

Kansas State University

Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources (HNR)

HORT 590: Horticulture Internship

Information for the Internship Employer

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HORT 590: Horticulture Internship

What is an Internship?

The opportunity to gain structured, supervised horticultural experience working for an approved horticultural organization. The internship experience should provide the student the opportunity to develop new horticultural skills, knowledge, and training that facilitate learning. An internship also provides an excellent opportunity to the intern's enhance diversity awareness by exposing the student to different lifestyles, traditions, and perspectives that are found throughout the country and the world.

Internship Objectives:

An internship helps students to *focus* on their education and career goals. Reinforcing the importance of a solid educational foundation is a major outcome of an internship experience. Typically, upon completing an internship, students are more excited and engaged in their coursework. For that reason, it is important that a student enter into an internship with specific learning objectives and goals in mind.

Therefore, the internship has these specific student-learning objectives:

1. Provide the student with practical on-the-job experiences in an off campus, horticultural-related organization.
2. To help confirm and/or expand educational and career goals.
3. To serve as a link between classroom theory and professional practices.
4. Provide job contacts, personal references and other forms of assistance in preparation for full-time employment.
5. To serve as an opportunity to expose and engage students to multicultural experiences that will broaden their cultural landscape. Diversity refers to all of the ways people are different; including individual, group, and cultural differences. Therefore, the internship should serve as an opportunity for students to recognize that a cultural landscape refers to different lifestyles, traditions, and perspectives that can be found not only in this country but also throughout the world.
6. To provide the student an opportunity to grow as a person intellectually and emotionally, and to recognize the strength of individual and collective differences.

Guidelines for the Internship Employer/Supervisor:

It is important that both employer and student are clear about what an internship is and is not. An internship is not seasonal employment, rather an agreement that the student will have the opportunity to learn about the various aspects of the company by rotating approximately every week or two (+/-) with guided supervision and constructive critique. The student will be required to satisfy particular requirements for credit and a grade; a written report; and evaluation of their experience; and present an oral presentation including photos of the experience. The student is required to maintain a weekly journal and photographs of projects and activities they are involved in during their internship.

What is expected of you, the employer?

1. We anticipate you will provide a meaningful experience with sufficient challenge to the intern. The intern is expected to provide work that contributes to your organization's mission and philosophy.
2. Discuss the intern's initial goals with him/her to be sure expectations are clear prior to the internship experience. Discuss and clarify the duties and responsibilities of the intern.
3. Provide clear job/project descriptions to the intern in a supportive learning and working environment. Maintain open communication with the intern.
4. Help orient the intern to the "culture" of your organization. Explain the rules; provide the intern with the necessary training to provide a safe working environment.
5. Help the intern develop and achieve their learning and personal goals.
6. Be willing to host an on-site visit from the academic advisor.
7. Meet on a regular basis with the intern to offer feedback. As an internship employer you will have great influence on the student, therefore, feedback is critical to their growth.
8. Provide an exit interview with the intern to discuss the experience. Determine if each of your goals were satisfied. Share your thoughts on potential areas of improvement for the intern.
9. We ask that you **Complete the Evaluation of the Intern Form** and give this to the intern after your exit interview. The intern will need to include this form with their written report package as a component of the internship requirements.