A "how-to" guide for employers as they establish a meaningful internship program to cultivate a strong talent pipeline.

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Background

Employee demographics are changing rapidly. Baby boomers are retiring and millennials are on the horizon to compose over seventy percent of the workforce by 2030. In order to ensure that the talent pipeline in Round Rock, Texas is sufficient to meet employers’ needs now and in the future, it is critical to tap into the future workforce now. One way to do this is through high quality work-based learning experiences and internship opportunities.

Hands-on, real-world work opportunities help students connect the dots between what they learn in the classroom and what they will need to know to be successful in their careers. The ever-changing nature of today’s workplace makes this connection even more critical, as the jobs of today require experienced workers to fill their open positions. Today’s jobs not only require individuals to have more specific technical skills in a given field but are also becoming increasingly concerned with the soft skills of their workers.

The following pages will introduce you to the nuts and bolts of developing internship programs, which can deliver results today to businesses of varying sizes while cultivating the talent pipeline for your company’s future. This guide is intended to assist employers in leveraging internships to help professionally develop their future workforce.
Description and Examples of Internship Programs

Overview of Internships

An intern, by definition, is “a professional in training.” An internship is any carefully monitored work experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he/she is learning throughout his/her tenure.iii

To establish uniformity in the use and application of the term “internship,” the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines an internship in the following manner: “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.”iv

The Columbus Chamber of Commerce (CCC) recommends treating internships like a production. Internships require planning, clear goals, parameters, evaluation, staff allocation, and regular attention. Designed effectively, internships will attract top students to your company. Internship program models vary widely; however, regardless of the form, the CCC states that each internship should have the following components:

- Learning Objectives and Outcomes: Students view internships as an extension of their studies. To sell your opportunity, it is essential to use language that relates the tasks and duties you’ll assign to learning objectives and outcomes.
- Limited, defined term: Because internships are viewed as an extension of study, they typically are expected to coincide with educational terms (semesters). This means internships typically last 10-14 weeks; they can be full-time or part-time (10-20 hours/week).
When crafting an opportunity, think about a deliverable, and a scope of work; put it on paper and rename it an ‘internship’.

- **Mentorship**: Students come to internships expecting to learn particular skills or methods from an experienced worker or mentor. You’ll find that your intern will also perform better with an assigned mentor and regular feedback.

- **Learning & Development**: With their “extension of studies” mentality, students expect and are accustomed to training and professional development opportunities that connects their studies to real-world, transferrable skills throughout an internship experience. Connecting the dots for students doesn’t have to be complex: schedule weekly one-on-ones or lunches to talk about different aspects of the company or even your job.

- **Expectations & Orientation**: Managing expectations up front makes all the difference. It’s useful to establish an agreement that lays out the objective, outcomes, duties and tasks, wages, and other expectations between the intern and the employer (like confidentiality, ownership of work product, etc). Educators might refer to this as a “Learning Contract.”

- **Wages**: In virtually all cases, any internship a company comes up with requires wages, as the intern will be considered an employee. There are some looser guidelines for non-profits – in which case it’s advisable to use a contract that outlines a volunteer relationship with the intern. Competitive wages will attract top students, but at minimum, consider minimum wage. The NACE average hourly rate for Bachelor level intern (2013) is $16.26.

- **Recruitment**: Recruitment for summer internships takes place during the prior fall, with offers made before the New Year. Many campuses also hold winter career fairs and recruiting events, although many top students will have already accepted an internship by this time. Recruiters can also take advantage of interview days either after or during career fairs, information sessions
with groups of students, or other flexibly scheduled on-campus interviews.

**Internship Program Development**

Provided below is a list of questions National Network of Business and Industry Associations (National Network) encourages companies to consider in the design and development of an internship program.

1. **Program Goals and Objectives:** What are the goals and objectives of the internship program? How will the program benefit the business?
2. **Workforce Needs and Model Selection:** What are your current and future workforce needs, and how might an internship model support these needs? Which program models best align with your workforce needs?
3. **Budget:** What is the available budget for the internship program?
4. **Resources:** What other internal and external resources are available to the organization to develop and run the work-and-learn model (e.g., teachers, equipment, corporate partnerships, etc.)?
5. **Alignment with Company Culture:** How will the design of the internship program align with company culture?
6. **Employee Involvement:** Will employees value the program enough to serve as mentors/managers for interns? Do you have plans to identify mentor and manager resources for the program?
7. **Partnerships:** What groups might the business partner with or leverage to make the program a success? Partnerships to consider include educational institutions, for-profit organizations, government, non-government organizations, parents/guardians, consultants, workforce development groups, and local businesses and industries.*
8. **How will you develop an effective recruiting process to attract students and workers to the internship program? Might you leverage program partnerships in the recruitment of talented students and workers for the program?**
9. **Value to Program Participants:** Does the internship program provide students/workers with something of value (e.g., academic credits, employer recognition, credentials, etc.)*
10. Management Support: Is the internship program supported by senior management?

