

Developing Industry Internships

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Idaho INBRE industry internships provide undergraduate students a pipeline to careers in the workforce. They are often the best choice for geographically bound students with academic potential who do not have access to a research university.

A typical summer internship includes 400 hours of real-world bench time. This is equivalent to 10 semester-long laboratory classes.

Successful partnerships benefit both the students and the employers and can strengthen relationships between communities and their institutions of higher education.

Step One: Advance Preparation

- Key personnel must work with school officials and obtain administrative support. Each campus is unique so procedures for paying students need to be worked out with Human Resources and Business Offices.
- *It is highly recommended that the interns are assigned in a way that they are paid through payroll, e.g. non-benefitted part-time employment.* This generally connects the intern to the proper paperwork and mechanisms for logging hours and receiving pay. It should also provide Workman's Compensation protection for the student in an off-campus position.
- Remember – INBRE can NOT pay through financial aid.

Step Two: Identifying companies and laboratories

- Identify laboratory opportunities in your area. Possibilities include:
 - Environmental testing laboratories
 - Hospital laboratories
 - Winery laboratories
 - Compounding pharmacies
 - Biotech companies
 - Companies and laboratories unique to the local economy
- Visit the companies/labs to view the facilities, to gain an understanding of the work environment, and to identify their needs.
- Talk with potential mentors and supervisors to establish common goals and expectations. Successful internships require a positive relationship between INBRE, the workplace, and the student.
- Be sure to discuss with both parties the steps that will be taken, e.g. an 'exit strategy', in case the internship experience is not satisfactory for either party. Generally, INBRE will mediate the ending of the internship to find closure that is beneficial to all participants.

Step Three: Identifying minimum requirements for the students

- Identify the course work on your campus that provides the minimum background of knowledge and skill needed for success at each site. In most instances this will mean completion of at least two semesters of freshman chemistry and/or one semester of microbiology

Step Four: Choosing the students

- Create an application process.
- Interview the pool of candidates to determine knowledge, motivation, and maturity of the undergraduate.
- Match undergraduates with laboratories and facilitate the initial meeting of the student and mentor.
- Conduct post-meeting interviews with both the students and the laboratory to determine if the match is successful or if adjustments need to be made for the benefit of both parties. Both the business and the student must be satisfied before the internship is finalized.

Step Five: Pre-internship training

- Depending upon the student some training may be necessary as to the expectations in the professional workplace.

Step Six: Communication during the internship

- Require the students to give brief weekly updates about the experience. If the internship is proceeding smoothly, bi-weekly updates may be appropriate later in the summer.
- Communicate with the laboratory and mentor *early in the internship*. Request feedback on both successes and concerns.

Step Seven: Communication at the end of the internship

- At the end of the internship talk with both the students and the mentors. Gather the positives and the negatives to use to improve the program for the next student.

Step Seven: Post-Internship

- Thank and honor both the business and the student.

September 23, 2014