



Internship Information & Best Practices

HOSTING AN INTERN:

At UVM, we believe internships should be a reciprocal, win-win scenario. Whether in-person or remote, internships serve as a valuable pipeline of talent for your company and help students explore and expand career options, build professional connections, and deepen academic learning through skill development.

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN DESIGNING AN INTERNSHIP:

Substantive work experiences can support students' academic and career goals. Some questions your organization might consider as you design a quality internship are:

- What are our goals as an internship site?
- What skill building opportunities will we assign?
- Who will provide high-quality training and supervision?
- How will we provide constructive feedback?
- What opportunities for professional development will we offer?
- How will we orient/[onboard](#) the intern?
- How will we communicate our company's cultural values?
- How will we compensate the intern?
- What resources will the intern need to be successful?
- What resources will our organization need to meet our goals as an internship site?

DEVELOPING A LEARNING CONTRACT:

Students look for opportunities to learn and practice skills specific to an industry or workplace. They also need—and want—opportunities to refine their career and self-development skills. We encourage including specific technical skills as well as the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) [eight career readiness competencies](#) into the learning contract you develop with an intern.

TIME REQUIREMENTS:

Internships generally last a semester (12-15 weeks). Most student interns can work 6-15 hours a week while school is in session, or up to 40 hours per week over the summer. UVM operates on a semester schedule (fall and spring) with a summer break. We recommend that employers post internship opportunities and solicit applications 3-6 months before the desired start date. Semesters are in session:

- Fall: Mid-August to mid-December
- Spring: Mid-January to early May
- Summer: Mid May to early August

ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS:

An academic internship is when a student enrolls in a related class to earn credit. Students integrate knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. This work/learning arrangement is overseen by a UVM faculty member and is usually the length of an academic term. It may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid. An integral component of the internship experience that distinguishes it from other types of work is structured and deliberate reflection related to agreed upon learning objectives.



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HOW DO STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR INTERNSHIPS?

Academic credit is awarded by the University, and students earn it by enrolling in an academic course that is completed concurrently with the internship experience. Employers do not have the ability to grant credit. Students have several course options in which they can enroll, and the Career Center serves as a resource to help students decide which course may work best for their particular circumstances. Most commonly, a three-credit internship class requires about 10 hours/week at an internship site and completion of associated class assignments. The employer's role is to work with the student to develop learning goals and to provide periodic feedback as requested by the faculty member.

CAN INTERNS BE PAID? MUST THEY BE PAID?

Compensation is not required or regulated by the university. However, with the financial demands of tuition, housing, travel, and other personal expenses, many students necessitate some form of remuneration to engage in an internship opportunity, and many students cannot afford to work for free. Taking these realities into account, we strongly recommend that employers compensate interns for their work.

Compared to unpaid internship opportunities, research has shown that paid internships generate:

- 2.5 times the number of applicants
- A more diverse applicant pool
- Happier and more engaged interns
- A steadier flow of talented interns who may become future employees of the company

OTHER BENEFITS:

Offering incentives can increase your applicant pool and provide added support. Examples include a stipend (a fixed sum of money paid periodically to defray costs of housing, food, and transportation), specific skill training, networking or mentorship opportunities, or other vouchers/perks (e.g. meals in the company cafeteria, bus passes, company gym memberships, etc.)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION - COMPANY MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Each organization approaches their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts with their own unique lens. Often, it starts with their company mission, vision or values that are at the core of who they are, what they stand for, and who they strive to be. Students often pay close attention to these statements. We've curated these [resources](#) on the importance of going beyond recruitment and actively incorporating diversity, equity & inclusion values into your company's mission to create a culture of belonging and inclusivity.

HOW TO GET STARTED:

To get started, register and post your internship on the Handshake platform (app.joinhandshake.com). Handshake allows you to specify student majors you are looking for, work responsibilities and the times of the year the internship is available (Fall, Spring, Summer.) UVM students access these postings and will contact you directly, allowing you to interview and select the student(s) who are the best fit for your position.

Not quite ready to commit to an entire semester of hosting an intern? Consider hosting a [micro-internship](#) managed by [Parker Dewey](#). These are short term, paid, professional projects that can take place year-round, typically range from 5 to 40 hours of work, and are due between one week and one month after kick-off.



Internship Legal Issues & Compensation

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STANDARDS FOR INTERNSHIPS:

If you are considering hosting unpaid interns, please note that the standards for unpaid internships are dictated by the US Department of Labor, and are outlined in the document entitled "[Fact Sheet #71](#)". Interns must be paid minimum wage unless the intern is determined to be the "primary beneficiary" of the intern-employer relationship. Updated in January 2018, the Department of Labor currently uses a seven-factor test to determine who is the primary beneficiary:

1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
 4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
 5. The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
 6. 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.
 7. 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.
- [U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71](#)

The Department of Labor's Fact Sheet 71 also states that "courts have described the 'primary beneficiary test' as a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the FLSA necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case. If analysis of these circumstances reveals that an intern or student is actually an employee, then he or she is entitled to both minimum wage and overtime pay under the FLSA. On the other hand, if the analysis confirms that the intern or student is not an employee, then he or she is not entitled to either minimum wage or overtime pay under the FLSA." If you have questions about the Department of Labor's guidance, we recommend that you consult with your attorney.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT:

Whether you are just considering having interns at your organization, familiar with hosting interns at your company, or would like to expand your existing internship program, the Career Center is here to help. We can offer tips and best practice information to grow your talent pipeline through internships. We have experience in sourcing, hiring, onboarding and retaining interns to assist you in creating a program that meets your business's needs. We look forward to working with you and connecting you to promising students! If you have any questions on hosting an intern or posting an internship description, the Career Center is happy to speak with you. Please contact us at 802-656-3450 or career@uvm.edu

Additional Resources:

[NACE Best Practices for Internship Programs](#)