UCLA Internship Recruiting Toolkit

POLICIES - REQUIREMENTS - RESOURCES - BEST PRACTICES

Updated November 2022

UCLA Career Center

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Introduction

Whether you're hiring your first UCLA intern or expanding a successful program, it always pays to refresh your knowledge of current best practices for internship recruitment and management. If you are planning to hire an unpaid intern, it's even more important to keep your Team up-to-date regarding UCLA internship policies, course credit requirements, and relevant federal labor laws.

This UCLA Internship Recruiters' Toolkit presents step-by-step guidance for all employers seeking to hire a paid or unpaid intern from UCLA. Topics covered here include:

- Planning and launching an exemplary internship program
- Essential steps required to hire UCLA students for a paid or unpaid internship
- The different intern hiring and compensation policies for private sector and public sector employers
- Advice on intern compensation, approved work hours, federal labor laws, and hiring timelines
- UCLA-specific guidelines for approving unpaid and paid internship listings
- How to write and present an effective internship job description
- Why every employer should build a clear week-to-week internship program syllabus
- The most effective UCLA recruitment techniques and internship promotion strategies
- How to best utilize the versatile UCLA Handshake recruiting platform
- Internship program interviews
- Best practices for internship program management
- Converting your top interns to entry-level colleagues
- Unique considerations and opportunities when recruiting interns at a major research university like UCLA

Our Team Is At Your Service!

Our UCLA Career Center Team welcomes hiring managers and intern supervisors to request an internship program consultation . Please feel free to contact our Industry Relations Team at *recruiting@career.ucla.edu* to share your internship questions or goals. We look forward to working with you!

STAGE 1

Planning—How To Build (Or Update) Your Internship Program

So, you're ready to build or update a premier internship program? If so, you're in good company! Each year, more and more employers in every industry have come to rely on internships as their primary new-talent pipeline.

This first section of your Toolkit explains how to build the strong foundation for a great student internship experience that benefits interns, supervisors, and your organization. For employers who are seeking to update a successful internship program, this pre-launch guide will help keep your Team up-to-date on UCLA internship program policies and university expectations for all internship employers.

STEP 1: Register Your Employer Account on the UCLA Handshake Recruiting System

The UCLA Career Center encourages all employers to build their foundation for intern recruitment by first creating a free account in the UCLA Handshake System. This step can be completed concurrently with other essential tasks such as writing internship job descriptions. Our Team recommends Handshake registration as your first stop for a few important reasons:

- **Recruiting 101 via Handshake University:** Handshake offers many useful tutorials to guide employers in recruiting interns at UCLA and other universities. These free resources require a Handshake account to access and can be found at: http://teachme.joinhandshake.com/employers/ . By connecting to Handshake University early, each member of your internship team will be learning together by using the actual UCLA recruitment platform.
- **Pre-Approval for Your Handshake Employer Account:** UCLA Career Center approval of your Handshake employer account is required before you submit any job or internship for review. Getting your employer account approved in advance will allow your Team to launch future intern recruitment drives without delay.
- **UCLA Registration Requirements:** UCLA enforces a few specific requirements for employers who are seeking approval to recruit interns via Handshake. Some of the following requirements (listed below) are unique to UCLA and may take extra time to put in place. Complete these steps in conjunction with your internship program planning will assure that you can start recruitment without a hitch at the most opportune time.
  - UCLA requires that all employers register with a commercial address connected to the employer by name. This applies to both in person and remote or virtual internships. Home-based offices or organizations are not approved as internship work locations.
  - UCLA requires that employers use a corporate email domain for Handshake registration and all communications with student candidates. UCLA declines all employer accounts using Gmail, Hotmail, and other public email services.
  - UCLA requires that employers present an organization website which allows Career Center staff and prospective interns to research each employer's services, personnel, and location. For smaller companies and startups, employers may present their LinkedIn page showing their affiliations.
- **Handshake Networking with Your Colleagues:** If you work for a large organization with operations in several markets, it's quite possible that colleagues based in another city have already set up a Handshake account to recruit interns. Because Handshake only provides a single national account for each employer, your Team may be able to view approved internship job descriptions while consulting colleagues who have also recruited interns. Consulting with peers who have already tested and refined internship best practices may

allow your Team build on their program management templates and experience.

