Employer Internship Manual

A guide to assist in building an internship program at your business, or enhance your current internship program.

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This manual is based on manuals compiled by: The Career Development Office of Lock Haven University in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. Also, based on manuals compiled by: Florida International University, Stetson University, USFSP, Internships.com, Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Applied Learning Center, and Notre Dame College.

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Contents
What is an Internship? .......................................................... 2
Benefits of an Internship Program............................................. 2
Academic Credit Internships .................................................... 2
Understand Legalities and Determine Internship Compensation ............................................. 3
  U.S. Department of Labor – Fair Labor Standards Act................................................................. 3
  National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Internship Requirements ..................................... 4
  FSU Career Services & Employer Relations Internship Requirements............................................. 4
Before You Begin Recruiting Interns ......................................................................................... 5
  Potential Intern Projects ........................................................................................................... 5
  Potential Learning Exercises .................................................................................................... 5
  Create an Intern Manual ........................................................................................................... 5
  Pre-Arrival Preparation ............................................................................................................. 6
Finding FSU Student Internship Candidates .................................................................................. 6
  Post Your Positions on RamTrack ................................................................................................. 6
  Employer Showcase Series ........................................................................................................ 7
  Watch for Events throughout the Academic Year ....................................................................... 7
Successful Internship Programs Follow Established Hiring Best Practices .................................... 7
  On-Boarding and Orientation ..................................................................................................... 7
  Informal and Formal Evaluations ............................................................................................... 8
  Termination .................................................................................................................................. 8
What is an Internship?

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 (National Association of Colleges and Employers – NACE).

Benefits of an Internship Program

Consider some of the ways in which a thriving internship program will immediately positively impact your organization:

1) Year-round source of highly motivated pre-professionals who can be evaluated and trained for possible future employment.
2) Increase employee-retention rate.
3) Interns may offer fresh ideas and new perspectives.
4) Mentoring an intern provides your staff members the opportunity to develop supervisory skills.
5) Give back to the community.
6) Improve the public perception of your organization.
7) Enhance company or product recognition among the public.

Academic Credit Internships

Students who elect to earn credit for an internship must have the internship approved by their academic department. The faculty evaluates the duties of the internship to determine credit worthiness, and the number of credits. Upon completion, faculty assigns a grade to the student based on the internship performance, additional academic assignments, and the employer’s feedback.

All students may earn academic credit from FSU while earning wages from their internship employer. There are no restrictions on earning credit in lieu of wages, or wages in lieu of credit. These are unrelated issues as employers do not have the authority to grant academic credit of any kind to students. This power rests with the University.

1) All departments have an internship for academic credit option and have developed student eligibility guidelines specific to their respective academic areas.
2) All students must receive approval and meet the academic requirements of their program to receive credit for an internship.
3) Students register for a credit bearing internship course and pay tuition.
Understand Legalities and Determine Internship Compensation

FSU encourages all employers (government, non-profit, and for-profit) to compensate interns through hourly wages, stipends, and/or monetary assistance with travel, parking, etc.

In addition to the U.S. Department of Labor’s guidelines, the Career Services & Employer Relations Office also follows the standards established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Listed below, for your convenience, are the internship criteria from the DOL and NACE. Lastly, FSU has established internship requirements for employers specific to the unique needs of the University which are also enumerated below.

**U.S. Department of Labor – Fair Labor Standards Act**

**Background**

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work.” Covered and non-exempt individuals who are “suffered or permitted” to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships in the “for-profit” private sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the “for-profit” private sector who qualify as employees, rather than trainees, typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.

**The Test For Unpaid Interns**

There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in “for-profit” private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term "suffer or permit to work" cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program. The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1) The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;

2) The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;

3) The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;

4) The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;

5) The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and

6) The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.
National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Internship Requirements

1) The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying knowledge gained in the classroom. **It must not be to simply advance the operations of the employer** or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

2) The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.

3) The experience has a **defined beginning and end**, and a **job description with desired qualifications**.

4) There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.

5) There is **supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of experience**.

6) There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.

