

OTAK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Internship Program Guidebook



Internship Program

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OTAK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Otak's business units work together to implement the Otak Internship Program. Otak recognizes that a comprehensive internship program contributes significantly to our recruitment, hiring, retention, and stewardship goals. Our program focuses on intentional learning through meaningful project engagement, mentorship, and cohort development where real work experience is gained.



Business Units

- Architecture
- Civil Engineering
- Construction Management & Inspection
- Environmental
- Landscape Architecture
- Planning
- PM/CM & Owner's Representation
- Project Controls
- Structural Engineering
- Survey & Mapping
- Transportation Engineering
- Urban Design
- Visitor Use Planning & Management
- Water Resources Engineering



CORE PROGRAM PILLARS



Engagement

Each Otak intern will contribute to project work, working directly with a supervisor or manager within Otak teams. Interns are given specific tasks, provided with necessary direction and guidance, and are allowed to gain valuable field and site experience. This project engagement also includes meaningful supervision and regular performance evaluations. Otak interns will always know how their work is going and have the chance to ask questions and learn by doing.



Mentorship

Otak interns are assigned an individual mentor. The mentor relationship is a valuable part of the internship experience and contributes significantly to the team atmosphere at Otak. Our work is collaborative, and for interns, it begins with a strong mentor. This mentor answers questions, provides guidance and suggestions, and introduces interns to the nuances of the company and our industry. Otak interns can rely on their mentors for support and insight throughout their internship.



Cohort

As a part of a cohort, Otak interns will work closely with their peers on projects to better understand the company and the industry. Peer support is vital to the internship experience and provides opportunities for learning and development, skill growth, and relationship building. The peer model of the Otak Internship Program is another pathway for developing collaboration skills that are vital to success in our industry.



Internship Fundamentals



WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?



An internship is a temporary, paid employment opportunity offered generally to students who are studying one or more of the disciplines found at Otak. They are often seeking work that will introduce them to a variety of professional development opportunities. Otak generally hires interns focused on engineering, comprehensive project management, and architecture. There may be other opportunities for internship hiring based on identified need.

WHY HAVE AN INTERNSHIP?

Otak is investing in a company-wide Internship Program for the following reasons:



- A robust Internship Program drives the firm's success in identifying and recruiting talented new professionals, including talent from identity groups that have been historically underrepresented in the industry.
- The Otak Internship Program connects professionals-in-training with Otak employees across our disciplines, provides cohort programming and mentorship, and gives access to meaningful site experiences.
- Internships provide students interested in full-time employment at Otak the opportunity to extend the interview process. This allows the company to evaluate the intern's capabilities before making the decision to bring someone on full-time.
- A comprehensive internship program includes making connections at key universities and colleges. The Otak Internship Program Team build relationships with faculty and career services staff to maintain a pipeline of skilled talent for our future recruitments.
- The Otak Internship Program gives back to the community by providing interns a chance to learn new skills and obtain real-world experience, creating a well prepared and experienced pool of industry leaders for our regions.
- Internships generally occur during the summer months but can happen at any time throughout the year.
- Otak interns can work full-time or part-time and have some degree of freedom to choose when they will work at Otak.

Career Fair and Recruitment Cycle



Career Fair Overview

Career fairs are where our recruiting story begins. They give us a chance to connect with students, share what makes Otak unique, and build meaningful relationships with colleges, universities and future talent.

WHY ATTEND CAREER FAIRS?



- Connect with potential interns and future full-time hires
- Build lasting relationships with colleges, universities, faculty, and career services teams
- Increase awareness of Otak across key disciplines
- Strengthen and diversify our recruiting pipeline

WHAT WE DO AT CAREER FAIRS



- Have real conversations with students about careers at Otak
- Highlight our projects, teams, and career pathways
- Promote internship opportunities and gather candidate interest
- Create connections that carry into future recruiting cycles

REGULARLY ATTENDED CAREER FAIRS



- **Colorado State University** – College of Engineering Career Fair
- **Oregon State University** – Construction & Architectural Engineering Fair
- **University of Cincinnati** – DAAP Co-op Program
- **University of Colorado Denver** – College of Architecture & Planning Career Fair
- **University of Oregon** – School of Architecture & Environment Career & Networking Fair
- **University of Portland** – Spring Internship & Job Fair
- **University of Washington** –
 - » Civil & Environmental Engineering Career Fair
 - » National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Career Fair
- **Urban League of Portland** – Career Fair

