



Employers interested in internship partnerships or on-campus recruitment opportunities may contact the Director of the Resource Center to discuss arrangements:

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Employer Guide to Internships

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Springfield College-Benedictine University welcomes partnerships with employers to offer internship opportunities that effect mutually beneficial outcomes for both employer and student.



Overview of Aims, Objectives, Benefits, and Guidelines

Student Internship Aims and Objectives:

While the terms work-study and internship are often used interchangeably, in a campus setting, they refer to a variety of programs with similar aims. The aim of Springfield College-Benedictine University's internship opportunities for students is to provide practical work experience that bridges the gap between the classroom and the world of work and articulates an understanding between theory and practice in the discipline. An internship experience allows students an opportunity to apply the knowledge, theories and skills acquired through their education. The internship program encourages students to develop professional skills in their chosen career field while providing the valuable work experience needed in an economically competitive world.

Specifically, those goals involve

- Improving the student's understanding of the application and practicality of the theory and principals of his or her chosen discipline,
- Complementing the academic component of development through exposure to new topics in an external atmosphere,
- Exposing students to the realities of the employer-employee relationship and preparing for an effective post-graduation experience, and
- Encouraging the development and maturation of the student so as to achieve a more successful, rewarding and meaningful life.

Benefits to Employers:

Long- and short-term benefits of employer participation in campus internship programs include

- Building strong bonds and developing beneficial partnerships with the educational community,
- Establishing a direct opportunity for involvement in raising the standard of professionalism for the future workforce,
- Providing a valuable service to the community by increasing productivity and employability of graduates entering the workforce,
- Offering focused, disciplinary input in needs-assessment curricular pursuits seeking to better align programs with job-market demands, and
- Acquiring access to a highly motivated and skilled labor pool offering new and objective viewpoints and stimulate creative problem-solving.

Guidelines for Employers (based on established, best-practice approaches):

- Establish clear job descriptions for internship positions, including level of experience and education expected as well as degree focus requirements, if applicable.
- Examine the job description to determine whether the internship is a paid position or strictly a mentorship. (The resources provided on page two of this guide can assist employers in understanding and clarifying this important distinction.)
- Provide adequate supervision to support the interns in accomplishing disciplinary objectives. (Interns desire consistent feedback and mentoring.)
- Prepare staff members by communicating the goals of the internship (both for the student and the organization) and by encouraging colleagues to share their knowledge and expertise.



Resources for Employer Articulation

Levitt, Eileen. "Are Your Interns Legal?" *Employment Management Today* 6.4 (2001).

As it becomes harder and harder for companies to recruit qualified workers, more firms have looked at college interns as a way to get the job done. Using college interns can allow employers to benefit in a variety of ways. Not only are there technically qualified students who are eager to receive work experience in their field, but it is also a good way for the company to decide whether a person is a potential hire. Employers who may be considering the use of interns, however, need to make sure they don't become entrapped by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Generally, the FLSA states that if a company benefits at all from the use of interns, it will be required to pay them at least minimum wage. Employees may not waive their rights to minimum wage by offering to work for free, or even use course credit as a form of payment.

As a matter of fact, schools or colleges that insist students not be paid if they're getting credit are unknowingly suggesting that employers ignore the FLSA, which is very clear that there must be monetary compensation. Employers who are found to have violated the FLSA will be liable for back wages owed.

According to Paul Skainy, Esq., at Rapaport & Skainy, LLC, of Columbia, MD (www.legalbriefs.com), interning is a very misunderstood area of the law. In fact, most academic institutions are unaware of the position that they have put employers in when they prohibit students from being paid if they're accepting course credit.

Nevertheless, interns can be a win-win investment. As long as the student is not doing anything that directly benefits your company and is simply observing or learning (as in a mentoring relationship), you may be justified in not paying him or her. It must be clear, however, that the student is involved in an educational program that is designed to provide professional experience in your company and that a paid employee is not being displaced.

If these parameters are not met, you must pay students minimum wage and benefit from their energy and talents just as you would any other new hire. And finally, if you are not sure if you are violating the FLSA, review the situation with your HR consultant or legal counsel.



Resources for Employer Articulation, cont.

Sturges, John. "Status of Interns and Independent Contractors." *Society for Human Resource Management* (2003).

Defining an Employee: FLSA defines an employee as performing activities controlled or directed by "an employer." Such an employee performs work for an employer's benefit, even if the employer doesn't require but instead "permits" the work. The FLSA notes that people who work for their own interest are not employees, but may be independent contractors or students and trainees acquiring experience. Many businesses misinterpret the meaning of these phrases and unwittingly violate the FLSA.

An Intern is Not Always an Intern: Interns spend time for their own benefit to get experience. They can't be promised jobs or pay, cannot spend time on the production of the company's normal business and can't contribute to "commerce." An intern is an unpaid trainee who is not doing any work that the business can use to further its goals or meet commitments and is spending time gaining experience but is not expected to provide anything that the company might use, whether working on the company's premises or at home. This suggests a company should view the role of an intern's "mentor" as time donated by the firm. Many companies view internships as part of corporate citizenship. Being realistic, companies use interns to bolster their image within their community and in campus recruiting efforts. In addition, an internship of a high potential candidate can sway a decision to apply for a job upon completing college.

