# Internship Guidelines

## Hiring

* Review applications and choose a handful of students to interview. The interview and application are all a part of the internship learning process. An additional goal of the internship is teaching students about what it is like to acquire a job in the ‘real world.’
* Ask traditional interview questions, including probing questions about why they chose to apply for the internship, what attracted them to a job in the water industry, etc.
* Choose a student who has soft skills, not necessarily the knowledge. They will gain knowledge throughout their experiences, which is the purpose of the internship. Necessary soft skills include curiosity, ability to problem solve, written and verbal skills, ability to get along with others, adaptability and excitement about the possibilities.

## Internship

* The purpose of this internship is to give students a broad overview of the water industry. The more experiences that can be provided to the student the better.
* Interns can provide maintenance support (mowing, painting, etc), but that should be a minor component of their responsibilities. The best approach is to provide the intern with a variety of job responsibilities in several different functions of the utility.
* Sometimes interns get frustrated when they are only observing and not “doing.” Let them know at the beginning of the day, or start of a project, how much they will be observing vs doing. If there is a lot of observing let them know why it’s important that they observe, encourage them to look for specific things, and tell them how important the process is that they are watching. Encourage questions and provide explanations. Create dialogue.
* The list below are experiences interns can participate in but are not limited to:

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| * Plant tours
 | * Going out on leak repairs
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| * Observing or testing in the lab
 | * Assisting with customer service or billing
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| * Attending council meeting
 | * Social media posts about experiences
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| * Meter reading
 | * Safety training
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| * Hydrant testing & flushing
 | * Sewer cleaning
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| * Distribution system chlorine residual testing
 | * General maintenance (<20% of time) – painting, mowing, repairing venting, etc.
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| * Well maintenance
 | * Residuals or sludge management
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## Joint Conference

Interns are encouraged to set aside at least one day to attend conferences hosted by your state’s WEA and AWWA chapters.

Registration for interns is typically complimentary. They are encouraged to attend with a chaperon. If arranged, interns may be given the opportunity to present on their experiences and lessons learned, receive acknowledgement, and be able to network with water industry professionals from across the state and nation.