STEP 2: Prepare Your Team to Adopt the Key Qualities of An Outstanding Internship Program

UCLA Career Center has confidence that every internship employer plans to give every student a great work-learn experience. However, in practice the value offered by internship programs can be quite variable. This results in part from employers building their programs based on their own internship experience rather than current best practices. In advising prospective interns, UCLA Career Educators suggest that students seek out high-value internships which offer some specific and meaningful benefits. Employers whose internships feature most of the following qualities will have an inherent recruiting advantage at UCLA.

Tasks and Team

- An enthusiastic and well-prepared supervisor who is skilled in the intern's area of service
- An internship job description centered on learning outcomes and skills development.
- A clear, week-by-week Internship Syllabus to guide training, tasks, projects, and learning objectives

Compensation and Tangible Benefits

- Compensation in the form of a competitive hourly wage or salary
- For unpaid internships, tuition reimbursement when a student is required to pay internship course credit fees
- Perks such as a transit pass, lunch stipend, access to childcare, or recreation facilities

Networking and Observation

- Regular and focused contact with employer's leadership team, such as learn-at-lunch workshops
- Job shadowing rotations and short-term assignments with a variety of departments
- Opportunity to join informal work groups, volunteer projects, and social activities

Networking and Observation

- Meaningful real-world projects, including a capstone Team project and presentation
- Reference and recommendation letter for a job well done
- For top performers, a pathway for internship conversion to a fulfilling entry-level job

STEP 3: Define and Refine Your Organization's Core Internship Program Goals

Just like every successful venture, an internship program can only reach its full potential if you start with solid foundational goals which reflect your organization's mission and values. For example, a universal value required of all internship programs is that interns must always be considered respected colleagues who invest their knowledge, time, and energy to gain professional experience. Within your organization, intern supervisors and coaches should always be valued as above-and-beyond contributors whose work builds your employer brand on campus while opening a pipeline to UCLA talent.

Before approving any internship listing, UCLA Career Center and UCLA Academic Departments thoroughly assess each employer's core reasons for hiring interns. In many cases, our Team declines to approve an internship listing because the job description reflects a mistaken core value that interns present a convenient source of cheap labor.

Intern-friendly core goals that lay the foundation for a successful program include:

- Strengthen Your UCLA Talent Pipeline: The #1 goal for internship program managers is to hire, train, and assess UCLA interns for future full-time roles. Internships are often described as a "10-week job interview," and a solid internship program gives employers

an inside track in competing for top talent.

- Pay It Forward: Equip talented young professionals with the skills for future internships and careers, with no specific plan to hire for entry-level jobs.
- Public Service Commitment: Government and nonprofit employers give interns a place to build skills while fulfilling a shared passion for public service
- Give Back to UCLA: Alumni entrepreneurs, executives, and business owners open the door for fellow Bruins to build professional skills and contacts.

Avoid Unfavorable Program Objectives.

Internships which always prioritize an employer's financial interest or business operations may offer limited learning benefit to students. UCLA Career Center often declines to list positions when it appears that an organization is not ready to prioritize interns' professional development. Core recruitment goals which run counter to student and university interests include:

- Staffing up and and adding expertise by tapping a student's specialized skills in an unpaid internship
- Hiring an unpaid sales force, brand ambassador team, or fundraising team
- Building a national web presence via unpaid social media or remote content creation assignments
- Launching a vague 'stealth' business idea with no current market presence

For paid student positions that do not prioritize intern learning goals, consider listing assignments as part-time jobs rather than internships.

For unpaid student assignments with non-profit groups, list administrative internships as volunteer roles rather than internships.

For unpaid positions defined by any of the unfavorable objectives above, employers must update intern duties to prioritize authentic learning outcomes. Another option is to postpone hiring interns until an enterprise matures and can offer paid positions.

STEP 4: Make Intern Learning Objectives the Primary Goal of Your Program

Always Set Intern Learning Objectives Before Writing Job Descriptions

Before being approved for recruiting at UCLA, internship programs and intern job descriptions must show ALL of the following qualities:

- At least three well-defined intern learning objectives with measurable outcomes
- Well-planned training, skill-building, and job shadowing opportunities
- An assigned training team including a qualified supervisor and mentor
- An internship syllabus which outlines weekly and quarterly goals, activities, and measures of success (see example)
- A clear description of any financial or material benefits (wage,salary, scholarship, stipend, bus pass, perks)

STEP 5: Prioritize Internships in Your Human Capital Strategy

Here's Why.

