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Information for Higher Education Faculty and Advisors

OurEarth.org is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that promotes environmental education and awareness. Since 2009, OurEarth.org has hosted interns each summer; and in total, more than 75 students from over 30 higher education institutions have participated, with many receiving course credit (optional choice for the students).

OurEarth.org's Environmental Leadership Program is a dual experience, which combines an internship with leadership training. The internship component principally focuses on the OurEarth.org website and expanding its educational resources and reach across the country. The leadership training involves a series of lectures, group discussions, and activities.

This is an unpaid and virtual internship in which interns work from their homes or college campuses. Although the virtual nature of OurEarth.org's program makes it quite different from traditional internships, OurEarth.org utilizes many tools to ensure communication and learning are not inhibited. OurEarth.org takes its responsibilities to its interns very seriously and it follows several academic guidelines to ensure interns receive a meaningful experience. Included below are criteria and descriptions that further define the expectations and administration of the internship program.

INTERNSHIP SUMMARY

Start Date:	June 11, 2012
End Date:	August 3, 2012
Work Schedule:	9 AM - 4 PM, Monday - Friday (EDT or PDT depending on intern's location)
Compensation:	Unpaid
Course Credit:	Allowed with permission from intern's higher education institution
Cost:	Free to participate

INTERNSHIP CRITERIA (NACE)

OurEarth.org's summer internship program follows the National Association of Colleges and Employers criteria for internships (<http://www.nacweb.org/about/membership/internship/>):

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

OurEarth.org has also developed its own virtual internship guidelines:

1. Many software tools are utilized for communication and project management. These are hosted in the "cloud" so interns have continual access to them. Included is software for interns to sign in and out during the day, which keeps an accurate log of their attendance.
2. At a minimum, all interns participate in a group meeting once a week via a conference call or webinar. On an almost daily basis, interns interact with their teammates (typically 4-5 team members) via verbal and non-verbal communication tools.
3. Feedback is continually provided to and requested from interns. This is in the form of one-on-one discussions as well as anonymous surveys that are distributed.

COURSE CREDIT

Interns have the option to receive course credit if it is approved by their academic institution. Interns are responsible for checking their institution's requirements and making arrangements with a faculty member or advisor in advance of the internship starting. OurEarth.org will complete evaluations and sign necessary paperwork, but all other arrangements must be handled by the interns with their academic institution.