



Internship Guide

for Employers

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS

INTERNSHIPS AND
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION



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What is an Internship?

A true internship is:

- Defined by a specific start and end date
- Aligned with the intern's career goals and provides a genuine encounter with the day-to-day work of their chosen career
- Facilitated by an internship supervisor who provides regular and constructive guidance and evaluation
- Structured around learning goals that the intern actively works toward and contemplates throughout the experience

76%

Former interns remain with the organization after year 1.

45%

Non-intern employees who remain with organization after year 1

Source: Society for Human Resources (SHRM), 2020

Interns should have a productive experience that includes professional learning in industry standards, project leadership, mentorship, and professionalism; alongside concrete opportunities to make a real impact on organizational goals.

“An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional workplace setting.”

Source:

<https://www.naceweb.org/internships>

Forms of Experiential Learning

1 Internships / Seasonal Employment

Paid employees, trained to perform limited, specific, often repeatable functions. Employees will have specific qualifications and limited training.

2 Cooperative Education (Co-Op)

Paid, academic-aligned work experience typically lasting 2 or more terms with advising for academic/career goals.

3 Research Assistant

Students support research by collecting, analyzing, and organizing data under supervision of professors or researchers, aiding in projects.

4 Service Learning

Combination of academics and meaningful community service to enrich learning, promote civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

5 Job Simulations

Virtual course that takes you through a day-in-the-life working in a specific role at a specific company, containing real industry tasks that simulate the work that you'd do in an entry-level role at the company.

6 Micro-Internships

Short-term, professional project that allows students or recent graduates to gain experience and explore different career paths. Assignments are project-based and can range from a few days to a few weeks.



Academic Credit

Students have the option to receive academic credit for internships, but it is **NOT** a requirement for participation.

Enrolling in an academic internship means the student will pay tuition for the credits earned.

\$1,000+

Cost of a typical 3 credit course at UCA

Academic credit is NOT a substitute for compensation.

Compensation is for the work performed, while academic credit is for the educational learning experience.

Design your internship program based on your organization's specific needs and what it aims to provide for its interns, not on academic credit requirements.

Universities are the entities that grant academic credit. Do not assure interns that your program will fulfill academic credit requirements.

Compensation



Interns are typically paid more than minimum wage workers in each state.

Average hourly pay for undergraduate interns in the US is around \$23.04.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2025

Organizations Unable to Pay Hourly Wages

typically provide alternative forms of compensation, such as:

- Project-based stipend (monthly or semesterly)
- Meal, housing, or transportation reimbursement
- Sponsored membership to a professional organization
- Sponsored attendance at a local, regional, and/or national professional development meeting, training, or conference
- Sponsored certification(s) - relevant skill or industry knowledge
- Academic scholarships

Launching an Internship Program



Goal

Converting student interns into full-time employees is the primary goal for most organizations.



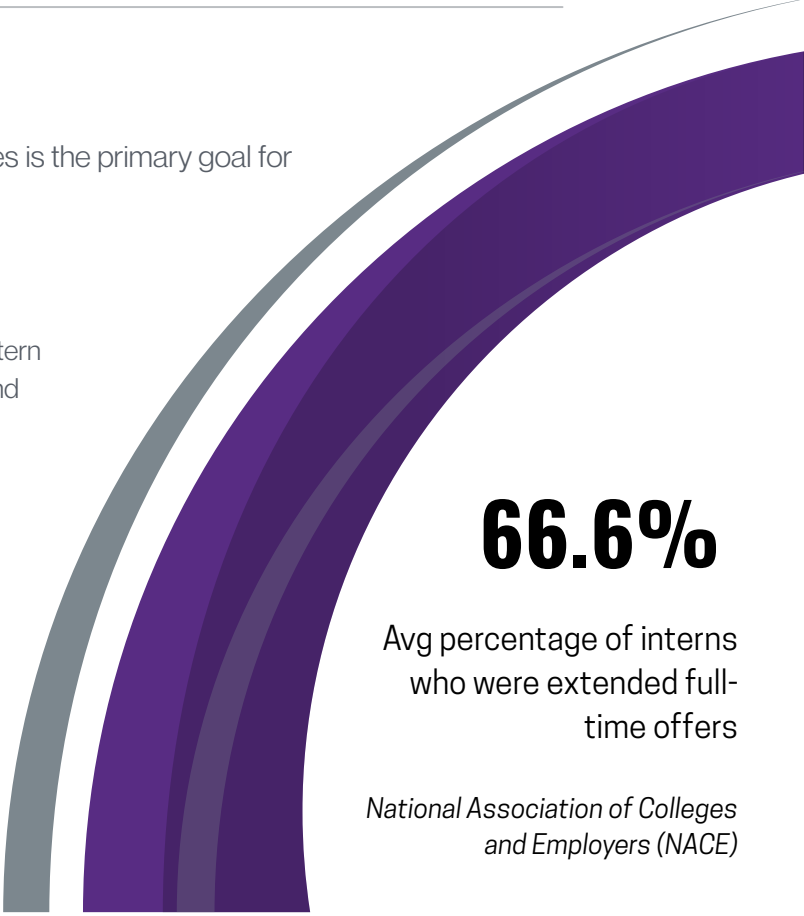
How to Be Successful?