- Hiring and training interns gives employers the opportunity to evaluate potential colleagues on-the-job before making a full-time job offer.
- In some industries, up to 80 percent of entry-level employees graduated from internship programs.
- Hiring interns often saves recruitment time and budgets.
- Interns who transition to full-time roles acclimate more quickly to new duties and work culture.
- Engaging interns can offer professional staff greater flexibility to pursue creative or strategic projects.

- Interns often introduce and apply the most current techniques and technologies.

STEP 6: Decide Whether an Internship Offers Your Best Experiential Learning Option

Internships are a form of experiential Learning which provide students with direct experience through which they can use analytical skills and reflection to apply new ideas gained from the experience to their classroom learning. Experiential learning includes internships, service learning, other work-learn opportunities. Determine what the best fit for the organization is by considering the following definitions:

Volunteer is a person who performs a service willingly, without pay or credit in order to support a cause.

Service Learning is curriculum-based emphasizing hands-on learning while addressing real world concerns. The service experience provides a context for translating discipline based theories into practice.
Civic Engagement offers a broad concept of community involvement and awareness that can include service, advocacy, service learning, volunteerism and political participation, with the goal of helping to develop community based knowledge, values and skills.

Capstone/Project Based Learning course is the culmination of learning in the major. A student generally works on a single large project–such as a thesis paper or large research project–for the entire semester.

Externships (Job Shadow) provide an initial exposure to a career for a brief period of time (such as one day a week or a couple hours per week) by having students "shadow" an experienced employee or professional. Externships may include academic credit when connected to a course.

A Student Employee is a person who is hired to provide services to an organization on a regular basis in exchange for compensation, not for academic credit.

STEP 7: Understand and Apply the UCLA Definition of an Internship

To be defined as an educational internship, a student assignment should have the following qualities:

- Includes developing intentional learning objective goals that are structured into the experience and supervised by a professional with relevant and related background in the field.
- Promotes academic, career and/or personal development.
- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, and evaluation.
- Balances the intern's learning goals with the organization's needs.
- Typically lasts three months. May be part-time or full-time.
- Involves industry related and soft skill development.
- May be carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit.
- Provides adequate supervision in a reasonably safe environment with the necessary tools to perform the learning goals agreed upon for the duration of the internship.

An internship is not

- Free help intended to replace the role or duties of a paid employee.

STEP 8: Decide Whether to Build a Paid or Unpaid Internship Program

All employers in all industries are strongly encouraged to pay their interns an hourly wage. Paid internships attract a more experienced and more diverse candidate pool. UCLA Career Center, Human Resources Professionals, and most U.S. industry associations recommend paying interns as a best practice in recruiting and program management.

For example, major employers in Los Angeles' signature media/entertainment industry have evolved from a tradition of only hiring unpaid interns to a 100% paid internship model. In fact, the era when most employers could ethically hire unpaid interns for low-level "gopher" tasks or cheap skilled labor ended by the mid-2000s.

Government agencies and nonprofit groups will continue to offer some unpaid public service interns. But, as competition for top talent grows more intense, most private sector employers are prioritizing paid internship programs. More than 20% busy work (filing, covering phone, errands).

STEP 9: Incorporate Special Considerations for Your Unpaid, Private-Sector Internship Programs

For employers who are new to working with students, it may come as a surprise that UCLA requirements for hiring an unpaid intern are far more precise and rigorous than requirements for hiring paid interns. In a nutshell, if interns are not the primary beneficiaries of their work with your Team, they must be paid as employees.

Now, the unbending expectation of Universities, HR Managers, Trade Associations, Parents, and the U.S. Department of Labor is that employers who hire unpaid interns will make each student's education and professional growth the #1 priority. This priority lays the groundwork for a productive long-term partnership between employer, student, and university.

In 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) updated its Fact Sheet #71 Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act. DOL offered further clarification in a 2018 Field Assistance Bulletin, which affirmed that unpaid interns must be the primary beneficiaries of their internship experience.

