



EMPLOYER INTERNSHIP PRACTICES GUIDELINES

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. An internship gives a student the opportunity for career exploration and development, and to learn new skills. It offers the employer the opportunity to bring new ideas and energy into the workplace, develop talent and potentially build a pipeline for future full-time employees.

A Quality Internship:

- Consists of a part-time or full-time work schedule that includes no more than 25% clerical or administrative duties.
- Provides a clear job/project description for the work experience.
- Orients the student to the organization, its culture and proposed work assignment(s).
- Helps the student develop and achieve learning goals.
- Offers regular feedback to the student intern.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...

INTERNSHIPS are supervised, structured learning experiences in a professional setting that allow you to gain valuable work experience in a student's chosen field of study. Internships require a minimum of 120 hours (typically, at least 10 hours per week during the fall and spring and either part-time or full-time during the summer).

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OPS) are paid positions that require you to alternate semesters between full-time work during the academic term and full-time academic study for at least two semesters. Students are often offered full-time employment with the organization upon graduation.

RESEARCH opportunities are available both on and off campus. These experiences offer a unique way to better understand a student's academic interests and consider how graduate school may play a role in future paths. Funding may be available for these experiences through organizations like the National Science Foundation (NSF).



BENEFIT OF HIRING AN INTERN

- Ease workload of regular employees
- Enable employees to focus on higher level tasks
- Meet short-term staffing needs
Complete “Priority C” tasks/projects
- Utilize a cost effective employment strategy
- Obtain access to highly motivated students who can fill staffing needs
- Complete finite projects
- Develop a pipeline of future employees
- Prepare tomorrow’s workforce
- Inject enthusiasm and fresh ideas into your organization
- Provide practical learning opportunities to students
- Take advantage of students’ tech and social media savvy

STUDENT INTERNS EXPECT

- To gain real work experience and provide meaningful assistance to the company. They don’t want to be gophers!
- To have a mentor who provides guidance, feedback, receptiveness and professionalism.
- To gain experience and skills in a particular field.
- To develop professional contacts.
- To gain exposure to upper management.
- To receive an orientation to the company for which they are interning. This introduces the student to the company’s mission and goals and provides them with information about company rules, regulations and procedures. It also introduces the intern to fellow employees who they can go to in the future with questions.

HOW DO I DESIGN AN INTERNSHIP?

Being thoughtful and intentional as you design your internship opportunity can mean a more successful and satisfying experience for all involved. We encourage you to consult the National Association of Colleges and Employers’ resources on internship best practices as you are building and conceptualizing your opportunity: 15 Best Practices for Internship Programs

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP?

- 1.) Keep it simple.
- 2.) Use keywords that attract students.
- 3.) Specify paid or unpaid. If paid, state the payment details.
- 4.) Review internship postings for examples.
- 5.) Include an overview of the job, including potential projects and tasks that could be assigned.
- 6.) List expected outcomes for the position.
- 7.) Include a list of required skills and qualifications.

SHOULD I PAY AN INTERN?

Although not currently an official requirement to post an internship with our office, we expect that for-profit corporations will pay UMBC interns and strongly encourage them to do so. Most unpaid internships in for-profit companies are not approved in our UMBCworks system. Paid internships encourage application, provide financial support for students while they are attending school and create a stronger feeling of loyalty and investment for an intern. While academic credit can be seen by some companies as an alternate form of compensation, many students do not value academic credit as a compensatory option, since they have to pay and register for academic credits. Organizations also cannot offer credit as compensation – decisions regarding the awarding of academic credit are solely within the purview of UMBC faculty. While there are not any current legal requirement that interns be paid, if you are offering an unpaid internship you need to ensure that your unpaid internship is in compliance with the US Department of Labor’s ‘Test for Unpaid Interns’: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Specific questions around legality related to internship payment should be directed to your legal counsel.

IF I AM PAYING AN INTERN, WHAT IS AN AVERAGE HOURLY PAY?

