



EMPLOYER GUIDE
to Internships

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Introduction to Internships

The Stony Brook University Career Center offers many opportunities for you to recruit highly motivated students for pre-professional internships. This guide contains key information and resources to assist with your internship recruitment needs.

What is an Internship?

An **internship** is a carefully monitored work or service experience in which the student has specific learning goals and actively reflects on what s/he is learning throughout the semester. Although internships vary widely from organization to organization, some common characteristics include the following:

- A time-limited experience that usually lasts about three months and occurs during the fall, spring or summer semesters.

- Promotes academic, career and/or personal development.

- May be paid or unpaid.

- May be part of an educational program monitored and evaluated for academic credit.

- Is different from a short-term job or volunteer work in that it requires an intentional "learning agenda" in a structured work environment.

- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation, and assessment.

- Seeks to establish a reasonable balance between the intern's learning goals and the specific work tasks of an organization.

How Do Internships Benefit Employers?

You may be wondering, "What's in it for me?" Employers derive several benefits:

- A potential year round source of highly motivated pre-professionals.

- New perspectives on various organizational processes, procedures and programs.

- Quality candidates for temporary or seasonal positions and projects.

- Increased visibility of your organization on college campuses.

- Freedom for professional staff to pursue higher-level projects.

- Flexible, cost-effective work force that does not require a long-term commitment.

- Prepared and trained new employees hired from your intern pool.

- Opportunity to mentor future professionals.

- A proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential employees.

The key element that distinguishes an internship from a part time or temporary job or community service is the intentional learning goals that the intern brings to the experience.

What Types of Internships are Available?

Internships can be paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, with academic credit or not, and occur during the semester or during the winter/summer breaks.

Paid Internships

Can be hourly wage, stipend, travel allowance, or even a salary. Compensation reflects the policies and practices of the organization and industry culture not the quality of the candidate.

Unpaid Internships

The Federal Government has begun to investigate unfair labor practices among for-profit employers. If you are a **for-profit company**, you should speak with your attorney about the risks you incur by violating minimum wage and federal labor law. Nonprofits and public service organizations are often exempt.

Internships for Credit

Academic credit is not granted by you, the employer; it is granted by a faculty member at the university. As an employer, you will be asked to complete assessments for students earning credit. If interns in your organization have questions about credit, please refer them to us.

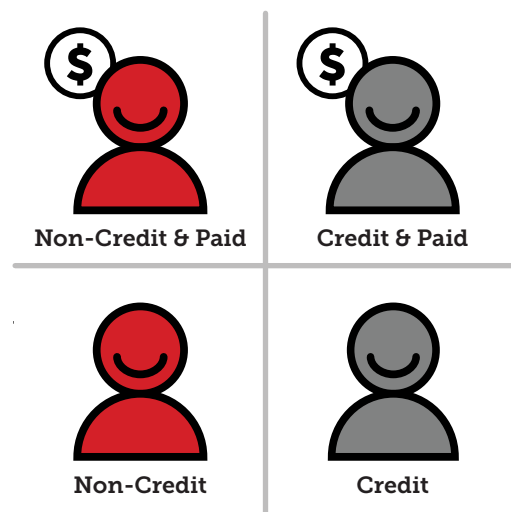
Non-Credit Internships

Non-credit bearing internships have no deadlines or required hours; these are often pursued for professional development only. A faculty sponsor is NOT necessary for a non-credit internship.

**Department of Labor regulations set for unpaid internships apply to non-credit internships as well.*

Internship Types

Internships generally fall under these four categories.



Step One: Creating an Internship Program Plan

Plan and formulate your internship program goals to be measured by you, your company's management team, or others in your organization. Structuring the internship in the planning stage will enable you to develop measurable goals and objectives that will prove to your organization's decision-makers the importance and value of your program.

In creating your internship program plan, include specifics. Construct your plan based on your organization's needs and resources. Use these questions while planning:

Do you want someone for a specific project? What are the tasks and objectives of the project? What are the deadlines for completing them?

