



FITCHBURG STATE
UNIVERSITY

Internship Guide

FOR EMPLOYERS



Internship Guide | FOR EMPLOYERS

Internships Defined

An internship is a practical work experience in a student's chosen field of study or career path. Students who intern have the opportunity to make important connections between classroom work and professional practice. Learning objectives, established with a faculty or staff member, guide the student through their internship experience. For credit-bearing internship experiences, a representative from your organization and a faculty/staff member from Fitchburg State will work together to monitor the internship and the intern's progress.

Purpose of an Internship

- Apply the skills and knowledge gained through academic work
- Acquire new technical skills
- Build experience necessary for employment
- Facilitate the transition from the academic world to the professional world
- Allow the student to evaluate their fit with the professional field they have chosen
- Prepare for the job search process
- Develop constructive work habits
- Utilize and strengthen their communication skills and build healthy work relationships
- Determine what professional and personal competencies they need to develop and address in their transition to professional life



Role and Responsibilities of the Internship Site

The primary role of the internship site is to provide supervision and guidance during the semester to the intern. The organization should provide day-to-day supervision to guide the student in their work. In addition, regular communication with the student's faculty supervisor is expected, if the student is earning credit for their internship. Communication may include a mid-term evaluation, a final evaluation, and on-site visits.

In addition, the internship site should do the following

- For credit-bearing internships, complete the internship agreement required by the student's academic department
- Provide the intern with opportunities to develop skills to enhance their marketability as a professional
- Schedule meaningful work activities
- Provide the tools and resources for the intern to complete required tasks
- Advise the intern on job seeking skills and how to build a professional resume or portfolio
- Counsel the intern in dealing with challenges encountered in performing their role
- Communicate any issues or problems that cannot be resolved at the organizational level to the faculty supervisor (for credit-bearing internships), or Associate Director of Internship Coordination and Employer Relations (for non-credit internships).
- Consider providing a letter of recommendation for the intern
- Treat the intern with the same respect and professionalism afforded to employees

Role and Responsibilities of Fitchburg State University

Your contact to develop and arrange an internship can begin with the Associate Director of Internship Coordination and Employer Relations, **Susan Beddes (sbeddes@fitchburgstate.edu OR 978-665-3321)**.



When students complete an internship for experience and do not pursue academic credit, the Career Services and Advising Center will serve as a resource to employers on developing and advertising the internship. When students complete internships for academic credit, the University will prepare, support, and evaluate student interns and internship sites. Your ongoing contact will come from a faculty member in the student's field of study, if the student decides to apply for academic credit for their internship.

For credit bearing internships, more specifically, the University will do the following:

Prepare

- Support host sites in developing internship position descriptions and recruitment
- Brief the student on the internship requirements and general professionalism expectations
- Explain to both the student and the organization the internship agreement process

Support

- Clarify the learning objectives and expectations
- Notify the student of the operational details of the internship
- Apprise the on-site supervisor of the internship requirements
- Schedule on-site visitations, if applicable
- Provide feedback to the intern and the supervisor following any meetings
- Intervene if there are on-site problems
- Provide periodic telephone or email contact with the on-site supervisor

Evaluation of the Student Intern and Internship Site

- Coordinate the completion of a performance evaluation with the on-site supervisor
- Review the internship agreement at the end of the experience to determine the degree to which the intern met the obligations
- Evaluate all academic assignments and record a grade for the intern (if applicable)
- Assess the organization with regards to the quality of the experience provided and the fulfillment of the commitments made in the internship agreement



Time Frame

Internships occur during the academic period (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Students can complete internships for experience (non-credit) or apply for academic credit and earn 3-12 hours of academic credit. If an internship is for academic credit, the internship will usually require 120 - 600 clock hours. It is the student's responsibility to check with their academic department to find out how many hours are required to achieve academic credit.

- **Fall Semester: September – December**
- **Spring Semester: January – May**
- **Summer Semester: May – August**

Please keep in mind that students seeking academic credit need to secure their internship by the end of the semester prior, so advertising and hiring needs to take place well in advance (3-6 months).

Academic Credit

If a student chooses to apply for academic credit for an internship, specific criteria must be met. The intern earns academic credit towards their degree for the work they complete at your organization. As stated above, the purpose is to apply theories, concepts, and skills acquired in the classroom to a real world situation. While



the intern is with your organization they will have regular contact with a faculty member who will track their work and review evaluations completed by the on-site supervisor. Interns will be required to provide the faculty member with written work and often a final project that is graded by the faculty member. It is common practice that faculty will include the on-site supervisor's evaluation in determining the final grade.

