

# Employer Guide to Hosting an Intern



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*Starting and Maintaining a Quality Internship Program.* Compiled and edited by Michael True, Senior Associate (Retired), Career & Professional Development Center of Messiah College with assistance from the Pittsburgh Technology Council and San Diego State University.

*Internship-in-a-Box.* Compiled and edited by Innovation Philadelphia and Career Philly.

National member organizations can offer additional assistance. The following organizations, and their regional and/or statewide affiliates, are recommended.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)  
62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085  
Phone: 800-544-5272  
Fax: 610-868-0208  
Web: [www.naceweb.org](http://www.naceweb.org)

National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE)  
19 Mantua Road, Mt. Royal, NJ 08096  
Phone: 856-423-3427  
Fax: 856-423-3420  
Web: [www.nsee.org](http://www.nsee.org)

Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA)  
16 Santa Ana Place, Walnut Creek, CA 94598  
Phone: 800-824-0449  
Fax: 925-906-0922  
Web: [www.ceiainc.org](http://www.ceiainc.org)

The following manual was compiled, utilizing the above resources,  
by the Career Center at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania.

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## INTRODUCTION

This guide contains information about the internship programs at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. Information includes: benefits of internships for students, faculty and employers and the details on how to create a successful experience.

The primary purpose of an internship is to further the intellectual, professional and personal growth of the student. Ideally, an internship will help students relate their educational interests and background to specific careers, test skills and interests in that field, and apply textbook theory in a viable work setting.

### Defining of an Academic Internship\*

An academic internship is a form of experiential education that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Students earn academic credit, or there is some other connection to a degree-granting, educational institution. This work/learning arrangement is overseen by a faculty or staff member of an educational institution and by a designated employee of an organization. Learning activities common to most internships include learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation, and assessment. The internship is usually the length or equivalent of an academic term, may be parttime or fulltime, paid or unpaid. It is generally a one-time experience. An integral component of the experience that distinguishes it from other types of work is one or more forms of structured and deliberate reflection contained within learning agendas or objectives.

\*Adapted from definitions by the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) and the Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA).

### Conditions Specific to Mansfield University

- In a credit-bearing internship, one credit hour equates to 40 clock hours of supervised experience.
- Up to 12 academic credits of internship experience may count toward graduation requirements. This may be less for some academic departments.
- Creditbearing (or for-credit) internships *always* require approval from the student's academic department. The student's academic advisor (a faculty member) and the department chairperson must approve the internship as relevant and substantive to the student's academic learning. Students are expected to secure for-credit internships during the semester prior to the academic semester of service (April for fall semester; November for spring semester, March for summer session). *Please keep this timeline in mind when you post an internship.*
- For a credit-bearing internship to be approved, the sponsoring organization (the site supervisor) must provide bona fide learning objectives, and the scope of the experience must be substantial (not simply clerical work, for example). A job description detailing the expected work the student will perform is required as part of the review to determine credit status.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### My organization can't afford to pay for an intern. Are there alternatives?

Not all interns are paid an hourly wage. Others choose to offer a stipend or scholarship to cover the cost of a for-credit internship.

Your organization should make itself aware of the 7-factor test in place from the Department of Labor to determine whether an unpaid internship is legal. It is recommended that you discuss the issue with your human resources representative and/or legal counsel. Further information on legal issues related to internships, as well as a list of the DOL's 7-factor test can be found in the appendices of this Handbook.

#### Do I have to provide health care for interns?

No, most students are covered by their parents' or guardians' health care plan, or obtain it through the school.

## The Benefits of Internships

### Student Benefits

- Learn more about a particular career, which helps the student make ongoing adjustments to his/her career plans. "Test drive" a chosen field; find out if he/she likes the type of work, atmosphere, hours, etc.
- Gain valuable experience for building a great resume and develop a competitive edge for job hunt and graduate school applications.
- Gain confidence in their abilities.
- Develop professional and marketable skills.
- Build a network and develop business contacts that may be of value during a job search.

### Organization Benefits

- Fill a specific skill need or bring fresh ideas to the organization.
- Maintain a year-round source of highly motivated pre-professionals.
- Identify quality candidates for temporary or seasonal positions and projects.
- Opportunity for professional staff to focus on creative projects and serve as mentors for new professionals.
- Tap into a flexible, cost-effective workforce not requiring long-term employer commitment.
- A proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential employees.
- Successful internships build a positive organization brand on campus.

## Participant Roles in an Internship

There are several participants involved in ensuring that an internship is successful.

### Student Intern's Role

The student intern is responsible for researching and interviewing for the internship opportunity. The student also will connect with the faculty internship supervisor in their appropriate major. The intern also is responsible for meeting with the site supervisor prior to the internship to clarify expectations and responsibilities, complete the internship and registration forms, work the required number of hours, seek out supervision and advice as needed, and complete the academically-related tasks that are agreed upon by the faculty supervisor and intern (such as a journal, additional research/paper or oral presentation to faculty and students at the completion of the internship). In addition, the intern maintains high standards of professionalism while at the internship site.