Here are some suggestions to avoid classifying an intern as an employee. First, it is important to be clear on the personal growth objectives of the internship and to communicate those in writing to the intern and those mentoring the intern. Second, someone should be appointed to monitor how the internship is understood by others and the intern's actual work and activities. Third, the company should communicate the objectives of an internship to the intern's school and, where appropriate, to the intern's advisor.

Paying an Intern: On the other hand, firms can view a paid intern as a cost-effective employee. It may be beneficial to call the position a trainee rather than intern, to avoid confusion where other parts of the company use unpaid internships. In this case, the summer trainee should



Resources for Employer Articulation, cont.

be designated a temporary employee, a category that could limit the total number of hours per year an individual may work, pay only for hours or days worked (not for holidays or other time off), and exempt the individual from benefits such as health insurance, life insurance, and retirement and thrift plans. In such cases, pay should at least be at the minimum wage and equitable with other employees performing similar work. It is possible to determine a bonus which might be paid at the end to the intern trainee or perhaps paid strategically just after the beginning of the next year as the individual is considering applying for "career employment."



Internship Position Description Form (Employer Template)

Company/Organization Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Supervisor: _____ Title: _____

Department/Division: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Extension: _____

Position Description: (List duties, responsibilities, etc.)

Qualifications/Requirements (i.e., education, technical skills):

Starting Date _____ Anticipated Duration _____

Employee Status: _____ Full-time _____ Part-time Hours per week _____

Pay Status: _____ Paid _____ Non-paid: Volunteer or Mentorship (Circle one.)

Pay per week \$ _____

Work Schedule: _____ Variable based on student schedule

_____ Fixed as follows: _____



Student and Employer Internship Agreement¹ (Template)

This letter of agreement clarifies and confirms the responsibilities of the company and the student intern in the internship, the beginning and ending dates of the internship, and the due dates for the performance evaluations.

The variety in the size and function of the company participating in the internship may in some cases require slight modification of the procedures contained in these guidelines. Significant modification of these procedures should be mutually approved in writing and signed by all of the parties signing the original agreement.

A separate agreement, a contract between the campus and the student, will be used toward assessment and the conferment of course credit.

Beginning date of the internship: _____

Completion date of the internship: _____

Will the intern be paid? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how much? \$ _____ per _____

Will the intern receive college credit for the internship? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how many hours credit? _____

Intern's weekly schedule (may be attached):

Position: _____

Location of company work assignment:

The employer is under no obligation to offer full-time employment to the student prior or after graduation. Likewise, the student is under no obligation to the employer after completion of the prescribed work period(s) for an internship.



Student and Employer Internship Agreement (Template), cont.

Responsibilities

Student Intern: As the student intern enters the company he/she is expected to assume, as much as possible, the role of a regular staff member. The responsibilities include:

1. Adhering to the company work hours, policies, procedures and rules governing professional staff behavior.
2. Adhering to company policies governing the observation of confidentiality and the handling of confidential information.
3. Assuming personal and professional responsibilities for his/her actions and activities.
4. Maintaining relationships with company employees, customers, and so forth.
5. Utilizing a courteous, enthusiastic, open-minded, critical approach to policies and procedures within the profession.
6. Relating and applying knowledge acquired in the academic setting to the company setting.
7. Developing self-awareness in regard to attitudes, values, behavior patterns, and so forth that influence work.
8. Preparing for and utilizing conferences and other opportunities of learning afforded in the company.
9. Being consistent and punctual in the submission of all work assignments to the supervisor and faculty coordinator.
10. Providing the faculty coordinator with periodic progress reports.

AGREED _____
Student Signature

Date



Student and Employer Internship Agreement (Template), cont.

Responsibilities

Employer: It is the responsibility of the employer to provide direct, on-the-job supervision of the student intern which includes the following:

1. Orienting the student intern to the company's structure and operations.
2. Orienting the student intern to the company's policies and procedures regarding appropriate dress, office hours, applicable leave policies.
3. Introducing the student intern to the appropriate professional and clerical staff.
4. Providing the student intern with adequate resources necessary to accomplish job objectives.
5. Orienting the student intern to the policies and procedures of the personnel department.
6. Affording the student intern the opportunity to identify with the supervisor as a professional staff person by jointly participating in office interviews, meetings, conferences, projects, and other personnel and management functions.
7. Assigning and supervising the completion of tasks and responsibilities that are consistent with the student intern's role in the company.
8. Consulting the faculty coordinator in the event that the supervisor becomes of aware of personal, communication or other problems that are disrupting the student intern's learning and performance.
9. Providing regularly scheduled supervisory conferences with the student intern.
10. Participating in the joint and individual conferences with the student intern and faculty coordinator regarding the student intern's performance.
11. Submitting an evaluation on the student intern's performance.
12. Submitting a job description for the student intern by _____ (date).

AGREED _____
Employer Signature

Date

¹ Adapted from Society for Human Resource Management best-practice model