

Six Stages of Intern Development and Advising Strategies For the Faculty Coordinator/Advisor

Stage One:

Arranging and Anticipating an Internship- What the students might be experiencing:

- Excitement, high motivation, and idealistic (and often unrealistic) expectations
- Sense of self-doubt: “Can I really do this? Maybe I ‘conned them’ during the interview; I know how to be a student, but how do I fit into this work setting?”

Advising Strategies in Stage One- How to help:

- ✓ Complete self-assessment, goal-setting, resume-writing, & interviewing
- ✓ Negotiate a learning agreement.
- ✓ The site supervisor can help by identifying opportunities, constraints, and requirements.

Stage Two:

Orientation and Establishing Identity- What the students might be experiencing:

- Learning new rules, rituals, and subtleties of power and information flow
- Attempts to gain acceptance
- Searching for direction and focus

Advising Strategies in Stage Two- How to help:

- ✓ Schedule regular meetings between the supervisor and intern .
- ✓ Revisit the learning agreement.
- ✓ The site supervisor can help by identifying orientation and training strategies.

Stage Three:

Reconciling Expectations with Reality- What the students might be experiencing:

- No longer feeling like a stranger in the organization
- Difficulty accepting differences between school and work world
- Lack of flexibility compared to the academic setting

Advising Strategies in Stage Three- How you can help:

- ✓ Re-evaluate expectations.
- ✓ Identify new realistic goals for learning.
- ✓ Reflect on the skills and successful strategies already used to become integrated into the work group.
- ✓ Encourage the student to become more assertive about needs and to negotiate with the site supervisor.

Stage Four:

Productivity and Independence - What the students might be experiencing:

- Increased learning and productivity on site.
- Accomplishing tasks and learning goals
- Feeling integrated into the work group
- Receiving evaluation
- Self confidence and self awareness
- Negotiating changes effectively

Advising Strategies in Stage Four- How you can help:

- ✓ Administer an evaluation and/or conduct a site visit.

- ✓ Conduct a midterm performance evaluation using the host organization's standard appraisal format. Begin to prepare the intern and supervisor for the adjustment that will be required at the next stage when the internship approaches closure.

Stage Five:

Closure- What the students might be experiencing:

- Awareness that the internship is almost over
- A sense that neither their coming nor their going was noticed
- Hanging on past the ending date, not sure when or how to leave the project and site comfortably
- Jealousy toward the next intern who will be picking up their project
- Loss of focus or enthusiasm

Advising Strategies in Stage Five- How you can help:

- ✓ Identify appropriate documentation and evaluation, modifying the learning plan if necessary
- ✓ Suggest final evaluative meetings between supervisors and interns.
- ✓ Plan journals, final papers, and on-campus meetings to help interns identify and assess obstacles they overcame, skills they developed, and insights they gained that provide a new perspective on their education, their work, and their future.
- ✓ Encourage the intern to move the mentor-mentee relationship with the supervisor to a new stage by seeking career advice, a letter of recommendation, and other networking assistance if these are appropriate given their relationship at the close of the internship and given the intern's career aspirations.

Stage Six:

Re-Entry and Practical Application- What the students might be experiencing:

- Readjusting to school setting or focus on post-graduation job search
- Excitement to be back in the classroom where they can apply their work experience to classroom concepts
- Finding academic assignments tiring and irrelevant and their fellow students preoccupied with mundane issues
- Renewed sense of independence and flexibility of student life
- Difficulty moving into the job-search process, getting motivated and organized
- Surprise at opportunities that present themselves immediately because of the internship
- Difficulty translating what they experience in the internship into skills and insights useful to job search.

Advising Strategies in Stage Six- How you can help:

- ✓ Remind students of how much they have learned and achieved and how well prepared they are for their careers and for further learning because of their internship experience and their networking contacts.
- ✓ Help interns become aware of and accept their feelings and to translate internship-related skills and insights into useful skills for personal, educational and career activities.
- ✓ Remind them of Stage-Five advice such as getting a letter of recommendation from their supervisor.

Source: *The Internship as Partnership*, Inkster, R. and Ross, R.. National Society for Experiential Education, 1995 (Please come to Career Services if you'd like to see this useful resource.)