningful internship experience starts with a successful onboarding experience for your Intern. The first few days of the internship will establish the tone for the entire internship experience. As a Mentor, you will be the single most important influence on the Intern's impression of your agency and their employment with the State. Plan for success from the onset! A formal onboarding process is vital for a successful Internship.

Interns need to be welcomed just as you would welcome a regular employee. As the Mentor, it is important that you personally welcome the Intern on their first day of work. Interns may be nervous. The Intern is not only new to your agency but may also be new to working in a professional setting. A warm welcome conveys the fact that you value the Intern and that the Intern is considered part of the agency.

Before the Intern begins:

- Send an introductory email to the Intern with "first day" details.
- Ensure your Intern has a designated workplace, email, and resources that are required to perform their duties.
- Send an email to the agency/department/unit announcing the new Intern will be joining the agency.

Topics to cover on Day One of onboarding:

- Agency's mission, structure, and work environment
- Paperwork, Policies, Procedures & Guidelines
- Building tour if applicable
- Office hours, lunch, break times, and dress code
- Co-create and establish learning goals and focus areas; establish expectations
- Introduction to other team members
- Staff contact list to include names, phone numbers and emails

What is an Internship?

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National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), offers the following definition of an internship:

“An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”

Best practices dictate that quality internships be structured to include:

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a **learning experience** that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The **skills** or **knowledge** learned must be **transferable** to other employment settings.
- The experience has a **defined beginning and end**, and a **job description** with desired qualifications.
- There are **clearly defined learning objectives/goals** related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.
- There is **supervision by a professional** with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is **routine feedback** by the experienced supervisor.
- There are **resources**, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support earning objectives/goals.

**If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate Internship.*

<https://www.naceweb.org/about-us/advocacy/position-statements/position-statement-us-Internships/>

"Engagement with students comes through Internships that build and enhance the students' competencies." National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

What is Career Readiness?

Career Readiness means that a student has attained and can demonstrate the desired competencies (behaviors) to allow for a successful transition from high school/college into the workforce. Employers are looking for well-rounded applicants who possess the knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace. **An internship provides students with the opportunity to develop Career Readiness Competencies.**

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) composed a list of eight Career Readiness Competencies (behaviors) that prepare students to enter the workforce successfully:

- **Career & Self Development** - Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning.
- **Communication** - Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives.
- **Critical Thinking** - Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis.
- **Equity & Inclusion** - Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures.
- **Leadership** - Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
- **Professionalism** - Understand and demonstrate effective work habits among the workplace and within the larger agency and community.
- **Teamwork** - Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work toward and attain a common goal
- **Technology** - Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks and accomplish goals.

Creating Goals for an Intern

To make the most of an internship and allow for reciprocal learning, the Mentor and Intern's first step will be to discuss Internship goals. Goal setting at the onset of an internship is vital because the goals create the framework for a valuable internship experience and allow for future feedback. The Mentor will utilize the Internship Planning Form to guide the goal setting conversation. The Mentor will engage the Intern in the goal setting process by asking the Intern what focus areas, such as **knowledge, skills, and Career Readiness Competencies**, that the Intern would like to gain from the internship. This conversation will allow the Intern and Mentor to co-develop and set learning goals.

Guiding Questions for Developing Internship Learning Goals:

- What does the Intern specifically hope to accomplish during the Internship?
- How does the Intern envision the goal will be measured?
- What actions does the Intern see themselves taking to achieve the goal?
- Are the goals being discussed relevant to the internship?
- What is the Intern's timeline for meeting the goals?

How do I determine if the Internship goals are SMART goals?

We recommend using the SMART goal format when discussing, identifying, and setting Intern goals:

- **Specific:** includes one task that your Intern wants to learn or do
- **Measurable:** tells us how someone proves they accomplished the goal and to what extent
- **Attainable:** the Intern must have the time, resources, knowledge, skill to achieve the goal
- **Relevant:** the goal is directly related to the Intern's job and/or profession
- **Timely:** there is a time element associated with the goal (i.e., deadlines, time frames), in this instance by the end of the internship

Providing Feedback to an Intern

Mentors play a critical role in the professional of an Intern. High quality internships are consistent and rich in feedback for the student. Just like other employees, Interns should be given consistent, helpful feedback in order develop knowledge, skills and Career Readiness Competencies.

