



CAREER AND  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

# Information & Tips for Internship Employers



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# Introduction

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The Career and Professional Development Center at Messiah University thanks you for partnering with us in offering internships to our students.

*Joy Fea*

Assistant Director for Internships and Faculty Engagement

## Contact Information

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## What is an Internship?

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"An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. Credit-bearing internships are overseen by a college educator and by a designated employee of an organization. The internship is usually the length or equivalent of an academic term, may be part-time or full-time, paid, or unpaid. An integral component of the experience that distinguishes it from other types of work is structured and deliberate learning objectives and corresponding reflection activities."

\* Definition informed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

## Why Start an Internship Program?

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- Sources motivated pre-professionals
- Gives back by sharing knowledge and skills with future career professionals
- Enables staff to pursue more creative projects
- Cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential employees
- Improves marketing on college campuses
- Brings in fresh perspective on projects

## What Defines a Quality Internship?

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1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom; an internship must be equal parts learning experience and professional activity. It must not simply advance the operations of the employer or consist of work that a regular employee would routinely perform
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings
3. The experience must have a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives related to the student's professional goals
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and an 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 the learning objectives/goals

\*National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Guidelines for an internship

## Experiences That Do Not Qualify as Internships

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- Free administrative labor or inexpensive solutions to replace full-time positions
- Positions supervised by family members
- Internships at home-based organizations
- Commission-based positions
- Unpaid positions that do not comply with FLSA regulations
- Positions requiring door-to-door canvassing, cold-calling, or petition gathering
- An "independent contract" relationship where the intern must set-up his/her own business
- Telemarketing positions
- Positions that require upfront fees before interns can work

## Virtual Internships

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A virtual internship must be as rigorous and educational as an in-person internship. A virtual internship should include the following:

- A weekly virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, etc. This meeting should be used to provide more personalized feedback to the student (project planning, reviewing progress, receiving feedback, and mentoring) and to correct any issues.
- A regularly scheduled email report in which the student provides information to the internship site mentor and the academic advisor, such as hours worked, challenges or problems encountered, progress toward learning objectives, and any questions they may have.

## Messiah University Internship Requirements

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Characteristics of a Messiah University Internship for Credit:

- Internships run concurrently with the semester: Fall, Spring or Summer. An intern may work before or after these dates; but the internship must be done at the same time as the semester-based course.
- One credit hour is the equivalent of 40 hours of onsite work over the semester (e.g., three credits is a minimum of 120 hours during the semester). Students can work more than the minimum number of hours but must meet the minimum.
- Students are required to complete assignments for the internship class component graded by their Messiah Internship Faculty Advisor (IFA).
- Internship may be part-time or full-time, paid, or unpaid.
  - Messiah University does not regulate the compensation of student interns. If your organization is a for-profit business, compensation is expected and virtually mandated by federal regulations.
  - Many students work their way through college and often give up paid part-time positions to take an internship. Receiving some form of remuneration is appreciated.
  - If your organization (for-profit or non-profit) is unable to offer a regular wage, consider helping the students with a stipend or internship-related expenses such as parking fees, mileage, meals, etc.
- An essential element that distinguishes an internship from a short-term job or volunteer work is that the intentional "learning agenda" is structured into the experience.
- Students completing an internship for credit are covered under Messiah's liability insurance policy.

### Credit/Hour Structure:

#### INTE 391 (1-3 credits)

Credit(s)	1	2	3
Minimum hours/semester	40	80	120

Both INTE 391 and INTE 394 include required online coursework assigned by the Career and Professional Development Center.

#### INTE 394 (4-12 credits)

Credits	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Minimum hours/semester	160	200	240	280	320	360	400	440	480

### Site Supervisor Responsibilities

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- Reading & signing the Agency Memo of Understanding, unless an Affiliation Agreement is already in place
- Reading & signing the intern's learning objectives. The intern will write the objectives but may need the site supervisor's input
- Signing the Work Reflection Log at the end of the semester. This log provides the documentation of the intern's hours and accomplishments and will affect the student's final grade
- Completing the SkillSurvey Mid-Point Evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation, which is sent via email, is to educate the intern, encourage him/her, and help him/her grow.
- Providing final acknowledgement that the internship hours have been completed
- Students will have additional internship course assignments that you are not responsible for
- Encouraging professionalism and giving interns increased responsibility
- Communicating openly and often
- Complying with FLSA standards
- Complying with discrimination regulations

### Intern Responsibilities

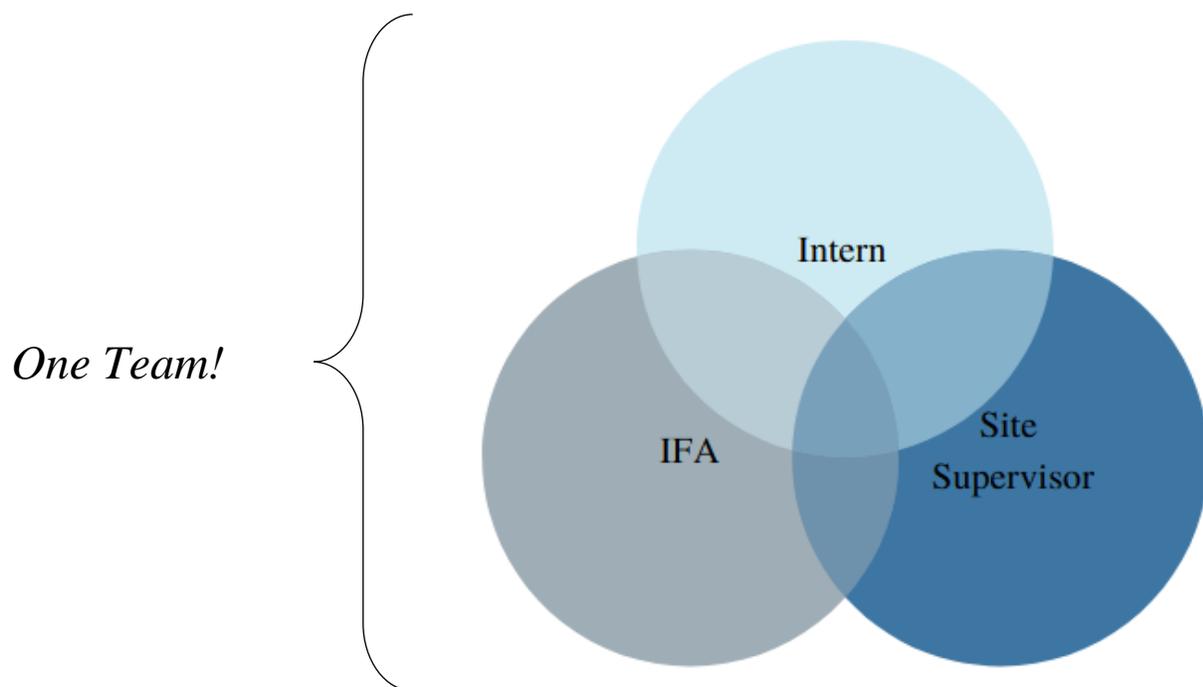
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- Registering the internship through the Career and Professional Development Center
- Completing class assignments
- Attending orientation and two meetings with their Internship Faculty Advisors
- Performing work-related tasks
- Meeting the hour requirement and logging hours
- Keeping commitments
- Acting professionally
- Acting responsibly within the confines of the organization's rules

## Internship Faculty Advisor (IFA) Responsibilities

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- Bridging the gap between employers and Messiah University
- Assisting students in identifying internship opportunities
- Assisting in the establishment and maintenance of appropriate internship experiences
- