



Guide to Academic Internships



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Internships Defined

An internship is a practical work experience in a student's chosen major/field of study. Students who intern have the opportunity to make important connections between classroom work and professional practice. Learning objectives, established with a faculty member, guide the student through their internship experience. A representative from your organization and a faculty member from Fitchburg State work together to monitor the internship and the intern's progress.

Purpose of an Internship

While each academic department may have specific objectives, the overall purpose of the internship is to:

- » Apply the skills and knowledge gained through academic work
- » Acquire new technical skills
- » Build experience necessary for employment
- » Facilitate the transition from the academic world to the professional world
- » Allow the student to evaluate their fit with the professional field they have chosen
- » Prepare for the job search
- » Develop constructive work habits
- » Utilize and strengthen their communication skills and build healthy work relationships
- » Determine what professional and personal competencies they need to develop and address in their transition to professional life

Role and Responsibilities of the Internship Site

- » The primary role of the internship site is to provide supervision and guidance during the semester to the intern. The organization should provide day-to-day supervision to guide the student in their work. In addition, regular communication with the student's faculty supervisor is expected. Communication may include a mid-term evaluation, a final evaluation, and on-site visits. In addition, the internship site should do the following:
 - » Complete the required contractual agreement (See Appendix.)
 - » Provide the intern with opportunities to develop skills to enhance their marketability as a professional
 - » Schedule meaningful work activities

- » Provide the tools and resources for the intern to complete required tasks
- » Advise the intern on job seeking skills and how to build a professional resume or portfolio
- » Counsel the intern in dealing with problems encountered in performing their role
- » Communicate any issues or problems that cannot be resolved at the organizational level to the faculty supervisor
- » Consider providing a letter of recommendation for the intern
- » Treat the intern with the same respect and professionalism afforded to employees

Role and Responsibilities of Fitchburg State University

Your contact to arrange an internship can begin with David P. Weiss, Ph.D., Director, Crocker Center, crockercenter@fitchburgstate.edu, 978-665-3675. The University manages the screening, placement, overall supervision, and evaluation of the intern. Your ongoing contact will come from a faculty member in the student's field of study. More specifically, the University will do the following:

SCREENING

- » Brief the student on the internship requirements
- » Determine if the student is appropriate for the internship
- » Determine the willingness of the student and the organization before entering into an internship agreement

PLACEMENT

- » Clarify the learning objectives and academic projects
- » Notify the student of the operational details of the internship
- » Apprise the on-site supervisor of the requirements of the internship

SUPERVISION

- » Schedule on-site visitations
- » Provide feedback to the intern and the supervisor following each meeting
- » Document the student's effectiveness
- » Intervene if there are on-site problems
- » Remove the student from the site if the student fails to act in a professional manner or if the student or the internship site fails to perform contracted obligations
- » Provide periodic telephone or email contact with the on-site supervisor

EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT AND THE INTERNSHIP SITE

- » Coordinate the completion of a performance appraisal with the on-site supervisor
- » Review the internship agreement at the end of the experience to determine the degree to which the intern met the obligations
- » Evaluate all academic assignments
- » Record a grade for the intern
- » Assess the organization with regards to the quality of the experience provided and the fulfillment of the commitments made to the internship agreement

Time Frame

Internships occur during the academic period (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Students can earn 3 -12 hours of academic credit. Internships usually require 120 - 600 clock hours. It is the student's responsibility to check with their academic department to find out how many hours are required to achieve academic credit.

- » **Fall Semester**—September-December
- » **Spring Semester**—January-May
- » **Summer Semester**—June-August

Academic Credit

The intern earns academic credit towards their degree for the work they complete at your organization. As stated above, the purpose is to apply theories, concepts, and skills acquired in the classroom to a real-world situation. While the intern is with your organization they will have regular contact with a faculty member who will track their work and review evaluations completed by the on-site supervisor. Interns will be required to provide the faculty member with written work and often a final project that is graded by the faculty member. It is common practice that faculty will include the on-site supervisor's evaluation in determining the final grade.

