

Appendix E: Tips for a Successful Site Visit

The benefits of visiting a student at her/his internship site are many. It gives you an opportunity to ensure that the student is having a good learning experience and is accomplishing her/his learning goals. It allows you to discuss any problems or issues in the internship. It equips you to better evaluate the site as an appropriate placement for your students, and helps you to advise future students about that internship. And, it is excellent public relations for the college and your department.

So, what do you actually **do** on a site visit? The tips below are designed to help you arrange and carry out a successful site visit.

- Schedule the site visit at a time when both the student and the supervisor(s) are working. Ask the supervisor to allocate 30 minutes for the visit (although many visits will last longer than that). Ask the supervisor if there is anything she/he would like you to know before the visit.
- Before the visit, contact the student to review her/his Internship Learning Objectives. Ask the student if there are any specific issues, problems or concerns she/he would like to discuss during the visit. If it is appropriate, ask the student to put together samples of her/his work for you to see during the visit.
- Take the site's Internship Description and a copy of the student's Internship Learning Objectives to the visit. If it is a first time visit, also take along information about your department/program and the college (A little PR never hurts).
- Begin the visit by reminding both the student and the supervisor that this is an informal meeting designed to focus on what the student has been doing and learning and to discuss what will happen during the rest of the internship. It is an opportunity for both the student and the supervisor to be open and candid about the internship experience.
- Each site visit is unique and should be allowed to take on its own "life". In order to move things along, think about these as a few questions to ask the supervisor:
 - In general, how are things going so far?

- Is the internship going according to the Internship Description, or have there had to be changes?
- What is in the future of the internship? What new projects or assignments will develop? What would you like to see the student focus on in his or her own development?

Here are a few questions for the student:

- What have you been learning so far? (Don't accept "A lot" as a response!)
 - What surprises have you had about the internship, the organization or yourself?
 - What skills or tasks would you like to work on more?
 - Are there things you would like to learn or do that you haven't had the opportunity to do yet?
 - Is this experience sending you messages about what you would—and would not—like to do in the future?
- At the end of the visit, ask the supervisor if she/he would be interested in working with another intern in the next semester. If so, be sure they know the planning dates and have the opportunity to review the internship job description they have on file with the college.

This list of tips is certainly not a complete one, and there may be nuances with your department or a particular site that create special issues to work through. If you would like to discuss those nuances or anything else about conducting site visits, please contact Career Services & Internships. On the next page, you will find a checklist to be used on your site visit.