For a thorough analysis on costs and benefits of offering unpaid internships, please see the NACE report 'Exploring the Implications of Unpaid Internships'

STEP 10: Build Your Internship Success Team and Elicit Organizational Buy-In

The most successful internship programs always inspire a strong buy-in from Executives, Managers, and Intern Supervisors working at all levels of an organization. Here are some examples of how to inspire buy-in in your organization:

- Every co-worker should embrace the idea that your internship program offers a highly cost-effective way to compete for top talent and to build a strong brand for all employment opportunities.
- It's especially important to recruit and train enthusiastic intern supervisors before listing your internship. Involve supervisors in the intern interview and evaluation process.
- Supervisors assign projects and provide day-to-day direction and feedback to interns. Mentors may speak with interns more candidly about challenges on the job while providing industry insights and career planning advice.
- For newly launched internship programs, your first supervisor cohort will model best intern management practices while building enthusiasm among future supervisors
- Ideal supervisor and mentor candidates include colleagues who have shown a natural affinity for coaching young talent.
- Present the opportunity to supervise and coach interns as a valued professional development experience and an essential link in building a strong talent pipeline.
- Engage your internship supervisor teams prior to recruiting interns, and ensure that colleagues working with unpaid interns understand that each student's learning goals must always be prioritized over work product.

Supervisors of unpaid interns must have especially solid knowledge of the following:

- Internship program goals and learning outcomes
- Adequate time to implement and refine the program

- Expertise and training experience in the intern's role and area of service
- Enthusiasm for coaching interns and integrating them with the workplace culture

Note: Administrative support staff should never supervise or delegate tasks to unpaid interns.

STEP 11: Define Your Ideal Internship Candidates

First-Year Bruins

First-Year students are interested in developing interpersonal and professional skills. These skills will allow them to discover what areas they excel in, and they could potentially remain with the organization through college. This experience can also support a student in choosing their best fit for an academic major.

Sophomores

With one year of college completed, sophomores have developed a sense of how to balance academic, work, and social commitments. They are just digging in to their chosen field of study and are eager to build their professional reputations.

Juniors:

An undergraduate intern could be beneficial for your organization because of their experience in and out of the classroom. They have an opportunity to apply things they've learned in their undergraduate curriculums into the workplace. Many students participate in internships to explore career niches and to develop their professional skills. Ideally an internship for a college student is an opportunity to network, enhance industry related and soft skills, leading from education to employment.

Seniors

Seniors can apply all of the knowledge, training, and experience gained during their undergraduate studies. They can transition directly into entry-level roles.

Graduate Students:

Since these students have earned an undergraduate degree and are interested in advancing research and professional skills relevant to their career niche.

Non-Traditional Students and Career Changers:

UCLA welcomes many non-traditional students who start or continue their undergraduate education in their 20s, 30s, 40s or 50s. By learning new skills and preparing for transition to a new industry they are hoping to expand a professional network in this new field and incorporate their professional skills into your organization.

STEP 12: Avoid Creating the Internship Types that UCLA Declines to List

UCLA Career Center respects the time and thought that every employer invests to build and promote an internship program. We are grateful to every internship program manager and entrepreneur who chooses to recruit interns at UCLA. Out of respect for your time, we present for your reference the types of internships and listings which UCLA will always need to decline. Each quarter, our Team respectfully declines hundreds of internships for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Fee-Based Programs:** US or international internships which require or request that students pay for participation. This includes registration fees, reimbursements, donations, product purchase, internship placement service agreements, or any other financial transaction of any amount.
- **Internships With No Learning Objectives or Skill-Building Opportunities:** All internship job descriptions, especially unpaid assignments, must clearly state at least three learning objectives and the training that interns receive to acquire and develop these new skills.
- **Unpaid Brand Ambassadors:** Campus Brand Ambassadors must be paid at least the California state minimum wage of $11 per hour.

