

TIME TO GET REAL

A GUIDE TO HOSTING KUCD INTERNS

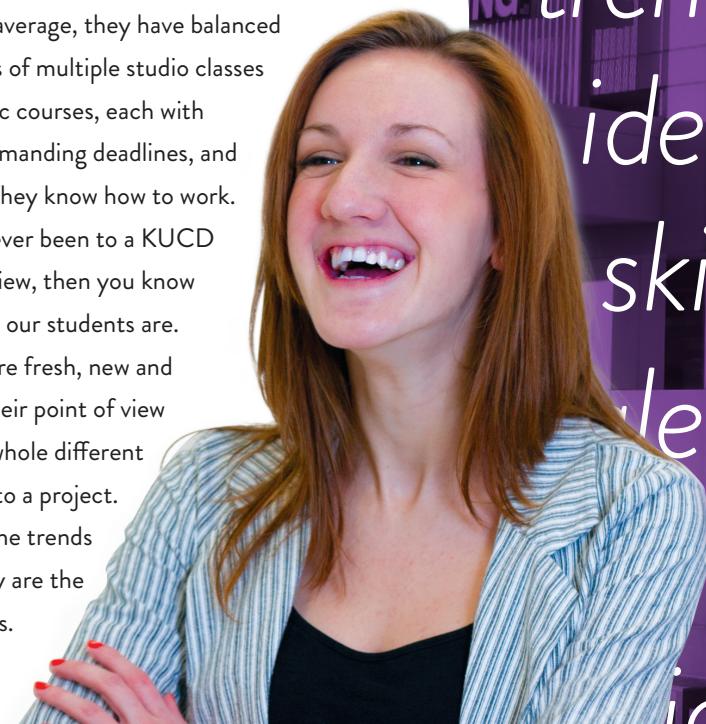


TIME TO GET REAL

Kutztown University Communication Design (KUCD) produces some of the finest designers in the field. We like to think it is because we treat our students like real designers from the start and expect professionalism throughout their experience. The capstone of that experience is our internship program.

At its best, a KUCD internship is beneficial to both the intern, and the design firm. The benefits to the student are probably a little clearer. They get to hang out with real-world designers and put everything they have been learning into practice. They finally get to work with real live art directors, fill out job-sheets, and meet the infamous “clients.” They can begin to understand the challenges that come in a real design studio whose purpose is not only to make effective and beautiful design, but also to prosper as a business. And, if they are lucky, they will learn the thrill of holding their first real printed piece in their hands and smelling the ink, or they’ll get to see their first real website up and running. It is so much more than a bullet point for their resume that isn’t just waitress, cashier, or camp counselor. It’s their first big toe in the real world.

Design studios that use KUCD interns get eager young creatives – real designers who have a solid foundation in the fundamentals of typography, layout, design and idea generation. By the time they are ready to go out on internship, they have completed at least three years of our program and have begun to concentrate in either graphic design, advertising or interactive design. They have real skills, both digital and traditional to bring to the table. Since they are required to have a 3.0 grade point average in their CD classes to qualify for an internship, we only send out our best students, and they are used to hard work. In order to earn that grade point average, they have balanced the demands of multiple studio classes and academic courses, each with their own demanding deadlines, and professors. They know how to work. If you have ever been to a KUCD portfolio review, then you know how creative our students are. Their ideas are fresh, new and inventive. Their point of view can bring a whole different perspective to a project. They know the trends because they are the trend-setters.



GET REAL INTERNS HERE

By choosing a KUCD intern, you are joining the ranks of hundreds of studios who have made the same wise choice. Our students have a reputation of excellence and creativity.

KUCD interns are typically seniors. Summer interns are juniors who will be seniors or “super seniors” who are taking a little extra time to finish. In return for their work, they get 10 credits toward the KUCD degree.

Students who are going on internship must have a minimum of a B average in all of their KUCD courses. They will have completed at least two levels of concentration courses and have a solid foundation in both print and interactive design basics.

The students who are eligible will fill out a detailed questionnaire with questions designed to pinpoint their career goals. We will also look at their work to determine their styles, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the internship coordinator (who has likely had the interns in class at least once) will confer with KUCD faculty to try to make the best match between intern and internship.



“KUCD taught me to be a designer. Whether it's web, print, or mobile, one thing stays true: good design comes from knowing the fundamentals.”

TODD COLEMAN / 1998

“KUCD not only taught me design, but they taught me the power of an idea.”

JACKIE WHITMOYER / 2002

REAL SERIOUS

To make this a real, rewarding, professional experience for our students and their intern providers, we take the placement process very seriously. Here's how it works:

1. Let us know exactly what kind of intern you are looking for. You can be pretty picky, we'll do our best to send you someone who has just the right skill set and personality for your staff.



2. We'll contact you to set up a meeting. We'd like to visit your office, see the kind of work you do and meet your staff to be sure we assign you just the right intern, and to make sure the experience will be of the quality we expect. If all goes well, we'll sign a contract and start the process of placing an intern in your studio.

3. We will assign you an intern at the next possible opportunity. You will receive a letter from us with their name and basic information. About two weeks before the internship, you should be contacted by the student to set up an interview. The student will bring you an informal portfolio (most of them have not had portfolio class yet) and you'll get a chance to meet them and make sure it is a good fit. It generally is.

4. They come to work. Our internship program lasts about 8 weeks and follows the KU academic calendar for half semester courses. So for instance, a first-half fall intern would start on the first day of classes and finish on the date of the midterm. The second-half intern would start the next day and finish the last day of regular classes. Interns work the same hours you do, generally, 40 hours a week for the duration of their internship.