11. Return on Investment and Cost-Benefit Analysis: How will you quantify the success and return on the model?

12. Program Management: Who will manage the internship program and track an intern’s performance against established model goals and objectives?

13. Skills and Competency Mapping: Have you developed a map of the skills and competencies needed for your company’s jobs and a plan to teach these skills to interns in order to establish a talent pipeline?

14. Program Pilot: Are you prepared to pilot your program with a small group of program participants?

15. Evaluation of the Pilot and Larger Program Rollout: Do you have a plan to review model goals and objectives against the pilot program results? Do you have a plan to adjust program elements as needed before adding additional resources and individuals to the program?vi

An internship is not:

- Free help.
- Meant to replace an employee.
- More than twenty percent busy work (e.g., filing, errands).
Internship Program Models

According to Internships.com, most internship programs can be categorized according to five basic categories:

1. Time of year. Internships tend to run the duration of an academic semester or quarter (although they can run longer), or over a summer or winter break. Therefore, based on the time of year, the basic types of internships are semester internships, quarterly internships, summer internships, fall internships, spring internships, and holiday or winter internships (i.e., over a winter break).

2. Industry. Internship programs are also classified by industry; this usually corresponds with the interns' majors. While there are obviously hundreds of possibilities, some of the most common include marketing internships, finance internships, legal internships, technology internships, and fashion internships.

3. Paid versus unpaid internships. There are legal ramifications—and blurred lines—regarding whether it is permissible to employ interns without pay (most depend on meeting the legal definition of “intern”). For now, however, it’s sufficient to say that paid internships and unpaid internships are another method of classification.

4. Credit versus no-credit internships. For-credit internships and not-for-credit internships is another type of categorization, as it’s a common misconception that internships are always in exchange for college or university credit. In actuality, internships can be part of academic coursework; however, they can also be part of an individual’s extracurricular plan to gain experience. When an internship is performed in exchange for college credit, the assigning of credit is strictly between the student and his or her school.

5. Location. Since internship programs are commonly posted online (and garner submissions from around the globe), internships are also referred to by the city in which they are located.
Benefits of Internships

For Employers

Nearly any company—regardless of size or location—can use an intern. Interns are ideal for all kinds of organizations across a diverse set of fields, including assistance with marketing, information technology, research, accounting responsibilities, human resource functions, and more. For employers who are looking for the top talent among college-educated, entry-level employees, an internship program is the best way for them to build a pipeline of experienced, young professionals. High quality internship programs meet your company’s needs while also building a pool of candidates who have work experience within your organization. Internship programs are an inexpensive recruiting tool and an opportunity to train future employees to develop the skill sets aligned with your workforce needs. Additionally, interns can provide a management opportunity for mid-level staff by assigning these staff members to mentorship and coaching opportunities within the internship program. vii

For Students

Internships are an excellent way to learn about an industry of interest while also acquiring some of the necessary skills and tools for success in that industry. Internships can also satisfy certain college program requirements and possibly allow the student to earn college credit, enriching the college experience and preparing for entrance into the workforce. Students can use internship opportunities as a great way of building a relationship with an employer in an industry of interest. This relationship can open doors to future positions and networking opportunities that can strengthen one’s career. Students participating in an internship are typically more engaged in their learning and develop a better work ethic and more skills and abilities. These interns later become more dedicated employees and involved community members. By providing experiential learning while still in school, internships can give students real-life experience in their potential future choice of career. viii
Liability and Legality

U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division


This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act for the services that they provide to “for-profit” private sector employers.

Background

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work.” Covered and non-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 some 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 serves 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 minimum wage and overtime compensation requirements of the FLSA do not apply to individuals who are engaged in agricultural labor as defined in the FLSA.
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 close 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 “for-profit” private sector internship programs 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 exercises 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 benefits 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 interns’ 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 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 receives 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 generally 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 is placed with the employer for a trial period with the expectation that he or she will then be hired on a permanent basis, that individual generally would 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 Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division Website: http://www.wagehour.dol.gov and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210
1-866-4-USWAGE
TTY: 1-866-487-9243

* The FLSA makes a special exception under certain circumstances for individuals who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency and for individuals who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for private non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships in the public sector and for non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible. WHD is reviewing the need for additional guidance on internships in the public and non-profit sectors.
Coaching an Intern

Supervising vs. Coaching

To garner the best results from an internship program, the internship manager should serve as a coach rather than a supervisor. A supervisor provides oversight while a coach provides growth opportunities. As an intern coach, you use all the skills necessary in any effective supervisory relationship, while students will still look to you as a mentor to assist in their transition from the classroom to the work environment.