Do you want to give the intern a taste of everything your company does? How will cross-training be structured into the intern's schedule?

Will you pay the intern? If so, how much? Wages vary widely across industries, so be sure yours are competitive.

What academic background and experience requirements are needed? Decide on standards for quality beforehand to help you find the best candidates.

Who will have the primary responsibility for supervising the intern? Onboarding, training and regular supervision are crucial to overall success.

What do you want the intern to learn from the experience? Define some learning objectives.

Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities

Regardless of the experiential learning activity, both the experience and the learning are fundamental. In the learning process and in the relationship between the learner and any facilitator(s) of learning, there is a mutual responsibility. All parties are empowered to achieve the principles which follow. Yet, at the same time, the facilitator(s) of learning are expected to take the lead in ensuring both the quality of the learning experience and of the work produced, and in supporting the learner to use the principles, which underlie the pedagogy of experiential education.

"Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities"

Source: National Society for Experiential Education. Presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting, Norfolk, VA

Step Two: Write an Internship Description

Draft a position description that clearly explains the intern's responsibilities. A written position description will structure the experience for both the intern and the employer and can be used to measure goals, outcomes and accomplishments.

A very important part of creating effective position descriptions involves the development of challenging work assignments that complement students' academic and/or career interests. One method to accomplish this is to design a primary list of work activities that will fit the needs of your department/organization. When the intern is selected, review the responsibilities and modify them according to the interns' knowledge and personal work/learning/career goals. Learn more about [internship description samples](#).

Components of the Internship Description

Title

*Summary - Brief paragraph about unit: mission, size, customers, summary of role
Tasks, Responsibilities, and Authorities*

*Qualifications including: desired experience; special educational or technical training,
skills, or knowledge; licenses; certifications, etc.*

Supervision & Training

Working Conditions

Credits/Salary

Learning Objectives for a credit-bearing internship

As you create the specific position, consider the following:

Purpose of the internship - how does it fit the organization's mission

Duties and essential responsibilities/job functions that will be required of the intern

Name of the department/division where the internship will be performed

Expectations regarding outcomes of tasks/projects performed and completed

*Required qualifications: include major, minimum GPA (if applicable), class standing
(freshman, sophomore, junior or senior) and any technical or job specific skills the
intern would need to perform the internship successfully*

Length of the internship and the required number of hours per week

Name of the supervisor responsible for training and evaluating the interns' progress

Application and selection process

*Include instructions on what application materials are required (eg. resume, cover
letter) and to whom and how they should be submitted.*

Credit-Bearing Internships

Credit-bearing internships require a higher level of involvement and engagement with University personnel. *Special requirements include:*

The position description must include learning objectives to be achieved. For faculty approval, the description must clearly outline how the experience will enhance learning in the classroom. *Please note:* We understand that clerical tasks are a part of many professional jobs and expect that some duties of this nature will be assigned. However, the student should have professional assignments similar to other entry-level workers.

Sign the Internship Agreement, which will be provided to you by the SB Career Center. Formal university-designed midterm and final evaluation must be completed by assigned deadlines.



Learning Outcomes

Stony Brook University expects these outcomes of the internship experience. All credit-bearing internships require learning outcomes that also should be included in the position description. *Students must:*

- Apply academic knowledge in a professional setting.
- Develop professionally relevant competencies and relationships in a professional setting.
- Gain exposure to a professional field and an understanding of professional etiquette.
- Observe and begin to understand a professional organizational culture.
- Evaluate self-performance in light of expressed goals and learning outcomes.
- Compare and contrast one's self-perception to the professional perception of a supervisor.
- Clarify one's calling through reflection on the internship experience.
- Critically evaluate the internship experience as an exemplar for the field.

Sample Internship Learning Outcomes

1. Communication Skills

A. Oral Communication

Interns will verbally express ideas clearly and persuasively with clients, supervisors, and colleagues and will participate effectively in discussion.

B. Written Communication

Interns will express ideas clearly and persuasively in writing as evidenced by acceptable candidate accomplishment.