7) There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

FSU Career Services & Employer Relations Internship Requirements

**INTERNSHIP SITE** - The employer must be an established business in operation for at least one year, located and conducting business in commercially-zoned office space/property.

**NOTE**: **VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS** where students conduct work from their home or residence hall room for an employer are not presently supported by the University. Students may consult with their academic department/faculty adviser to discuss the possibility of doing an Independent Study. **UNPAID AND NON-CREDITED INTERNSHIPS ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND ARE VIEWED AS STUDENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**.

**SUPERVISION OF INTERNS** - The organization must provide the intern with a designated on-site supervisor/mentor, knowledgeable in the subject area, who will provide the student with daily or weekly supervision and provide constructive feedback.

**POSITION DESCRIPTION** - Employers must provide an academically qualified, professional level work experience related to the student's major. The site supervisor provides a written job description of meaningful, career-related responsibilities and/or projects assigned prior to the student starting his/her internship. The job description will bridge the link between academic theory learned in the classroom, and practical, hands-on work experience.

**PAYMENT OF INTERNS** - An internship can be a paid or unpaid opportunity. Most of the internships that FSU students complete are paid either by a stipend and/or hourly wage. University policy allows students to earn credit with approval of their academic department for the internship whether it is paid or unpaid. Employers are encouraged to review the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division's **Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act** and be aware of the government's policy regarding internships and payments.

**EVALUATION** - Students should be provided with a written letter of evaluation at the mid-point and conclusion of their internship. Many, but not all, of the academic departments at FSU will mail the
internship site supervisor a student intern performance evaluation two weeks before the completion of the internship. Site supervisors should properly review and evaluate the intern(s) performance and mail the evaluation back to the designated FSU faculty internship supervisor in a timely manner.

**SAFETY** - The internship employer / site supervisor is responsible for informing student interns about any and all company / organizational guidelines, policies and any safety issues prior to the students' start date. Employers agree to provide the same consideration of health, safety and working conditions accorded permanent employees.

**REPORTING OF ISSUES** - Should any problems develop with the intern, they must be reported by the site supervisor to the student and the faculty internship supervisor or the University's Internship Adviser or contact Career Services and Employer Relations.

# Before You Begin Recruiting Interns

Just as you would for a full-time benefited position, your organization will need to develop an internship description and any other necessary written operations procedural manuals. Below are some potential internship projects and learning exercises which you may wish to include in your internship description.

**Potential Intern Projects**

1) Competitive Analysis /Product Comparisons
2) Developing process directions for tasks with high employee turnover
3) Sourcing lower-cost supplies
4) Preparing budgets, reports, plans, or proposals
5) Critiquing the company’s website from a user perspective

**Potential Learning Exercises**

1) Invite an intern to observe an internal meeting, a client meeting, or sales call.
2) Teach an intern how to prepare a budget, report, or plan.
3) Train an intern how to use a piece of equipment or software.
4) Help an intern use their PowerPoint skills to make a company presentation.
5) Role-play with an intern how to make a client follow-up call or close a sale.

**Create an Intern Manual**

1) Company Profile – organizational overview, historical information, mission and/or vision statement, primary product or service positioning, biographical consumer information, visual representation of the business structure, company organizational chart, info. on other offices/branches, info. on retail locations, public perception, recent news
2) Position Profile – similar to a job description, an overview of the intern’s roles and responsibilities
3) Company Policies – procedures for calling in sick, procedures for completing timesheets, etc.
4) Discuss intern etiquette – expectations for attire and behavior
5) Timesheet Form – an original (to make copies from) and an example of a completed timesheet

Pre-Arrival Preparation

1) Send a Welcome Packet confirming start date and communicating key first-day information.
   This may include:
   a. A copy of the Internship Agreement (and any other HR documents interns need to sign ahead of time).
   b. A Welcome Letter containing any information necessary for the first day of work, etc.
2) Touch base with intern coordinator and supervisors.
3) Alert employees:
   a. Send a company-wide email alerting employees to the arrival of interns. You could provide a brief, generic biography about the interns – their school and/or major.
   b. Ask employees to make interns feel welcome by initiating introductions and answering questions when possible.