Learning Objectives

Creating learning objectives is an important step in defining the internship goals and activities for an intern. The learning objectives help the intern develop a clear understanding of what they will gain from the experience and help establish realistic expectations. In addition, learning objectives allow the intern to have a more rewarding experience and enhance their career and academic development.

Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

Internships can be paid or unpaid. This will depend on the organization and the academic department at the University. For unpaid internships, be mindful of the Department of Labor guidelines for organizations that are "for-profit". (See Appendix.)

Whether paid or unpaid, we strongly encourage employers to remind students to sign up to receive academic credit for the internship.

Organizational Benefits

Internships can bring many benefits to an organization and create excitement among your staff as students enter the workplace. Some of the benefits include:

- » Early recruiting of qualified employees
- » Access to new concepts and ideas
- » Supervisory and mentoring experiences for your staff
- » Ability to promote and share a positive image of your organization
- » Advantages from the enthusiasm and knowledge base of university students and faculty
- » Bringing extra personnel to your organization to address projects
- » Development of a relationship with the University that can lead to other collaborative projects and programs
- » Reduced training costs as interns may have an abbreviated learning curve if hired. Interns will already understand the organization and culture.
- » Demonstrated investment in the community—interns will grow and develop into tomorrow's leaders. Your organization will contribute to the community by promoting and retaining an educated workforce.

To get started, consider the following questions for your organization:

- What** do we want to accomplish from our internship program?
- Where** can the most value be achieved from this program?
- Who** is best suited to be the contact person for our program?
- How** will we measure success as an internship provider?
- Where** will the intern be located within our office?
- What** is needed to set up an adequate workspace?
- What** academic skills and background do we expect of the intern?
- What** other professional experiences can we provide for an intern beyond day-to-day work tasks?

(See Appendix for a form you can use to answer these questions.)

8 Steps to Getting Started

IDENTIFY your goals for the intern.

DEVELOP a job description that you'd like to fill within your organization. Determine if the internship will be paid or unpaid. If there are "perks" available at your company, consider those as well. If non-paid, Department of Labor guidelines exist for "for-profit" organizations. (See Appendix.)

DETERMINE when you will start your program (summer, fall, spring).

COMMUNICATE the internship position to the University and we will coordinate with the appropriate departments to help you recruit candidates.

DETERMINE your selection method. Will you host on campus interviews?

INTERVIEW the candidates and determine if there is a good "fit". Like any candidates, potential interns possess different strengths. It is important to assess each candidate with respect to the available position.

SCHEDULE a mutually agreeable start date and develop expectations regarding the intern's ongoing work schedule.

ASSIGN a supervisor and communicate with your internship contact at Fitchburg State University.

The more prepared you are for your intern, the more sustainable your internship program will become. In the end, the intern, your organization, Fitchburg State University, and your community will benefit.

We thank you for your willingness to collaborate with our University and our students.

If you would like to work with Fitchburg State University developing an internship program please contact:

David P. Weiss, Ph.D.
Director, Crocker Center
Fitchburg State University
crockercenter@fitchburgstate.edu
978-665-3675

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

We strongly suggest that you provide the intern with an orientation. While the interns may have had a strong academic experience, it is possible that they have not worked in a professional setting. A checklist, like the one below, may help the student feel a sense of belonging to the organization and provide structure to the internship program.

OFFICE TOUR AND FACILITY INFORMATION		POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
Make sure that the intern work station is in order.		Complete HR paperwork.	
Point out location of restrooms, break room, supply room, conference room, etc.		Go over written policies and procedures.	
Take intern on tour of entire facility and introduce to department staff and key personnel.		Address protocols for dress, behavior, correspondence, and the maintenance of work space.	
Discuss mail and telephone system operation.		Review general administrative procedures.	
Suggest food locations within facility (if applicable).		Issue badge, building access cards, and codes.	
Clearly communicate expectations regarding work hours.			
INTERNSHIP POSITION INFORMATION		ORGANIZATION INFORMATION	
Determine meeting times between supervisor and intern.		Explain the mission of the organization and organizational structure.	
Assign guide/mentor for intern who will be able to answer general questions.		Discuss the history, values, and overall, objective of the organization.	
Discuss schedule/hours, payroll, and time cards or sheets (if applicable).		Provide intern with company reading materials such as journals, newspapers, etc.	
Go over learning objectives, job duties and responsibilities, and overall expectations.		Consider opportunities for the intern to sit in on board meetings and/or attend community events.	
Make sure the intern has email account and login information to computer.		Provide general overview of each department and special details about the intern's assigned department.	

