

INTERNSHIP GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

GETTING STARTED

An internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. An internship gives a student the opportunity for career exploration and development and to learn new skills. It offers the employer the opportunity to bring new ideas and energy into the workplace, develop talent, and potentially build a pipeline for future full-time employees.

A quality internship has these characteristics:

- Part-time or full-time work schedule that includes no more than 25% clerical or administrative duties.
- Provides a clear job/project description for the work experience.
- Orients the student to the organization, its culture and proposed work assignment(s).
- Helps the student develop and achieve learning goals.
- Offers regular feedback to the student intern.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INTERNSHIP, COOPERATIVE CO-OP, AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Internships are supervised, structured learning experiences in a professional setting that allow a student to gain valuable work experience in their chosen field of study. Internships generally require a minimum of 120 hours (typically, at least 10 hours per week during the fall and spring and either part-time or full-time during the summer).

Co-ops (Cooperative Education) are paid positions (like internships) in which students may alternate semesters between full-time work and full-time academic study; for at least two semesters. Co-ops are most common in engineering fields and not common at Missouri State University, but there are students who may be interested in them as applied learning experiences.

Research opportunities are available both on- and off-campus. These experiences offer a unique way to better understand a student's academic interests and consider how graduate school may play a role in future paths. Funding may be available for these experiences through organizations like the National Science Foundation (NSF).

DESIGNING AN INTERNSHIP

How do employers design an internship?

Being thoughtful and intentional as you design your internship opportunity can mean a more successful and satisfying experience for all involved. We encourage you to consult the ***National Association of Colleges and Employers' resources on internship best practices*** as you are building and conceptualizing your opportunity: [Best Practices for Internship Programs \(naceweb.org\)](https://www.naceweb.org/best-practices-for-internship-programs)

How to Write an Effective Internship Posting:

- Keep it simple.
- Use keywords that attract students.
- Specify paid or unpaid. If paid, state the payment details.
- Review sample internship postings for guidance.
- Provide an overview of the job, including potential projects and tasks that could be assigned.
- List the expected outcomes for the position.
- Include a list of required skills and qualifications.

PAID OR NOT PAID INTERNSHIPS

We expect that for-profit corporations will pay Missouri State University student interns. Most unpaid internships in *for-profit companies* are not approved by the Career Center. Paid internships provide financial support for students while they are attending school and create a stronger feeling of loyalty, investment, and accountability for an intern. While academic credit can be seen by some companies as an alternate form of compensation, many students do not value academic credit as a compensatory option, since they must pay and register for academic credits.

Organizations also cannot offer credit as compensation – decisions regarding the awarding of academic credit are solely within the purview of Missouri State University faculty within the students' academic program. While there are not any current legal requirements that interns be paid, if you are offering an unpaid internship you need to ensure that your unpaid internship is in compliance with the US Department of Labor's "Test for Unpaid Interns": [Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#). Specific questions about legality related to internship payment should be directed to your legal counsel.

If I am paying an intern, what is the average hourly wage?

An hourly wage for an intern will vary widely, depending on the industry in which you work, the major or skillset of the student you are recruiting, their level of experience, and location of the internship. Internships can range from state minimum wage for roles and up to \$32 or more an hour for more technical skillsets. An hourly wage cannot be less than minimum wage for the state in which the student will be working.

RECEIVING ACADEMIC CREDIT FROM MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

A student registers (and pays for) internship credits just as they would any academic courses that provide credit. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process through their academic department or through the Career Center. To initiate this process, we encourage students to contact the Career Center for support. While all students may not have the option to take academic credit, all students can schedule an appointment with a Career Resources Specialist for guidance in the Career Center.

Students, depending on their major, will find that their college offers [internship or cooperative education courses](#) for specific academic areas. Each academic area has different criteria for internship approval and requirements to complete. Note, not all students are required to complete an internship as part of their degree program. To learn more about the internship courses and majors, see the following tables for the different Colleges internship courses.

If a student applies, interviews, and is offered an internship with your organization, the student can determine if they would like to receive academic credit by registering for the course and ensuring they meet the prerequisites for the course. The student will need to complete [internship paperwork](#) and receive approval from their academic department.

The internship may take place during the fall, spring, or summer semester (unless otherwise noted) with the purpose of providing students with professional and applied learning experiences in their respective industry.

Students will be responsible for logging work hours at your company while completing academic course requirements and meeting with the employer supervisor for expectations and evaluations.