2. Cognitive Skills - *examples of successful intern accomplishment of learning outcomes*

- A. Showing understanding of professional customs and practices
- B. Acquiring and evaluating information
- C. Organizing, maintaining and interpreting information
- D. Applying knowledge to the task

3. Professional Skills - *examples of successful intern accomplishment of learning outcomes*

- A. Exercising leadership
- B. Listening effectively
- C. Dressing appropriately



Step Three: Recruiting an Intern

Promote Your Internship Opportunities

The Stony Brook University Career Center will work with you to promote your position and collect resumes from qualified applicants. We use nationally known and reputable software, **Handshake**, to manage the recruitment process.

Handshake will allow you to post jobs/collect resumes FREE-OF-CHARGE, request rooms to interview on campus, and register for job fairs all from one easy-to-use account. When you post positions, they go into a pending bin for approval. Once they have been reviewed, they will be visible for students/alumni to view and submit resumes.

To create/access your account, visit **Handshake's help center**.

To post a position, from the menu bar on your left-hand side select "Job Postings"

To register for a Job Fair or other event, select "Events"

These are the recommended time frames to recruit candidates for internship positions. Following these recommendations will ensure there is ample time to promote your internship opportunity and select the right student(s).

Contact Qualified Students for Interviews

On-Campus: The Career Center regularly hosts employers on campus to conduct screening interviews with candidates. There is NO CHARGE for this service. A campus interview is best for students, as they do not have to miss class to travel to the company site for the first round. To arrange for a room to interview on campus, log into your Handshake account and click on "Request an Interview" on your home page.

On-Site: We encourage a site interview for the 2nd round, giving candidates an opportunity to visit your work site and giving your staff / hiring managers an opportunity to see the candidates. You would schedule these on your own.

Virtual Recruiting: The Career Center provides interview rooms for students, with a safe and secure video connection for remote interviews. Employers can do phone / Zoom interviews when geographic distance is an issue.

Employment Offers and Acceptance Policy

The SB Career Center and its **Employer Recruiting Policy** firmly believe that it is in the best interests of both students and employers to allow adequate time for students to make an informed decision about whether to accept or decline an offer. Students who are able to sufficiently analyze all information at their disposal will be more confident in their choices, and employers will benefit from hiring candidates who have a sincere interest in honoring their commitment.

We encourage employers to allow students **at least 2 weeks** to decide on offers. Students should be given the opportunity to make use of all services/information available to them and should not be subjected to exploding offers requiring a student to choose a job offer within a very short amount of time or face having the offer rescinded. While we recognize that there are legitimate business reasons for offers to be accepted or rejected within a specific timeframe, this type of offer is not appropriate within a collegiate environment. In an effort to provide students with sufficient time to conduct their job/internship searches and make informed decisions, we expect employers to abide by specific deadlines which are posted each semester.

For more information, refer to **NACE's Reasonable Offer Deadlines Guidelines**.

Step Four: Managing Interns

Onboarding

Becoming oriented to a new setting can be difficult and stressful when starting any new job. The sooner your interns understand what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. Therefore, the intern needs to become acclimated to the environment as soon as possible after starting work.

Prepare an offer letter for student hire. If the student will be working remotely, you may wish to include information on this in the offer letter.

Orient and train your new hire about policies, procedures, and goals.

The supervisor and intern should set specific expectations as well as short and long-term goals for the duration of the internship.

Ensure new interns know and understand how to use your communication tools and the best way to contact team members.

Training

Establish a training program that will give the intern a clear understanding of what is expected, and include information about tasks or projects that will be supervised and evaluated. The training process will vary depending on the organization and the intern's experiences. For remote or virtual interns, be sure to schedule check-in dates and deadlines to ensure both the intern and manager are on track.

Supervision

Students will look to you as a mentor who will assist their transition from the classroom to the work environment. We suggest you meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance.