Throughout the internship, monitor the intern's work, provide feedback as often as needed, and encourage the intern to ask questions!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I get the word out to campus about my open internship position?

- » Email the job description in a Word document to ccanney@fitchburgstate.edu.
- » Once the job description has been received, the University will promote your opportunity with the appropriate departments.

What paperwork do I need to fill out?

- » The paperwork you need to fill out may vary slightly and is dependent upon your intern's academic program.
- » The University has a contractual agreement that the intern site supervisor will need to sign. (The student will provide this form.)
- » Most organizations have an intern fill out an application to keep on file. Sometimes this form is the same as the application for regular employees. Other times, organizations will create a form specific for interns.

What does a typical intern schedule look like?

- » Interns should work with their site supervisor to develop a mutually agreeable schedule.
- » This schedule will vary depending upon the number of credits assigned to the internship and the number of hours required by the student's program of study.

Are there any types of evaluation forms I need to fill out?

- » We recommend a mid-term and final evaluation. (See Appendix.)

Is the intern allowed to rotate between departments?

- » Some organizations value the intern rotating between departments to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the company.

What if the intern is not a good fit?

- » First, schedule a meeting with the intern to discuss any concerns.
- » If you have counseled with the intern and have not seen progress, contact the intern's faculty supervisor.

Should I expect a site visit from someone at Fitchburg State?

- » Site visits are very common and depend upon the intern's academic program. Typically, site visits will occur at the beginning or middle of the internship.

The documents in this section are for illustration. Some academic departments within the University may use different forms with the exception of the Internship Program Contractual Agreement/Indemnification Agreement.

Developing Your Internship Program

Providing answers to the questions below will help you get started in developing a successful internship program. You can use these questions as an internal planning document or share the responses with the University.

What do we want to accomplish with our internship program?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Where can the most value be achieved from this program?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who is best suited to be the contact person for our program?

How will we measure success as an internship provider?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Where will the intern be located within our office?

What is needed to set up an adequate workspace?

What academic skills and background do we expect of the intern?

What other professional experiences (community meetings, training sessions, etc.) can we provide for an intern beyond day-to-day work tasks?

Sample Internship Job Description

Your internship position should provide students with enough information to help them make an informed decision to determine if they qualify for the position.

Your description should include:

- » Organization Information/Profile
- » Description of intern's tasks, responsibilities, and desired skills
- » Preferred major, classification, and GPA
- » Compensation and academic credit
- » Preferred application method
- » Your company logo

EXAMPLE

Position Title

Event Coordinator Intern

Supervised by

Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Company Information

ABC Hotel and Spa—Hotel and resort located near Wachusett Mountain. Our location is ideal for your winter get away with access to a full-service ski resort. We have over 200 guest rooms, as well as 10 suites, a restaurant/lounge, and over 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

Qualifications

We are looking for an individual who is self-motivated and organized. Intern should be familiar with Microsoft Office and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The individual should have excellent communication skills and a positive customer service attitude. Attention to detail is a must. All majors are welcomed (Business and Communication Majors preferred)

Responsibilities

Work with employers and the public to increase awareness of services offered through our facility. Schedule meeting rooms and conference facilities. Coordinate in-house and external events such as: weddings, conferences, meetings, etc. Provide customer service to guests, during on-site events. Develop new partners.

Compensation and Academic Credit

This is a non-paid internship position. Students are encouraged to receive academic credit for their internship experience with their academic major or as an elective.

How to Apply

To apply, students should send resumes to: (name of contact and email address).

Semester: Fall 20 Spring 20

Student Name: _____ Academic Program: _____

Whereas, _____, hereafter referred to as the Field Placement Site, recognizes the professional responsibility of assisting in the teaching of students interested in the behavioral sciences and is interested in providing assistance to the University in its curricula, and, whereas, Fitchburg State University, hereafter referred to as the University, is currently conducting an internship program and desires to obtain the assistance of the Field Placement Site in furthering its educational objectives.

