

TOGETHER WE  
**SUCCEED**

# Internship Toolkit

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

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WOU Center for Professional Pathways

*Providing WOU students with access to transformative experiences, education and counseling that advance their career development and benefit society.*

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## CONTACT US

Center for Professional Pathways

503-838-8432 | or e-mail: [pathways@wou.edu](mailto:pathways@wou.edu) | Location: WUC 119



Center for  
Professional Pathways

Dear Valued Employers and Community Partners,

Thank you for your interest in creating an internship program with Western Oregon University. We consider internships to be the centerpiece of experiential learning and we value the opportunity of building a partnership with you through this experience.

We have had a tremendous amount of success in developing accessible and equitable internship opportunities for our students. Internship awareness continues to grow among our students who are looking to you to provide these quality internships that will focus on their future careers. These opportunities provide them with the mentorship, skills and experience needed to reach the next steps in their career goals.

The Internship Toolkit: A Guide for Employers contains detailed information regarding the internship process and employer services at Western Oregon University. This guide is designed to assist you with starting and maintaining a quality internship program whether you are developing an internship program for the first time or need information on how to strengthen your existing internship program. You will find many tools and resources in this guide that will help with your internship recruitment.

Our goal is to provide all Western Oregon University students with access to quality internship experiences that will enhance their learning outside of the classroom, as well as provide you with talented student interns to help your business grow.

Our Center for Professional Pathways staff are here to help you develop quality internship programs that are mutually beneficial to you and to our students.

We look forward to partnering with you and your business/organization.

Best regards,

The Center for Professional Pathways Team

Western Oregon University

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How can you meet the needs of your organization while helping prepare a student for their future as a professional? One way is to develop a quality internship program. The information contained in this toolkit will help you develop your internship program. Although students benefit tremendously from their internship experience, you too will see the advantages of hiring a WOU student intern.

## BENEFITS OF HIRING AN INTERN

- Employers have ready access to a pool of potential hires.
- Internships offer an effective evaluation program in prospective employees.
- Companies experience a greater retention rate among students who are hired after their internship due to greater job satisfaction.
- Recruiting interns is more cost effective than for regular entry to mid-level hires.
- Interns returning to campus are effective public relations ambassadors for your organization and contribute positively to a company's recruiting efforts and image.
- Internships can support an organization's diversity initiatives.
- Internships serve as a training and development program.
- Employer/University ties are strengthened and communication is improved.
- Internships tend to increase regular employee motivation and productivity.
- Interns free up regular employees from minor or routine tasks and allow these employees to concentrate on more complex projects.
- Interns are enthusiastic and can provide new ideas and new viewpoints to the organization.

Internships are a way to provide students with the opportunity to work in pre-professional positions while in school. Internships are any type of carefully planned and monitored work experience in which the intern has intentional learning goals; they can be a part of the student's educational program or can be a part of the student's individual learning plan. Internships should promote academic, career and/or personal development. As an important part of an internship, interns will have a supervisor or mentor who will encourage them, guide them, and give them valuable insight on their current field of work and their chosen career path.

## BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- Gain exposure to real-world problems and issues
- Cultivate adaptability and creativity in a dynamic world.
- Increase marketability to employers. On average, only 30% of graduating seniors have job offers before graduation; however, after completing an internship, that figure rises to 58%.
- Evaluate specific companies or specific careers prior to committing to full-time employment.
- Ease transition from being a student to entering the workforce.

- Increase opportunities within a company for faster advancement and growth.
- Increase self-confidence in the workplace while developing an expanded network of professionals.
- Facilitate a higher starting salary than non-interns. In a recent study interns received, on average, \$2,240 more than non-interns for starting salary.
- Have resume-building experiences while applying academic concepts.
- Have opportunities to fund college education.
- Have personal growth experiences and exposure to different job opportunities.
- Have hands-on opportunities to work with equipment and technology that may not be available on campus.

### WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship provides hands-on 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 experience and professional connections in fields they are considering and provides employers with the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

To ensure that an experience is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition, **all of the following criteria must be met:**

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

*Source: Position Statement: U.S. Internships: A Definition and Criteria to Assess Opportunities And Determine the Implications for Compensation, National Association of Colleges and Employers*

### EXPERIENCES THAT TYPICALLY DO NOT QUALIFY AS INTERNSHIPS:

- Commission-based positions.
- Positions located in home-based businesses.
- Positions in which the student displaces a regular employee.
- Positions that require door-to-door canvassing, cold-calling, or petition gathering.
- "Independent contractor" relationships that require the intern to set up his/her own business for the purpose of selling products, services, and/or recruiting other individuals to set up their own business.
- Family-owned businesses or positions supervised by a family member.
- Telemarketing positions.
- Positions in which the student is required to pay the employer for any part of the experience (fees for training, etc.).

## INTERNSHIP VS. PART-TIME JOB: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

What makes internships unique is the focus on student learning. This is an opportunity for the student to apply skills learned in the classroom or elsewhere, that tie to the student's academic, career or personal goals. While the student might perform some roles that are not for their learning, the goal is for them to explore and practice their professional identity under supervision and with mentoring.

An example could be a student wanting to apply their writing skills and learn professionalism by writing press releases. The expectation is that the student needs some coaching and guidance and not be expected to accomplish the task perfectly on the first try. With gentle feedback, the final output will be professional, well written and offer a fresh, student-oriented perspective that relates to their career path.

## TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS

The types and duration of internships are flexible to accommodate the mutual needs of both the student and the employer. While there is no rigid arrangement, internships generally involve one or more of the four following options:

### Continuing Part-Time Internships

For students who are currently enrolled, the internship can be part-time for 10 to 15 hours per week during the academic year, for one or more quarters. Because of the heavy academic load WOU students carry, it is recommended that a student work no more than 15 hours per week.

### Summer Internships

For WOU students, the most popular period for internships is the summer non-enrollment period. WOU students begin looking for full-time summer internships as early as October and the search for "a good summer internship" continues throughout the year. Students are available to work up to 40 hours per week beginning mid-June and running through mid-September.

### Academic Credit for Internships

Please note that for a WOU student to receive academic credit for an internship, each individual student, on a case-by-case basis, must make arrangements with an academic department. Internships for credit have a minimal difference for host sites, most often it will require a few additional pieces of paperwork approving the internship and/or final evaluation.

### Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

The temptation to hire an unpaid intern is there, but the pay-off is less than expected. Due to financial realities of our students and/or the cost of an internship for credit, a student is more likely to select a paid internship, given the choice. A paid internship is more competitive and attracts a higher number of qualified applicants.

Below are five easy steps to assist employers in hiring their interns. These steps are meant to help employers hire interns that are a good fit for their company or business. As always, employers should contact our office if they have questions or concerns.

Step 1	Conduct a Needs Assessment
Step 2	Draft an Internship Description
Step 3	Recruit Your Intern
Step 4	Learn About Legal Issues
Step 5	Evaluate Your Intern

### Step 1: Conduct a Needs Assessment

Are you a small organization looking for help on a special project? Are you a growing organization that needs to find motivated employees? Are you a nonprofit that has low administrative costs, but could provide an excellent experience for a student? Your internship program can be designed to meet your needs and expectations as well as your intern's. However, in order for your program to be successful, it requires commitment on your part. It is very important that someone be in charge of the intern such as a mentor or supervisor. This person should be someone who enjoys teaching or training and has the resources and time to serve as the intern's supervisor.

### Step 2: Draft an Internship Job Description

Your description should include job duties, a list of qualifications that may include a specific

major, computer skills, class level, GPA, etc. Your listing should also include information regarding citizenship. Will you consider taking on an international student who has an F-1 Visa, for example? Also, include information on the application procedure. Be sure to mention whether the internship is paid or non-paid. If it is paid, list the wage or stipend amount. Include the duration of the internship, whether it's 3, 6, or 12 months and how many hours per week are needed. Typically, paid internships last one semester and require 20 hours per week. If the internship is unpaid, students may only be able to work 8-10 hours per week.