As a Mentor, you will develop a plan for consistent check-ins with your Intern.

It is important to schedule a formal, weekly meeting with your Intern. The estimated time commitment for the meeting should be between 1-3 hours a week. Standing meeting provide an Intern with opportunities to receive feedback regarding their performance during the Internship, to monitor their progress of learning goals, and to have coaching and reflective discussions. These meetings also provide an Intern with the opportunity to communicate to you if they feel additional support is needed.

Standing meetings can consist of:

- Process for completing a task
- Talking through a project
- Reports on project/work status
- Intern can ask questions
- Intern and Mentor can discuss how the Intern is contributing to the agency
- Discuss Intern's strengths
- Discuss areas that have opportunity for growth
- Encourage your Intern to keep a portfolio or list of the work accomplished throughout the Internship

Framework for Feedback

As a Mentor you want to ensure that feedback you give to your Intern is useful and meaningful. Remember, the internship experience may be the first experience a student has in a work environment. You may find that an Intern needs extra coaching and constructive feedback regarding work performance and behaviors. You also want to provide opportunities where you can provide your Intern with positive feedback about their work performance and behaviors to keep them engaged, motivated, and to grow their confidence.

Providing Feedback to an Intern

There are many models for providing feedback. In this guide we will focus on the SBI model. The SBI model is a structured approach to providing feedback. Feedback is framed around three components: a specific situation, the behaviors that took place, and the impact of those behaviors.

SBI Framework

Situation - Be ready to talk about the time, the place, and what you saw, so that the context is clear and specific. Connect your feedback to a specific action.

"Great job coordinating that meeting!"

Behavior - Observable action. This should be described in accurate, factual terms. Discuss the precise behavior you want to address.

"You developed a concise agenda with defined objectives and assigned action items."

Impact - Clearly explain the impact of the behavior that you just described. Highlight the impact the behavior has on you and the agency.

"Your agenda kept us organized and informed. It also allowed us to prioritize our project goals and feel confident and excited about the direction we are moving toward and completion of the project you are working on."

Resources for giving feedback

The secret to giving great feedback - LeeAnn Renninger
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtl5UrrgU8c>

Difficult conversation made easy – Joy Baldrige
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TkbHLD5Mnw>

Mandatory & Optional Intern Training Opportunities

As much as possible, you should provide training and development opportunities for your Intern. Providing learning opportunities for your Intern demonstrates your agency's commitment to your Intern's growth and development.

All SoNM summer Interns and Mentors are **strongly** encouraged to attend and participate in the Intern Onboarding Kick-Off and the Internship Summit hosted by the State Personnel office. The State Personnel Office will also provide additional Internship Skill Building and Community Building Trainings. Please ensure your Interns participate in these activities and trainings.

Additional training provided to the Intern can include:

- Skills development training – Promote technical skills such as working knowledge of computer programs, office equipment, or training via ELM or LinkedIn Learning.
- Job shadowing – Encourage Interns to shadow you throughout the week. Interns can participate in team and or staff meetings, observe and even contribute to high-level problem solving and analytical thinking, and interact with diverse SoNM employees and team members at all agency levels.
- Professional conferences – Provide your Intern with the opportunity to attend professional conferences or networking events when possible.

Optional Mentor Training Opportunities

Listed below are trainings offered by the State Personnel Office that will assist Mentors with managing Interns.

All instructor-led classes are conducted over Zoom. Enrollment is available on the ELM system at <https://elm.share.state.nm.us/>. If you need assistance with utilizing the ELM system, please see our ELM tutorials at <https://www.spo.state.nm.us/training/elm-tutorials/> or email us at personnel.training@state.nm.us.

Additional training for Mentors includes:

What's Your Communication Style? (SoNM-1677-28) - Instructor-led, June 28th
This training helps learners identify their own preferred communication style, and to recognize styles preferred by others, strengthening communication skills. Open to Supervisor and non-supervisory employees.