5. They do an internship project that is a part of their grade. The form of it may change from semester to semester, but it will always be some sort of reflection of the work they did as an intern in your studio. If your work flow slows down and you don't have much for them to do, you can always mentor them through their internship project, but they are really expected to produce the project on their own time .

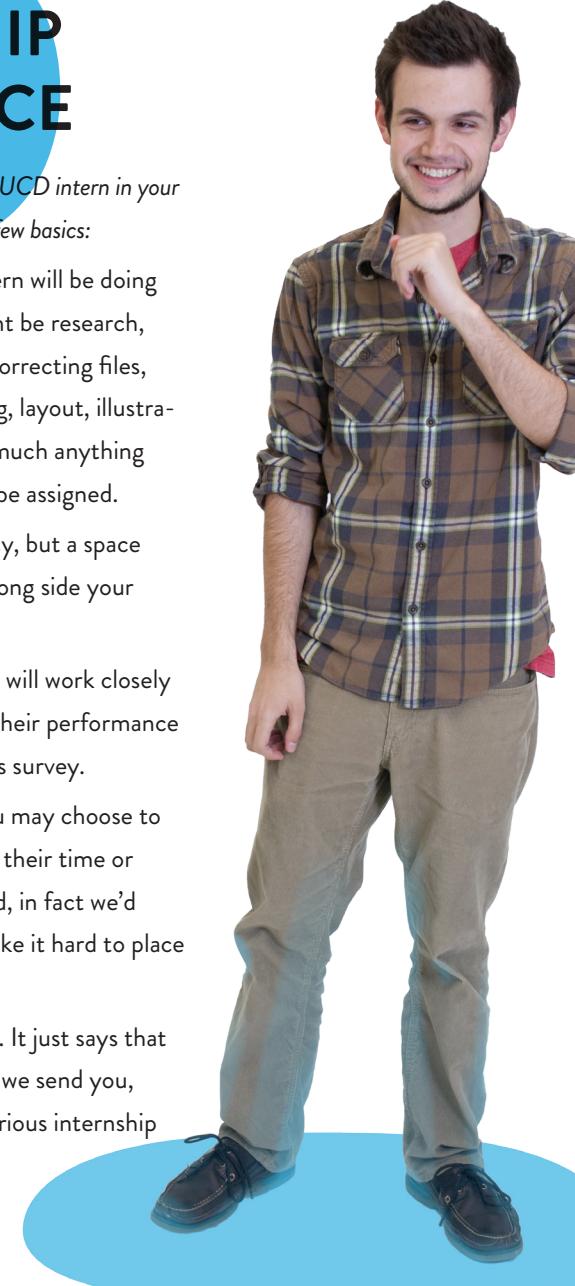
QUALITY INTERNSHIPS
PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE STEPPING STONE TO
WARDS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CREATE
CONTINUITY WITHIN THE DESIGN PROFESSION
WE THANK THOSE WHO OPEN THEIR DOORS TO YOUNG DESIGNERS AND GENEROUSLY SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF DESIGN PRACTITIONERS

[HTTP://WWW.AIGA.ORG/A-GUIDE-TO-INTERNSHIPS/](http://www.aiga.org/a-guide-to-internships/)

A REAL INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

If you are interested in having a KUCD intern in your studio, you will need to provide a few basics:

- an experience where the intern will be doing actual design work. This might be research, idea generation, sketching, correcting files, image manipulation, comping, layout, illustration, website design, pretty much anything that a junior designer might be assigned.
- a place to work, nothing fancy, but a space where they can work right along side your regular design staff.
- a supervisor and mentor who will work closely with the student and assess their performance through a scheduled progress survey.
- compensation – or not – you may choose to compensate your interns for their time or mileage, but it is not required, in fact we'd rather not know, it might make it hard to place students fairly.
- a signature on KU's contract. It just says that if you accept the intern that we send you, you'll provide them with a serious internship experience for the entire internship period.



REAL CONCERNS

If we sign up for an intern, can we get a few students to choose from? We send out about 50 interns each year. That's a lot of interviews. We have streamlined the process by acting as your HR department for interns. Our internship program is about 30 years old, and we have a pretty good track record for placement. Many of our students have online work that you can check out if you like before you agree to take them on.

What if we don't like the intern you send us?

Try to stick it out for the eight weeks. Since the students will get a grade, be sure that your review reflects the issues. Turn the situation into a teaching opportunity and have a conversation with the student about their performance. Give us a call and let us know what went wrong so we can address it too.

What if business slows down and we don't have enough work to keep the intern busy?

You can ask the student to concept for a future project, a pro-bono job, or make up a mock project and mentor them through it as if it were real. You might also encourage them to work on their internship project and help them with that. Interns can be put to work archiving and organizing files (paper or digital), fonts, and other day-to-day studio tasks.



Can we get an intern every single half-semester?

Maybe. We place our interns based on their skill set, interests, and preference of location. We'll only send you an intern if we have the perfect fit.

What if we need to take a break from the internship program?

Just let us know. When you are ready to host again, we'll get you right back on the list.

How should we compensate our interns? There are lots of opinions about this. Honestly, if the interns are doing work that is billable it seems only fair that they would be compensated. But some internships don't really work out that way. Visit <http://www.aiga.org/be-smart-about-student-internships/> for good advice, or feel free to discuss it with the KU internship coordinator, she will have options and ideas for lots of situations.



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