- **Unpaid Remote or Virtual Internships in Private Sector Companies:** UCLA Academic Departments will unfortunately not approve internship course credit for students who take on unpaid remote or virtual internships (Government and non-profit exempt). For this reason, our Team declines remote unpaid listings when submitted through the UCLA Handshake system.
- **Internships Based in a Private Residence or a Shared Community Space:** Internship activities must take place in a commercial setting where students can interact directly with colleagues.
- **Unpaid Blogging or Content Creation Internships:** If your team wishes to rely on interns to build a web presence, a salary of minimum wage or above is required for local as well as remote internships.
- **Vehicle-Required Internships:** An intern sponsor may not rely on an student's vehicle, laptop, mobile phone, or any other personal property for business purposes.
- **Internships Which Far Exceed a 1:1 Employee to Intern Ratio:** The ratio of interns to paid staff should be no more than 1:1. Employers who appear to be 'staffing up' or filling skills gaps with unpaid interns will be declined.
- **Independent Contractor Internships:** Interns may not be paid as independent contractors. Internships must be paid or unpaid. The Society of Human Resource Management advises against paying interns as independent contractors.
- **Commission-Compensated or Monthly Stipend Internships:** At a minimum, paid interns must earn at least the equivalent of $11.00 per hour. Commissions or incentive bonuses may only be offered if the base salary is at this level and may not be offered for unpaid internships. Employers offering a monthly salary or stipend which does not appear to equal $11.00 per hour are declined.
- **Lack of Like-Skilled Trainers and Supervisors:** Interns must have a supervisor and career coach who is an expert in the student's area of service and who can teach new skills. For example, our Career Center Team declines listings when an enterprise or a non-profit with one or two paid staff seeks to hire 10 or 12 skilled interns.
- **Internships with More Than One Negative Report:** UCLA Career Center, UCLA Academic Departments, and all schools using the Handshake system contribute reports on interns' experiences to a private university database. When multiple interns report an employer's unfavorable conduct or work conditions, our Team reserves the right to decline internships and employer registrations without further explanation.
- **Unpaid Internships that Duplicate the Duties of a Paid Job:** Department of Labor guidelines and industry best practices

NOTE: When an internship listing is declined, all employers are encouraged to update the job description to comply with UCLA standards. If you feel that your internship was declined in error, please contact our Team at recruiting@career.ucla.edu for advice and re-consideration.

STEP 13: Confirm that Your Student Assignment Meets the Legal Definition and Industry Standards of an Internship

All internships, whether paid or unpaid, must prioritize interns' education and training over immediate business needs.

- The U.S. Department of Labor has made the priority of interns' professional development a universal requirement for all unpaid internships based in the United States.
- The DOL Fact Sheet Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act provides a 7-Point Test to define a student assignment as an internship.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) provides a useful definition of internships which all staff who supervise interns should understand and enforce:

"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."

Make sure to review the more detailed **Employer Internship Listing Guidelines**

In practice, UCLA Career Center allows employers who provide paid internships more flexibility in the types of tasks that interns are asked to perform. For example, our Team will approve a paid "mailroom" internship with a talent agency but will not approve a similar unpaid position.

The U.S. Department of Labor defines unpaid Government and Non-Profit internships as volunteer public service positions, for which employers may hire students to take on both skilled and unskilled and administrative tasks.

Remote/Virtual Internships:

The UCLA Career Center approves paid internships where some or all work is done remotely, as long as the information provided in the Handshake posting demonstrates that it meets the same standards and requirements for in-person internships as described in in UCLA Internship Recruiting Guidelines. Third-party agencies may not recruit for remote/virtual internships.

STEP 14: For Paid Positions, Confirm Compliance with UCLA Definition of a Paid Internship

UCLA defines an unpaid internship as any position that does not offer compensation equal to the applicable state minimum wage. This includes student positions that provide a scholarship, reimbursement, or other types of compensation rather than a wage or salary. In addition, unpaid internships must define and deliver clear learning outcomes that complement the student's field of study and career goals.

- Per-Project compensation not a paid internship
- Independent Contractor not a paid internship

STEP 15: Understand UCLA Internship Course Credit Requirements

All private sector employers must require that UCLA interns earn academic credit for an unpaid internship. This includes unpaid internships which offer a stipend, a scholarship, or any reimbursement.

- UCLA Career Center only lists unpaid private-sector internships that meet all course-credit requirements.
- Student interns have the main responsibility to enroll in a UCLA internship course when required by their employer.
- The main requirement for employers is to confirm each intern's hiring and start/end dates through a letter offering the internship.
- Federal labor law makes internship credit optional for government and non-profit employers. In contract to for-profit employers, interns who work in unpaid public service positions are considered volunteers.
- But, many government agencies and nonprofit groups also choose to require that interns earn course credit through their UCLA Department.

STEP 16: Schedule Your Internship Dates and Duration

Since unpaid private sector interns will enroll in a UCLA internship class, all credit-based internships must start and conclude during the ten-week UCLA quarter.