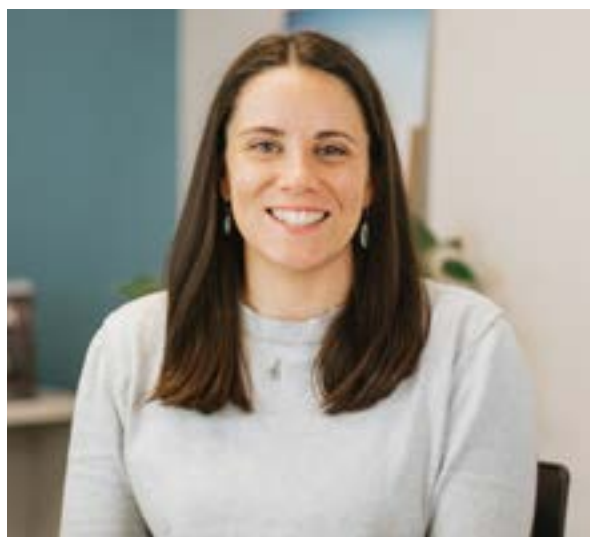
CAREER FAIR LIFECYCLE

- I. Career Fairs & Outreach**
Attend events, connect with students, and build relationships with colleges, universities and programs.
- II. Candidate Engagement**
Follow up with interested candidates, maintain communication, and nurture relationships.
- III. Interview Process**
Screen candidates, coordinate interviews, and evaluate skills and fit.
- IV. Selection & Offer**
a. Identify top candidates, extend offers, and manage acceptances. Once offers are accepted, distribute a survey to understand interns' goals, expectations, and what they hope to gain from the internship experience.
- V. Onboarding**
Prepare interns for a successful start through a structured onboarding experience, including a clear onboarding/training schedule, new hire orientation, assigned mentors, and targeted training opportunities.
- VI. Internship Experience**
Provide meaningful work, mentorship, and real-world learning while exposing interns to multiple disciplines across Otak to support well-rounded development.
- VII. Completion & Conversion**
Evaluate performance, gather feedback, and identify high-performing interns for potential full-time opportunities.

CAREER FAIRS

Career Fairs are great ways to meet with potential candidates face-to-face. Every university hosts careers fairs multiple times throughout the year. The cost for employers to attend varies. There are often specialized fairs to attract specific students, e.g., STEM, Civil Engineering, Architecture or Construction Management.

Otak's Talent Acquisition Team and Internship Committee will research and identify career events at select schools. Schools are chosen based on prior participation, proximity to Otak office locations, specialized academic programs, and designation as minority-serving institutions, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).



INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Many college and universities offer their own internship programs. The process is structured and includes an employer application, interview with students, selection process, onboarding, scheduled evaluations throughout the internship and a post-internship interview. There may be a fee associated for an employer to participate depending on the school.

Other Collaboration Opportunities

CAREER SERVICES

The most effective way to connect with potential student interns is to work directly with a college or university's career services, which utilize technology differently to connect to students. By utilizing career services to connect with students, companies can take advantage of these valuable resources.



- Employers can host on-campus information sessions for students to learn about internship opportunities and ask questions. In some cases, career services will promote the event and drive attendance, with or without a fee.
- Hosting college students at our locations to provide tours, behind the scenes looks at our professionals at work, as well as programming designed to introduce students to technical aspects of work.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Engaging with student organizations, either through sponsorships, mentoring or lecturing, is a great way to get to know the students and, just as important, for the students to get to know the company. There may also be opportunities to act as a guest lecturer. Your personal insight helps students learn more about Otak and potential career opportunities.