Learning Objectives

For both experience and academic credit internships, creating learning objectives is an important step in defining the internship goals and activities for an intern. The learning objectives help the intern develop a clear understanding

of what they will gain from the experience and help establish realistic expectations. In addition, learning objectives allow the intern to have a more rewarding experience and enhance their career and academic development.

Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

Internships can be paid or unpaid. This will depend on the organization and the academic department at the University. For unpaid internships, be mindful of the Department of Labor guidelines for organizations that are "for-profit". Internships that are unpaid may not be a realistic option for some students who need the financial stability of working while attending university. We strongly encourage employers to compensate interns. Interns add significant value to your organization and a paid internship may also create a more competitive applicant pool. Please review the **NACE position statement on U.S. internships** and compensation and the criteria put forth by the **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)**.



Organizational Benefits

Internships can bring many benefits to an organization and create excitement among your staff as students enter the workplace. Some of the benefits include:

- Early recruiting of qualified employees
- Access to new concepts and ideas
- Supervisory and mentoring experiences for your staff
- Ability to promote and share a positive image of your organization
- Advantages from the enthusiasm and knowledge base of university students and faculty
- Bringing extra personnel to your organization to address project needs
- Development of a relationship with the University that can lead to other collaborations
- Reduced training costs as interns may have an abbreviated learning curve if hired. Interns will already understand the organization and culture.
- Demonstrated investment in the community—interns will grow and develop into tomorrow's leaders. Your organization will contribute to the community by promoting and retaining an educated workforce.



Developing an Internship Program at Your Organization

An internship is an educational experience related to a student's degree program and career plan, which allows the student to apply what they learned to real work situations.

Qualities of Typical Internships:

- Provide real world experiences, meaningful projects, and are less than 30% general office work (filing, covering phones, stuffing folders, etc.)
- Promote the academic, career and/or personal development of the student
- Include intentional learning objectives and supervisor evaluations of the student twice per semester.
- Provide career connections, mentorship and networking opportunities within the organization/industry
- Are a three-month commitment, but can be extended based upon performance.
- Can be part-time or full-time.
- Ensure a supervisor is assigned to adequately communicate expectations with the student while providing a reasonably safe learning environment.

Consider the following questions for your organization:

- What do we want to accomplish from our internship program?
- Where can the most value be achieved from this program?
- Who is best suited to be the contact person for our program?
- How will we measure success as an internship provider?
- Where will the intern be located within our office?
- What is needed to set up an adequate workspace?
- What academic skills and background do we expect of the intern?
- What other professional experiences can we provide for an intern beyond day-to-day work tasks?

12 Steps to Creating an Internship:

1. Identify your goals for the intern.
2. Develop a comprehensive position description (see below for details)
3. Decide if the internship will be paid or unpaid. If there are “perks” available at your company, consider those as well. If non-paid, **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) guidelines** exist for “for-profit” organizations.
4. Determine when you will start your program (summer, fall, spring).
5. Contact the Career Services and Advising Center for help with posting your position to Handshake and coordinating with the appropriate departments to help you recruit candidates.
6. Decide on your selection method. (apply directly to site, have CSAC collect applicants, host on-campus interviews, etc.)
7. Select and interview applicants
8. Upon finding the right candidate with the appropriate fit and experience, make an offer.
9. Work directly with the student to set a work schedule and determine compensation.
10. Complete the appropriate paperwork required by your organization’s human resources department.
11. Close the position and report any hires. The Career Services and Advising Center will follow up with the student to determine whether they would like to register the internship for academic credit.
12. Assign a supervisor and communicate with your internship contact at Fitchburg State University



Writing an Internship Position Description

The internship position description is the first step towards creating a structured and successful internship program. A well-written and robust position description will attract the right candidates and will raise awareness of your organization on-campus. For selected candidates and their supervisors, the description clearly defines the duties, expectations and parameters of the position.



Required Components of the Internship Description:

- Organization Information/Profile
- Your company logo
- Position title
- Compensation
- Minimum and maximum work hours each week
- Start and end dates
- Major duties
- Scope and timeline of project work
- Required and preferred qualifications including preferred major/class year
- Preferred application method

Paid vs. Unpaid

- If the position is paid, determine the hourly salary range. If unsure how to determine a range, you can reach out to the Career Services and Advising Center for comparable position ranges.
- If unpaid, your organization must define how the student will benefit from the experience. There are legal considerations if unpaid to ensure you're complying with US labor laws. Please review **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)** guidelines for "for-profit" organizations

Minimum and Maximum Work Hours

- The typical internship range is between 10 and 36 hours per week depending on the semester (Fall, Spring, Summer), a student's class schedule and their desire to do a full-time or part-time internship.