Employers should structure their recruitment and hiring timelines in line with the UCLA academic calendar. This means that credit-based internships must begin and end by the following dates:

- **Fall Quarter**—Interns start last week in September and end first week in December
- **Winter**—Interns start first week in January and end third week in March
- **Spring**—Interns start first week of April and end second week in June
- **Summer**—Interns start third week in June and end last week in August

Note: Most employers offering paid internships with compensation that equals or exceeds the California minimum wage ($11.00 per hour) exercise their option to not require internship course credit

Employers should list their internship credit requirement clearly in the job description.
International students must always arrange internship course credit in order to legally work in unpaid or paid internships.

STAGE 2

Pre-Launch & Hiring

With essential planning questions answered and your Intern supervisors in place, you're almost ready to list your opportunities, interview qualified Bruins, and hire top candidates. Writing your internship job description and a syllabus to guide each intern's experience are projects that can and should involve your entire intern support Team.

Launch your recruitment by listing your internships on Handshake, which allows all qualified UCLA students to view and apply for the positions that fit their goals and interests. Interviewing, hiring, and on-boarding interns is the culmination of your Team's commitment to creating an outstanding internship experience.

STEP 1: Gather the Essential Elements for All Internship Job Descriptions

The essential components of an effective internship description include:

- Explain the organization's goals and mission
- Outline the intern's responsibilities and potential tasks/projects
- Describe skills that will be developed
- Illustrate the necessary qualifications
- Skills (computer, analytical, design, communications, etc.)
- Education level (year, GPA, etc.) and Majors
- Clarify the duration of the internship
- Hours required per week / semester (fall, spring, summer)
- Flexibility with schedule or specific hours
- Note if it's paid or unpaid
- Specify how to apply and provide contact information
- Examine your entry-level job descriptions and consider what experiences and qualities would make a strong candidate.
- Then, take a step back to connect these qualifications with intern training, tasks, and projects that would develop your ideal recruit.

STEP 2: : Benchmark Industry Peer Job Descriptions

Research and benchmark the internship job descriptions of industry peers. Also benchmark job descriptions from employers in all industries who hire interns for similar roles such as accounting, communications, engineering, and sales.

Intern description examples are readily available on public job boards such as The National Labor Exchange. The best resource for a comprehensive body of more detailed job descriptions is each employer's own hiring site. Adapt relevant elements of these descriptions as you write your own.

STEP 3: Decide on a Broad or Focused Recruitment Strategy

The UCLA Career Center recommends that employers from all sectors and industries strongly consider a broad recruitment strategy that encourages all qualified UCLA candidates to apply.

The alternative of a tightly focused recruitment strategy is favored by many employers who are seeking candidates with specialized skills in fields such as accounting, computer science, and engineering

STEP 4: Refine and Prepare to Post Your Internship

Effective pre-planning focuses and simplifies the task of writing and posting your internship job description. Descriptions for unpaid internships should always highlight what each intern can expect to learn on the job through coaching and practical application of new knowledge.

Unpaid internships in particular should emphasize the tangible perks and benefits of working with your team. This may be a regular learn-at-lunch conversation with members of your executive team, access to employee dining and recreation facilities, transportation stipends, and other steps that make an intern's work life easier.

Employers are encouraged to post two types of job descriptions: One listing that gives an overview of all opportunities and a link to your own hiring site, and a second set of listings that describe each internship in greater detail.

Elements of an Effective and Appealing Internship Job Description

- Start by describing the intended learning outcome: "What you'll learn on the job"
- Describe coaching and training approach: "How we'll prepare you for success"
- Connect tasks to learning: "Putting your new knowledge into practice"
- Highlight professional growth: "Leading and managing your first project"
- Define qualifications in an encouraging way: "What you need to know"
- Highlight the success stories and career evolution of previous interns

STEP 5: Build a Quarterly Syllabus to Guide Training, Skill-Building, and Intern Projects

One convenient way to connect learning objectives, training, projects and related tasks is to leverage the university model of a quarterly syllabus to guide each intern's experience. A useful structure for this syllabus is to list the learning activities knowledge interns will acquire during one week, then list the tasks that apply this knowledge during the following week.

Incorporating a capstone project for each intern or a group project for your entire intern cohort is a great way to show interns' professional development toward the end of each quarter.

STEP 6: Decide how to best include international student interns and other UCLA populations

International: These are typically undergraduate or graduate students. There is no excessive paperwork needed to hire an international intern. International students do not need a green card to intern.