Internship Structure and Policies



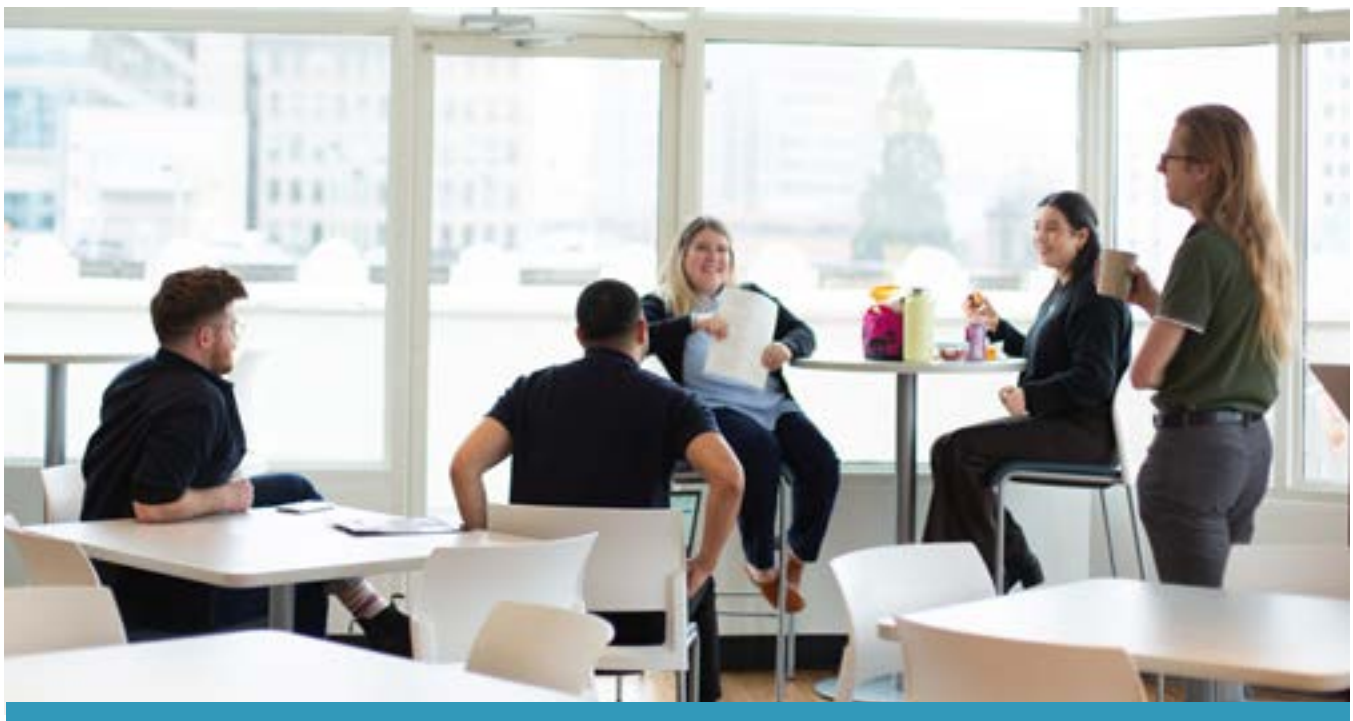
PAID VS UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

Compensation

Otak offers compensation for all internships, unless otherwise agreed upon by the intern and the internship manager. Depending on the circumstances, Otak may offer assistance in securing housing near the regional office to which the intern is assigned.

Course Credit

Internships generally occur during the summer months but can happen at any time throughout the year. Otak interns can work full-time or part-time and have some degree of freedom to choose when they will work at Otak.



Planning to Host an Intern



HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

Otak Internship Program hosts complete many tasks to support the growth and development of their interns. Hosts help secure mentors, identify meaningful project tasks, and create pathways for performance evaluation and support.

- Identify meaningful project work, assign tasks, and ensure interns have the guidance and resources needed to contribute effectively.
- Coordinate support structures, including assigning mentors and establishing clear supervision and performance evaluation processes.
- Plan ahead by defining project needs, expected outcomes, and opportunities for intern learning and professional development.

PRE-HIRING CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to recruiting and hiring an intern, internship hosts are encouraged to ask the following questions:



- What are your specific project needs?
- How can an intern contribute to meeting those project needs?
- When do you need an intern during the calendar year?
- What will interns be asked to do?
- What kinds of projects are available?
- What kinds of support will be available?
- How will a mentor and a supervisor be identified and supported?
- What outputs do you expect from the intern?
- How will these outputs and the intern be evaluated?
- What kinds of assessment will be used to support the intern's growth and professional development?