- Devote time to train, supervise, and develop the intern
- Have resources such as work space, computer and internet access, telephone/voicemail, etc.
- Have the desire to mentor/invest in the intern



Identifying Your Needs

- Are there back-burner projects that you would like to see completed?
- Is there a big project or peak season when your organization needs extra help?
- Do you have a specific employee who would benefit from extra short-term assistance?
- Do you have any resources or programs that need an update?



66.6%

Avg percentage of interns who were extended full-time offers

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

Did you know... employers typically begin recruiting interns
8 months before their start date?

Are You Ready to Launch Your Internship Program?

- Does your organization have time and resources to develop and mentor interns throughout their experience?
- Is there a physical work space available for the interns to complete their work, equipped with all necessary technology?
- Do you have a supervisor with some expertise in the area in which the intern will be working?
- Who will be responsible for planning and executing your intern's on-boarding and off-boarding processes?
- Does your organization have the supervision structure to ensure the intern is meeting organization standards?

Job Descriptions

Well-developed internship job descriptions are key to attracting a strong pool of UCA student applicants. When writing your description, please include the content shown below.



Organization Information

- Compelling, short description of your organization
- Overall, concise statement describing the internship program

Description and Responsibilities


- Explanation of role with examples of tasks
- Description of what the intern will learn and gain from this opportunity
- List of professional development opportunities available to the intern
- Hours per week; in person and/or remote days

Minimum Requirements

- Specific skills and qualifications you require
- Desired majors for the position
- Specific courses completed
- Any other firm requirements

How to Recruit Interns at UCA

1. Advertise your internship opportunity through Handshake, UCA's online platform connecting students and employers
2. Be visible! Participate in Career Services events (career fairs, internship banquet, information sessions, etc.)
3. Learn more about recruiting options at uca.edu/career/recruit-uca-students/

For more information about navigating  **handshake**, see uca.edu/career/post-jobs/. Don't hesitate to contact UCA Career Services if you need assistance.

Campus Interviews



Benefits for Recruiters

Interview on UCA's campus for a more personal assessment of the candidates and to build stronger relationships with potential hires and UCA faculty.



Get to Know Students
More Personally



Strengthen your
Company's Brand



Positively Influence
Students' Perspective
of Company



Streamline
Recruiting Process



Benefits for Students

On-campus interviewing is less intimidating than the off-campus setting, offering a chance to learn more about the company and its opportunities in a more relaxed environment