### Career Center's Role

The Career Center serves as a clearinghouse of information for students and employers. The Career Center informs prospective interns about the process and requirements to secure and participate in an academically appropriate internship. They may also assist students with the internship search process, such as setting goals, contacting faculty and employers, critiquing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, and appropriate professional expectations.

### Faculty Internship Supervisor's Role

The faculty supervisor is responsible for helping the intern integrate the internship into his or her total academic experience. She/he provides academic direction and evaluates learning derived from the internship.

The student and the faculty internship supervisor should meet early in the process of finding an internship to determine if the student is academically eligible to complete an internship according to department guidelines and to discuss the student's goals in completing an internship.

Once the student has found an internship, the faculty supervisor will advise the student about the internship site approval process, registration for the course, number of course credits, any required liability insurance and fees associated with the course registration. Academic requirements may include a final oral presentation to students and faculty on the experience, a journal, paper, relevant research and/or projects. The faculty supervisor maintains appropriate contact with the student and site supervisor throughout the internship to give direction and support. The amount and form of contact are determined by the academic department.

### Site (Agency/Field) Supervisor's Role

Student interns are supervised by staff representatives employed by the site organization. The site supervisor should have sufficient experience and expertise in the area in which the student is interning. Site supervisors are responsible for determining qualifications for the position, interviewing interns, orientation of interns to the organization, and directing and evaluating the student's work. The ideal site supervisor will serve as a mentor, sharing the pros and cons of a career in the field and offer suggestions for entering the profession. The site supervisor meets with the intern on a regular basis to guide performance, answer questions and provide background information and resources related to the intern's work. A site supervisor also may help by recommending ways to enhance the intern's learning.

## DEVELOPING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### 1. Identify learning experience you can offer & potential projects to be completed.

Depending on the scope of the work you need done, the estimated time frame to complete it, how much learning you can provide, and other factors, you need to identify if you are looking for just one intern, multiple interns, or developing a recurring internship program.

### 2. Prepare for hosting an Intern.

Assign a supervisor/mentor who likes to train and has the resources to do an effective job. Identify a workplace for your intern and supply needed equipment, computer, phone, etc. Identify training opportunities and materials and put together a package for the intern's arrival. Learn the legal implications of hosting interns. Just like other workers, they are subject to legal protections and regulations. Protect yourself and your intern by knowing the laws. Further information on legal issues related to internships can be found in the appendices of this Handbook.

### 3. Write a clear and specific internship description.

This document helps students (and faculty) understand exactly what the internship involves, what key skills you expect from students, and what your expectations are regarding the work they will perform. The description would also include mention of work schedule, payment (if any), minimal qualifications, and application process with contact information. A sample internship description can be found in the appendices of this Handbook. The Mansfield University Career Center can answer questions and provide individualized assistance as needed.

### 4. Complete an Internship Affiliation Agreement.

An Affiliation Agreement is a legal agreement between Mansfield University and your organization. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of each party. The Internship Affiliation Agreement may be obtained online at [career.mansfield.edu/employers](http://career.mansfield.edu/employers) or by contacting the Mansfield University Career Center directly. An Affiliation Agreement must be in place before a student can begin an internship with the organization. Each internship agreement is effective for five (5) years from date of signature.

### 5. Post the internship description online via Handshake ([career.mansfield.edu](http://career.mansfield.edu)).

Mansfield University partners with Handshake to offer a free online job and internship posting board utilized by Mansfield University and accessible to all current students and alumni. The Mansfield University Career Center will review the intern description and determine if it is a good match for MU students. The Career Center will also publicize the opportunity to appropriate academic departments, student clubs/organizations or other campus entities.

### 6. Applicant review.

This is similar to finding and hiring any employee. Because students have less experience than other candidates you may have interviewed, you should prepare appropriate questions beforehand. Here are some examples:

- Why did you choose your major?
- What extracurricular activities are you involved in?
- What coursework have you completed that will help you succeed in this position?

### 7. Process paperwork.

Forms and documentation will be required by various parties, including Mansfield University registrar's office and academic department. The student should initiate this process and provide you with the required forms.

### 8. Managing the Intern

a. **Orientation/Expectations** – You may consider developing an orientation folder including particular protocols and policies of the organization.

- Introduction to staff
- Typical working hours, when to take lunch break and where

- Where to park
- Where are restrooms
- Office equipment to be used and how to use the equipment
- What is appropriate attire
- Where and when are staff meetings held (if applicable)
- Other possible areas of training
  - Answering the office telephone and how to take messages
  - Appropriate level of personal telephone calls or internet use
  - How to carry out particular research
  - Business etiquette and expectations for the workplace

It is important that the student understand from the outset what the employer expects in terms of job duties and performance. In this initial conversation, the student should have the opportunity to express his/her expectations of the training assignment. A clarification of expectations by both the employer and the student should open communications between the two, setting the stage for a productive experience.

