

Standard Internship Screening Criteria

Candidate name:

Interview date/time:

Candidate phone/email:

After reviewing the candidate's submission packet...

Did it include all the required material (resume, cover letter, writing sample, or any other posting requirements)?

Was the resume well organized and well written?

Did the cover letter express genuine interest in the position, was generally well written and free of typos?

After talking to each candidate, consider...

Does the candidate have any real-world experience – might be having taken some related biology/food science courses, maybe they worked on a farm or in a restaurant, or maybe they clearly communicated a genuine desire and interest in this job, which tells you they can be successful. *If the candidate did not have any specific comments about the internship or their desire to work for the agency, this could be a red flag. Even if they do not have a lot of applicable experience, drive and motivation can make up for that and give them an opportunity to learn on the job from the agency. If possible, attempt to find an intern who is pursuing a degree that will lend itself to a future hiring opportunity in your program or for your agency.*

Do they have at least one or two skills that can benefit the internship and/or the special project you are considering? *As an example, this could be something as simple as experience in building surveys or reviewing/summarizing data or something as complex as skills in website editing or graphic design.*

Were they able to tell you what additional skills or experience they want to gain from this experience? Do you think you can help them with it during a 3-month time? *If they don't have a good answer to this question, it is a red flag. They should be able to communicate at least one or two skills/experiences they want to gain from the internship – especially if you have provided a job description to them; they can pull from that and provide items they don't have a lot of experience with, or items they want to focus on. Some examples might be the field experience, the online training, policy or procedure review/editing, or even outreach or public speaking experience.*

Do you feel confident in their explanation about getting acclimated into a new job and staying organized and multi-tasking? *Their answers should give you confidence that they can handle more than one task/project at a time with the ability to meet deadlines and give you what you need when you need it. The goal is to create a situation where you are NOT required to micromanage the intern; however, keep in mind that a student intern will still require more oversight and support than a regular full-time employee.*

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Did the candidate provide relevant examples of their experiences and relate those to your interview questions? *Their experience may be limited, but if they can make a connection between their life and what you ask about challenges they've encountered (a proud academic or professional moment, etc.), this is a good indicator for success.*

Did the candidate clearly discuss with you what they view as positives/challenges to different management styles, what is their preference, and can the supervisor work within those preferences for a successful manager-intern relationship? *Think about who is going to supervise the intern and what their management style is like – are they a micromanager, or will the intern have limited supervision most days? Consider what type of relationship will work best for both the final candidate and the supervisor to ensure there is enough supervision for success, without so much that the candidate still has room to learn and grow.*

Does the timeline of the candidate's availability work with the timeline for the agency's desired internship? *The grant opportunity will afford 3-months of funding, but the agency can start early/end later and/or supplement the internship timeline with their own internal funds. Based on successful internships we've seen in the past, a full-time summer internship lends itself nicely into a part-time fall internship when the student returns to school after they've had an immersive experience over the summer. They will also require less oversight to maintain ongoing tasks in the fall after having a successful summer. If they are graduating (not returning to school), is there a potential hiring opportunity post-internship? Do they express an interest in working for the agency in the future, if the timing and opportunity were right?*

Did the candidate ask any questions – were the questions valuable, did they demonstrate the candidate's grasp of the position and interest in working for the agency? *If they don't ask you ANY questions, this could be a red flag. They should ask something (anything!) to try and gain additional understanding about the job, the agency, and/or what they will be doing for the summer. This also demonstrates their interest in the position and a willingness to ask questions and learn above and beyond.*

Did the candidate send a thank you note afterwards? *A thank you note is always a nice touch and it's a positive sign if they send you one after the interview (especially if they already have your email address). Something as simple as reaching back out to thank you for your time and reiterate their interest in the internship shows follow-up and follow-through, demonstrates genuine interest in being hired for the position, and gives them another opportunity to leave a good impression with you as the interviewer. Even if you opt to hire someone who did NOT send a thank you note – it's great mentorship to encourage them to do this in the future. Help them grow for future interviews and make them even more prepared for when they begin interviewing for full-time jobs.*