An hourly wage for an intern will vary widely, depending on the industry in which you work, the major or skillset of the student you are recruiting and his or her level of experience. Internships can range from minimum wage for some roles and up to \$22 or more an hour for more technical skillsets. An hourly wage cannot be less than minimum wage for the state in which the student will be working.

**WHAT IS THE INTERN/RESEARCH/CO-OP PRAC COURSE AT UMBC?
DOES THIS COUNT AS ACADEMIC CREDIT?**

Intern/Research/Co-op PRAC is a 0 credit Internship Practicum course. By enrolling in PRAC, a student’s official transcript provides a record of your participation in a University approved internship/co-op/research program. Students complete learning objectives, participate in professional development workshops, and evaluate their work to further learn from their internship experiences. The Intern/Research/PRAC alone does not count as academic credit. However, many departments require PRAC in order for students to proceed with academic credit. All students at UMBC who are participating in internships, co-ops or research are encouraged to enroll in PRAC in the semester they are completing the work. Retroactive enrollments in PRAC are not permitted.

HOW DOES AN INTERN RECEIVE ACADEMIC CREDIT FROM UMBC?

A student registers (and pays for) internship credits just as they would any academic courses that provide credit. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate this process through their academic department or through the Career Center. To initiate this process, we encourage students to contact the Career Center for support. While all students may not have the option to take academic credit, all students can enroll in the Career Center Intern/Research/Co-op PRAC course.

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THE PROCESS IF I AM SUPPORTING A STUDENT IN PRAC OR ACADEMIC CREDIT?

When a student is enrolled in PRAC, the supervisor is expected to help the student set learning objectives and an action plan/goals to complete during their internship. A mid-placement call may occur between the student, their intern coordinator at the Career Center, and their supervisor to check in on the progress of the intern. Finally, all supervisors of students enrolled in the Career Center PRAC will received an electronic evaluation to be completed at the end of each semester you host the student. Additional requirements will vary based on the department through which the student is earning the credit. The student will be responsible for communicating to you the role you play as it relates to their specific department/credit-earning process.

HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK SHOULD AN INTERN WORK?

As much as possible, an internship should be flexible in nature, as it is generally something a student pursues while also taking classes. During the academic year, internships are typically part-time, between 10-20 hours a week; not to exceed 20 hours a week during the academic year (September-May). Summer internships, or those during a semester in which the student is not enrolled in courses, can require up to 40 hours a week. Please note that we strongly encourage internships that require more than 20 hours/week of students to be paid on an hourly or stipend basis, regardless of industry. Offering an unpaid full-time summer internship will likely result in no applicants, as most students cannot commit that amount of time to an unpaid opportunity.

HOW MANY WEEKS OR MONTHS IS A TYPICAL INTERNSHIP?

An average internship is 3-4 months coinciding with a student’s typical semester or summer. A key factor in determining proper internship length is that an internship should be long enough for a student to get into the rhythm of the position and complete deliverables that are valuable to you and them.

Season	Beginning Date	End Date	Avg. #of Hours / Week
Fall	Mid Aug. - Mid Oct.	Mid December	10-20
Winter	Mid Dec. - Early Jan.	Early February	20-40+
Spring	Early February	Mid May	10-20
Summer	Mid May - Early July	Mid August	20-40+

HOW CAN I FIND THE BEST POSSIBLE INTERN?

Look beyond a student's major or class level. Consider how a student's overall profile and experience match the qualities, skills and other requirements of the position. Consult the Career Center for ways to get your internship announcement in front of students and increase your candidate pool.

HOW DO I ADVERTISE MY INTERNSHIP TO UMBC STUDENTS?

A key way to advertise your internship is through UMBC's online job and internship board, UMBCworks, which is used by students and alumni from a wide variety of degrees and programs. You may also wish to participate in a career fair or recruitment event. A full list of events is available on the employer section of our website (careers.umbc.edu).

HOW DO I GET MY INTERNSHIP APPROVED BY UMBC?

Once your internship is posted to UMBCworks, the position will be reviewed and approved by Career Center staff. We will contact you if there are any questions or concerns. You will be notified via email once your position is approved.