Darr College of Agriculture	Internship Courses
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AGB 499 Internship in Agribusiness, Agricultural Education and Communication	AGS 499 Animal Industry Internship
AGP 499 Internship in Plant Science and Natural Resources	AGV 526 Agriculture Vocational Cooperative Education
AGR 499 Internship in Agriculture	AGV 626 Agriculture Vocational Cooperative Education
AGR 796 Agriculture/Science Internship	
Reynolds College of Arts Social Sciences & Humanities	Internship Courses
ANT 499 Internship in Anthropology	GER 598 Supervised Practicum in Gerontology
ART 407 Art Internship	HST 399 Internship in Public History
ART 495 Internship in Art History	HST 599 Internship in Public History
ART 795 Graduate Internship in Art History	HST 698 Internship in Public History (Graduate)
COM 494 Conflict Internship	JRN 595 Journalism Internship
COM 495 Communication Internship	JRN 695 Journalism Internship
COM 794 Conflict Internship	MCL 400 World Languages Practicum
COM 795 Communication Internship	MED 595 – Media Internship
CRM 490 Internship in Criminology	MED 695 – Media Internship
DSS 720 Internship Training in Defense & Strategic Studies	MST 495 Museum Studies Internship
DES 499 Design Internship	PLS 493 Part-time Internship in Political Science
ECO 399 Cooperative Education in Economics	PLS 494 Full-time Internship in Political Science
ENG 464 English Studies Internship	PLS 498 Part-time Internship in Public Administration
ENG 574 Technical Writing Internship	PLS 782 Internship/Practicum in International Field
ENG 694 Technical Writing Internship	REL 499 Internship in Religious Studies
ENG 774 Professional Writing Internship	SOC 499 Internship in Applied Sociology
GBL 499 Internship	
College of Business	Internship Courses
ACC 394 Cooperative Education in Accounting	MFD 402 Internship in Fashion Design
ACC 494 Internship in Accounting	MGT 394 Cooperative Education in Management
ACC 794 Internship: Accounting	MGT 494 Internship in Management
BUS 394 Cooperative Education in Business	MGT 794 Internship: Management
BUS 494 Internship	MKT 394 Cooperative Education in Marketing
ENT 494 Internship in Entrepreneurship	MKT 494 Executive Internship-Marketing
FIN 494 Internship in Finance	MKT 794 Internship: Marketing
FIN 794 Internship: Finance	RMI 494 Internship in Risk Management and Insurance
IDC 499 Internship in Interior Design	TCM 299 Cooperative Education in Technology
ITC 394 Cooperative Education in Information Technology and Cybersecurity	TCM 399 Cooperative Education in Industry
ITC 494 Internship in Information Technology and Cybersecurity	TCM 494 Professional Internship
ITC 794 Internship: Information Technology and Cybersecurity	TCM 792 Graduate Internship

MFD 401 Internship in Merchandising	TCM 792 Graduate Internship
College of Education	Internship Courses
CFD 366 Preparation for the Professional Internship	EAD 883 Superintendency Internship-Part 2
COU 781 Secondary School Counseling Internship	EAD 884 Special Education Director Administration Internship-Part I
COU 783 Elementary School Counseling Internship	EAD 885 Special Education Director Administration Internship-Part II
COU 785 Mental Health Counseling Internship	EAD 886 Superintendency Internship-Part 3
EAD 790 K12 Principal Internship Onsite-Part 1	SEC 783 Internship in Teaching I
EAD 791 K12 Principal Internship Onsite-Part 2	SEC 784 Internship in Teaching II
EAD 792 K12 Principal Internship-Related Agencies	SEC 785 Internship in Teaching III
EAD 793 K12 Principal Internship Onsite-Part 3	SPE 760 Internship-Orientation and Mobility
EAD 882 Superintendency Internship-Part 1	
McQueary College of Health & Human Services	Internship Courses
BMS 380 Cooperative Education in Biomedical Sciences	PTE 747 Clinical Internship II
HLH 791 Wellness Internship	PTE 757 Clinical Internship III
KIN 791 Graduate Internship	PTE 877 Clinical Internship IV
NUR 475 Nursing Internship	PTE 887 Clinical Internship V
PSY 798 Internship	PTE 888 Clinical Internship VI
PTE 737 Clinical Internship I	REC 491 Recreation, Park & Sports Administration Internship
College of Natural & Applied Sciences	Internship Courses
CHM 397 Cooperative Education in Chemistry	MAT 796 Science Internship
CHM 796 Science Internship	MTH 796 Science Internship
GLG 399 Internship in Geology	PHY 399 Cooperative Education in Physics
GLG 796 Science Internship	PHY 796 Science Internship
GRY 399 Internship in Geography	PLN 599 Internship in Community and Regional Planning
HSP 499 Internship in Hospitality	PLN 699 Internship in Community and Regional Planning

EMPLOYER'S ROLE IN ACADEMIC CREDIT

When a student is enrolled in an internship, the supervisor is expected to help the student set learning objectives and an action plan/goal to complete during their internship. A mid-placement evaluation may occur between the student and their supervisor to check in on the progress of the intern. Finally, all supervisors of students enrolled in a for-credit internship course receive an electronic evaluation to be completed at the end of each semester you host the student.