What Goes into Developing Roles and Responsibilities



Key Components

Position description examples can be found in the Appendix. A strong job description should clearly define the responsibilities of the intern position, required qualifications, systems of support, and accountability.

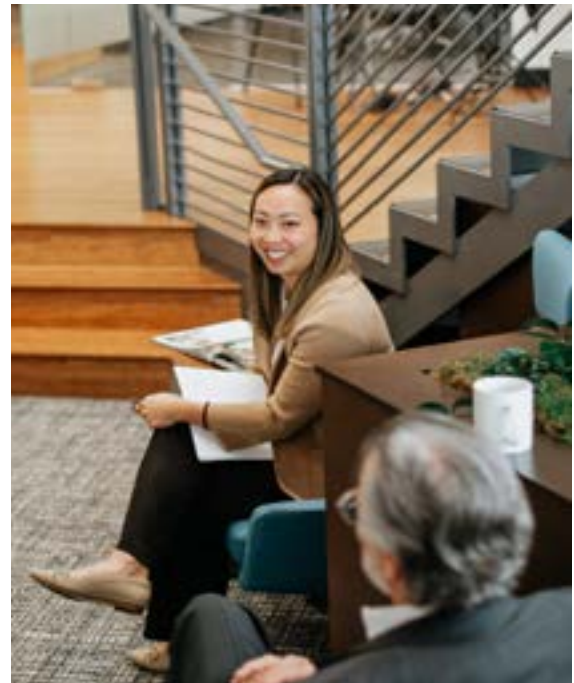
Position descriptions should address:

- Required skills and qualifications for the role
- Daily duties and responsibilities
- Types of projects the intern will contribute to
- Expected learning and growth objectives

Performance Evaluation Criteria

Performance evaluation is a key aspect of the Otak Internship Program. The position description should clearly outline:

- How the intern will be evaluated
- How often evaluations will occur
- How evaluation outcomes will be used post-internship (e.g., references)





Position Postings

There are generally three methods for posting or sharing internship positions with potential employees and the people who support them:

Handshake: A web-based system that is utilized by both colleges and universities as well as firms and companies across professional industries. Otak has a Handshake account and individual staff members can request accounts through the Talent Acquisition Team.

Career fairs: The Talent Acquisition Team and participating staff regularly attend career fairs at colleges and universities as well as other community institutions and agencies. These career fairs are a great opportunity to meet students, potential interns, and future professional staff, while also expanding our professional networks, reconnecting with industry peers, and building relationships with key college staff and faculty.

Professional development events: Our colleagues and peers can help spread awareness of the Otak Internship Program and provide valuable feedback to improve it. Please coordinate with the Talent Acquisition Team if you would like to share or post about the program at a professional development event.





Internship Hiring

INTERVIEW AND HIRING PROCESS:

Internship interviews will help evaluate if the candidate is a good fit for your position.

- I.* The interview panel should consist of 2-3 people. If the intern is scheduled to cross train in other departments, then it would be appropriate to have a representative from their respective disciplines participate in the interview selection. A mentor should be identified in advance and be included in the interview selection process.
- II.* The interview process may include one or two interviews. If the first interview is via Teams, an in-person interview at the assigned office location is recommended. It is important for the candidate to see the work environment and culture of Otak.
- III.* The Talent Acquisition Team will support the development of an interview scorecard to evaluate candidates and capture additional feedback, ensuring a consistent interview process across all interviewers.
- IV.* Once a candidate is identified, the Talent Acquisition Team will initiate the hiring process.
- V.* A compensation analysis will be conducted, and a recommended salary will be sent for review.
- VI.* Upon salary approval, an offer letter will be created for review/approval. The Talent Acquisition Team will then present the offer to the selected candidate.
- VII.* Once the candidate has accepted the position, all other candidates will be notified that the Talent Acquisition Team has filled the position.

Supervising Your Interns



First and foremost, it is our goal to ensure interns feel supported and valued. Supervisors and managers are primarily responsible for supporting interns' growth in their field, helping them manage challenges and identify solutions. A supportive supervisor understands that this process begins with onboarding and continues through consistent evaluation and feedback.

THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE INCLUDES

Orientation and onboarding

- Each intern will participate either in-person or virtually in the New Employee Orientation, hosted in the Portland office.
- Each individual Business Unit and region, in coordination with the Talent Acquisition team, will be responsible for developing an onboarding schedule to set up the intern for success.