Since the internship is an extension of the learning process, you will need to provide opportunities to bridge the two experiences. You should meet with your interns regularly to provide feedback concerning their performance. During these meetings, the students can:

- report on the status of a project
- ask questions
- learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- participate in an evaluation of their strengths
- discuss areas needing growth and development
- get a sense of what kind of work lies ahead

At the same time you will have an opportunity to coach, counsel, and reinforce positive attitudes and performance. If the student is receiving credit through the school, you should anticipate that you may have some interaction with your students’ internship coordinator through telephone calls, on-site visits, and written evaluations. Such persons will help you find a solution if difficulties occur (e.g., intern attendance or punctuality problems, low motivation, unsatisfactory work, or personal conflicts).\(^x\)
Onboarding and Orientation

It is imperative that interns (and new hires) are appropriately acclimated to your organization. It is counter-productive to overload them with information on their first day, or even first week. The Michigan Internship Initiative (MII) recommends that new hire and internship orientation programs should be set up as an ongoing process rather than a one-time event. MII recommends the following components for structuring and strengthening your orientation program:

Orientation preparation:
- Prepare a list of essential items that need to be covered on their first day. Also consider preparing an organizational chart that includes names and projects.
- Create a guide, document, or talking points that address your organization’s culture.
- Identify and communicate how the intern/new hire will fit in with your organization.
- Mail a “welcome package” to your intern prior to their first day. Include:
  - Start date and first day agenda
  - Directions and parking information (if needed)
  - Bios and pictures of Board and staff members (optional)
  - Frequently asked questions (FAQs) from previous interns

*If Mondays are the busiest days for your organization, do not have an intern start on a Monday. Be sure that their manager has available time to dedicate to the intern on their first day.

**If your intern is going to be attending meetings on your behalf, it is important that they know about your organization’s mission, vision, and goals so that they can appropriately respond to questions and situation.
Helpful Sample Documents

Sample Internship Description Form

Company Name:

Job Title:

Supervisor:

Supervisor Contact Information:

Hours:

Internship Overview:

- Standards
- Duties and responsibilities
- Pay
- Required experience
- Knowledge/skills/abilities
- Physical requirements

Main Point of Contact:
Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:
Sample Evaluation Form

Intern/volunteer name: _________________________________________________

Dates of internship: _____________________________________________________

How well was the intern prepared for this internship?

Can you suggest instructional areas that would benefit this intern?

Please provide examples in which the intern applied good judgment and had a technical competence for the assigned tasks.

Please provide some examples in which the intern worked quickly, thoroughly, and efficiently.

Discuss areas where the intern has made significant improvement.

What are the intern’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to the internship program parameters?

Would you recommend this intern for future employment? Why or why not?

Are there other areas involving the internship program or the intern that you wish to comment on?
Top Ten Concerns of Interns

Below are the top ten concerns of interns, as identified by the University of Virginia.

1. Give us real work!
   It can’t be said too many times that interns want to work and learn. An internship can help you get a job done that you couldn’t otherwise, right? If you’ve brought on an intern as a recruitment tool, then how will you be able to assess their abilities? It just makes sense to utilize your interns well.

2. Do what you say, and say what you do!
   Be honest with your interns about what they can expect during their internship. If the job will require stuffing some envelopes, then make that clear. But if you tell the intern they will be researching a project, and they spend 90% of their time doing “grunt work,” then bad feelings will develop. Honesty doesn’t cost you anything, and it will make the interns feel that much more respected.

3. We like feedback!
   Remember that interns are students, and they may not have the business skills and experiences that you take for granted. If your intern makes an oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.

4. We want to be included too!
   Is there a staff meeting that they can attend? Can they quietly tag along to that next project meeting? Headed to lunch with a couple of people in the office? Please include them in the daily life of your workplace. After all, if you provide a little more perspective on the intern’s work, the product will be much better.

5. Please explain.
   When you assign work, make sure you give a detailed explanation. While the work may seem trivial and obvious to you, it may not be
obvious to someone who’s never done it before. Patience and a few extra minutes at the beginning will pay off later when your intern can produce good work independently.