Finding FSU Student Internship Candidates

Career Services & Employer Relations does not place students in internships, but provides resources for employers to identify and select quality FSU students and alumni.

Post Your Positions on RamTrack

To post, just follow these instructions:

1) Visit the link https://www.myinterface.com/framingham/employer/
2) Click on “Click here to register”
3) Type your organization’s name in the text box provided. This will check to see if your organization is already registered.
4) If your organization does not come up, please click on “Can’t find your organization?” and fill out the registration form. For the company profile, please enter a brief overview about your organization. After registering, you will be able to input your current positions immediately.

Once registered, you will have full access to visit RamTrack and log in to your account to post any time.

Framingham State University students and alumni have free 24/7 access to view your available opportunities. You also have the ability to edit your listing at any time. Please let us know if you hire FSU students or alumni. We always like to hear of success stories!
**Employer Showcase Series**

Every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the academic year we give up to six employers a space in the lobby of our student center to reach out to students. (Shifts run from: 9-11:45 a.m., 12 noon-2:45 p.m., and 3-6 p.m.) This is a great way to informally network with the FSU student body and to advertise internship opportunities to our students. Please visit the Career Services and Employer Relations webpage to complete the online reservation form. Please note that you must have at least one internship position posted on RamTrack in order to be eligible to participate in the Employer Showcase.

**Watch for Events throughout the Academic Year**

Job and Internship Fairs are held every Fall and Spring semester and will be advertised on RamTrack. Employers register for these events through their RamTrack accounts.

**Successful Internship Programs Follow Established Hiring Best Practices**

Successful internship programs require the same amount of time, effort, and resources that an organization would implement when hiring a full-time, benefited employee. Your organization should follow its established procedures for on-boarding, orientation, informal and formal performance evaluations, and termination processes.

**On-Boarding and Orientation**

1) Greet interns, then tour your facility and make introductions to managers and colleagues.
2) Turn in Internship Agreement and other employment paperwork.
3) Conduct intern orientation meeting to include:
   a. Review of behavior/performance expectations
   b. Review learning objectives
   c. Discuss projected assignments
   d. Discuss training schedule (i.e. orientation, professional development sessions, etc.)
   e. Schedule times for supervision sessions
   f. Provide opportunity for interns to discuss their expectations
4) Distribute badges, key cards, or other necessary entry items.
5) Instruct how to use office equipment.
6) Provide the intern with the Intern Manual: pay schedules, procedures for calling in sick, and overall expectations for attire and behavior.
7) Intern Supervisor should explain how and when feedback will be provided throughout the internship.
Informal and Formal Evaluations

Informal
Clear and consistent feedback is a critical component of a successful internship program. Weekly check-ins are encouraged in order to clarify processes and procedures, ensure deadlines are being met, and correct inaccuracies or other miscommunication before a more serious problem develops. Supervisors may want to encourage interns to keep a list of non-urgent issues that don’t directly affect project progress to address at the weekly check-in meeting.

Formal
Just as you would for any full-time, benefited employee, it is encouraged you complete a formal written evaluation at the end of the internship to summarize the students’ progress towards meeting their learning objectives. It is also recommended, that a mid-point evaluation is conducted to ensure that students are on the right track to achieve their learning objectives and provides an opportunity to realign behaviors and assignments in order to meet these objectives. Students completing academic-credit internships may have specific forms provided by their academic departments which are required by supervisors to complete.

Termination
How you treat an intern during the termination process is just as important as how you conducted orientation for the intern at the outset of the internship. Concluding the internship with a formal wrap-up process demonstrates the value the organization places on interns. You may wish to include one or several of the following activities during the final days of an internship:

1) Provide opportunities for the intern to complete presentations to recap their internship experience. This can be a great opportunity for the intern to demonstrate their accomplishments and for other employees to see the value of internships.
2) Discuss future employment options with the student (if applicable).
3) Host a going away party for the intern.
4) Take the intern to lunch/dinner.
5) Provide a letter of recommendation or certificate of completion.