Eligible students who maintain an F1 or J1 visa status are permitted to intern in their major field of study by federal regulation with permission from their representative Office of International Students and Scholars.

These students benefit organizations because of their language advantage and their willingness to adapt to a different environment. The application process for International interns includes:

STEP 7: Promote your internship via the UCLA Handshake platform

UCLA Career Center's convenient Handshake career management service at career.ucla.edu invites employers to create a free recruiting account and to list internship opportunities. Each internship is reviewed by UCLA staff and must include certain baseline information: A verifiable business address; an employer web page; a named contact and an email address which is linked to the employer domain name.

Over 40,000 registered UCLA students and subscribing UCLA alumni can view and apply for internships through the Handshake system. Your internship listing is viewable by all candidates as soon as it is approved by Career Center staff.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Internship Programs

How does UCLA define a paid internship?

A paid internship is an experiential learning opportunity that offers an hourly wage or salary that matches or exceeds the state minimum wage (currently $11.00 per hour in California).

How is a paid internship different from a part-time job?

For many employers, a paid internship has many similarities to a paid part-time job in regards to personnel policies (such as tax withholding and workers compensation). Unlike part-time jobs, a paid internship prioritizes the intern's education and professional development.

All paid and unpaid internships must offer the benefits of mentorship, training, skill-building opportunities, and defined learning outcomes.

Which UCLA candidates are we allowed to hire for our paid internships?

Employers enjoy complete flexibility to hire any UCLA undergraduate or grad student for a paid internship. This includes first-year students, recently graduated alumni, and advanced degree candidates.

Can I hire a recent UCLA graduate for a paid internship?

Many forward-thinking local, national, and international employers have created full-time alumni internship programs for recent UCLA graduates, and UCLA encourages this hiring track. New-graduate internships typically have a duration of six months and are full-time paid positions. These programs give interns the opportunity to focus entirely on their internship experience.

Listing And Promoting Paid Internships At UCLA

How can I list our paid internship with UCLA Career Center?

UCLA Career Center's convenient Handshake career management service at career.ucla.edu invites employers to create a free recruiting account and to list paid internship opportunities.

Each internship is reviewed by UCLA staff and must include certain baseline information: A verifiable business address; an employer web page; a named contact and an email address which is linked to the employer domain name.

Which groups UCLA students and alumni can apply for our paid internships via Handshake?

Over 40,000 registered UCLA students and subscribing UCLA alumni can view and apply for internships through the Handshake system. Your paid internship listing is viewable by all candidates as soon as it is approved by Career Center staff.

How do I describe my internship on the UCLA Handshake system?

The Handshake job and internship listing platform features pre-set information fields which employers fill out to describe internship duties and qualifications. Many employers will copy and paste job descriptions and preferred qualifications from an existing listing. Students then search internship listings based on their goals, skills, and field of study.

For a broad-based recruitment push, employers may select all majors and all class levels. For a more focused recruitment, employers choose specific majors and class levels.

What other types of UCLA recruitment events and activities can I schedule via my Handshake account?

Your Handshake account also opens the door to scheduling on-campus interviews, promoting internships and jobs at a UCLA career fair, or hosting an exclusive information session.

Internships And Academic Credit

Are UCLA students required to earn course credit for paid internships?

Students who have U.S. citizenship, permanent resident status, or DACA status (described below) have the option to earn course credit for their work as paid student interns. However, course credit for paid internships is not required by UCLA and is often not desired by students or employers.

One important exception applies to international students who are attending UCLA on a student visa. International students are always required by federal law to earn course credit for both paid and unpaid internships, and for this reason employers must schedule internship start dates for international students in sync with the start of a UCLA academic quarter.

If a student requests academic credit for their paid internship, what is required of me as an employer?

Employers offering paid internships for credit will need to provide a signed letter that confirms the student's hiring, employment start date, designated supervisor, internship duties, training agenda, and learning goals. This letter supports interns as they enroll in a four-unit UCLA internship course through their academic department. In some cases, students may arrange a two-unit internship research project through their academic department.

An employer's main responsibility is to fulfill all commitments of the internship job description and to maintain the intern's employment for the entire ten-week quarter.

Planning For A Great Intern Experience

We are starting a new internship program. Where do we begin?

