

PROVIDING INTERNS WITH FEEDBACK TO BUILD SKILLS

Connect All Feedback to Skills

When you give feedback, every intern action you address—good or bad—should be connected to a skill. Consider what skill the intern used that allowed them to perform well on a given task or what skill was lacking that led to a problem. Taking a skills-based approach avoids generalizations about the person and assumptions about their intent and allows you as a supervisor to adopt a coaching mentality that provides your intern with encouragement for growth and tools for ongoing professional success.

Provide Continuous Feedback

Providing your intern with frequent, continuous feedback throughout the summer is critical to helping them learn and grow in consistent steps as a young professional. Don't wait until a formal mid-summer or end-of-summer review to share feedback with your intern. Instead, seek out multiple opportunities to provide different types of feedback during the internship. Young people want and expect this—they've grown up in a culture that provides immediate feedback, such as in college discussion sections or online learning environments, and on social platforms.

Feedback should be provided in three different forms:

- **DAILY:** Be intentional about offering quick, daily positive recognitions and constructive notes on opportunities for improvement. Remember to go beyond "Good Job" by using the skills-based lens discussed above to name what went particularly well (or not) and what skills they used (or missed using).
- **WEEKLY:** Weekly Check-Ins are crucial. Schedule a set time each week to review work progress, reflect together, and answer questions that will keep your intern on track.
- **AT KEY MILESTONES:** Finally, it is important to step back a bit to provide broader feedback at key milestones such as at mid-internship and as part of a final performance review. Taking some time to consider the bigger picture at these points helps interns to reflect on their growth over time and to discuss, synthesize, and appreciate what they've learned across the weeks.

Use COIN Feedback Model* to provide feedback to your intern:

Effective feedback depends on establishing mutual trust and understanding. Help your intern understand that you want to see them succeed in this position and beyond, and that you share a goal of turning any potential growth areas into strengths. A good option for providing constructive advice, the COIN method, is outlined below.

C	Context: Provide context for your intern by connecting the feedback to a specific instance or event you witnessed—such as during a meeting or presentation, while engaging informally with colleagues, or during an email exchange, and explain why it matters.	You might start with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>At/During/With ...</i>- <i>My/Our expectation was ...</i>- <i>I had hoped ...</i>
O	Observation: Describe the specific work behavior, good or bad, you observed within that context, using specific and factual statements.	You might continue with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>I noticed you ...</i>- <i>I thought you ...</i>
I	Impact: Explain how the observable behavior impacted the business in a positive or negative way. Or ask the intern to make the connection regarding the instance or event's effects on larger departmental or company goals.	You might continue with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>I felt/That was...</i>- <i>What do you ...</i>
N	Next Steps: Engage your intern in identifying action steps to move you both forward by building on the positive impact or remedying the negative impact of the behavior in the future.	You might continue with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>What would you do next time?</i>- <i>Next time I would try ...</i>

*COIN Feedback Model developed by [World of Work Project](#)