

## Guidance for Hosting Internships

### As you are considering interns for your organization:

The University of Arizona defines an internship as:

*A guided learning experience offered by an organization with the student's education and preparation for future employment in mind. An internship is a temporary practical assignment, usually lasting only 1-2 academic terms, with no guarantee of ongoing employment.*

### Additional criteria to consider as you develop an internship program:

- What knowledge and skills would a student intern learn / gain from the experience? How will this internship prepare them for future endeavors?
- What tasks and responsibilities will the intern take on to contribute to the organization?
- How much time is your team able to devote toward developing and supporting an intern?
- Are you prepared to assign a team member to supervise and mentor the intern?
- How many hours of work per week do you envision for an intern? An internship pursued for academic credit requires a minimum of 45 hours per unit. Most students who wish to earn university credit pursue 3- or 6-unit internships (which require 120 hours to 270 hours). For students not pursuing credit for an internship, a minimum of 120 is suggested to provide an intern with the opportunity to gain skills and have a full experience where they can contribute.
- Are you planning to provide a paid internship, or are planning to pay a stipend or salary to an intern for the contributions they make? Here are some notes on paid vs unpaid internships:
  - Paid internships are becoming the increasing trend. This article from NACE [Paid Internships: Moving Toward Greater Equity, Setting Pay](#) offers some perspective and suggestions as you decide what is right for your organization. The University strongly encourages paid internships.
  - Unpaid internships can still be valuable learning experiences. While paid experiences are more desirable, benefits such as flexible scheduling, opportunity to work alongside a designated mentor, or ownership over a project that could be a great resume-builder can make an internship desirable to students. If you are considering an unpaid internship, please review the [U.S. Department of Labor fact sheet on unpaid internships](#).

### To-Dos as you are preparing to recruit, hire, and host an intern

- Consider what skills are required for the internship (what skills will interns be applying and what skills will they develop?).
- Draft a job description, following the guidance we suggest for an [internship job description](#).
  - Select a descriptive title for the internship – Conservation Intern or Marketing & Communications Intern vs simply Summer Intern – which will garner more interest for the position and will help the students when they apply to future opportunities.
  - State the role of the intern and the key projects they would be involved with.
  - Clearly state preferred requirements. **TIP:** The fewer requirements, the more likely you may be to see more applicants.
  - Promote any benefits (consider reading this as an applicant – what does the organization offer that would be most appealing to a student intern?).



- Plan for ideal start / end dates for your team (it may also help to partner with the university - either college / department or through [SECD](#) to be aware of the academic calendar).
- Determine how applicants should apply. Handshake is the university's career platform that we suggest. [Join Handshake](#) to reach the most students with your opportunities.
- In addition to Handshake, consider if there are students from specific majors you would like to reach. Some departments provide individual department resources for their specific student population and outreach to Internship Coordinators in those majors could yield applicants.
- Post the internship and alert any university partners.
- **TIP:** Many postings will need time to garner interest and allow students to prepare their application materials. Allowing at least 30 days and up to 3 months for a position to be "live" in Handshake will increase likelihood of applicants.
- Establish interview / selection process in accordance with [EEOC guidelines](#).
- Conduct interviews and make selections in alignment with your organization's practices for hiring new employees/interns/hosting volunteers. Interviews may be virtual or in-person. They can also be conducted in one of the interview rooms on the University of Arizona campus. For more information regarding on-campus interviewing, contact [employer@arizona.edu](mailto:employer@arizona.edu).

### Pre-internship / Post-internship and Internship duration best practices

- Discuss goals and objectives for the internship with the intern and key members of your team.
- When internships are pursued for academic credit, it is the responsibility of the intern to coordinate with the academic unit that is responsible for awarding credit.
- Complete an [Internship Workplan agreement](#) in collaboration with the intern. This is advised whether the student is doing the internship for credit or not, to agree upon the projects, hours, objectives, and duration of the internship.
- Plan for all resources, equipment, and workspace for the intern.
- Plan for onboarding and training and communicate this plan to the intern and to all involved.
- Create a plan for regular check-ins and feedback throughout the internship.
- Adhere to the agreed upon workplan. As changing business needs occur, for any changes that impact the intern's role, communicate to the intern, and ensure they understand and agree to adaptations. If the internship is being completed for course credit, alert the intern to inform their academic partner/course instructor of changes to the workplan.
- Include the intern in appropriate team initiatives or professional development opportunities.
- Provide a review and/or final feedback for the intern, recognizing their work and contributions, and providing feedback on areas for improvement and suggestions for continued development.
- Collect feedback on the experience through a conversation or a survey at the end of the internship, allowing the intern to provide feedback as you evolve your internship program.
- Stay in touch. Internships have a powerful impact on career planning. Your intern may turn to you for career guidance or as a reference. They also may want to share with you their next steps and successes. Your intern could turn out to be a future candidate and colleague!

### Additional Resources

- NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers), [Position Statement: U.S. Internships](#)
- NACE [15 Best Practices for Internship Programs](#).