Employer's Guide to Internships at the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh

The University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh feels very strongly about providing our students with quality internships and experiential learning opportunities to help them progress in their personal and career development. We believe that internships provide great opportunities for our students to learn professional skills and gain marketable experience. For this reason, we offer a variety of great resources for your organization to connect on the UW - Oshkosh campus.

What is an internship?

Internships are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as, "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional workplace setting. Internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, develop social capital, and make connections in professional fields. In addition, internships serve as a significant recruiting mechanism for employers, providing them with the opportunity to guide and evaluate potential candidates."

Generally, internships are designed by the employer to meet the needs of the organization while at the same time providing the interns with training, specific work assignments, and learning experience to expand their education into the world of work. Students often seek internships to help them build professional experience in their field of interest, test prospective future employment/career choices, receive mentoring, establish a professional network, and make their academic studies more relevant.

A typical internship:

- Balances the intern's learning goals with the organization's needs.
- Includes intentional learning objectives, observation, reflection, supervision, and evaluation.
- Usually last one to two semesters (14 weeks - 28 weeks) or a summer (8-10 weeks).
- May be part-time or full-time.
- May be paid or unpaid (see Department of Labor criteria in the Wages section below).
- May be part of an educational program and carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit or part of a learning plan that the intern develops.
- Includes opportunities for developing industry related and/or transferable skills to promote academic, career and/or personal growth.
- Provides interns with professional contacts for networking and future employment.

How Internships Benefit Employers

- Cost effective way to identify and evaluate potential full-time employees
- Company visibility on and off campus
- Increase productivity through support for current employees
- Provide opportunities for professional staff to pursue other or new projects
- Gain fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to old problems
- Quality candidates to assist with projects and tasks
- Opportunity to contribute expertise to the educational training of students
- Demonstrates a commitment to the community to develop future professionals

Role & Responsibilities of an Internship Supervisor/Employer

- Offer a true career related experience that enhances academic learning. Hiring a student to perform busy work (i.e. data entry, filing, answering phones, etc.) are appropriate internship experiences only when balanced with meaningful professional responsibilities. The internship serves as a link between classroom learning and practical application, so it should involve the student in making decisions and learning about a career field through hands-on experience.
- Provide a position description that describes the internship. If students are enrolling in academic credit for the internship, they may be required to complete an Internship Agreement from their academic department, which they are responsible for sharing with you. This is an opportunity for you and the student to clearly define the learning objectives and job duties for the internship.

- Provide an orientation for the student to the work site. Introduce the student to the organization, the employees, the physical layout, and the order of responsibility. Be sure the student intern knows the general philosophy and procedures of operation for the organization. Inform the intern of the policies and expectations to be followed.
- Provide the intern with ongoing feedback and conduct a performance evaluation. You can use your organization's performance evaluation or evaluation(s) provided to you as indicated in the learning agreement.

Starting an Internship Program at Your Organization

1. **Set goals and decide what the intern could do.**
    - ♦ What does your organization hope to achieve from the internship program?
    - ♦ Special Projects: Identify a "wish list" of special projects that need to be organized and implemented. Interns can be assigned to assist with these projects, which can include organizing research projects, planning special events, developing special promotional campaigns, or designing web pages. When developing an internship involving special projects, you should identify goals, timelines, and outcomes so that everyone understands the purpose and expectations involved.
    - ♦ On-going Operations: Certain businesses and organizations routinely experience peak periods where additional assistance is needed. Others may operate under very limited budgets and need additional help throughout the year, in which interns can assist. For example, interns may be assigned to assist as youth group facilitators, human resource management support staff, public relations assistants or marketing associates if it aligns with their educational or career goals/learning objectives.

2. **Determine how much time the intern will spend with you**.
    - ♦ Determine how much time it will take to accomplish the goals. Generally, students are available for one semester or for a summer internship. Some students will consider longer term internships. The semester time frames for UWO internships are generally as follows, but can be tailored based on the student's availability and your organization's needs:
        - ▪ Fall semester: September through the second week of December (14 weeks)
        - ▪ Winter Interim: January (3 weeks)
        - ▪ Spring semester: February through second week of May (14 weeks)
        - ▪ Spring Interim: third week of May through the first week of June (3 weeks)
        - ▪ Summer semester: June through August (8 weeks)
    - ♦ Many internships are set up on a part-time basis (10-20 hours per week) to allow students to gain experience while maintaining a partial or full load of academic credits.