Start and End Dates

- The average length for internships is three months, or 12-14 weeks, but can be extended based upon performance.
- For students to receive academic credit, start and end dates should be confirmed and approved by the student's academic department.



Major Duties and Responsibilities

- Consider the 3-5 key functions of the position—such as event coordination, administrative tasks, client relations, etc.—and establish specific tasks or duties associated with those key functions.
- Learning objectives are the core components of the internship because they define what the student will learn during their time on the work site. Consider specific, measurable outcomes for your student intern to achieve while on the worksite.

Required and Preferred Qualifications

- When considering what to include in this section, make sure to highlight specific majors or academic areas, key technical skills, and necessary soft skills.
- Make sure to clarify between required and preferred qualifications for the position because many students will choose not to apply if they feel they don't fit the criteria exactly.



EXAMPLE:

Position Title: Event Coordinator Intern Supervised by Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Company Information: ABC Hotel and Spa—Hotel and resort located near Wachusett Mountain. Our location is ideal for your winter get-away with access to a full service ski resort. We have over 200 guest rooms as well as 10 suites, a restaurant/ lounge and over 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

Qualifications: We are looking for an individual who is self-motivated and organized. Intern should be familiar with Microsoft Office and social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok. The individual should have excellent communication skills and a positive customer service attitude. Attention to detail is a must. All majors are welcomed (Business and Communication Majors preferred).

Responsibilities: Work with employers and the public to increase awareness of services offered through our facility. Schedule meeting rooms and conference facilities. Coordinate in-house and external events such as: weddings, conferences, meetings, etc. Provide customer service to guests during on-site events. Develop new partners.

Timeline and Hours: 10-15 hours/week, approximately January 15 – May 1

Compensation: \$15/hour

How to Apply: To apply, students should send resumes to:
(name of contact and email address).

EMPLOYER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

▶ How can I get the word out to campus about my open internship position?

We use Handshake as our career and internship platform for all students (undergraduate, graduate, and recent alumni). Employers can make a profile for their organization by going to: app.joinhandshake.com/employer_registrations/new or scanning the QR code. Once your profile is complete and you have passed the vetting process, you will create a job posting and add Fitchburg State University as one of your schools and we will approve you for all future job and internship postings. Once you are established in Handshake, we can easily share your open positions with the most relevant students/alumni through targeted emails and social media posts. Reach out to **Susan Beddes** (sbeddes@fitchburgstate.edu), with questions.



SCAN TO JOIN
Handshake

▶ When should I advertise and hire for an internship?

Please keep in mind that students seeking academic credit need to secure their internship by the end of the semester prior, so advertising and hiring need to take place well in advance (3-6 months). For example, a student looking for a Spring semester internship would need to secure their internship by early December at the latest. In this case, advertising the position in September/October and conducting interviews in November would be ideal.

▶ What paperwork do I need to fill out?

The paperwork you need to fill out may vary slightly and is dependent upon your intern's academic program, if they plan to apply for academic credit. The University has a contractual agreement that the intern site supervisor will need to sign (the student will provide this form).

Most organizations have an intern fill out an application to keep on file. Sometimes this form is the same as the application for regular employees. Other times, organizations will create a form specifically for interns.

▶ What does a typical intern schedule look like?

Interns should work with their site supervisor to develop a mutually agreeable schedule. This schedule will vary depending upon the number of credits assigned to the internship and the number of hours required by the student's program of study.

▶ Are there any types of evaluation forms I need to fill out?

Evaluation processes may vary slightly and are dependent upon your intern's academic program, if they plan to apply for academic credit. If the internship is non-credit, there is not a required evaluation, but having a formal mechanism for giving the students feedback is recommended.

▶ Is the intern allowed to rotate between departments?

Some organizations value the intern rotating between departments to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the company.

▶ What if the intern is not a good fit?

First, schedule a meeting with the intern to discuss any concerns. If you have counseled with the intern and have not seen progress, contact the intern's faculty supervisor (for students pursuing academic credit) or the Assoc. Director of Internship Coordination and Employer Relations (for students not pursuing credit).

▶ Should I expect a site visit from someone at Fitchburg State?

Site visit processes may vary slightly and is dependent upon your intern's academic program, if they plan to apply for academic credit. The more prepared you are for your intern, the more sustainable your internship program will become. In the end, the intern, your organization, Fitchburg State, and your community will benefit. We thank you for your willingness to collaborate with our University and our students. If you would like to work with Fitchburg State University to develop an internship program please contact: **Career Services and Advising Center** | careercenter@fitchburgstate.edu | **978-665-3151**



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