SAMPLE TIMELINE

FIRST DAY/WEEK

Review work policies and procedures, including hours, breaks, work attire and any relevant guidelines the intern needs to follow. Establish learning objectives with the intern and create a plan of action for meeting these objectives.

MIDWAY

Conduct a mid-point evaluation with the intern to review progress made towards the established objectives. Provide performance feedback and identify steps the intern needs to take to meet all objectives and goals by the internship's end.

CONCLUSION

Conduct a final review and evaluation.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Set clear objectives and expectations for the position.
- Assign meaningful tasks and duties that help further the organization's mission.
- Evaluate the intern and provide regular feedback.
- Schedule regular meetings between the intern and his/her supervisor to allow open discussion of expectations, upcoming projects and progress the intern is making. This also allows the intern to ask questions and express concerns.
- Provide adequate training and supervision to make the internship a real learning experience.
- Provide the tools, materials and equipment needed for the intern to be able to complete required assignments.
- Select and train appropriate supervisors and mentors who will guide the intern, assist in skill development and answer questions.
- Include the student intern in relevant meetings when possible so he/she can gain experience attending and participating in business meetings.
- Include the intern in company social events to provide networking opportunities.
- Provide a professional environment that fosters a safe and productive work atmosphere.
- Conduct business in an ethical manner.
- Provide a final evaluation at the conclusion of the internship to discuss the intern's performance and accomplishments, and also to identify strengths and opportunities for continued development.
- Meet any educational requirements set forth by the student's home institution if the internship is being taken for academic credit, including providing enough hours, assignments, etc.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING INTERN'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

These strategies assume that you are paying an intern so they are functioning as a key member of your organization. If you are sponsoring an unpaid intern, you need to have paid careful attention to the Department of Labor criteria and ideally have consulted with internal legal counsel, to ensure that projects are not violating those expectations and criteria.

- Offer advice, insights and share information about your own career path and interests.
- Provide students with opportunities for meaningful hands-on experiences in your workplace – working on a project, being part of a team, contributing to larger goals, etc. Again, if you are sponsoring an unpaid intern you need to have paid careful attention to the Department of Labor criteria and ideally have consulted with internal legal counsel.
- As appropriate and possible, include the intern in meetings with other staff and team members Provide exposure to multiple facets of your organization, and team members within it.
- Conduct exit interviews with interns so that it is clear to them what went well, what you see as their strengths and areas where you would suggest additional growth. This type of feedback can also assist you in enhancing your internship program and support future interns.
- Offer to keep in touch with your intern after the internship experience to support him/her as a reference. If you have time/interest, offer support as a mentor.
- Suggest relevant professional organizations where a student should consider becoming a member, or affiliations and certifications they should seek in order to be successful in your field.

LEGAL CONCERNS

While designing your internship program, you may need to consider the impact of various legal issues. Contact your organization's legal counsel if you have questions or need more information. Some of the major legal factors impacting internship programs include:

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students can bring new perspectives to your organization as interns. They bring insight from their own cultures, and are eager to experience the professional world in the United States. There are several types of visas granted to international students, most of which allow for the student to work off campus. The International Education Services Office at UMBC will be able to advise the student regarding his/her work authorization status and particular type of student visa. Most students on F-1 visas will enroll in the Career Center PRAC course to complete a CPT form.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Interns may be required to work on projects where intellectual property rights are a concern. Typically, if new employees would be asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement, an intern may be asked to do so as well. If you are concerned, seek legal counsel on how to proceed.

BENEFITS AND INSURANCE

Benefits are not typically offered to interns, since internships are usually short-term. Most students will have insurance coverage through their colleges or universities, or will be covered under their parents' policies. If you have questions regarding benefits and insurance, contact your legal counsel.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Federal and state regulations regarding equal employment opportunities apply to the employment of interns as well as full-time employees. For additional information, contact your human resources department or legal counsel.

WHAT IF MY QUESTION ISN'T COVERED HERE?

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