3. **Establish the necessary organizational support**:
    - ♦ Designate a primary mentor/supervisor for the intern. Supervisor(s) must have knowledge and expertise in the field the student is interning in. The intern should not serve as an expert (e.g., your company has no employees with expertise in social media and wants an intern to work on all social media efforts.)
    - ♦ Decide whether the intern will work in one department or several.
    - ♦ Determine the kind of orientation and training the intern will need.
    - ♦ Determine equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the intern to perform their duties.
    - ♦ Assume liability for work-related injuries sustained by the intern, insofar as the agency may determine the same to be required by state and federal law.

4. **Determine the criteria/qualifications you want in an intern:**
    - ♦ What academic background or experience is needed to complete the identified projects and tasks?
        - ▪ particular major(s)
        - ▪ minimum GPA
        - ▪ year in school
        - ▪ technical skills
        - ▪ courses taken
    - ♦ Personal characteristics

5. **Write an internship position description** (see Appendix A for an example template)
   Include the following:
   - Brief organization description and link to the organization's website
   - Position title
   - Location (city, state)
   - Start/end dates of the internship
   - Compensation: indicate if it's paid (pay rate) or unpaid
   - An estimate of hours per week
   - Duties and responsibilities (potential tasks/projects, skills that will be developed)
   - Skills and qualifications required/preferred (communication, computer, analytical, etc.)
   - How many positions are available?
   - Application instructions, selection process, and deadlines
   - Contact information

   If you would like assistance with writing your position description, please contact Kari Meszaros, Career & Professional Development Internship Coordinator: meszarosk@uwosh.edu, (920) 424-2181.

6. **Announce & Recruit:**
   To start the process of advertising your internship position at UW - Oshkosh:
   1. Post the position(s) on Handshake, the university's online job-posting database. All university students have access to these positions. To create your account or log-on to your existing account, visit https://uwosh.joinhandshake.com/login.

      If you need assistance with your account or creating an account, visit the UW - Oshkosh Career & Professional Development website (http://www.uwosh.edu/career/employers/) or contact Career & Professional Development at 920-424-2181, career@uwosh.edu.

   2. In addition to posting the position description on Handshake, you can email the position description to the Career & Professional Development Internship Coordinator to share your opportunity with the department(s) or faculty of the students you are trying to recruit.

   3. Consider attending events on campus and/or connecting with student organizations.

Hiring Process

As the hiring organization, you determine the application process and select the applicant(s) who best meets your needs. Students are responsible for contacting you for additional questions and applying for the internship as you outlined. You can contact the selected students directly to set up interviews.

Once you make an offer to a student for the internship, complete the appropriate paperwork for human resources at your organization and the student's internship requirements (if applicable).

Wages

Do you offer a paid or unpaid internship?

We believe it is desirable to compensate interns in some manner. Students participating in paid internships can alleviate some of their student debt. Employers also benefit by attracting the best applicants and maintaining a stronger sense of accountability with the interns.

For more insight into internship wages, review NACE's *Key Factors to Consider When Setting Intern Salaries* (https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/internships/key-factors-to-consider-when-setting-intern-salaries/) and *Everything You Need to Know About Paying Interns*, by Parker Dewey (https://info.parkerdewey.com/unpaid-internships).

On January 5, 2018, the DOL issued a statement essentially ending the reign of the six-part test and replacing it with the primary beneficiary test to determine if an individual can be classified as an unpaid intern.

Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

The primary beneficiary test does not include a rigid set of requirements, but a non-exhaustive list of factors to determine who is the primary beneficiary of the internship. The factors include:

- the extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation;
- 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 an educational institution;
- the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit;
- the extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar;
- the extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning;
- 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; and
- 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.

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.