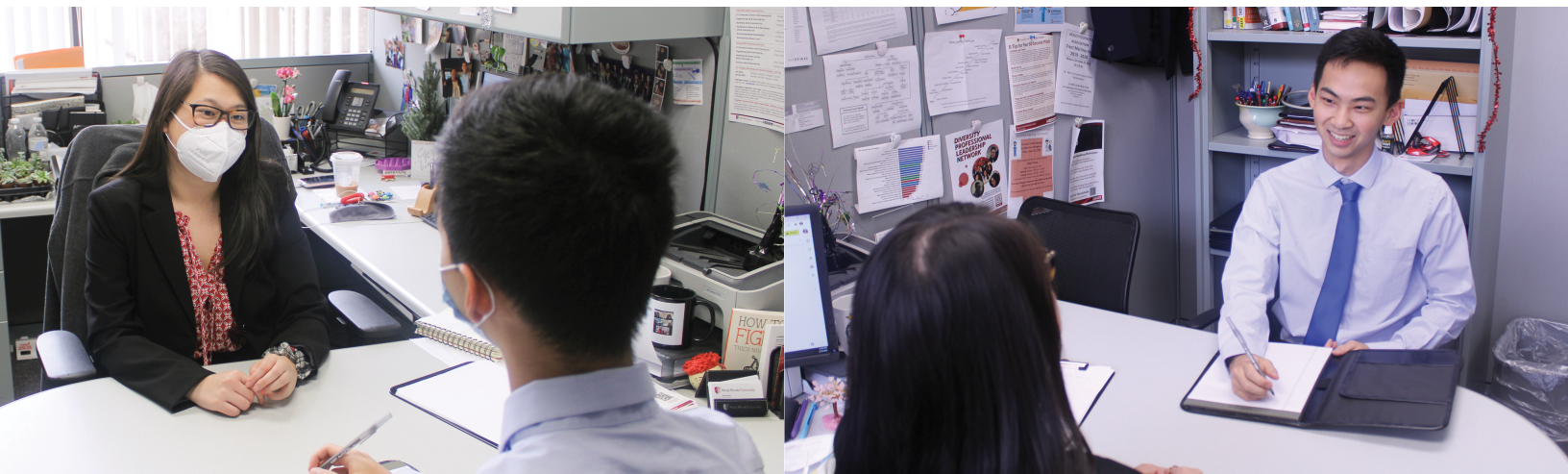
Evaluation

Feedback is essential for an intern to capitalize on strengths that they bring to the program and further develop the areas that need more attention, all with the aim of helping interns to become highly competent professionals.

Evaluation Procedures

Final evaluations must be completed by the supervisor and will be sent by email. Evaluations are required for credit-bearing internships by professors at Stony Brook University. Documents need to be completed, reviewed with the intern and returned to the Career Center by specific deadlines.

A supervisor is expected to evaluate the intern's progress regularly and informally throughout each academic term and to report his/her assessment of the intern's progress to the student and the faculty sponsor. We strongly recommend that the supervisor schedule weekly or bi-weekly conferences with the intern to accommodate the need for frequent and focused evaluation.



Step Five: Legal Concerns

Following are some common legal concerns voiced about internships, but every organization should check with legal counsel for specifics.

When can an internship be unpaid?

The U.S. Department of Labor specifies through the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** the requirements for an internship to be legally unpaid. Follow the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Labor for **for-profit** and **non-profit organizations**.

The Stony Brook University Career Center reserves the right to decline to post an unpaid/non-credit internship. *If the internship is for a for-profit employer and we do not feel that the internship represents a sufficient learning opportunity to offset the value of the work being performed or the employer does not stipulate how the intern will learn new skills or gain new knowledge, as it relates to the six criteria listed above that transmits to the "Employment Relationship Under the Fair Labor Standards Act", the employer may be referred to post a paid internship.*

International Students

There are few restrictions in hiring international student interns. There are two types of practical training:

- Curricular Practical Training
- Optional Practical Training

For more information explaining regulations in terms of hiring international students, you will find on the **Stony Brook University Visa and Immigration Services website**.

Best Practices

Feel free to refer to these recommended resources when creating your internship position(s).

- "15 Best Practices" by NACE
- "Internships 101" by Parker Dewey

With any questions, please contact the Career Center Director of Experiential Programs:

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