A Guide to Mentoring Others (SoNM-1716-5) - available anytime for online enrollment and completion on demand on ELM.
In this course, you'll find a complete guide to Mentoring others. That includes learning who a Mentor is and what they do, how to lead productive Mentoring sessions, and the do's and don'ts of becoming an effective Mentor.

Giving Employee Feedback (SoNM-1709-1) - available anytime for online enrollment and completion on demand on ELM.
In this course, you'll learn how to prepare for and effectively conduct a feedback meeting, what to do when an employee reacts poorly, and how to respond to common negative reactions to feedback.

Intern Capstone & Internship Summit

At the conclusion of the summer internship, Interns will be asked to participate in a Summer Internship Summit hosted by the State Personnel Office. Interns and Mentors should plan and develop a formal presentation or summary that can be shared at the Summer Internship Summit. The purpose of the Summit is to give the Intern a chance to reflect on their experience and their learning, and to share their experience with other Mentors, their peers, and state agency stakeholders. This format can be an oral presentation, a PowerPoint presentation, or a video. It is up to the Mentor and Intern to decide the format.

Starter questions for the capstone presentation can include:

- What project, specific assignment, or activities did you work on as an Intern?
- How do you feel the work you did during the internship tied back to the agency's mission and goals? And if so, how?
- What new skills, knowledge or competencies were you able to gain or build upon during this internship?
- How was the internship valuable for your academic and or professional growth?
- What was the biggest lesson you learned during the internship?
- Did this experience help you make a choice regarding your career goals? Why or why not?
- Did you gain an understanding of how your role in the department/unit/agency impacts the greater needs of the State of New Mexico?
- Did your internship help you gain a better understanding of SoNM employees' roles as public servants and how they impact the greater needs of the State of New Mexico?

Internship Conclusion: Final Evaluations & Offboarding

Evaluations

As the internship comes to an end, both the Mentor and intern will be required to complete final evaluations. The Mentor will arrange a time for a formal discussion about the internship experience.

Intern Performance Evaluation - A final evaluation provides the Mentor with an opportunity to discuss the Intern's overall performance, achievements, goals, strengths, and opportunities for growth. When giving this feedback, the goal is to foster and promote growth and improvement in the Intern. The final feedback and evaluation should not have any surprises on it given that the Mentor has been having regular check-ins and giving ongoing feedback to the Intern.

Intern Satisfaction Evaluation – Upon completion of the internship, the Intern will be asked to complete an Intern experience evaluation. This evaluation will be implemented by the Internship Coordinators at the State Personnel Office. The final evaluation allows the Intern to submit honest feedback about their Intern experience. The Intern satisfaction survey is designed to assess skills, knowledge, and competencies that the Intern developed during the Internship. The evaluation will also provide the State Personnel Office with insight about the quality of the SoNM Summer Internship Program.

Intern Offboarding

The offboarding experience for an Intern is just as important as the onboarding. Offboarding is an opportunity for the Mentor and agency to show the Intern appreciation for the work that the Intern participated in and completed.

Internship Conclusion: Final Evaluations & Offboarding

Suggestions for offboarding your Intern:

- Provide your Intern with a handwritten card or an e-card signed by all team members in your unit/department/agency.
- Take your Intern out to lunch or coffee.
- Ask Intern to complete a final presentation to a team that includes the Mentor's manager, Mentor, team members and relevant leadership.
- Send an email to the department team announcing offboarding of the new Intern and recognizing your Intern's contribution to the agency.

Exit Interview

As the internship closes, it is best practice for a Mentor to conduct an exit interview. Exit interviews can be conducted in person or virtually prior to the Intern's last day of work.

A few critical questions that a Mentor can include in the exit interview are:

- What type of changes would you recommend for the internship program within this agency in the future?
- Did the internship activities match your expectations? Why or why not?
- Did the tasks, work, and or project you participated in help you achieve your learning goals?

Resources for Offboarding Interns:

Close Out the Internship Experience: Offboarding & Assessment

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/closing-out-Internship-experience-off-boarding-robert-shindell-ph-d-/>

Offboarding Interns in a Virtual Environment

<https://www.nacweb.org/talent-acquisition/Internships/offboarding-Interns-in-a-virtual-environment/>