Convenience and
Accessibility



Opportunity for
Personal Connection

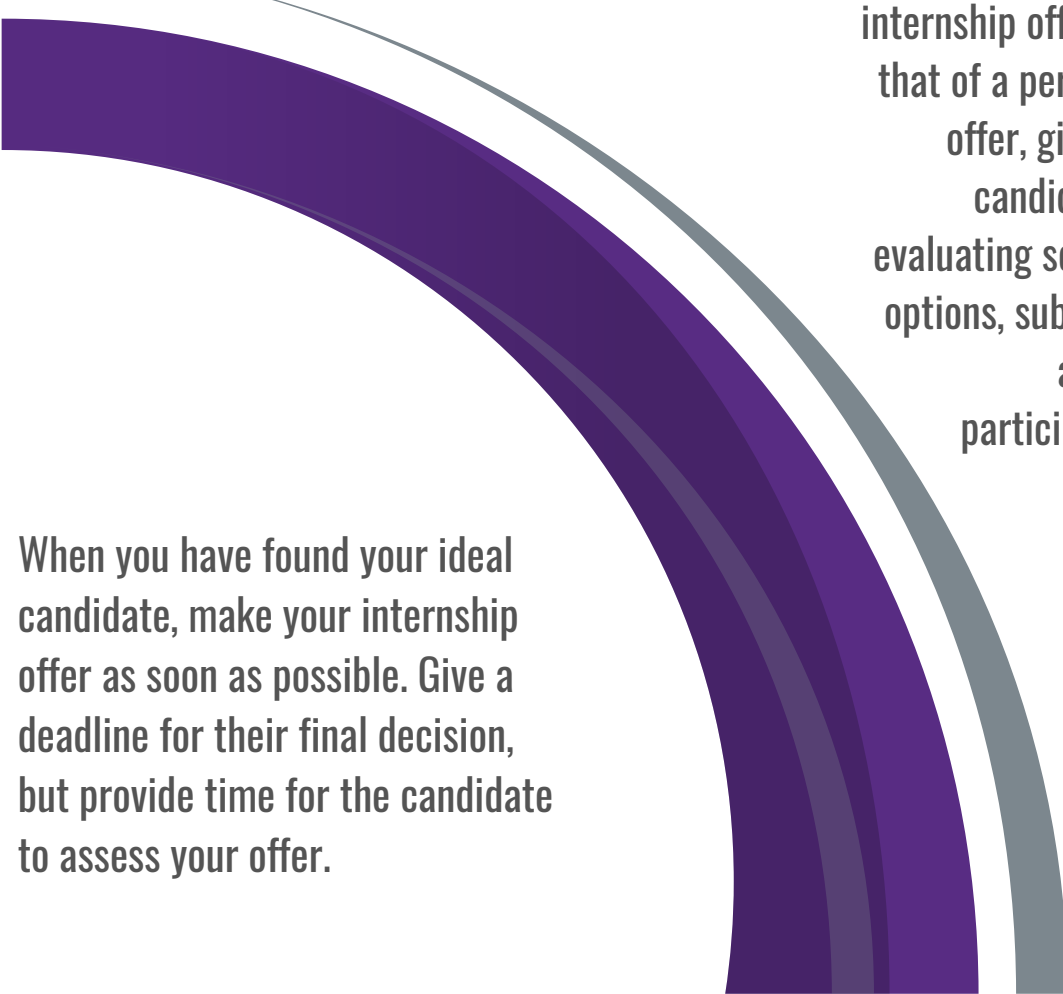


Reduced Anxiety and
More Comfortable



Safe Environment to
Show Skills and Passion

Extending an Offer



The process of making an internship offer should mirror that of a permanent position offer, given that student candidates are usually evaluating several internship options, submitting multiple applications, and participating in various interviews.

When you have found your ideal candidate, make your internship offer as soon as possible. Give a deadline for their final decision, but provide time for the candidate to assess your offer.

Recommendations:

- Extend your formal internship offer in writing
- Detail total compensation package
- Detail dress code and work schedule expectations, including required office days or meetings
- Give the candidate plenty of time to consider the offer
- Once the offer has been accepted, remove the posting from all job boards

Supporting Your Intern

Make the intern feel like part of the team!



Orientation

Orientation

Held on the first day of work, orientation should be more detailed than a full-time hire. Make them feel valued by setting up their work area, preparing a name tag, company swag, welcome sign, etc.



History

Organization's History

Share history of organization - where it began, how it has changed or grown, company's long-term goals.



Structure

Organization Structure

Provide copy of organization chart. Explain reporting structure for the intern's team with names and contact info of those who can answer questions.



Expectations

Policies and Expectations

- Special jargon for company or department?
- Work standards and protocols?
- Policies on using technology, printing, or phones?
- Security confidentiality policies?
- Protocol for break rooms?
- Local, state, federal guidelines or laws that apply to their work?
- Safety regulations?
- Protocol of obtaining office supplies?
- Parking areas?

Goals and Evaluation

Internship supervisors provide essential guidance and support to help interns navigate their move into professional careers.

A Supervisor Should:

- Meet with intern regularly to check-in on work and to provide feedback on their experience and their performance
- Provide leadership and motivation
- Support the intern's professional development through task delegation
- Provide industry and career insight
- Conduct mid-term and end-of-term evaluation to discuss the intern's strengths, progress, and their reflection on their experience



SMART Learning Goals

(specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound)

Collaborate with intern to develop learning goals that reflect their desired outcomes and experiences. Focus on categories relevant to the intern's academic journey and professional development. Common categories for college internships goals are:

- Academic Learning Goals - connecting classroom knowledge to real-world applications
- Skill Development Goals - focused on building specific skills required in their chosen industry or workplace
- Career Exploration Goals - to determine if a particular career path aligns with their interests and aspirations
- Networking Goals - building professional relationships for career advancement
- Personal Development Goals - enhancing their soft skills like communication, critical thinking, and self-management

Need Assistance?

UCA Career Services and Office of Cooperative Education is here to help you! Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns.

✉ internships@uca.edu

🌐 www.uca.edu/career

UCA Career Services and Cooperative Education

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