Additional requirements will vary based on the department through which the student is earning the credit. The student will be responsible for communicating to you the role you play as it relates to their specific department/credit-earning process.

HOURS

An internship should be flexible in nature, as it is generally something a student pursues while also taking classes. During the academic year, internships are typically part-time, between 10-20 hours a week; not exceeding 20 hours a week (September-May). Summer internships, or those during a semester in which the student is not enrolled in courses, can require up to 40 hours a week.

Please note that we strongly encourage internships that require more than 20 hours/week of students to be paid on an hourly or stipend basis, regardless of industry. Offering an unpaid full-time summer internship will likely result in no applicants, as most students cannot commit that amount of time to an unpaid opportunity.

How many weeks or months is a typical internship?

An average internship is 3-4 months coinciding with a student's typical semester or summer. A key factor in determining proper internship length is that an internship should be long enough for a student to get into the rhythm of the position and complete deliverables that are valuable to you and them.

FINDING AN INTERN

How can I find the best possible intern?

Look beyond a student's major or class level. Consider how a student's overall profile and experience match the qualities, skills, and other requirements of the position. Consult the Career Center for ways to get your internship announcement in front of students and increase your candidate pool.

How do I advertise my internship to Missouri State University students?

A way to advertise your internship is through Missouri State University's career management platform, [Handshake](#), which is used by students and alumni from a wide variety of degrees and programs. You may also wish to participate in a career fair or recruitment event. A full list of events is available on the [Career Fairs and Events](#) page

How do I get my internship approved by Missouri State University?

Once your internship is posted in Handshake, the position will be reviewed and approved by staff. We will contact you if there are any questions or concerns. You will be notified via email once your position is approved.

*The student(s) will need to get approval from their academic department if they can get internship credit

WHEN TO POST A POSITION

Internships may be posted at any time of the year. These dates below are a loose recommendation for posting internships.

Note: This is a guideline only (not rigid) or required

Season	Post Position by	Report new hires to Missouri State University Career Center by
Fall	July 15	November 30
Winter	September 15	February 28
Spring	October 15	April 1
Summer	January 15	June 30

BUILDING A GREAT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Get internal buy-in

Employee support

- Recruit non-HR business leaders and team members to champion the development of an internship program.
- Identify a level of interest in having an intern and ask employees to share how they think an intern could be most useful and productive.
- Hold a focus group with employees to get a better understanding of their intern needs and what abilities/skills/knowledge an intern should possess to ensure a good return on investment for the company.
- Create a form or application for requesting an intern. Ask employees to identify key attributes and qualifications, like specific majors, systems experience, and/or prior work experience.

Senior leadership engagement

- Development experiences for the interns that expose them to senior leaders in the company. This could be a lunch and learn with the CEO or President. This provides an exciting educational opportunity for the intern, but it's also a great way for senior leadership to meet the intern, make a positive contribution to the internship program, and feel personally invested in its success.

BUILDING A GREAT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Preparation

- Draft a job description that includes projects the intern will be working on.
- Identify the team and supervisor of the intern will be working within the company.
- Clarify the hours, compensation, and type of evaluation the intern should expect.

Goals & Measurement

Before you begin writing the internship description, consider the organization's goals and how you will measure success.

Possible Goals:

- Convert graduating intern to full-time employees?
- Create ambassador program for organization (interns return to their campus following the internships)?
- Assist with a particular project?
- Benefit from an area of expertise interns could bring to organization that doesn't currently exist
- Use the internship program as a focus group for products and services?

RESOURCES

Internship Description

Internship descriptions should clearly state the company's background, culture, goals of the position, scope of work, hours, pay, and necessary skills. If you require specific coursework or majors, that should be included as well.

Descriptions can include opportunities for interns to work on something innovative for the company. These kinds of projects are a big plus and will make it more appealing. Also list any other perks like free lunch on Fridays, access to the gym, or special discounts on summer housing.

Staff

Identify an Internship Coordinator

This person can organize the recruiting and onboarding process and matches interns to their projects, departments, and direct supervisors.

Identify a Mentor, Supervisor and Project Team

A mentor acts as an Intern buddy (can be the supervisor, fellow team member, or longtime employee)

A supervisor is the intern's boss, assigning work and monitoring progress. Regular feedback and structured evaluations can help the intern understand their strengths and the areas that need improvement, promoting growth during the internship.

A project team is comprised of the people the intern will work with the most. The best intern experiences fully integrate interns into a team.

Money

The cost of an internship program can vary greatly. Some organizations offer housing assistance, competitive salaries, and perks. Other organizations provide unpaid internships with limited or no company benefits. Missouri State University advocates for paid internship for reasons that benefit both the intern and the employer.

