

# Ready for an Intern?

Interns bring many skills and strengths to support the work of organizations. The following considerations can help determine whether an employer is ready to recruit North Central students or if they will benefit from additional coaching from Career Development to be able to support an intern.

## What is a quality internship?

Career Development uses the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition of an internship. According to NACE, an internship:

1. Must be a **learning experience that applies knowledge gained from the classroom**.
2. **Teaches skills or knowledge that can be transferred** to other employment settings.
3. Has a **defined beginning and end and a job description** with desired qualifications.
4. Has **clearly defined learning goals** related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. Provides **supervision and routine feedback from a professional with expertise** in the field.
6. Provides **resources, equipment, and facilities** to support learning goals.

\*An employer cannot require a student to request academic credit as a condition of the internship. Only the student can initiate the internship contract.

## Does my position qualify as an internship?

Not all opportunities are the right fit for an internship. Some opportunities are better suited for part-time or full-time jobs. Positions that do not qualify as internships include those that:

- Are supervised by a parent or other relatives of the student's family.
- Predominantly or entirely consist of administrative or clerical work.
- Are 100% commission based.
- Predominantly consist of sale and/or lead generation (e.g., cold-calling, client prospecting, door to door canvassing, or petition gathering).
- Require students to pay the employer for any part of the experience (e.g., fees for training, supplies, sales kits, etc.).
- Are located in home-based businesses.
- Require students to act as an "independent contractor" to set up his/her own business for the purpose of selling products, services, or recruiting other individuals to set up a business.
- Are offered remotely/virtually without consistent supervision or interaction with a professional who has expertise in the field.

## What are the responsibilities of internship supervisors?

To ensure a successful experience for all parties:

- Provide a detailed job description that outlines duties, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Review and approve the Internship Contract and Learning Goals.
- Assume direct responsibility for the intern and provide regular supervision and mentoring.
- Provide an orientation to the company policies/procedures and a safe working environment.
- Abide by all federal and state nondiscrimination/anti-harassment laws and regulations.
- Comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (for unpaid internships).
- Monitor and approve weekly time card and report logs.
- Complete intern midterm and final evaluations administered by Career Development.
- Communicate questions and concerns directly to the student and Career Development.

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## What should be included in an internship job description?

Intern job descriptions should be on company letterhead (if possible) and include:

- Intern position title
- Description of the internship program, including training and support provided to the intern
- Responsibilities, projects, tasks, and duties
- Desired qualifications
- Details of how the intern will be supervised and evaluated
- Start and end dates of the internship
- Required number of hours worked per week
- Compensation or an understanding of no compensation
- Site supervisor's name and contact information

## Do I need to pay an intern?

Paying a competitive wage for interns is good practice, not required practice. The U.S. Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is intended to ensure that an internship is an educational experience rather than a job, and the primary beneficiary of the internship is the intern. An internship with a for-profit organization can be unpaid if the experience passes the Department of Labor's "Test for Unpaid Interns and Students" which is summarized below.

1. There is a clear understanding that there is no expectation of compensation.
2. The training is similar to that given in an educational environment.
3. The internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments and calendar.
5. The internship is limited to the period in which there is beneficial learning.
6. The intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
7. There is no expectation of a paid job offer at the conclusion of the experience.

## Suggested resources

[Department of Labor, Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)

[NACE – 15 Best Practices for Internship Programs](#)

[NACE – Position Statement: U.S. Internships. A Definition and Criteria to Assess Opportunities and Determine the Implications for Compensation](#)



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Career Development