

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP GUIDE

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 UNDER FAIR LABOR STANDARDS

- Training is provided similar to an educational environment
- The internship is tied to the student's college education
- The internship accommodates the students academic commitments
- There is a set duration that aligns with training purposes
- The internship does not displace the work of fulltime employees

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JOBS, INTERNSHIPS & VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteering: An unpaid role for an organization with flexible hours.

Part-Time Job: A paid role where an organization is looking to get a specific job done. The manager is not training the student to grow within their field.

Internship: A role that related to the student's major, has development/shadowing/learning opportunities and consistent feedback.

INTERNSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING YOUR INTERNSHIP

- Determine what you want the intern to accomplish during the timeframe.
- Think about what the learning objectives are for the internship.
- Plan out the work the intern will be doing in advance.
- Determine the structure of the internship:
 - Will your intern rotate between different departments?
 - Who will the student intern report to directly?
 - What educational components will be included (ex: shadowing, sitting in on meetings, etc)?

JOB DESCRIPTION AND HIRING PLAN

- Set up a clear job description for your internship.
 - What is required and what is preferred for the job description?
 - Will students need to submit a resume, cover letter and/or writing samples?
- Post the description at least 4 - 6 months out (if not earlier).
- Interview your intern to ensure it's a mutual fit.

ONBOARDING FAST FACTS

- Be sure to have some sort of initial onboarding or training.
- Set clear expectations on how the student will be evaluated.
- Provide the intern with an overview of company expectations.
- Set up times for regular feedback and consider a written evaluation.

INTERNSHIP BEST PRACTICES

- Encourage your intern to get involved within the organization.
- Interns should have real work to complete, similar to what an entry level employee would work on.
- Interns can be silent participants in meetings and take notes.
- Work with your intern to help them learn workplace etiquette.
- Show appreciation for a job well done (ex: provide a certificate at the end of the internship).
- Set clear expectations for work hours each week.
- Inform the student of organization ethics and expectations.

MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- Your intern should have one designated manager that gives feedback.
- The intern manager and intern should meet regularly for one-on-one meetings.
- Determine if the student will receive some sort of evaluation throughout the internship (many internships for course credit will already include this supervisor evaluation).
- Set clear expectations around how you want to receive communication (email, phone, in-person).
- Be available for your intern to ask questions.
- Advocate for your interns involvement in other areas of the organization.

Helpful Links:

- **Department of Labor:** <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/whdfs71.pdf>
- **NACE Best Practices:** <https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/internships/15-best-practices-for-internship-programs/>

RECRUITING WESTERN STUDENTS

- Post your internships in JobCat
- Email the Center for Career and Professional Development
 - We can help market your internship across campus
 - Or help you get involved in campus activities
- Attend our annual career fairs

CLASS CREDIT INTERNSHIPS FAST FACTS

- Depending on the major, some students can complete an internship for course credit.
- If an student is completing an internship for course credit a faculty member will also oversee the students experience.
- The student will have to meet a set amount of hours at the internship to receive course credit.

If you want to recruit students taking internship courses post your internships before or during this time frame:

- **February – March:** For Summer/Fall Internships
- **September – October:** For Spring Internships
- **Semesters run during the following times:**
- **Spring Semester:** Jan – May
- **Summer Semester:** May – Aug
- **Fall Semester:** Aug – Dec
- *Students cannot complete an internship during the winter for course credit.*

Internships that are not for class credit still help the student build their resume.