Project involvement

- Supervisors or managers of interns will strive to identify meaningful opportunities for the intern to contribute to ongoing projects.

Site visits

- Interns should be exposed to work in the field via supervised site visits and unsupervised site visits, when appropriate.
- Otak will provide a Site Visit Toolkit (hard hat, vest, etc.).

Mentorship

- Mentorship is a vital aspect of the Otak Internship Program.
- The intern's supervisor or manager will identify and assign a professional mentor to each intern.
- The mentor will meet on a regular basis with the intern and seek frequent opportunities to answer questions, discuss career path goals, provide insight, and give supportive feedback for their assigned intern.

Supervision

- Thorough supervision is a key component of the Otak Internship Program. The supervisor will have consistent contact with interns and will check-in on a frequent and regular basis.
- During the check-ins, the supervisors or mentors will provide the intern(s) with performance feedback, answer questions, and provide guidance as needed.

Professional Development

Interns can attend professional development and professional association events, such as:

- AIA
- OAME (in Portland/SW Washington)
- ACEC

Internship Experience & Expectations



- Quality and quantity of work, assignments are completed with thoroughness and accuracy.
- Professional and effective verbal and written communication with all Otak team members and project teams including co-workers, managers and clients.
- Time management, multi-task, prioritize and complete work to meet deadlines.
- Exercise sound judgment and problem-solving capabilities, demonstrate technical expertise and expected knowledge of current skills.
- Contribute to project work with the guidance of a manager or mentor within the Otak project teams.
- Gain valuable field and site experience through assigned tasks.
- Meet regularly with manager and mentor for performance feedback and to ask questions.
- During the final week of internship, interns will conduct a project presentation to the internship cohort.

ONBOARDING

- Complete the internship survey and review the completed survey with manager and mentor.
- An onboarding and orientation schedule will be provided.
- Regular supervisor and Talent Acquisition check-ins.

BI-WEEKLY COHORT MEETINGS

- The cohort meetings bring the interns together under the leadership of Talent Acquisition Manager with the assistance of the internship committee and other leadership within Otak.
- These meetings are designed to provide an environment where interns can connect with peers.
- Cohort meetings are held in-person and location will be determined each meeting with virtual access in other regions.
- These cohort meetings will include the following:
- Time will be provided to discuss what's going well, challenges they may be experiencing, and opportunity to ask questions.
- A presentation from a professional staff member or guest.
- A presentation from an intern that directly relates to their project work.
- Meet and greet with Otak staff and guests.
- Cohort meetings will be held bi-weekly during summer months.



DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED IN INTERNSHIP COHORT PRESENTATIONS

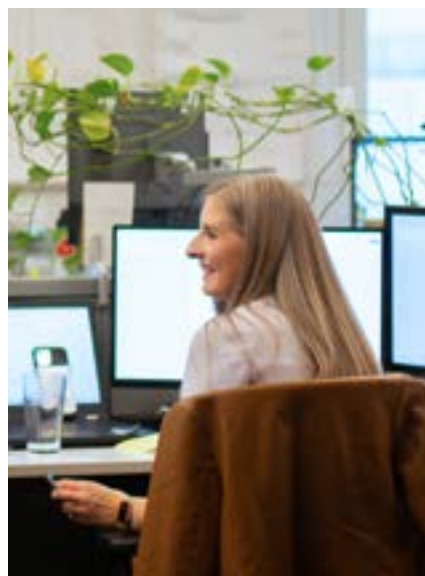
- *Structural*
- *Water and Natural Resources*
- *Architecture*
- *Planning and Landscape Architecture*
- *Transportation and Infrastructure*
- *Survey*
- *PMCM (Project & Construction Management)*
- *Construction Management and Inspection*
- *Federal Business (within Planning and Landscape Architecture)*
- *Executive Leadership*

FINAL WEEK OF INTERNSHIP

The intern will conduct a final presentation to the internship cohort during their last week at Otak. The intern will work closely with their supervisor and mentor to determine the date of the presentation as well as the topic of the presentation. The presentation should highlight work that the intern completed during their time at Otak and is an opportunity to practice the presentation skills that are vital to Otak's collaborative work environment.

