What Is an Internship?

An internship is a monitored work experience that has intentional learning outcomes and goals for students.

- The student is learning from a professional in his/her intended career field.
- The employer provides educationally enriching projects with learning objectives, mentoring, evaluation, quality training, and supervision.
- The majority of job assignments should relate to the student’s major or career interests with minimal assignments involving clerical work.

An internship can vary in length, hours, and compensation.

- **Length**: fall semester, spring semester, summer. Arcadia students typically participate in internships during the summer months.
- **Hours**: Academic year internships are typically more successful when the hours per week are less than 10. Summer internships are typically 40 hours/week and between 8-12 weeks long.
- **Compensation**: paid, unpaid, stipend, housing, or travel allowance. For unpaid internships, it is important that your internship program adheres to the Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act. For more information: [http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf)

How do students benefit from an internship?

- Builds students’ resumes and expands their network of professionals.
- Gives students an opportunity to apply academic concepts and principles to a work environment.
- Allows students to evaluate their career choice, either to continue on their present academic/career path or to consider other possibilities.

How does the organization benefit from having an internship program?

- Provides year-round source of highly motivated short-term professionals.
- Opportunity to assess the capabilities of a prospective full-time employee prior to graduation.
- Increases an organization’s visibility on campus.

Designing Your Program: Create an Internship Program that Meets Your Needs

Set goals: What does your organization hope to achieve by having an internship program?

- Are you a small organization searching for additional help on a project?
- Is your organization growing quickly and in need of motivated new employees?
- Are you a non-profit or government agency that does not have a lot of money to pay, but can provide an interesting and rewarding experience?
- Are you searching for your organization’s future staff and leaders?
Create a well-developed structure for your internship program.

- What will the intern do? Be as specific as possible! Structured experiences are good experiences; otherwise, a student may become confused or bored.
- What academic background, skills, or experience do you seek?
- Who will hire, supervise, and mentor the intern?
- Is there adequate workspace for the intern? Where will they sit?

Draft a position description.

- Be sure the description clearly explains the intern’s duties.
- Include information about your organization and the location of the internship.
- Provide a timeframe for the internship, including start/end dates and typical working hours.
- Describe preferred majors (if applicable), coursework, and desired skills of applicants.
- Include information on compensation.
- Provide application instructions and a deadline. Students will typically wait until deadlines to apply.

Consider salary/pay range for interns.

- For profit employers need to consult the U.S. Department of Labor's fact sheet to help determine whether interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act [http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm)
- Students are much more likely to apply for paid internships. Remember students incur expenses related to internship experiences (travel, parking, clothing, food). If your organization is unable to offer a paid internship, consider helping the student with a stipend or internship related expenses.

Consider other professional development opportunities.

- Think beyond the intern’s defined responsibilities: will there be other professional development opportunities available, such as special training programs, lunches with executives, and special events? The opportunity to advance skills and network with others is very attractive to students.

Your Internship Program: Tips for Success Once the Intern Is On-Site

- Discuss, determine, and agree on learning objectives WITH the student intern.
- Plan an engaging orientation program that is effective for both interns and mentors. Provide an overview of the organization’s mission, values, and structure. Consider setting up one-on-one meetings with the staff members the intern will interact with most.
- Be sure everyone involved has clear expectations, including: work hours, appropriate office attire, specific job responsibilities, and organizational policies and procedures.
- Ensure job assignments are clear and related to the learning objectives.
- Try your best to fully incorporate the intern into the life of your organization (staff meetings, staff celebrations etc.).
- Provide feedback along the way with regularly scheduled meetings.
- Select a professional in your office who cares about the development of students in the field to supervise and/or mentor.
- Evaluate, document, and demonstrate the value of an internship program to your organization. This is important for the continued support and success of your internship program.

Please post your internship to Knightlink (powered by Handshake)

Posting positions in the KnightLink system is free. If you already have a Handshake account, you can log in from the Handshake Employer Portal [https://joinhandshake.com](https://joinhandshake.com). If you are creating your account for the first time, click on the "Employer" area at [https://arcadia.joinhandshake.com/register](https://arcadia.joinhandshake.com/register).

If you need additional assistance, please contact us: recruit@arcadia.edu