

Analysis of Employer Internship Survey 2005-2007

METHODOLOGY

All Construction Management students are required to take an internship course in which they acquire work experience. This course is typically taken the summer before their senior year. The CM Program asks internship employers to complete an *Employer Internship Evaluation*. The evaluation is administered online by the ISU Career Center. The survey instrument contains eight questions rated on a five-point scale; five represents the high score; one represents the low score. The survey asks employers to rate the interns on the following:

1. Attitude
2. Learning ability
3. Quality of work
4. Maturity
5. Dependability
6. Quantity of work
7. Relations with others
8. Overall performance

In addition, there are seven open-ended questions as follows:

1. Comment on student's ability to relate classroom knowledge to the internship setting. Does the student demonstrate an appropriate foundation for this type of experience, and does s/he uphold the expectations of this placement?
2. Does the student demonstrate appropriate decision-making skills? Does s/he respond appropriately under work related stress? If this placement involves critical thinking and crisis situations, how does the student function? Please provide examples or specific comments.
3. How has the student demonstrated motivation, enthusiasm, and initiative in this internship? Can you recall a situation in which the student really demonstrated exemplary involvement, or took an active role in a project or situation?
4. What are this student's most significant strengths? Please discuss the student's professional growth during this experience.
5. What constructive feedback would you provide to help the intern get even more out of this experience?
6. Aside from providing interns (or helping to meet your entry-level needs), please describe how our University might help your organization.
7. Did the student have an opportunity in this internship to make classroom or public presentations, or act in a capacity to represent your agency outside your office?

The survey also asked the employer to rate students on a five-point scale according to the following abilities related to critical thinking and general education. This section of the survey was optional.

- Finding new ways to think about problems or topics
- Evaluating opposing options or viewpoints
- Communicating ideas by writing effectively
- Communicating ideas by speaking effectively
- Solving complex problems
- Working with others on projects
- Understanding and respecting the cultures, attitudes, and customs of others
- Reading ability
- Ability to think independently
- Capacity for critical analysis

- Capacity for reasoned inquiry
- Making informed and reasonable choices
- Learning effectively on his/her own
- Understanding that learning is a life-long process
- Ability to adapt to change

Quantitative data for the items listed above were arranged in table formats for faculty review. Qualitative comments were listed per student and also aggregated anonymously. In addition, comments that were relevant to the Program's objectives were listed under the appropriate objective. All data were reviewed by the construction faculty who agreed to the findings listed below.

DELIMITATIONS

The survey instrument was designed primarily to evaluate critical thinking, leadership, and management skills. This responds to the Construction Management mission statement which is as follows:

The mission of the Construction Management Program at Indiana State University is to provide the knowledge, skills, and values to enable graduates to become leaders in the construction industry and responsible members of society.

Specific Program objectives that the survey did not address or provide data for are ethics, scientific theory, design theory, surveying, accounting, and finance. These issues are better addressed by other instruments such as the Alumni Survey and Senior Survey.

FINDINGS

The grand aggregate total rating of the students was 4.2 (out of 5). This indicates that the employers of our interns are very pleased with the interns' performance. The categorical ratings are as follows:

Attitude	4.3
Learning ability	4.2
Quality	4.1
Maturity	4.1
Dependability	4.4
Quantity of work	3.9
Relations with others	4.4

The lowest rating is for Quantity of Work, which is perhaps an indication of the students' inexperience. The other categories relate directly to leadership. Leadership is an asset that is learned and acquired from many different sources and experiences. Experiences in the CM Program that can encourage leadership are the course in industrial supervision, extra-curricular activities, faculty role models, and working with peers in class projects. The Employer Internship Survey indicates that the program does not need to be altered in this regard.

The average for "communicating ideas by writing effectively" was 3.8, which is above average but could still show improvement. Class assignments requiring professional correspondence should be encouraged.

The average for "communicating ideas by speaking effectively" was 4.1. This is a "good" score, but faculty agreed that projects requiring student presentations should be encouraged in the curriculum.

No data in the survey indicate that significant changes in the Program are necessary. Please see the attached "Comments from Employer Internship Survey 2005-2007."