

Employer guide: developing a quality internship program



THUNDERBIRD
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT



Arizona State
University



Table of Contents

Introduction.....

3

Section one: getting started

3

The goal of an internship

Questions to consider beforehand

Hiring an intern

What is an internship?

Section two: things to consider

5

Paid vs. unpaid internships

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) credit requirements for unpaid internships

Offering an internship for credit

International students

Section three: creating and implementing your program.....

8

Internship description template

Implementing a successful internship program

Section four: recruiting students for your internship program.....

10

Posting in Handshake

Conclusion.....

10

Helpful links

11

Introduction

This guide is designed to assist in the process of developing an internship at your organization and seeks to answer frequently asked questions regarding internships for students at Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University. In an effort to provide the best opportunities to students and alumni, Thunderbird’s Career Management Center works with employers to create and maintain quality internship opportunities that meet the general internship qualifications at Thunderbird. Together, it is our goal that all internships provide a mutually beneficial experience to students, alumni, and our employer partners.

Section one: getting started

The goal of an internship is to allow students to:

- implement classroom knowledge in a professional work environment.
- understand multiple aspects of an organization.
- acquire industry knowledge.
- develop career competencies that will be critical to advancing in their future careers.

These guidelines assist our employer partners with developing meaningful internship programs.

One of the biggest mistakes employers make is hiring an intern before they are ready. Before seeking to hire an intern, consider the following questions:

- What is your goal in creating an internship opportunity at your organization?
- What is the intended duration of the internship and how many hours per week will the intern work?
- Will the internship be virtual or in-person? If virtual, what methods of communication are available for the intern?
- How will you compensate the intern for their time? If unpaid, does your internship satisfy all the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for unpaid internships?
- What orientation, training, and resources will be provided to set the intern up for success?
- Do you have an individual who has been identified as a supervisor and/or mentor for the intern, who also has direct knowledge and experience in the intern’s duties? If so, does this person have the time and resources to commit to training and mentoring the intern for the duration of the internship?

What is an internship?

An internship is more than a part-time job or volunteer position; rather, it is a short-term, hands-on, supervised work experience with a professional organization designed to increase a student's knowledge of a professional career field through significant learning objectives. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides opportunities for applying classroom concepts in the workplace setting. It must not simply be used to advance the operations of the employer and cannot replace the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

Generally, the outlined criteria below must be met to qualify as a professional internship:

- The intern will receive quality training from a supervisor/mentor who possesses expertise directly related to the intern's responsibilities.
- The experience will provide exposure to multiple aspects of a professional career field, internship organization, or industry.
- An internship description will be provided that includes a detailed explanation of duties and/or projects, required skills or qualifications, and a minimum number of hours per week.
- Clerical or nonprofessional tasks will comprise no more than 20% of the intern's responsibilities.
- The intern will be provided with an appropriate workspace and resources required to complete assignments. If the internship is virtual, the intern must be provided with the resources to complete assignments.



Section two: things to consider

Paid vs. unpaid internships

It is a common misconception that the majority of internships are unpaid. In order to be competitive, we suggest paying your interns. Of course, this can vary by industry and level of skill needed for the position. Generally, at Thunderbird, the rate of pay needs to be at least federal, state, or local minimum wage (calculated over any time scale, including hourly, weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, or annually).

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. Courts have identified the following seven factors as part of the test:

FLSA credit requirements for unpaid internships

- 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.
- The extent to which the internship environment 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.
- The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
- The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
- The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
- 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.
- 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.

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

Generally, a for-profit institution would not meet the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements, unless the internship is structured more as a “job shadow” experience. The employer must not gain any immediate advantage from the unpaid work of the intern.

Can I offer an internship for credit?

Thunderbird has over 15+ concentrations, some of which require internships while others do not. It is up to the student to work with their academic advisors to determine if an internship experience is eligible for credit for their degree program. Employers who offer internships to students, and the student who is getting credit for the experience, must sign a Student Placement Agreement outlining the internship and including terms of the agreement. Because of this, it is advisable that employers do not guarantee internship credit for their positions, as this is determined by the academic advisors of the student's major.

International student considerations

Thunderbird School of Global Management is home to more than 200 international students representing over 40 different countries. **By working with the Employer Relations team at Thunderbird, your organization can quickly access global talent to meet your business needs unlike anywhere else.**

The most common visa type employers will see when recruiting international students for internships is the F-1 visa. International students holding this visa are eligible to work in any unpaid internship if the internship qualifies as a trainee experience by FLSA standards. To become eligible to work in a paid internship, International students must apply for one of the following types of work authorization listed below and there are different processing times associated with the application.

