

MCAA Model Construction Internship Program

The MCAA Model Construction Program seeks to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with mechanical construction industry professionals desirous of sponsoring student internships. Internship is a period of service for a student in a professional field to gain supervised practical experience. There is significant value to be gained for student and employer in completing an internship.

To develop a successful internship program requires three elements: a goal oriented student with a strong work ethic and a desire to advance, a sponsor firm experienced in mentoring students and providing successively more responsible assignments, continual care and attention by faculty and industry sponsors to the student intern's progress.

Reasons for an internship program:

- To provide our students with the best construction education possible.
- To provide our students with a sustained real world experience that can only be learned outside the classroom.
- Expose our students to opportunities in mechanical contracting and bring new professionals to the industry.

Objectives of our internship program:

- Familiarize students with construction industry planning, design, and field operations.
- To introduce students to the interrelations among the various tasks and participants in the construction process.
- To expose students to management and communication functions performed within a construction project.
- To aid students in acquiring specific skill sets which will enhance their value to employers and the industry.

Benefits of a successful internship program:

- Students will gain knowledge that can only be acquired real world situations.
- The students develop professional skills and gain industry exposure.
- Upon graduation, the student interns are productive and skilled pre-professionals.

MCAA's internship program is 30 to 36 weeks of meaningful work and successively increased responsibility. In some cases, a 12-week Summer Program of one term is available. The intent of the program is to link a student with the same employer over three summers, although this is not always possible. The sponsoring employer provides a progressively increasing salary coupled with work experience in three primary areas as follows:

- **Field Operations** - Assisting in submittal processing, checking material delivery, timekeeping, cost control, schedule checking, subcontract monitoring, and problem resolution.
- **Office Operations** - Preparing quantity take-offs, vendor and subcontractor contracts, estimating, and scheduling functions. Check drawings and specifications for completeness and discrepancies. Attend bid openings, conferences, take notes, etc. Assist in handling paperwork components of managing the construction process.
- **Project Management** - Perform management, field engineering or office functions at advanced experience level of a mature intern. Demonstrate the ability to accept responsibility and put into practice skills, leadership, and judgment learned in earlier internship periods.

The Internship Process

Assignment

A distinct effort should be made to match the student's interests and personality with the sponsor's interests and characteristics. There is no restriction on geographical location of job assignments. The self-reliance learned by a student being away from his hometown and embarking on a professional relationship is nearly as valuable as the experience gained on the job site. Students are normally interviewed by sponsors in late October and early March and during March through April tentative assignments are discussed with sponsor firms by phone. Final assignments should be made shortly thereafter to allow students time to plan for summer lodging and travel plans.

Briefing and Arrangements

In late March and early April new interns will attend an orientation meeting to be briefed on what to expect and how to establish personal contact with their sponsor. While it is the student's responsibility to arrange their own travel, to coordinate reporting details directly with the sponsor, and to find living accommodations, it is hoped that sponsors help with these matters to the maximum extent possible.

Visits and Coordination

During the summer, faculty members should visit as many of the interns and sponsors as possible. Priority should be given to new sponsors. Additional faculty contacts are made by telephone throughout the year.

Evaluations and Reassignments

Evaluations are requested at the end of each summer from both sponsors and interns. Should an evaluation from a sponsor indicate that a student's performance was only adequate or provisional, or should an intern's evaluation indicate that the sponsor's training plan had shortcomings, faculty will follow-up to address the issues.

In addition to completing evaluation forms, students must prepare a written report on their internship period to demonstrate their communication skills. Sponsors should receive a copy of this report.

Situations may arise where students voluntarily drop from the construction program, transfer to another academic program, or indicate dissatisfaction with an assignment. Likewise, a sponsor may state a desire that an intern not be reassigned for some reason. In these situations, every effort is made to reach a mutually satisfactory arrangement. The university contact for internships should be contacted immediately should such a situation arise.

Elements for Success

Typically, the elements for a successful internship program are:

1. A goal-oriented student with a strong work ethic and a desire to advance;
2. A sponsor firm experienced in mentoring students and providing successively more responsible assignments; and
3. Continual care and attention by faculty to the intern's progress.

With these elements in place, future interns can have confidence in their prospects for success.

Suggested Work Activities for

Construction Interns

Field Operations

(recommended for first work period)

- Working as a helper, clerk, or technician assistant, etc.
- Assisting with drawing process and checking material deliveries.
- Assisting with time keeping and cost control, inventory control, schedule checking, subcontractor monitoring, and problem resolution.
- Assisting with report preparation, safety inspections, submittal logging and processing.
- Observing and recording results of meetings, conducting site tours for visitors.

Office Operations

(recommended for second work period)

- Preparing quantity take-off's, calling vendors and subcontractors for proposals.
- Checking drawings and specifications for completeness, discrepancies, etc.
- Attending bid openings, conferences, etc.; taking notes, keeping records, completing forms.
- Assisting with project record keeping, preparing shop drawings, and assisting with cost control records.

Project Management

(recommended for third work period)

- Assisting project managers and superintendents at as high a responsibility level as practical.
- Coordinating subcontractor activities, verifying work and recommending progress payments, inspecting.
- Planning and scheduling, processing change and extra work orders, preparing requests for progress payment.
- Obtaining permits and licenses, checking zoning and code requirements, designing temporary facilities.
- Arranging for utility services, conducting safety inspections and training, supervise punchlist activities.
- Expediting material deliveries, assisting in documenting and preparing claims.
- Verifying work hours, materials used and other elements necessary for updating database files.
- Preparing briefing charts and formal reports, etc.

Expectations and Responsibilities Of Internship Participants

I. Administration

The construction internship shall be administered by the participating University, and local MCAs and Mechanical Contractors.

II. Internship Defined

An internship is: ***“a period of service for a student in a professional field to gain supervised practical experience.”***

III. Objectives of the Internship

1. To familiarize students with the construction industry and the processes of planning, design, and field operations.
2. To introduce students to the complex interrelationships which exist between the various tasks and participants on a construction project.
3. To expose students to the numerous management functions which must be performed within a construction organization.
4. To aid students in acquiring specific job skills which will enhance their value to their employers and the industry when they embark upon construction-related careers.

IV. Responsibilities of Participants

1. Responsibilities of the University
 - A. To maintain an academic program with a course content focused on building and specially construction and meeting the requirements of the university.
 - B. To maintain a strong link with the industry, to ensure that the construction program meets industry needs on a continuing basis.
 - C. To identify students with interests and abilities in facilities engineering and construction and construction-related fields.
 - D. To assign qualified students to industry sponsors according to career interests of students, personality compatibility, and market concentration of sponsors.
 - E. To designate a specific faculty member to work directly with sponsor representatives in planning intern assignments, and resolving intern-related problems.
 - F. To conduct on-campus orientation of interns to prepare them for working experiences.
 - G. To approve and disseminate annually the basic compensation rates and other terms of intern employment.
2. Responsibilities of the Industry Sponsor

- A. Provide ten to twelve weeks of meaningful working experience for each student intern. During the internship period, expose the intern to one of the three primary areas of experience each year as follows:

- Field Operations
- Office Operations
- Project Management

Sponsors are free to assign field or office operations in any order and of any duration, depending on their needs and preferences. However, an early exposure to field operations is considered to be most compatible with the beginning intern's limited experience and training, and will prove valuable for the student to develop an understanding of other functions that are part of the construction process which will be learned in succeeding work periods.

The intern is expected to be obligated to the sponsor as is any other responsible employee and may be subject to discipline and/or discharge for cause in the same manner as any regular employee of the sponsor.

- B. Identify a contact person within the sponsor's organization with whom the intern can maintain contact over the internship duration, including academic periods, for the purpose of employee development.
- C. Conduct an orientation to introduce the intern to the sponsor's organization and the student's place within the organization, explain the organization's personnel policies, and ensure that all necessary forms, tests, and other requirements of employment will be made, and how the student should request reimbursement for travel and other job-related expenses.
- D. Provide the intern and the University's Internship contact with a description of the work activities planned for each work period and the goals of these work activities as related to the student's construction educational objective.
- E. Pay the intern the appropriate basic compensation and travel reimbursements outlined as follows:

(FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES)

Intern compensation to be paid by the sponsor: Basic (minimum) compensation, supplementary compensation where appropriate, eligible travel and living expenses.

- a) Basic Compensation:
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|--------------------------------|---|----------|
| 1 st period interns | — | \$375/wk |
| 2 nd period interns | — | \$425/wk |
| 3 rd period interns | — | \$475/wk |
- b) Cost of living adjustments to assist with abnormal expenses such as initial travel from a student's home to their job assignment, high cost of living areas, overtime, etc. is left to the discretion of the sponsor, but should reflect American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association cost of living index. (Find this data at: <http://www.accra.org>)
- c) Use of private auto for business purposes: An intern shall be reimbursed on a mileage basis when required to use his or her private auto for the sponsor's business purposes.

- F. Complete an evaluation of each intern near the end of each internship period, and forward the form to the Internship Director.

3. Responsibilities of the Student Intern

A. The student intern has the following specific responsibilities:

- a) Establish contact with the designated sponsor representative at least a month in advance of assignment to determine when, where, and to whom to report for work each work period.
- b) Be a conscientious, dependable employee of the industry sponsor, performing all assigned tasks, and observing the functions performed by other people working at the job site during the working period.
- c) Be willing to travel away from home and establish a temporary residence in any geographical location where assigned by the sponsor for a duration of at least ten weeks each.
- d) Make all necessary arrangements and pay for travel to and from home to the assigned working location and for daily commuting between temporary lodgings and the work site (if not paid or compensated by employer).
- e) Make all necessary arrangements and pay for lodging, meals, and all incidental costs of living during each work period.
- f) Communicate regularly, both orally and in writing, as required by the sponsor's representative and the university's internship Contact, with respect to the internship experience.
- g) Submit an evaluation of each internship period to the university's internship contact on a form to be provided.
- h) Advise the sponsor firm representative of need to provide a written evaluation to university's internship contact at the end of the period.

V. Hold Harmless

The sponsor, as the employer of the intern, shall protect and save harmless MCAA, its offices, agents, and employees from any damages, liabilities, claims, suits, court fees or other costs which may result from the intern's employment.