Once you have finalized your internship description you can post it on WolfLink, WOU's online database where students look for internships and jobs which have been posted by employers. (See Step 3 for more information on posting instructions.) In order to help our students keep a good balance between work, study and other obligations, we recommend that students work no more than 20 hours per week while attending classes full-time (12 credits). Since a majority of our students work, they may not be able to dedicate more than 8-10 hours per week to complete an unpaid internship. The tipping point is when students dedicate more hours to their internship than they are to their academics, which is discouraged.

### Step 3: Recruit Your Intern

How will you find the ideal intern? You should begin recruiting the semester before you need an intern. For example, if you need a summer intern, you should begin advertising in the spring semester. This will give you time to write your description, post it, receive resumes/applications, set up and conduct interviews, and finally hire your intern.

WolfLink is a great resource to help advertise your internship. To create your WolfLink account, please refer to page 11.

Another venue you may want to consider for finding qualified interns is to attend our Internship and Volunteer Fair or one of our other Career Fairs. Our fairs attract hundreds of students and several employers. Use WolfLink to register for our events.

### Step 4: Learn About Legal Issues of Hiring an Intern

As with any other employee, interns have rights and are protected under the law. View The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or contact

your human resources department. If you need information concerning student visas and recruiting international students, contact the Western Oregon University International Education and Development Office at 503-838-8425. You can also contact Immigration Support Services, 1-800-437-7313 or visit [www.immigrationsupport.com](http://www.immigrationsupport.com).

### Step 5: Evaluate Your Intern

Be sure that you evaluate your intern at least once a month, if not more. Giving consistent verbal feedback will help both you and your intern. During such feedback sessions is a good time to set goals and discuss outcomes. As an employer, you will want to know that your intern is meeting your expectations. The evaluation should be given verbally and in writing. A benefit of writing evaluations is if you want to hire your intern at a later time, you will already have some information about your intern. Please note that the intern will also evaluate their experience at the end of their internship. This will help you assess your internship program.

### Additional Resources

- [Legal Issues: Internships](#), *National Association of Colleges and Employers*
- [Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#), *U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division*
- [8 Principles for Experiential Learning Activities](#), *National Society for Experiential Education*
- [15 Best Practices for Internship Programs](#), *National Association of Colleges and Employers*
- [Internship Program Standards](#), *Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education*
- [Position Statement on Internships](#), *National Association of Colleges and Employers*
- [The SHRM® Guide to Organizing an Internship Program](#), *Society for Human Resource Managers*
- [Employing Interns](#), *Society for Human Resource Managers*
- [Intern Evaluation Form](#), *Society for Human Resource Managers*

The following information does not apply to non-profits or government agencies.

**1. Give us real work.**

It can't be said too many times that what interns want most is to work and to learn. An internship position may be able to help you get a job done that you couldn't get done otherwise. If you've brought on an intern primarily as a recruitment tool, you will still need 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," bad feelings may develop because the intern's expectations were incorrectly set. Honesty doesn't cost anything and it will make 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 a misstep or oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future. Don't come down too hard on him or her—remember, internships are meant to be learning experiences.

**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? Can they join you for lunch with a couple of other coworkers? Please include them in the daily life of your workplace. If you help provide a little more perspective on the intern's work, both the process and the product will be that 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 need 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 they 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, they should schedule regular times to meet with the intern.

**8. Be prepared.**

Avoid a situation like this: 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. Make sure there is workspace ready for your intern, and be prepared to give him or her at least a basic orientation and welcome. See #9 below.

**9. I need a desk and 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 neither fun for the intern nor efficient to move him or her 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.**

Even though internships are different from one another 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 tools to do the job.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR****Background**

The FLSA requires “for-profit” employers to pay employees for their work. Interns and students, however, may not be “employees” under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work.

**The Test for Unpaid Interns**

Courts have used the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA. In short, this test allows courts to examine the “economic reality” of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the “primary beneficiary” of the relationship.