Now, therefore, in consideration of the mutual agreements set forth herein, Fitchburg State University and the Field Placement Site agree as follows:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

1. Use proper administrative channels (agreeable to both parties) to make plans for the educational experience of their students.
2. Acknowledge that students will be expected to comply with current policies and procedures of the Field Placement Site, and the appropriate department of the agency/department.
3. Provide students who meet the minimum academic requirements (as agreed by both parties) necessary to enter the agency/department experience.
4. Propose the internship start and end dates and total number of hours students will be assigned and the expected learning objectives (as agreed by both parties) by the beginning of each semester.
5. Provide a specific faculty member who will serve as liaison with Field Placement Site personnel where necessary.
6. Provide and maintain records and reports necessary for conducting the learning experience (see Field Placement Guide).
7. Provide educational objectives for the agency/department experience and curriculum content (see Field Placement Guide).
8. To withdraw any student or faculty member from the program when such student or staff person is unacceptable or undesirable to the Field Placement Site for reasons of health, performance of duties, or other reasonable causes.
9. University shall procure and maintain professional liability insurance coverage in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence and \$3 million in the aggregate covering all students and faculty who participate in the internship program. Evidence of same shall be provided to Field Placement Site and filed in the Office of Academic Affairs. University will notify Field Placement Site in writing, promptly in the event that such coverage is changed or canceled.
10. Require students to provide evidence of current physical examinations, including documentation of Rubella immunity, evidence of immunity to chicken pox (Varicella) provided either through a physician's note or proof of titer, a Negative (-) Mantoux Test, and Hepatitis B Immunity, if required by Field Placement Site.
11. Arrange with the director at the Field Placement Site for an orientation to by-laws, rules and regulations of the Field Placement Site, if applicable.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT SITE

1. Provide orientation of the student to the physical facilities, policies, and procedures of the Field Placement Site.
2. Provide an experience under the supervision of qualified personnel that meets the stated objectives of the educational program (as agreed to by both parties). In essence, this means that the student will observe and participate in the Field Placement Site (to the extent allowed by licensing and liability requirements) in accordance with the Field Placement Guide and as outlined herein;
 - a. Provide a description of Student Responsibilities:
 - i. Hours Per Week _____;
 - ii. Total Hours/Semester _____;

- iii. Describe scope of tasks and activities in which the student will be involved over the course of the field placement experience:

- b. If the student is employed within the field placement agency, attach a copy of her/his job description. In addition, indicate whether the following conditions are met:

_____ Separate supervisors are assigned to oversee the student's fieldwork experience and the student's employment.

_____ The job description for the field placement includes new responsibilities and does not simply mirror those for paid employment. If the job is sufficiently new, this provision may not apply.

_____ Care will be taken by the Field Placement Supervisor to ensure that the student is not permitted to work more than 40 hours of paid employment per week (i.e., no overtime or double shifts) during the span of the field placement.

- c. Describe the agency's support system, in particular the safeguards taken to minimize risks to students in situations that may require expertise beyond their current capabilities (e.g., assaultive clients, emergency situations requiring clinical experience, including medical emergencies, suicidal or psychotic behavior, etc.):

- 3. Expect the student to perform only those tasks commensurate with his/her level of education and experience and furnish direct supervision to provide for the safety and welfare of both client and student.
- 4. Provide a specific person to oversee the internship agency/department educational program and act as liaison between the Field Placement Site and University.
- 5. Provide cooperation, when asked, in formal evaluation of students, consonant with educational objectives jointly agreed to by both parties (see Field Placement Guide).
- 6. Provide and maintain the records and reports required by the University for conducting the educational program

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH PARTIES

- 1. No individual participating in this program shall be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.
- 2. The Field Placement Supervisor and the University's Faculty Supervisor will ensure that student interns do not work more than 40 internship hours per week at the Field Placement Site.
- 3. To meet as outlined in the Field Placement Guide and review the program.

INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

- 1. To the extent permitted by law, the University agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Field Placement Site, its respective Trustees, officers, directors, agents and its employees and all professional and administrative staff working for or at Field Placement Site from any actions, proceedings, claims, liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses of any nature including personal injury, death or property damage (including without limitation Field Placement Site's reasonable attorney's fees and costs) arising out of, resulting from or relating to 1) Field Placement Site's participation in the program (including but not limited to participation in any evaluation of students); 2) the acts or omissions of any student, instructor, or person affiliated with the University including its employees, servants, agents or; 3) breach of any of the terms hereof by the University, except to the extent such claims, liabilities, damages, costs and expenses are determined to be the result of the negligence of the Field Placement Site, its Trustees, officers, directors, agents and employees.
- 2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, because the University is a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("public University"), no Board of Trustees, or agents thereof, of any public University has the authority, statutory or otherwise, to enter into an indemnification or hold harmless agreement on behalf of a public University of the Commonwealth. Further, pursuant to amended Article 62, §1, of the Massachusetts Constitution,

and applicable Massachusetts case law, the Commonwealth and public University are prohibited from indemnifying or holding harmless, in any manner, any individual or any private association, or any corporation which is privately owned and managed. Where the party to a contract with the Commonwealth or public University is not an individual private association, or a corporation that is privately owned and managed, the Commonwealth or public University can indemnify or hold harmless such party only upon a two-thirds vote of each House of the Massachusetts Legislature.

3. In the event of that repeal of amended Article 62, §1, AND the enactment of statutory authority authorizing a Board of Trustees, or agents thereof, of a public University of this Commonwealth, to enter into an indemnification or hold harmless agreement on behalf of a public University of this Commonwealth, the parties agree to the terms of the preceding paragraph, to the extent that these terms are consistent with such statutory authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

1. Student Health—A student who becomes ill or injured while performing the educational experience may: report to the University Health Service for treatment; seek treatment with his or her own physicians; and/or report to the emergency room/outpatient clinic of the Field Placement Site, if applicable. In all instances, student is ultimately responsible for payment of fees related to illness or injury.
2. Salary and Time Commitment—For six (6) credit hours, the student will spend a minimum of 225 hours, for nine (9) credit hours, a minimum of 337.5 hours, and for twelve (12) credit hours, it would be a minimum of 450 hours at the Field Placement Site. Time credit can be given for work done away from the workplace if agreed to by the faculty of the University and Field Placement Site. The student will keep a journal/log of the hours spent at the site, and the type of activity/work performed (see Field Placement Guide).
3. Student Goals and Objectives—The student requests work experience as defined in the Learning Contract (see Field Placement Guide).
4. Evaluation Procedures—The student will meet for 10 seminar classes during the semester and be responsible for written work as outlined in the Field Placement Guide.
5. His/her supervisor at the Field Placement Site will evaluate the student. This evaluation will constitute 60% of the student's grade.

This agreement is for the duration of the student Internship, and may be terminated by either party upon written notice.

The duration of the Internship will be from _____ to _____.

Student Name (please print): _____

Student ID Number: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Internship Location Name (please print): _____

Field Placement Site Supervisor Name: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Student)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(University Faculty Supervisor)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Field Placement Site Supervisor)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Executive Director or Designee)

Name of Organization: _____

Date	Hours Worked	Describe Work Completed

Internship Site Supervisor (Signature): _____ Date: _____

Student (Signature): _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor (Signature): _____ Date: _____

Complete and return as an email attachment by the midpoint of the internship period.

Name of Intern : _____ email: _____

Name of Field Supervisor: _____ email: _____

Internship Location: _____

1. Identify new knowledge, skills or attitudes the intern has acquired in the internship.

2. Describe successful activities or accomplishments in the internship.

3. Analyze the intern's response to challenges or problems confronted in the internship.

4. Identify assistance needed by the intern or the supervisor to successfully complete the internship.

Complete and return as an email attachment at the end of your internship. A copy should be in your final portfolio.

Name of Intern: _____ email: _____

Name of Field Supervisor: _____ email: _____

Internship Location: _____

1. Identify new knowledge, skills or attitudes you have acquired in your internship. How did this help you apply what you had learned in your major?

2. Identify the accomplishments in your internship that you feel will benefit your career.

3. Rate the overall internship experience from 1-5, with 5 being an exceptional experience and 1 being an unsuccessful experience. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Evaluate the following areas with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strong disagree.

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
My internship site was well-suited for me.	5	4	3	2	1
My supervisor provided appropriate instructions.	5	4	3	2	1
My supervisor included networking and mentoring in my experience.	5	4	3	2	1
My supervisor provided helpful feedback to help me be successful.	5	4	3	2	1
My work schedule was reasonable.	5	4	3	2	1
I would recommend this organization to future interns at Fitchburg State.	5	4	3	2	1

Include a copy of this also in your portfolio.

Complete and return as an email attachment at the end of the internship period. A copy of this document should also be in your intern's final portfolio

Name of Intern: _____ email: _____

Name of Field Supervisor: _____ email: _____

Internship Location: _____

	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
	5	4	3	2	1
The quality of this student's work was consistently excellent.	5	4	3	2	1
This student was reliable about fulfilling the requirements of the internship.	5	4	3	2	1
This student reported to work on time consistently.	5	4	3	2	1
This student never had an unexcused absence.	5	4	3	2	1
The student demonstrated professional behavior and appropriate dress for our organization.	5	4	3	2	1
The student contributed positively to our organization.	5	4	3	2	1
The student meshed well with our organization's culture	5	4	3	2	1

If a position was open in my organization, I would extend a job offer. Yes No

Would you recommend this student to another employer as an intern? Yes No

Would you be willing to write a letter of reference for this intern? Yes No

What recommendations would you make to the student for his or her next work experience?

Additional Comments and Suggestions

BACKGROUND

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work” exempt individuals who are “suffered or permitted” to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships in the for-profit private sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the for-profit private sector who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.

THE TEST FOR UNPAID INTERNS

There are circumstances under which individuals who participate in for-profit private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term “suffer or permit to work” cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the Act’s minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern. This exclusion from the definition of employment is necessarily quite narrow because the FLSA’s definition of “employ” is very broad. Some of the most commonly discussed factors for the for-profit” private sector internship are considered below.

SIMILAR TO AN EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT AND THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARY OF THE ACTIVITY

In general, the more an internship program is structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to the employer’s actual operations, the more likely the internship will be viewed as an extension of the individual’s educational experience (this often occurs where a college or university exercise oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit). The more the internship provides the individual with skills that can be used in multiple employment settings, as opposed to skills particular to one employer’s operation, the more likely the intern would be viewed as receiving training. Under these circumstances the intern does not perform the routine work of the business on a regular and recurring basis, and the business is not dependent upon the work of the intern. On the other hand, if the interns are engaged in the operations of the employer or are performing productive work (for example, filing, performing other clerical work, or assisting customers), then the fact that they may be receiving some benefit in the form of a new skill or improved work habits will not exclude them from the FLSA’s minimum wage and overtime requirements because the employer benefits from the intern’s work.

DISPLACEMENT AND SUPERVISION ISSUES

If an employer uses interns as substitutes for regular workers or to augment its existing workforce during specific time periods, these interns should be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek. If the employer would have hired additional employees or required existing staff to work additional hours had the interns not performed the work, then the interns will be viewed as employees and entitled to compensation under the FLSA. Conversely, if the employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow an intern to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the intern performs no or minimal work, the activity is more likely to be viewed as a bona fide education experience. On the other hand, if the intern received the same level of supervision as the employer's regular workforce, this would suggest an employment relationship, rather than training.

JOB ENTITLEMENT

The internship should be of a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the internship. Further, unpaid internships should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the internship period. If an intern were placed with the employer for a trial period with expectation that he or she will be hired on a permanent basis, that individual would generally be considered an employee under the FLSA.

WHERE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This publication is for general information and is not to be considered in the same light as official statements of position contained in the regulations.

For additional information, visit the Wage and Hour Division Website: www.dol.gov/whd and or call the toll free helpline, 8 AM to 5 PM in your time zone, 1-866-487-9243.

US DEPT of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20210

866-4-USWAGE
TTY: 1 -66-487 9342