- Communication** – Initially interns need to have frequent contact with the supervisor, because there is so much to learn in the first few weeks. Once the student is settled in he/she needs to know that the supervisor is available to discuss any problems or questions that may arise. The University requests at least two formal conferences between the student and supervisor to evaluate the student's job performance. Some academic departments will provide standardized evaluation instruments. These conferences provide an opportunity for the supervisor to offer constructive feedback and advice for the student's professional development. These sessions should be used to emphasize proper attitudes, encourage good work habits, and instill pride in performance.
  - Monitoring and Supervision** – Give interns meaningful work. Assign day-to-day tasks that increase in responsibility throughout the internship. Monitor and evaluate work. Allow intern to develop teamwork and communication skills. Create goals with deadlines. Guide intern in breaking down tasks and setting milestones. Provide ongoing support.
  - Vary the Experience** – The interns should be given sufficient time to develop proficiency in each task. However, the students should not be kept at the same task throughout the entire work term merely because he/she is capable and productive in that area. Supervisors should provide a variety of learning experiences and, if possible, some choice in tasks not yet attempted.
  - Develop Professionalism** – Interns are impressionable and eager to learn. Host organizations can help students develop professionally. Particular attention should be given to help students improve human relation skills, personal appearance, and the ability to make decisions. They should be encouraged to use their initiative, to be creative, to be enthusiastic and diligent, and to improve the overall quality of their work performance.
  - Develop Loyalty** - Students who have excellent work experiences feel good about the employer. They share their impressions with other students on campus through the student "grapevine." This process assures the promotion of a good employer brand, which will aid in future recruitment needs. Providing interns a positive experience is one of the best "PR" tools that an employer can have on a college campus.
9. **Evaluate your Internship Program**  
How well is the internship meeting your program/organization's needs? How well is the internship meeting the needs of your interns? Are there other projects or departments where an intern could add value? What could have improved the experience?

If any questions should arise related to Mansfield University interns, please contact the Faculty Supervisor assigned to the student or the Career Center.



## CONTACT INFORMATION



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Alumni Hall, Ground Floor  
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Mansfield, PA 16933  
Phone: 570-662-4133  
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## **Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act**

This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns and students working for “for-profit” employers are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).<sup>1</sup>

### **Background**

The 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 Test for Unpaid Interns and Students**

Courts have used the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA.<sup>2</sup> 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:

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The FLSA exempts certain people who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency or who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation, for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships for public sector and non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., *Benjamin v. B & H Educ., Inc.*, --- F.3d ---, 2017 WL 6460087, at \*4-5 (9th Cir. Dec. 19, 2017); *Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Inc.*, 811 F.3d 528, 536-37 (2d Cir. 2016); *Schumann v. Collier Anesthesia, P.A.*, 803 F.3d 1199, 1211-12 (11th Cir. 2015); see also *Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.*, 330 U.S. 148, 152-53 (1947); *Solis v. Laurelbrook Sanitarium & Sch., Inc.*, 642 F.3d 518, 529 (6th Cir. 2011).

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.

#### **Where to Obtain Additional Information**

This publication is for general information and is not a regulation. For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

**U.S. Department of Labor**  
Frances Perkins Building  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

**1-866-4-USWAGE**  
TTY: 1-866-487-9243  
[Contact Us](#)



## Career Center

### Sample Internship Description

**Tip:** Write the internship job description as if you were writing a job description for an entry-level position.

**Company Name:** Company Name

**Company Description:** Brief Description of your organization (what it does, its size, and other topics that describe your company and its mission). A company website may also be included for more information.

**Internship/Position Title:** Title that generally describes position responsibilities.

**Internship Supervisor:** Name and Title of employee to which student will directly report

**Description:** Responsibilities that the student will have, as well as daily tasks or projects the student will be assisting with. The description is very important. Be as specific as you can. The more information included in the description will allow the student to decide, before applying, if the position would be a good match.

**Qualifications:**

- Skills you would like this student to possess (Excellent writing and communication skills, knowledge of computer applications such as Photoshop, MS Word...)
- Student's class level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
- Grade point average requirement (optional)
- List academic majors from which you want to hire, such as business, science, etc...

**Benefits to Student:** A general description of the opportunities the student will have to learn and apply coursework and develop professional skills.

**Location:** Internship site location

**Hours, Start Date and End Date:** Flexible, minimum, maximum hours per week. Typically, students look for part-time internships during the school calendar year or full-time during the summer.

**Compensation:** It is advisable that your organization make itself familiar with the 7-factor test developed by the Department of Labor to determine whether interns and students working for "for-profit" employers are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf>

**For More Information or to Apply:**

Provide a list of all information being requested (cover letter, resume, writing sample, transcript, letters of recommendation, etc.). Include the name of the contact person, agency address, phone and email on your announcement.

**Application Deadline:** list a specific date and time or list as "Open until filled".

This sample form is for informational purposes only, it does not constitute legal advice and may not be appropriate for all internship settings. Before using this or any other form, you should consult your human resources department or legal counsel.

For more information: Mansfield University Career Center (570-662-4133 or [careers@mansfield.edu](mailto:careers@mansfield.edu))