6. I want a mentor!
Make sure that interns have a mentor or supervisor to provide guidance. Make it someone who truly likes to teach, and the experience will be even better.

7. A minute of your time please.
The best mentor in the world is useless if he or she can’t or won’t spend the necessary time mentoring. As newcomers, interns may not speak up if they’re feeling ignored, so the burden of making sure they’re okay is on the mentor. If the busiest person in the office wants to be the designated mentor, he or she should schedule regular times to meet with the intern.

8. Be prepared!
That wonderful day has arrived and the intern goes to start their internship only to learn that no one knew they were coming, and there is no place for them to work.

9. Um…I need a chair.
It is amazing how many employers hire an intern and don’t think about the fact that they will need a desk, chair, phone and a computer in order to do the task assigned. It is no fun, and not efficient to move an intern from desk to desk as people are out one day to the next. If you want to get a job done, you need to supply the intern with the tools to do the job.

10. Show me the money (as best you can).
While each internship is different, and each industry has its own personality, remember that interns have expenses. Your organization may not be in a position to pay much, but anything can help. Maybe you can help pay for their parking, take them to lunch every so often, or develop some other creative way to assist them.
Local Colleges, Universities, and High Schools
Resources and Contacts

The Art Institute

To coordinate an internship opportunity and recruit students, contact the Art Institute of Austin Career Services directly.

Contact:
Amber Lemmons
Career Services Advisor
101 W. Louis Henna Blvd. Suite 100
Austin, TX 78728
512.691.4903
alemmons@aii.edu
www.artinstitutes.edu

Austin Community College

Campus2Careers at ACC will match your postings with the best candidates from a database of students. In addition, posting your internship will allow you as a registered employer to:

1. Create a company profile and post a video that will build your brand on campus
2. Employers may post part-time, full-time, internship, or volunteer positions

Contact:
Trish Welch
ACC Career Services
512.223.2011
twelch2@austincc.edu
www.austincc.edu/business-and-community/post-jobs-internships
South University

The South University Office of Career Services can be a valuable resource for you as you work to find qualified professionals to fit the hiring needs of your organization. It will connect you with motivated, dedicated graduates who are ready for the next step in their career. Simply fill out the university’s form, and Career Services will contact you to discuss your needs.

Contact:
Lisa Steffensen, Ph.D.
Dean of Student Affairs – Austin
QEP Career Readiness Committee Chair
1220 West Louis Henna Blvd.
Round Rock, TX 78681
512.516.8716
lsteffensen@southuniversity.edu
www.southuniversity.edu/WhoWeAre/Student-Affairs/Career-Services/For-Employers

Southwestern University

Postings for full-time, part-time, or internship positions targeted at Southwestern University students and graduates are free to employers. Employers must register with PirateLink the first time they access the system prior to posting. Postings typically require one business day for approval by Career Services before being activated.

Contact:
Maria Krueger
Internship Coordinator – Career Services
Southwestern University
P.O. Box 770, Georgetown, TX 78627-0770
512.863.1346
krugerem@southwestern.edu
www.southwestern.edu/careers
Texas State Technical College

Texas State Technical College works diligently to connect industry statewide to highly skilled and qualified TSTC students and alumni, in part through hireTSTC, TSTC’s exclusive online job board. Through hireTSTC, employers are able to:

- Build a profile
- Search prospective applicants
- Refer job and internship postings
- View resumes
- Report a hire

To connect to students to fill your job needs, login to hireTSTC for employers.

Contact:
Kacey Darnell
Director of Career Services
254.867.3009
kacey.darnell@tstc.edu
www.myinterface.com/tstc/employer/

Texas State University

Below are the steps for posting a position with Texas State University.

1. Create a contact profile for yourself/company. To do this, click here and then click on “Employer Log In”, then “First Time User”, then “Can’t Find Your Organization?” button, then simply fill in the blanks. The Texas State University Career Services office will review and activate approved jobs, internships, and contact profiles within three business days of being submitted.

2. After your profile has been approved, please visit here and under the quick links listing choose “log in to Jobs4Cats.” Once you have logged in you may choose from the following options
3. To create an on-campus interviewing schedule, please select “new schedule request” under the “on-campus recruiting” tab and then fill in the blanks. Please select “preselect” for your “schedule type.”

4. To create a new job or internship posting on our Jobs4Cats posting board, select “new job” under the “my jobs” tab and again, fill in the blanks.

Contact:
Tosca McCormick
Employer Relations Coordinator
Texas State University Career Services 512.245.7829 direct
tosca.mccormick@txstate.edu
www.careerservices.txstate.edu
References and Resources

3 Ibid.
8 Ibid, p. 2.