The federal and state work-study programs will support students who are doing internships at qualifying organizations. Students must also be eligible for work-study financial aid. For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office: fao@uwosh.edu, (920) 424-3377.

How much should you pay an intern?
We recommend identifying a fair entry-level starting salary for a similar position at your organization and multiplying it by a percentage to determine the intern's salary. The percentage will vary depending on the intern's education level and experience. For example, a senior may earn 80-90%, a junior 80-85%, a sophomore 75-80%, and a freshman may earn 70-75% of a typical starting salary for a similar position. If you follow this rule of thumb, you can offer increases each year to returning interns and stay within your current salary structure.

NACE shares internship salary data in the article *Average Hourly Wage For Interns Exceeds $23* (https://www.naceweb.org/job-market/compensation/average-hourly-wage-for-interns-exceeds-23-dollars).

Liability & Legal Concerns

Non-disclosure & Non-compete Agreements: Because an internship is, by definition, a short-term learning opportunity for students prior to graduation, a non-compete agreement may severely limit a student's ability to accept a second internship or full-time post-graduate employment. Non-competes are also difficult to establish as reasonable under the law. Therefore, we ask that employers do not require their interns to sign such an agreement. Similarly, a student's ability to discuss their experience in an internship can be crucial in demonstrating their qualifications in applications and interviews for a future job, and in assessing the internship's educational outcomes. Students receiving educational credit for internships may, in fact, be required to write about their experiences. For these reasons, we also ask that employers do not require interns to sign a non-disclosure agreement unless it is reasonably and narrowly drawn to protect intellectual property or other particularly sensitive information.

Medical insurance: The University does not provide medical insurance to students. A student may be listed on their parent's health insurance policy, they may obtain insurance independently, or they may qualify for insurance through an employer if they are entitled to pay for their work.

Worker's Compensation: If a student is paid in an employment capacity, the student should be covered by the employer's workers' compensation policy. If a student is in an unpaid position or received a stipend and is not an agent of the university, it is highly advisable for an employer to obtain a rider to its existing workers' compensation policy to cover the intern.

Professional Liability: If a student is working as an intern that is approved by the university, is unpaid, and is part of a credit course, they would be acting as an agent of the university and therefore would be covered under our State Self-funded Liability Program. Generally, UW – Oshkosh Risk Management would supply them with a Certificate of Coverage to forward to the establishment they are interning at. In any other cases/circumstances, the insurance would have to be purchased through a professional association in their field.

For More Information

For general information and questions with creating an internship program, contact Kari Meszaros, Internship Coordinator at UW Oshkosh Career & Professional Development by phone at 920-424-2181 or email at meszarosk@uwosh.edu.

For School of Business internships, contact Andrew Soderberg at soderbea@uwosh.edu, 920-424-0199. Professor Soderberg can assist you in connecting with the business departments and students.

Appendix A: Internship Posting Template

Creating a position description for an open internship can be the most essential step in acquiring a quality candidate. Time should be put into creating the position description as it is important to ensure a quality response from qualified students.

Position Title: It is always helpful to include "intern" or "internship" in the posting. For example, Social Media Internship or Finance Intern.

Organization: Your company or organization name

Work Schedule: Hours per week? Specific days or times? Flexible? In person/remote/hybrid?

Pay/Salary: Per hour rate or Not Paid. It is always helpful to specify. Students will be looking for this information and if it is not provided, they may look past this opportunity.

Employment Start Date: Approximate start date

Employment End Date: End date or ongoing

Job Description:
This is your chance to really sell your position. What are facets of the position that will interest students? What skills/knowledge will they gain from the internship? Make sure to state specific duties or general topics the intern will have the opportunity to experience. Students are encouraged to look at the entire "package" when considering internships. This includes the educational opportunities and experiences they will have throughout the internship that will create professional development. Make sure to sell those opportunities in this portion of the job description.

Qualifications:
Some areas may include:

- Year in School
- Major
- Classes Taken
- Skills
- Qualities

Application Instructions:
How do you want them to apply? Email resume and cover letter to… or they can apply right through Handshake (our online recruiting system). This allows students to immediately send their resume via the system while viewing the position description.