

# Create an Internship

Career Services supports internships by connecting students with employers and serving as a resource for helping employers in the creation of internships. U of I strongly endorses internships and other experiential learning activities to help students progress in their personal and professional career development.

## Getting Started

### Identify Significant Projects and Work Tasks

Many employers have lists of projects and not enough staff to complete them while others experience peak periods where additional staff is needed or operate under limited budgets. Interns are the ideal solution. Because of the nature of academic schedules, students often look for internship opportunities that are temporary in nature. Keep in mind, students are looking for internships that provide professional experience and the opportunity to learn.

### Special Projects

Interns can organize research projects, plan events, develop promotional campaigns or design web pages. When developing an internship around a special project, identify goals, timelines, and outcomes so everyone understands the purpose and expectations of the project.

### Ongoing Operations

Organizations that need help throughout the year can benefit from having interns serve as HR support staff, PR or marketing associates, website developers or facilitators for youth groups.

### Determine Internship Length

The duration of your internship can be flexible to accommodate the needs of both the student and the employer.

Academic credit for internships may be available if pre-arranged by the student and his or her academic department.

### Summer Internships

This is the most popular time for students to participate in an internship. Students begin looking for full-time summer internships as early as October.

*Your future is our mission*

## **Fall or Spring Full-Time Internships**

Full-time internships during the school year can be accommodated if the employer and student are located in the same geographic area or the internship is virtual. Employers should work with students to understand their class schedule and have reasonable expectations regarding when an intern can contribute hours to the internship.

## **Fall or Spring Part-Time Internships**

A more popular option for internships during the school year is to keep them part-time. This allows the flexibility students need to complete their coursework while contributing as an intern. Similar concerns regarding geographic location and virtual options should be noted here as well.

## **Establish Support and Address Liability Needs**

Designate a mentor/supervisor who is interested in teaching others, understands the organization and can develop quality work assignments for the intern. Good supervisors not only help interns learn, they help the organization learn about the intern as a potential full-time hire.

Decide whether the intern will work in one department or several.

Determine the type of orientation and training the intern will need.

## **Liability Concerns**

Employers are required to provide a safe working environment and equipment, supplies and workspace necessary for interns to perform their duties. There are some additional needs to keep in mind:

### *Medical Insurance*

Students must have medical insurance to register for classes at U of I. They must report personal insurance information or enroll in the Student Health Insurance Program offered by the university.

### *Workers' Compensation*

If a student is paid in an employment capacity, the student should be covered by the employer's workers' compensation policy. If a student is unpaid or receives a stipend, it is highly advisable for an employer to obtain a rider to its existing workers' compensation policy to cover the intern.

## **Paid, Unpaid or Stipend**

While some interns are willing to work with an employer on an unpaid basis to gain valuable career-building experience, the candidate pool for an internship will likely be much larger and of higher quality if financial compensation is provided.

### **Intern Salaries**

To calculate a fair hourly wage, first identify the entry-level starting salary for a similar position at the organization, then multiply it by a percentage. This percentage varies depending on the intern's education and experience.

Follow these guidelines:

- Seniors: 80-85 percent of entry-level salary
- Juniors: 70-75 percent of entry-level salary
- Sophomores: 60-65 percent of entry-level salary

### **Unpaid or Stipend Internships**

When pay is not possible, the student must be the primary beneficiary of the relationship. Courts have used the "primary beneficiary test" to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA. In short, this test allows courts to examine the "economic reality" of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the "primary beneficiary" of the relationship.

Courts have identified the following seven factors as part of the test:

- The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee —and vice versa.
- The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
- The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
- The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
- The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
- The extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.

- The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

All internships should follow [NACE guidelines](#) and abide by the [U.S. Department of Labor FLSA standards](#).

## Write a Position Description

Position descriptions should include:

- Brief organization description and website address
- Position title
- Skills and qualifications required/preferred
- Duties and responsibilities
- Learning outcomes for the student
- Designated supervisor with expertise in the area of the internship
- Pay rate (indicate hourly, stipend-based or unpaid/for class credit)
- Hours per week and the start/end dates of the internship
- Location (city, state)
- Application instructions and deadline

## Advertise, Interview and Hire

Career Services can help you recruit students for your internship.

Post your internship on Handshake, U of I's free online job and internship database. Browse other recruiting options <[hyperlink to /employer-support/job-recruitment](#)>.

## Set up on-campus interviews

Career Services' staff will help coordinate on-campus interview schedules to maximize company visits and allow employers to meet with candidates. To arrange interviews, [email the Employer Relations team](#) or call 208-885-6122.

Employers should contact Career Services 6-8 weeks prior to their visit to allow adequate time for promotion. Visit our website to learn more about scheduling interviews <[hyperlink to /employer-support/job-recruitment](#)>.

## Report the hire

Employers who hire a U of I student or alumnus are asked to notify Career Services. Employers can also [email Career Services](#) at any time with hiring information.

## We Can Help

Career Services can help in the internship creation process. [Email the Employer Relations team](#) or call 208-885-6121.