Providing feedback is crucial to the growth and success of our interns and the program. A final performance evaluation will be conducted the last week of the internship with the mentor and manager.

The Talent Acquisition Team will conduct an exit interview with the intern and will develop a plan to stay connected with them throughout the school year.



POST-INTERNSHIP

Maintain ongoing communication between interns and the Talent Acquisition team to support continued engagement and future opportunities.

OTAK'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

Appendix

- Sample Job Descriptions
- Sample Onboarding Checklist for Manager
- Sample New Intern Survey
- Sample Cohort Agenda
- Sample Intern Presentation
- Sample Exit Interview

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Architecture Intern

Are you a creative and motivated architecture student passionate about sustainability and design? Do you have a desire to work with multifamily housing, commercial and mixed - use projects? If so, Otak wants to talk to you! Otak's Architects and Urban Designers produce enduring structures and designs. We establish places that are creative yet practical, modern yet timeless. Our experts bring sustainable design and design excellence to every project, from multifamily housing and transit centers to community buildings and everything in between.

This position will support the overall design direction, develop architectural design details, and prepare documents throughout all phases, including the necessary design and jurisdictional reviews.



What You'll Do

- Support the resolution of design solutions during the schematic design, design development and construction documents phases.
- Assist project team with product and systems research, and materials selection.
- Collaborate with project team to ensure design intent and conformance to quality assurance, quality control and best practice standards.
- Collaborate with the lead Project Architect /Project Manager or designated team leader to keep parties informed of progress; recognize problem issues and communicate impact to team, seeking clarity when necessary.
- Prepare client presentations and present design concepts, drawings, models, etc.
- Participate in project reviews regarding project costs, budgets and adherence to schedule.
- Perform entitlement and planning/zoning code analysis to determine density and site yield/restrictions.

What You Bring

- Top tier academic performers who have obtained or are pursuing a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Architecture
- Intermediate knowledge of applicable zoning codes, applicable codes, and implications on design
- Experience with as many of the following: Revit, AutoCAD, Photoshop, Illustrator, SketchUp, and InDesign
- Knowledge about sustainability and integrated design
- Knowledge of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Project Delivery methods
- A minimum of (1) one year of Professional Architectural design and construction documents experience from an Architecture company/studio is preferred, but not required.

SAMPLE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

Pre-Arrival Preparation

- Notify team of incoming intern
- Prepare workstation and equipment
- Set up system access (computer, software, badge)
- Assign mentor
- Develop onboarding schedule
- Prepare initial project assignments

First Day: Welcome & Orientation

- Welcome and introductions
- Office tour
- Introduce team, department, and key contacts
- Explain team structure and working relationships
- Provide security badge/access

Organization & Program Overview

- Review company and department organizational charts
- Explain how the internship supports company goals
- Review roles and responsibilities
- Discuss expectations and goals

Workplace Logistics & Policies

- Parking information
- Workstation setup and expectations
- Office hours, breaks, and lunches

Work Process & Communication

- Job responsibilities and authority
- Available resources and administrative support
- Weekly meetings/check-ins
- Open door policy
- Two-way communication expectations
- Professional communication expectations

Mentorship & Support

- Introduce assigned mentor
- Schedule regular mentor meetings
- Explain mentor role and expectations

Getting Started

- Confirm first assignments/projects
- Review onboarding/training schedule
- Ensure all systems and tools are working
- Set first check-in meeting

Ongoing Expectations

- Explain feedback and evaluation process
- Set expectations for continued check-in

New Intern Pre-Survey

This short survey is your chance to share your thoughts and help us tailor your internship experience to your goals. Your feedback will directly influence how your manager and mentor can best support you throughout the program.

Name _____ **Business Unit** _____

Date _____ **Location** _____

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE - SURVEY QUESTIONS

- To make the most of your internship, what specific skills or experiences are you hoping to gain during this period? Are there any areas within your field you'd like to focus on?

- To ensure a successful internship experience, what are your expectations regarding the level of responsibility, project involvement, and feedback you'll receive?

- To help you achieve a fulfilling internship, what are your top 3 goals for what you want to accomplish during this time? These goals can be related to skills you want to develop, projects you'd like to be involved in, or knowledge you hope to gain.
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

- Beyond your main area of focus, are there other disciplines that you would like to explore or gain some basic knowledge in? We may be able to connect you with resources or projects that can help you explore these interests!

Otak provided Services: Architecture, Civil Engineering, Transportation, Structural, Water & Natural Resources, Trails, Landscape Architecture, Planning, Project Controls, Project Management/Construction Management, and/or Survey.

- What sparked your interest in your field of study? Are there any specific areas within your chosen career path that you're particularly excited about?
- Can you describe a time you faced a challenging deadline or high-pressure situation? What strategies did you use to manage it effectively?
- We understand that deadlines and pressure are a part of the internship experience. What kind of support would be most helpful to you when facing these situations?
- Do you have any preferences for how you receive feedback (e.g., frequency, level of detail)? How do you prefer to receive feedback (e.g., in writing, in-person meetings)?
- Additionally, is there a communication style that works best for you (e.g., clear and concise instructions, open-ended discussions)? For day-to-day communication, what method(s) works best for you (e.g., email, chat, phone, in-person)?
- What specifically attracted you to Otak for your internship? What factors influenced your decision to apply for an internship at Otak?

Intern Cohort 2025 – Kickoff Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025

12:00pm – 1:00pm PST

PURPOSE

This session is designed to welcome our 2025 intern cohort and provide an introduction to the company, promote professional development, and foster connections across offices and disciplines.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Intern Cohort Class 2025 overview and schedule.
- Intern introductions:
 - » Name
 - » Office/location
 - » Business unit
 - » School and year
 - » Favorite engineering structure, facility, or design (from anywhere in the world).

COMPANY PRESENTATIONS

- Welcome remarks - Nico Vanderhorst, Interim President/Puget Sound Regional Director
- Company overview - Scott Dreher, Chief Operating Officer
- Chad Weiser, Director of Federal Business, Planning and Landscape Architecture
- Q&A

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY – ROSE, THORN, NOODLE

- Rose: Something positive or exciting that happened this week.
- Thorn: A challenge or opportunity you encountered.
- Noodle: Something funny or unexpected.

NEXT COHORT MEETING:

- Thursday, July 10 th with:
 - » Sue Tsoi, Business Unit Leader of Survey – Survey
 - » Kristen Ballou, Civil Engineer – Transportation and Infrastructure
 - » Action items

Sample Intern Presentation

Davis Brandt
Project Coordinator Intern

Intro

- About Me
- Projects
- Responsibilities
- New Insights
- Appreciation

Who am I?

What are some projects I worked on this summer?

- Salem Keizer Bond Project
 - Brush College Elementary
 - Salem Heights Elementary
 - Roberts High School
 - Wright Elementary
- City of Salem Mill Race Project

What was I involved in?

- Punch walks
- Warranty walks
- Weekly Observation reports
- Daily Smartsheet report filing
- OAC weekly meetings
- Pre-con and Post-con 360 photos

Mill Race Project

Roberts High School Security Vestibule

What did I learn?

- You can never take too many photos
- You can never ask too many questions
- Always check the project plans
- Step out of your comfort zone
- Stay in the loop as much as possible
- "Spend the five minutes now to save the 5 hours later." – Famous Grant Eldridge quote

Thank you Otak!

- All the Project Managers in Salem
- Grant Eldridge
- Ally Shuell
- Cohort meetings

Internship Wrap-up/Exit Interview Questions

Name _____ Position _____

Date _____ Department _____

1. On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 indicating “not at all satisfied” and 3 indicating “very satisfied,” how well did this internship align with your expectations?
2. What aspects of your internship did you enjoy the most? What do you believe could have made your experience better?
3. Looking back, what do you wish you would have known before starting your internship? Did you feel that Otak provided you with enough information prior to starting?
4. What letter grade would you give your mentor? What feedback would you give them about what worked well or how they can improve?
5. On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 indicating “not at all satisfied” and 3 indicating “very satisfied,” please provide your impression of the following:
 - Support and training for new employees
 - Employee work/life balance
 - Social rapport between employees
 - Otak’s alignment and commitment to social issues (e.g., Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)
6. In your opinion, what aspects of Otak’s work environment have room for improvement?

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503.287.OTAK (6825)

Corporate Office | 808 SW Third Avenue, Suite 800;
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