



SCIP INTERVIEW/HIRING GUIDE

Hiring the best intern to meet your mission

SCiP

Serving Communities
Internship Program



**VOLUNTEER
ALBERTA**

The Serving Communities Internship Program (SCiP) provides Alberta's nonprofits with the opportunity to bring in new expertise that can help achieve their missions. By participating in this program, nonprofit organizations can tap into the skills and mindsets of Alberta post-secondary students that are interested in making a difference in their communities.

For more information on how you can plan and create internships and support interns, check out the SCiP Guidebook.

How do you hire the best intern to support your mission?

In order to find the best student to fill your internship position it is important to interview potential applicants. An effective interview process can support successful internships. It is good practise to follow the same screening process for interns as you do for volunteers or employees. Tasks, responsibilities and risks of the position determine the degree of screening necessary, regardless of whether a person is an intern, volunteer, or employee.

If you have established screening practices, that is great! If not, you may want to consider reviewing Volunteer Alberta's Volunteer Screening Program which offers education and development grants to support nonprofits to establish screening processes. Remember, interviewing is one step in Volunteer Canada's 10 Steps to Screening and you can find more information in the Volunteer Canada Screening Handbook.

Purpose of Interviews

In order to make an internship placement or project successful, organizations need be supported by the right people. Interviewing employees is vital to ensure that they have the right skills, shared expectations for the position, and are the best fit for your organization. Sometimes following complete screening processes and conducting interviews with interns and other volunteers can be difficult to prioritize, even though it can have wonderful benefits.

Focus interviews on learning more about:

- skill set and expertise
- establishing understanding of the organization's mission
- work experience/performance history
- education/career/volunteer trajectory

Remember, applicants for SCiP internships have specialized knowledge from their academic experiences and are seeking professional experience to help them in their careers after they graduate. Consider and ask about how their educational background and skillset might help improve your organization's capacity while building their experience and resume.

Important Note: Up to 10% of SCiP interns are International students, while many others are newcomers to Canada or first generation immigrants. This means you may be interviewing people with different cultural norms. For more information on navigating this space NorQuest College has created an excellent resource to help people in Human Resources: Diversity at Work: Intercultural Solutions, Navigating the Interview.

Before the Interview:

Plan

Start with the end in mind. If you know what you want from the internship, and can visualize the successful applicant, the interview will help you get there.

Some questions to ask yourself or other staff before the interview are:

- What qualifications, skills, abilities, and knowledge does the successful applicant need?
- What kind of experience do you want you applicant to have?
- What style of interview would you like to have?
- What other questions should you ask?

Communicate

Professional communication with applicants is important throughout your screening and hiring processes, this is also part of the learning experience for students. Plan to be communicating with applicants during the hiring process, from when you contact your candidate to invite them to the interview to your off-boarding process at the end of their time with you. Ensure you are professional, and clear, always setting clear expectations, providing what information they need, and be clear about the hiring process so applicants know what to expect.

Research

Have an idea of who you are interviewing before they walk in the door. Respect for privacy should always be top of mind though, and it is important to understand the difference between public and private information.

Check out The Volunteer Alberta Website and the Government of Alberta for more information.

Review

The day of the interview be sure you review the job advertisement, role description and the applicant's resumes, as well as any other applicable information.

During the Interview

It can be beneficial to think of interviews as a conversation. The applicant will want to learn more about the internship, the people they will be working with, and what your organization is really like. In turn, you should be able to glean what kind of experience the student is seeking, and from there you can determine whether their expectations match yours.

Remember, this could be a first professional experience for the applicant, and they may be nervous. Helping them feel comfortable can contribute to the student being better able to highlight their skills and experiences.

At the beginning of the interview, it is important to ensure all the information you have is correct, and for the SCiP program it is important to ensure the applicant is eligible. Students are responsible for ensuring their own eligibility; however this is not confirmed until they are hired by an organization.

Before you begin interviewing the applicant, give an overview of your organization, the internship responsibilities and expectations, and explain the hiring process you will follow. This is the opportunity to provide clarity and is a chance for the applicant to ask questions about the internship.

As you are conducting the interview, be sure to take notes. It will help in creating follow up questions, or skipping questions the applicant has answered as part of another question, and most importantly in reviewing your applicant and making decisions. It is a good idea to ask for references, these could be from other volunteer positions or faculty if the student does not have past work experience.

A useful tool to help in getting to know interns, volunteers, and even staff is the Window of Work. You may even want to apply this tool as part of the interview process, or in the development of projects and internship positions.

After the Interview:

The interview process is not over when you finish the interview! You still need to complete the applicant review, follow-up with applicants, complete reference checks and any other screening as appropriate for the position, and determine any changes to the scope of the internship based on discussions with the intern.

Remember, if an applicant is not the best fit for the current position they could be a great fit for another project, internship, position, or even be a good match for a role at another organization! Stay in touch with your network and consider referring potential volunteers to other organizations as applicable. An interview is not just an interview for a single position, but an individual making an effort to engage with your organization and should be an important part in your people engagement strategy.

For more information on these topics and additional resources check out Volunteer Alberta's Interview Resource.



10 Resources in this Guide to Help you!

- How to Get Started with SCiP for your organization: SCiP Guidebook
- Volunteer Canada's 10 Steps to Screening Website
- Volunteer Canada Screening Handbook
- Volunteer Alberta's Volunteer Screening Program
- Norquest College's Diversity at Work: Intercultural Solutions, Navigating the Interview.
- Volunteer Alberta's SCiP Professional communication guide
- Volunteer Alberta Blog Post on 4 best practices for Privacy Protection
- Government of Alberta Protecting Personal Information: A workbook for non-profit organizations
- Volunteer Alberta's Window of Work Tool
- Volunteer Alberta's Interview Resource

QUESTIONS?

For questions specifically pertaining to the Serving Community Internship Program (SCiP), please contact scip@volunteeralberta.ab.ca

For general inquiries, please contact volab@volunteeralberta.ab.ca.