Employers launching a new paid internship program should invest the time required to shape a positive internship experience. Essential steps include:

- First, Identify an enthusiastic mentor and team, rather than just assigning an intern supervisor
- Set core learning outcomes as the heart of your paid internship program
- Plan a progressive cycle where intern training leads to skills acquisition and then application
- Benchmark intern job descriptions for your industry and for the intern's role or 'job function' across different industries
- Include focused learning and networking experiences such as job shadowing and 'learn at lunch' sessions with a range of department heads executive staff
- Write and critique your internship job description (you can ask UCLA Career Center for examples)
- Create a 'capstone' team project for your internship cohort to present near the end of their work term
- Set your preferred intern start date and work back to create a hiring timeline
- In addition to creating thoughtful interview questions, consider a case competition, hackathon, or other avenue to evaluating student skills
- Inform your recruiting team about the different fields of study, student career clubs, and recruitment activities at your target universities

- List your internship opportunity with UCLA on the Handshake system, and start hiring!

Compensation And Benefits

How much should we pay a UCLA intern?

As long as an intern is paid at least the state minimum wage, the level of compensation is negotiable between employers and students.
In general, employers hosting paid internships offer $12 to $15 per hour for motivated candidates with limited experience and higher training requirements. Interns who command higher salaries of $18 to $35 per hour are those who offer more advanced skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM fields) as well as Finance and Communications.

Advanced degree candidates who have specialized knowledge or industry experience may also earn more as interns.

Employers are encouraged to benchmark competitors and peers in order to establish a competitive pay package.

Can we pay an intern as an independent contractor?

No. UCLA discourages employers from hiring interns as independent contractors. This status may require the intern or the employer to defend a student's contractor status to tax authorities. The best practice is to process paid interns as part-time employees who will receive a W-2 statement for the tax year in which they work.
Employers may choose to hire students for part-time jobs (rather than internships) which would have different compensation arrangements.

We would like to offer a stipend, scholarship or reimbursement. Does this make our internship a paid assignment?

No. Only assignments that have defined hours and a defined wage or salary may be listed as paid internships.

Stipends, scholarships, or reimbursement for travel costs are welcomed by students, but unless the position also provides a wage/salary it will be considered an unpaid internship.

Can I pay interns a commission?

Paid interns may receive a commission or performance incentive in addition to their wages. But, any assignment that is paid 100 percent on commission must be classified as a job rather than internship.

Timing For Intern Recruitment And Onboarding

When can I on-board intern from UCLA?

Paid interns who do not require internship course credit may be hired to start their work any time of year and for any duration. One key advantage of paid internships is that employers may enjoy complete flexibility to on-board interns immediately or several months from the date of hire.

What is the best time to recruit for an internship program?

Many large, industry-leading employers and government agencies choose to interview paid summer interns during the UCLA Fall Quarter (September through December). Non-profit organizations and fast-growing startups often hire summer interns January through May.

Intern Work Schedules

How many hours can interns work during the UCLA school year (October - June)?

For school-year intern assignments that take place during traditional business hours, paid internships should require anywhere four hours to 16 hours each week. If some of an intern's duties can be completed during evenings or weekends, an employer may present the option of working additional hours.

All employers are encouraged to offer flexibility to accommodate each student's class schedule as well as travel time to the worksite. And, each intern's available work hours will vary based on class schedules and individual commitments (athletic teams, student government, part-time employment, etc.).

Employers who show a willingness to work out a realistic schedule will be more likely to enjoy the benefit of an intern who can focus entirely on his or her assignment.

How many hours can interns work during the UCLA Summer Quarter (Mid-June-September)?

Many employers in all sectors offer full-time or part-time paid internships during the UCLA summer quarter. In some fields such as investment banking, paid interns work more than 40 hours per week in line with industry standards.

Requirements For Hiring Eligible Non-U.s. Citizens

Are there special requirements for hiring an international student?

Yes. All currently enrolled UCLA international students in good standing may accept paid internships that relate to their field of study via the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) visa addendum. Establishing a student's CPT and Tax Identification Number is done through specific university departments rather than through the employer.

An important consideration is that international students may only apply for the required CPT after an employment offer is confirmed. For this reason, it is very helpful to make employment offers as early as possible during the quarter prior to start dates.

Are there special requirements for hiring a student who is undocumented and/or covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) guidelines?

Student interns who are covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (or DACA) guidelines will first obtain an Employment Authorization Card (or work permit) from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. This allows employers to verify the student's right to work in the U.S. just as they would for other employees.