

Employer Internship Guide

What is an internship?

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 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.

How do internships differ from other jobs?

Internships MUST include specific learning objectives for the student. In the classroom, students build knowledge from lectures, assigned reading, exams, and class projects. Through internships, student interns learn through practical application of what was gained in the classroom.

To be truly defined as an internship, the experience must be:

- 1.) Related to the intern's intended career field or coursework.
- 2.) Facilitated by an internship supervisor who provides regular constructive guidance, evaluation, and feedback.
- 3.) Targeted toward a learning objective, which the intern engages in and reflects upon throughout the course of the internship.

How does the internship process work at UT?

Every internship that is made available to UT students through HIRE-UT must first be approved for academic credit. The internship approval process starts with completion of an Internship Request Form (IRF). This form is available via email or [online](#). One form needs to be completed for each unique internship you would like to post. Provide as much detail as possible when completing this form to facilitate a timely approval.

Internships can only be posted if the host site can provide verification of liability insurance and compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (via check boxes on the IRF). The completed IRF will be forwarded to the appropriate faculty members for credit approval and to increase visibility of the opportunity. By posting your internship with us, you are agreeing to fulfill all credit requirements (such as completing student performance evaluations and verifying time sheets). Pending credit approval, the internship will be posted to HIRE-UT. Students are not placed in internships; they must search HIRE-UT to find opportunities. It is the student's responsibility to contact faculty if they are completing the internship for credit.

What requirements are needed to host an intern?

Employers interested in hosting interns must provide the following:

- **Physical office space** (office space cannot be located inside the home)
- **General liability insurance coverage** (consult with your insurance provider or legal team for verification)
- **Direct in-person supervision**
- **Compliance with [Fair Labor Standards Act](#)**

How long does it take for internships to get approved?

The approval process typically takes one week from the date that the completed IRF is received.

Do I have to pay my intern?

The answer to whether you must pay an intern can be found in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Pursuant to this law, the Department of Labor has developed six criteria for identifying an unpaid learner/trainee. All six factors must be met to post an unpaid internship:

- The training is similar to what a student might experience in an educational environment, even though taking place at the employer's facilities
- The training is for the benefit of the student
- The student does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff
- The student is not entitled to a job at the end of the training period
- The employer derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student
- The employer and the student both agree that the student is not entitled to wages

Compliance with FLSA is a requirement to participate in The University of Tampa Internship Program. It is the sole responsibility of the employer/ host site to determine if this criterion is met. Please consult legal counsel or the Department of Labor if more information or clarification is needed.

** The majority of internships are paid and students are presented with an abundance of internship opportunities. To remain competitive, we strongly encourage paid internships.

What level of compensation is typical for an internship?

Compensation varies from industry to industry. Academic credit is not a form of compensation. Interns that are paid must at least meet the state's minimum wage criteria. However, to attract the most desirable candidates, competitive compensation is recommended. To ensure that your internship is in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, review [Internship Programs under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#).

How can I develop a strong internship position description?

Though similar to a part-time or full-time job description, internship position descriptions should also disclose learning outcomes. When interns recognize value in the internship and understand the professional growth opportunities available, your target applicant pool will grow. Be as detailed as possible in your position description to convey an accurate picture of how the student can increase their knowledge/skill set, and be an asset to your organization.

Can I post my own internship on HIRE-UT?

Employers cannot independently post their internships on HIRE-UT, as all internships must be approved before posting. If you post your internship to HIRE-UT, it will remain in a “pending” status until reviewed by the Office of Career Services and approved by the appropriate academic department(s). All of our internships are available for academic credit. As a result, we have very specific requirements dictated by academic curriculum. Any internship that is posted without official internship approval will be deactivated until an IRF is completed and faculty approve the internship for academic credit.

Am I guaranteed an intern?

The Office of Career Services does not place students into internships and therefore cannot guarantee that a student will apply to your internship. However every effort is made to market your internship and inform students about internship opportunities. Paid internships typically receive a larger, more competitive candidate pool.

Is sponsorship required to hire an international student as my intern?

No. An international student can be hired as an intern the same way you would hire a domestic student. The international student will be required to earn academic credit for their internship, but they can still get hired the same as any other candidate. There will be paperwork on the student’s end, but no additional paperwork on your end is required to hire an international student for your internship opportunity.

What can I do to build awareness of the opportunity, in addition to posting to HIRE-UT?

Internship host sites that spend time on campus building their brand typically have the most applicants. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Please visit the [Employer Services Page](#) to learn more about how to increase your engagement with the broader UT community.

As an internship host site, what do I need to do so that a student can obtain credit?

The student should assume most of the responsibility when completing an internship for academic credit. However, you may be asked to complete an evaluation of the student’s performance, verify hours worked, or provide additional documentation. Please be sure to understand the deadlines for such materials, and to provide them in a timely fashion.

When do internships typically begin? How long do they last?

Internships typically start within the first three weeks of the academic semester and last the duration of the semester (14 weeks during fall/spring semesters, 12 weeks during summer).

Can an intern be considered an independent contractor?

No. The independent contractor designation is not appropriate for interns. Independent Contractors are hired because of their expertise in a given area and are expected to produce certain results. That arrangement is a direct contradiction to the main purpose of an internship, which should be to learn.

Should I offer orientation for newly hired interns?

It is recommended that you coordinate some type of onboarding orientation for your intern(s) similar to how you would treat a new part-time or full-time staff member. Items for inclusion could be a history of your organization, explanation of organizational structure, rules, policies, expectations, and a review of the student's learning objectives and goals.

What if there is a problem with my UT student intern?

Employers are urged to report any incident as soon as possible to The University of Tampa, Assistant Director of Internships, to permit both the university and the host site the opportunity to promptly intervene. All complaints should be filed as quickly as possible. All interactions during the intervention will be documented and kept on file in the Office of Career Services.

What should I do to begin the internship approval process for my organization?

Contact the Office of Career Services for assistance hireut@ut.edu, or begin the approval process by completing an [online Internship Request Form](#).

The National Association of Colleges and Employers 2016 Internship and Co-op Survey reports:
The overall conversion rate for interns is 61.9 percent.
Employers made full-time offers to 72.7 percent of their interns.

The information provided in this document is not legal advice, and should be viewed as general information.
Please consult your legal counsel for specific information.