



Alumni Evaluation Assessing Your Program's Long-Term Impact

Career Internship Network Publications

The Career Internship Network (CIN), a program of the Youth Development Institute, comprises more than thirty New York City institutions with established internship programs for adolescents that provide exposure to, understanding of, and experiences in potential careers. As part of its services, CIN provides professional development workshops for members who run the career development programs. Resource guides and worksheets accompany each workshop to assist program coordinators in their work with interns. This downloadable publication is part of a series adapted from these workshop materials that we want to share with the field. We encourage you to use any of the materials, but please include copyright information on related pages.

Why Keep in Touch with Alumni

Alumni are valuable assets of your program. Collecting and updating contact information is the most challenging and time-intensive part of any alumni endeavor. But once you have accurate contact information you are set to do a number of things. You can contact alumni to:

- invite them to upcoming events and/or opportunities
- request their participation in an alumni council that
 - designs and conducts alumni events for their peers
 - helps to interview each new round of student applicants
 - participates in the interviewing process when hiring new staff
- ask for volunteers to serve as peer mentors for the new interns coming into the program
- survey them about the possible long-term impact of the internship on their lives

Assessing If Your Internship Had a Long-term Impact

Career development internship programs frequently want to ask the question: *What impact if any, did the internship have on the lives of students after they*

completed the program? The rest of this document offers some ideas about how you might go about this endeavor.

Attached sections:

Section A. Sample Alumni Questionnaire

The sample questionnaire is designed to provide you with relevant feedback from alumni on both where these young people are in their lives and what, if any, impact the program has had on them since leaving the internship. You can mail and/or email it to alumni for written responses or you can conduct the interviews by telephone or in person. The latter, of course, is more time consuming and not recommended if you want to look at a large number of alumni.

Section B. Instructions for Building an Alumni Assessment Database

Gathering your data is the first step of an alumni assessment, but how you store and organize it is key to what sort of sound information you will likely be able to discern from it. The database example is quite straightforward and can easily be done in Excel or other database program.

Section A. Sample Alumni Questionnaire

Dear Alumni:

We would love to hear from you about your experience since leaving the internship program in order to learn more about how effective we are. Please complete this questionnaire *thoroughly* and *thoughtfully*; we want to know what you *truthfully* feel about the program's impact on your life since you left. But, **before** you start filling out the questionnaire, please take a few moments to sit quietly and think back to your *entire* internship experience, and then begin. If you need more space to write, continue on the back of the paper. Don't hesitate to call or email with questions or comments.

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Please give us some basic information

Name _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Female _____ Male _____ Age _____

how many years as an intern _____

which year[s] _____

grade level(s) at time _____

2. Please check off where you are in your life now:

currently in high school

graduated high school

received GED

applying/ied for college (where: _____)

attend(ed) college (where: _____)

plan to go straight from high school to a job

have a job in my chosen career without going to college

(name of job/career: _____)

B. IMPACT OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ON YOUR LIFE

3. How did your internship experience affect you after leaving the program?: (please check off and carefully answer *all* that apply)

approach to or experience with your school work (please explain)

plans for further education after high school (please give an *example*)

choosing a job/career (please explain)

4. Please complete **all 3 parts** of the following sentence starter:

What has stayed with me most since the internship ended was...

because...

This makes me think...

5. In the **left-hand** column check off any of the skills you learned **DURING** the program.

In the **right-hand column**, please give an example of any of the skills you gained from the internship that you have applied **AFTER** completing the program.

During & After Skill Chart

<i>GAINED IN PROGRAM</i>	<i>USED AFTER PROGRAM EXAMPLES</i>
Being a good employee (punctuality, attendance, quality work) ____	
How to apply for a job and/or college ____	
Person-to person communication ____	
Public Speaking ____	
Time-management ____	
Working well with others ____	
Conflict resolution ____	
Leadership in a group ____	
Self initiative, taking action on your own ____	
Problem solving ____	

Section B. Instructions for Building an Alumni Assessment Database

You need to build your alumni assessment database at the same time as you develop your questionnaire otherwise you will not be able to easily manage the data you receive. Before you begin you must have already collected recent and correct contact information for your alumni. (Tip: Every time you reach alumni ask them if they have contact information for anyone else they knew in the program. Also, ask the school internship coordinator if she or he has any updated information, such as if and where a student might have gone to college or moved. You should also try popular chat rooms and websites youth frequently use.)