Some typical paid internship structures:

- Current hourly rates for interns can range from state-to-state minimum wage rates (Depending on the technical aspect of the internship & location of internship, the rates can range from \$15-32/hour).
- The Missouri minimum wage is currently \$15/hour effective January 2026.

Some advice from NACE about intern salaries:

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The following questions can help identify if past internships have been successful:

- How many interns were offered and accepted full-time positions after the internship?
- Will interns recommend this internship to fellow students when they are back on campus?
- Did the goals identified at the beginning of the internship get completed?
- Did staff or organizations adopt any new practices or skills because of the internship?
- Was a new product or service improved due to the contributions and perspective of the intern?

SELECTION & HIRING

Many of the students you recruit as interns will have limited or no professional work experience. Typically, their background includes part-time employment, campus activities, and athletic or academic achievements. **As a result, here are a few things to look for:**

Campus Involvement - A student who is involved with extracurricular activities on campus likely has good organization and time management skills. They also demonstrate the ability to work in groups.

Leadership Roles - Strong social skills, teamwork, and self-confidence are all features of students who have leadership roles on their resume. Look for roles like orientation leader, resident assistant, or student tutor.

Academic Performance and Coursework - Grade point average does not tell the entire story of any student, but if there is coursework, they have completed that is relevant to your industry; it is good to know that a student performed well in those courses. In addition to, or even instead of GPA, ask about performance and projects in courses that you think are applicable to the internship.

Athletic Participation - Student athletes typically have excellent time management skills and self-discipline. They often are used to working as a member of a team, handling setbacks while taking action to move forward, and following directions to achieve a goal larger than themselves.

Prior Work Experience - Many potential student interns do not have professional experience, but you can look past a job title to see what skills are needed for that job and how they might translate to your internship position; retail experience indicates good customer service skills; camp counselors are good motivators and organizers.

ONBOARDING

Your interns may be new to an office environment, and they will certainly be new to your workplace culture. Your goal in onboarding interns is to introduce them to your organization, how it operates, and what culture drives it, so that interns can adapt, meet your expectations, and excel in their roles. **Here are some steps for successfully onboarding interns:**

Before They Start

- Be clear when hiring about the start and end date for the internship and include the number of hours/days worked each week.
- Is the student counting on the internship for academic credit? If so, review their school's requirements in providing credit and schedule time to fulfill their requests.
- Explain the company's dress code.
- Identify a workspace for the intern and consider the supplies they will need: a computer, phone, company email address, and building ID card.
- Determine specific projects that your intern will be working on.
- Outline work expectations for your intern and create metrics for measuring intern success.

When They Arrive

- Give your intern a tour of your facilities and introduce them to other staff.
- Discuss operation procedures such as clocking-in, requesting time-off, absences, and overtime rules.
- Provide a one-sheet of key contacts (IT, HR, supervisor, important clients, or partners, etc.).
- Provide an overview of the company's culture. What are the unwritten rules of your organization? Are first names used for everyone or are some people Mr/Ms/Dr? Is it acceptable to bring a cell phone to a meeting to take notes or keep track of time?
- Review projects, expectations, and timeframes and how success for the intern will be measured.

RETENTION

A goal for many organizations is to convert their interns into full-time employees. Even those who cannot plan for full-time hiring may want to bring a successful intern back during the semester or the following summer.

Making The Offer

Timing is important. Ideally, you want to make a full-time or continued offer as a student concludes an internship and heads back to campus. Your organization's ability to make the offer at this time will depend on the availability of positions you have and the timing of the student's graduation date. By having an offer to the student as they return to campus, they can leave on a high note, and you have the chance to secure a new employee.

Following Up

In the space between when an offer is accepted and the start of the position, you can continue to build a strong relationship with your candidate: send a few emails, a "care package" during finals, or ask them to represent your company at a campus information session. The key is to find non-intrusive ways to let your candidate know that you are thinking of them and are eager to have them be part of the team.

Be Prepared

Interns can be very strategic as they are starting their careers. Sometimes they accept a full-time offer and then back out; sometimes they use your full-time offer to negotiate a better offer from a competing company. Just be aware that you may not retain 100% of interns who accept full-time offers after having even the best internship experiences with you.

To get more guidance and to learn more, visit [Employers and recruiters - Career Center - Missouri State](#) or call 417-836-5636.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2026-2027

First Day of Classes Fall Semester	August 17
Labor Day	September 7
Fall Break.....	October 8-9
Thanksgiving Holiday	November 25-27
Last Day of Classes Fall Semester	December 4
Fall Final Exams	December 5-10
Commencement.....	December 11
Holiday.....	December 14 - January 18
First Day of Classes Spring Semester	January 19
Presidents' Day Holiday	February 15
Spring Break.....	March 13-21
Spring Holiday.....	March 26
Last Day of Classes Spring Semester	May 7
Spring Final Exams	May 8-13
Commencement.....	May 14