Please note that as an employer, you have minimal paperwork to complete and there is no greater financial commitment to hire an international student for an internship than a domestic student for an internship.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students who must complete an internship course to graduate from their current degree program. Detailed information is available through ASU's International Student and Scholars Center (ISSC), which has a processing time of CPT applications between 10-14 business days.

Hiring international students to full-time positions

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allowing international students in F-1 status to gain off-campus work experience in their field of study before or after completion of studies for a maximum of 12 months. F-1 students who received a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math) field may apply for a single 24-month extension of their 12-month OPT period. The purpose of OPT is to complement the student's academic work. USCIS processing time is approximately 90 days for all OPT applications after which students receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) which states the dates the student is eligible to work in the United States. Detailed information is available through ASU's International Student and Scholar Center.

For more information on these and other legal issues, refer to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Also, refer to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).



Section three: creating and implementing your program

Robust internship descriptions reach students more effectively than brief ones. The following template includes the information you need to create a highly attractive opportunity for students and alumni.

Internship description template	
Position description and overview	This is an opportunity to attract the right student and identify who they will report to for the duration of the internship.
Learning objectives	Effective learning objectives describe what you want the student to be able to do by the end of the internship.
Primary responsibilities	The core duties which will be completed.
Minimum qualifications	The required skills and experience.
Desired qualifications	The preferred skills and experience.
Start and end date	Internships have clearly defined start and end dates.
Hours per week	Desired hours per week depending on organizational need.
Unpaid or paid status	Identifying paid status in the job description helps attract the right candidates.
Location and logistics	Identifying city and state resources provided for on-site internships or logistics surrounding virtual internships including technical and computer requirements.

Implementing a successful internship program

Orientation

- Provide a thorough onboarding and orientation process for your interns. Make sure all expectations and goals are clearly established at the beginning of the internship.
- Educate the intern about policies/procedures and how your organization operates to set them up for success in their new role.
- Introduce the intern to their mentor and the team they will be working with. Communicate to the team the responsibilities of the intern in order to facilitate success for all.

Supervision

- Maintain an open channel of communication with the intern. Not every intern will need the same type of support and supervision. It’s important to ask the intern what motivates them and how they prefer to be recognized and receive feedback.
- Be flexible with the intern’s schedule and needs. Many interns are still students who may be taking courses during the day or evenings, holding other jobs on the weekend, or have family needs they must tend to.

Professional development

- Provide professional development opportunities for the interns, including participation in training, workshops, and meetings that help them learn about the industry and profession.
- Provide opportunities for the intern to network and conduct informational interviews with other members of the organization.

After the internship

- Complete a final evaluation and facilitate a formalized exit interview process. This allows interns to provide feedback in order to assess the effectiveness of the program and provides you an opportunity to make changes that will enhance the experience for future interns.
- If you are willing to be a reference for the intern, provide contact information. Consider connecting with them on LinkedIn for additional professional networking opportunities.
- Complete a final evaluation for the intern.
- Provide copies or files that link the projects they worked on so that they continue to build their work portfolio.

Section four: recruiting students for your internship program

When the internship program is finalized, the next step is to register and post the position to Handshake. Handshake is Thunderbird's online career platform that you can use to post job or internship opportunities, view and register for upcoming events, schedule on-campus recruiting visits, and connect directly with students. Since Thunderbird is not on Handshake as a separate school but as a unit of the Arizona State University Enterprise, you will need to register for a Handshake account first, and then request to connect with ASU to reach Thunderbird students. To do this, visit app.joinhandshake.com/register and choose "Employers".

This website is accessible to students of all majors and degree programs, as well as alumni who may be seeking career and internship opportunities. Students will view and apply for the position per your directions in the posting. All interviewing, hiring, and onboarding are conducted between you and the student.

Beyond Handshake, resources are available to connect directly with the student or alumni population you are seeking. For assistance with creating an on-campus or virtual recruiting strategy, contact the Employer Relations Team at Thunderbird via email at: employer.relations@thunderbird.asu.edu.

Conclusion

Thunderbird values our employers and the role you play in developing Thunderbird students. Thank you for your valuable contributions, time, and efforts. This guide was prepared by Thunderbird's Career Management Center to provide our employer partners with internship development and implementation strategies. It is our goal that both Thunderbird students and employers have a positive internship experience that aids in students' career development and provides employers with satisfaction with the experience.

For additional assistance in creating and implementing an internship within your organization, please contact the Employer Relations Team at employer.relations@thunderbird.asu.edu.

Helpful links

- FLSA Standards: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>
- ASU's International Student and Scholars Center (ISSC): issc.asu.edu
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE): naceweb.org
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): <https://www.uscis.gov>
- Handshake: app.joinhandshake.com/register
- Thunderbird Employer Relations team email: employer.relations@thunderbird.asu.edu





thunderbird.asu.edu