Step 1: Determine Goals

Carefully consider and identify, *Why* do we want to undertake this assessment? How will the audience and purpose influence the questions we ask and the database format?+

Step 2: Devise Your Questionnaire¹

Thoroughly consider what type of information you want to collect and how you will use it. Check to make sure that the data you are asking for is related to your program goals. (Note the earlier sample questionnaire in this file may not meet your needs.)

Step 3: Identify Database Fields to Correspond to Each of Your Separate Questionnaire Items

Look back at the questions in the sample questionnaire above. Note that there is a *separate* field for each of the items in the form.

Alumni Database Fields

First Name	Last Name	Contact information	Impact once completed: regarding school work	Impact once completed: regarding more education	Impact once completed: regarding job/career	What has stayed with me most since the internship ended was... because... <i>This makes me think...</i>	Codes for themes	During & After Skill Chart	Codes for themes
Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5	Field 6	Field 7	Field 8	Field 9	Field 10

¹ Tip: If possible use websites such as <http://www.surveymonkey.com/> to put your questionnaire up on the web for alumni to answer directly. This sort of website organizes and in some cases analyzes your data for you.

Step 4: Collecting and Sorting the Data

A. To Begin

- . determine who will collect, input, and interpret data²
- . devise methods of data collection³

B. Updated Contact Information (Fields 1-3)

- . contact intern using address/phone/email from original application
- . contact guardians and/or school (information from original paperwork)
- . ask other alumni from same cohort for any contact information of others
- . ask mentors for possible information/leads for their past interns

C. Impact of the Program After Completing (Fields 4-6)

- . transcribe information from emails, conversations, and/or hardcopy documents into database fields about the impact of the program on students' school work, continuing education choices, and/or jobs.

D. Description of Biggest Impact (Field 7)

- . enter the qualitative information that alumni report about the program's most significant impact on their lives after they left.

E. Codes for Themes (Field 8)

- . after you have entered all the data for each responder, look down the field 7 column. On a hard copy of the database, circle themes and patterns that keep appearing throughout the data in column 7. Give each theme a separate code (such as %A+ for the impact of working one-on-one with a mentor). Enter the code into field 8. Now you can call out all the %A+s across the program at once to see what impact you had in the working-with-a-mentor arena for all interns.

F. During & After Skill Chart (Field 9)

- . enter the skills alumni say they gained during the program and they applied after completing it.

G. Codes for Themes (Field 10)

- . repeat the process of determining patterns and themes within the qualitative data and applying relevant codes to signify each one.

² Tips:

- . One person should be responsible for collecting and inputting the data. College or nonprofit administration graduate school students are often good candidates for this concentrated project.
- . Persistence is everything, calling, recalling, re-emailing, and trying every lead.
- . Call in the *evening* when students are more likely to be home.

³ Tip: to gain the highest response rate possible, provide incentives such as a raffle with the prize being a sum of money that can be used toward college-related expenses.

Step 5: Data Analysis

You have sorted the data by inputting the information into its respective field and *coding* the qualitative reflection responses. This time consuming piece is crucial in order to let you analyze the data you have collected. Carefully examine your coded data and make notes of what patterns or themes you see. Do NOT interpret the information yet. You are solely making objective observations.

Step 6: Interpretation

Step back and take a look at what your analysis appears to indicate. You can NOT claim that your program definitely caused a particular outcome after the program. However, you can say in your report that there was a correspondence between your results and the particular outcomes you were looking to achieve.

Step 7: Reporting & Disseminating

Make your findings official by writing a report. The report should outline your program and its goals, and briefly describe the method you used to go about your alumni assessment. Then present your results and describe recommendations for changes in your program you might now make in response to your findings.