

Employer Internship Guide

What is an internship?

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), an internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

How are internships different from other jobs?

Internships provide specific learning objectives, allowing students to learn and apply practical skills gained in the classroom. Unlike most jobs, internships are usually temporary. An intern is evaluated after a specific period of time to see if he/she would be a great fit for full-time employment with the company.

An internship must be:

- Related to the intern's intended career field or coursework
- Facilitated by an internship supervisor who provides regular constructive guidance, evaluation, and feedback
- Targeted towards a learning objective to allow student engagement and reflection throughout the course of the internship

How does the internship process work?

You can create an account and post your internship position(s) in our Handshake system.

- Please visit <https://famujoinhandshake.com>. After your account is approved, you will be able to post your position(s)
- Once your position is posted, it will be reviewed for approval (usually two - three business days) by a staff member in the Career & Professional Development Center. Pending approval, the internship will be available for students to view and apply
- If you have questions pertaining to creating your account or posting your position(s), please visit <https://support.joinhandshake.com/hc/en-us/categories/202707307-Employer>

What are my requirements to host an intern?

When hosting an intern, you are required to provide the following:

- Physical office space (office space cannot be located inside the home)
- General liability insurance coverage (consult with your insurance provider or legal team for verification)
- Direct in-person supervision
- An evaluation of your intern

Also, in order to participate in the internship program, you must comply with the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA). It is the sole responsibility of the employer/host site to determine if this criterion is met. Please consult legal counsel or the Department of Labor if more information or clarification is needed.

Virtual or remote internships are becoming popular. Good practices for virtual internships include:

- Schedule weekly virtual meetings with video chat and screen sharing for personalized feedback
- Use online document-sharing tools (Google Docs, etc) and project management software to allow instant updates and easier communication between the student and the supervisor
 - If the supervisor is in the local area, the supervisor can meet with the student in a public place weekly or bi-weekly in addition to virtual meetings. This face-to-face meeting can be a great time for mentoring, feedback, and additional project planning.

Some academic departments on campus will allow virtual internships for credit with certain agreements in place, others will not. The student will need to work with his/her department to determine next steps.

How can I develop a strong internship position description?

Though similar to a part-time or full-time job description, internship position descriptions should include learning outcomes. When an intern recognizes value in the internship and understand the professional growth opportunities available, your target applicant pool will grow. Be as detailed as possible in your position description to convey an accurate picture of how the student can increase their knowledge/skill set and be an asset to your organization.

Can I post an unpaid internship?

The [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA) requires “for-profit” employers to pay employees for their work. Interns and students, however, may not be “employees” under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work.

The Department of Labor has developed seven criteria for identifying the primary beneficiary.

All seven factors must be met to post an unpaid internship:

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.

** The majority of internship positions are paid and students are presented with an abundance of internship opportunities. To remain competitive, we strongly encourage paid internships.

What level of compensation is typical for an internship?

Compensation varies from industry to industry. Academic credit is not a form of compensation. (Students who choose to enroll their internship for academic credit have to pay for the course.) An intern who is paid, must at least meet the state's minimum wage criteria. However, to attract the most desirable candidates, competitive compensation is recommended.

Am I guaranteed an intern?

The Career & Professional Development Center does not place students into internships and therefore cannot guarantee that a student will apply to your internship. However, every effort is made to market your internship position(s) and inform students about internship opportunities. Paid internships typically receive a larger, more competitive candidate pool.

Is there a requirement on the start date and length of an internship?

Yes, within this current context, the Career and Professional Development Center has established these guidelines to provide both students and employers a fair, transparent and up-to-date framework for managing the offer phase of the recruitment process:

- For all offers extended for summer internships or full-time employment, employers should allow students until October 21 or a minimum of two weeks from the date of the written offer, whichever is later, for students to accept or decline any offer.
- For all offers extended during Summer 2020 accelerated recruitment for Summer 2021 internships, students must be given a deadline of October 21, 2020 or a minimum of two weeks from the date of the written offer, whichever is later.
- Employers should be flexible in granting offer extensions on a case-by-case basis if the circumstances warrant it.
- The written offer should clearly state all appropriate terms and conditions, including, but not limited to, position title/description, location, benefits, start date, salary, bonuses, etc.
- All bonuses or other incentives are to remain in full effect for the entire duration of the offer period.
- Students are encouraged to contact employers well before the offer deadline if they have any questions or concerns about their offers, including needing more time to make their decisions.

Internship Offer	Offer Cannot Expire Before
Upon completion of summer internship with organization (return for 2021 internship)	October 21, 2020 (Four weeks after the Fall Career and Internship Expo)
After October 21, 2020	Two weeks after the formal offer
January 2021	Four weeks after the Spring Career and Internship Expo)
After four weeks from the Spring Career and Internship expo	Two weeks after the formal offer

Students should confirm with their academic department to ensure they are in compliance with the department's specific internship guidelines and procedures in reference to the length of the internship. Usually, internships last the duration of the semester.

What else can I do to build awareness of the opportunity?

Internship host sites that spend time on campus building their brand typically have the most applicants. This can be accomplished by attending our Career Expos and scheduling information sessions. Please visit www.famu.edu/careercenter for more information on our Career Expo. Please email LaKeshia.Edwards@famu.edu to schedule an information session to increase your engagement with the FAMU community.

What should I do so that a student can obtain academic credit?

The student should assume most of the responsibility when completing an internship for academic credit. However, you may be asked to complete an Internship Request Form, which includes intern supervisor, student responsibilities, projects, learning objectives, verification of liability insurance, compliance with FLSA, etc. Each academic department manages for-credit internships a bit differently, but you will likely be asked to complete an evaluation of the student's performance, verify hours worked, or provide additional documentation. Please be sure to

understand the deadlines for such materials, and to provide them in a timely fashion. Your student intern can provide more detail on what their academic department requires.

Is sponsorship required to hire an international student as an intern?

No. An international student can be hired as an intern the same way you would hire a domestic student. The international student will be required to earn academic credit for their internship, but they can still get hired the same as any other candidate. There will be paperwork on the student's end, but no additional paperwork on your end is required to hire an international student for your internship opportunity.

Can an intern be considered an independent contractor?

No. The independent contractor designation is not appropriate for interns. Independent contractors are hired because of their expertise in a given area and are expected to produce certain results. That arrangement is a direct contradiction to the main purpose of an internship, which should be to learn.

Should I offer orientation for newly hired interns?

It is recommended that you coordinate some type of onboarding orientation for your intern(s), similar to how you would treat a new part-time or full-time staff member. Items for inclusion could be a history of your organization, explanation of organizational structure, rules, policies, expectations, and a review of the student's learning objectives and goals. Also, you will be responsible for providing the necessary equipment/materials for the intern to successfully complete their internship (computer, office space, applicable software, etc.).

What if there is a problem with my intern?

Employers are urged to report any incident as soon as possible to the Career & Professional Development Center to permit both the university and the host site the opportunity to promptly intervene. All complaints should be filed as quickly as possible. All interactions during the intervention will be documented and kept on file in our office.

Additional Questions

Contact: LaKeshia Mobley-Edwards
Internship Coordinator
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Professional Practice Standards: All employers who wish to recruit students from Florida A&M University through the Career and Professional Development Center and its resources are required to comply with all Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Laws and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Principles for Professional Practice.

The information provided in this document is not legal advice and should be viewed as general information. Please consult your legal counsel for specific information.