**The following seven criteria must be applied when making this determination:**

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee—and vice versa.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic

commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.

5. The extent to which the internship’s duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
6. The extent to which the intern’s work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
7. The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

If analysis of these circumstances reveals that an intern or student is actually an employee, then he or she is entitled to both minimum wage and overtime pay under the FLSA. On the other hand, if the analysis confirms that the intern or student is not an employee, then he or she is not entitled to either minimum wage or overtime pay under the FLSA.

**The Internship is Similar to an Education Environment and the Intern is 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 minimum wage as well as receive 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 are entitled to 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.

Source: United States Department of Labor, The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), December 2012,

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

### **Where to Obtain Additional Information**

This publication is for general information and should not be considered a replacement for official statements of position contained in the regulations.

For additional information, visit Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division Website: <https://www.dol.gov/whd>

There are several ways to recruit an intern. One way is to post on WOU's online jobs database, WolfLink (also known as Handshake). This is a free online career services management system for employers, students and alumni, and the Western Oregon University community.

### How to Register on WolfLink/Handshake:

Step 1: Visit [wou.joinhandshake.com](http://wou.joinhandshake.com)

Step 2: Select sign up for an account

Step 3: Select "employer" as your account type

Step 4: Complete the Sign up as an employer questionnaire

Your request will be approved within one business day.

### How to Post an Internship or Job:

Follow the steps in this article to learn how to post an internship or job on WolfLink

<https://support.joinhandshake.com/hc/en-us/articles/218693198>

### Other Features of WolfLink

Additionally, through WolfLink you can sign up for:

- Internship Fairs
- Career Fairs
- Info Sessions
- Tabling Events

WolfLink is a job and internship posting site, powered by Handshake, providing connections for students and prospective employers.

The University provides no assurance of any kind regarding the actual qualifications or capacities of a student to perform the desired work or of any actual or prospective employer's willingness or ability to provide the described work.

Any student or employer who misrepresents information to the University for the purpose of utilizing this service shall be barred from its continued utilization.

*We reserve the right to exercise broad discretion and refuse service to anyone.*

**For more information regarding WolfLink/Handshake contact us by:**

**Email:** [pathways@wou.edu](mailto:pathways@wou.edu)

**Phone:** 503-838-8432

**All internships posted on WolfLink must meet the following criteria:**

- The position must be a learning experience for the student as well as clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework
- The company/organization must be a legitimate established business located in a commercial space
- An experienced professional with expertise in the content area of the internship (i.e., the "Site Supervisor") must be assigned to supervise/mentor the intern/student. The person trains the student as needed, monitors and evaluates student's work performance
- Interns must be given an orientation to the organization, safety procedures, training, ongoing supervision, and evaluation
- It is the responsibility of the employer to cover the costs for all training, certificates, background checks, etc.
- There are no requirements for the student to pay the employer in any form for any part of the experience. The employer expects no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern
- Interns should not be considered "consultants" or be expected to provide a function that your professional staff does not have the skills to perform (i.e., create a company website, write a grant, and develop a marketing campaign) -consider hiring a student for part-time or seasonal work to perform those tasks
- Interns must have an appropriate workspace and tools with which to perform their duties (i.e., access to a computer, software, etc.)

**Principles for Professional Practice**

All employers who conduct recruiting activities using any Center for Professional Pathways resources are required to comply with all Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Laws, Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) Law, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Principles for Professional Practice.

We reserve the right to exercise broad discretion and refuse service to anyone. All job and internship listings are posted at the discretion of Center for Professional Pathways staff, and staff reserve the right to choose to not post a position if it does not appear to support the best interests of students and/or the University.

## Center for Professional Pathways

### Contact Information

**Adry Clark**

Director  
503-838-8648  
clarka@wou.edu

**Justin Sunada**

Assistant Director/Internship Coordinator  
503-838-8041  
sunadaj@wou.edu

**Jennifer Hansen**

Career Development Coordinator  
503-838-8652  
hansenj@wou.edu