



7 Things to Consider When Hosting an Internship

Does the internship posting meet our Job & Internship Posting Standards?

Organizations wishing to recruit students and alumni of The University of Texas Austin using [HireUTexas](#) or one of our college-specific career services job and internship online databases – such as [CareerSource](#) – can do so free of charge, however all submissions to UT Austin career services job and internship databases are reviewed and approved/rejected based upon the information contained in the postings vis-à-vis the [UT Austin Career Services Job & Internship Posting Standards](#).

Employers should put as much thought into their internship descriptions as they put into their job descriptions. Provide students seeking internships enough information in position descriptions to be able to evaluate the opportunity and make a decision as to whether or not they should apply. Don't assume students will inherently recognize what a great opportunity interning for your company will be. If it is a great resume-building experience, use the position description to tell them precisely how.

In most instances, students doing internships for academic credit will be required to present a portfolio of work samples at the end of the semester, write a journal chronicling/reflecting on their experience and/or write a report of some kind to quantify and give evidence of the internship experience. Make sure you are giving interns substantive work so they can fulfill the course requirements and earn the academic credit they paid for.

During the fall and spring semesters, student interns usually have to balance their internship schedule with their course schedule, part-time job schedule and personal schedule. Students doing summer internships often have more schedule flexibility, but usually still have other time commitments they must consider. Most internships require students to complete at least 150 hours of work over the course of a semester; approximately 10-15 hours per week during fall and spring semester and 15-20 hours per week during the shorter summer semester. Internship start and end dates should coincide very closely with the start and end of the semester during which the student is receiving the academic credit. In our college, internship credit is not awarded retroactively and we don't allow students to do summer internships and register to receive the credit in the following fall semester.

Has the recruiter agreed to abide by our Recruiting Policies & Guidelines?

Employers who wish to make use of the assistance, services and/or facilities offered by the career services offices at The University of Texas at Austin must also comply with [UT's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#) and the additional Recruiting Policies

and Guidelines outlined by the College-based Career Services offices with which they interface.

As part of the University's commitment to leadership in the area of ethics and professional conduct, we require employers utilizing UT Career Services to adhere to employment laws and principles of professional practice, as outlined by the federal government and The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) [Principles for Professional Practice](#), respectively.

Is the unpaid intern afforded the same protections as an employee?

Many employers, particularly small employers, are unaware of the liability they take on when hosting an unpaid intern. We at the University are keenly aware of this, and this is why we only approve internship sites that have adequate business liability and worker's compensation insurance. All tenants in commercial office space must carry adequate insurance coverage; it is a cost of doing business. Many home-based businesses do not carry the same types and levels of insurance, so we do not typically allow postings for unpaid internships in home-based businesses. And, this protection extends beyond simple workplace safety. Just like employees, interns should not be subjected to sexual harassment or other conditions that would constitute a hostile work environment. Treat interns with the same respect given to regular employees and offer them similar workplace protection.

Will the unpaid intern be working in a professional work environment?

Workplace and facilities are themselves an issue. Employers must provide physical space in a professional work environment where the interns can complete their assigned tasks in close proximity to their direct supervisor. Most "home offices" and virtual internships do not offer professional work environments, so most home offices and virtual internships are not suitable for unpaid internships.

Here is an example: If interns have to use the same restroom as your kids, and they have to go from your home office through your kitchen and past your dining room to get to that restroom, you are not offering a professional work environment.

Will the unpaid intern be provided the necessary resources and supervision?

Resources: If you wish to take on unpaid interns, don't expect them to bring their own tools! Provide a desk, phone, email address, online access, computer, parking permit, camera, etc. Reimburse them for approved expenses; including mileage if they have to run any errands or travel to off-site meetings in their own vehicles. Remember, if you are not paying them, they are actually paying to work for you. Don't make it cost them anymore than necessary.

Supervision: Interns, particularly unpaid interns, should be supervised by experienced professionals. Accounting interns should be supervised by accountants, human resources interns should be supervised by HR professionals, public relations interns should be supervised by PR professionals; journalism interns should be supervised by journalists. A production office receptionist or administrative assistant cannot adequately supervise, mentor or train a film production intern to be anything other than a production office receptionist.

The supervisor should be on-site, and physically present and accessible to the intern on a regular basis. How else will that supervisor be able to evaluate the intern's performance, train and coach the intern, offer feedback and input and otherwise be a resource to the intern? They can't. And, this feedback is important: In the case of internships for academic credit, internship supervisors should conduct mid-term and final evaluations of the intern's performance, and the results of these evaluations should be shared with the university's faculty/staff internship coordinator and the intern. Interns should also evaluate their internship experience and share this evaluation with their university faculty/staff internship coordinator. Learning and performance development should be the objectives of the student evaluations. Quality control should be the objective of the internship evaluations.

What about “virtual internships?”

In certain instances, our college will award academic credit for virtual internships. Every once in a while an internship comes along that clearly deserves consideration. We know the world is changing and that more and more people are working remotely and in virtual environments. But remember, an internship for academic credit is first and foremost a learning experience, and an intern left to learn by themselves - 10 or 1000 miles away from their supervisor – is rarely engaged in a learning experience worthy of academic credit.

Is it an Internship or a Part-time Job?

We have a very narrow definition for internships. If we are going to allow a posting in our online databases to be called an internship, we want it to meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria because we want to be sure that it is an experiential learning experience and therefore potentially eligible for academic credit.

If your posting does not meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria, chances are it isn't an internship; rather, it is a part-time job. Our students need part-time jobs, too! Part-time jobs are great; they are just not internships – and this distinction is very important. While internships can meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria AND also be paid, part-time jobs – though paid employment – are not internships unless they meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria.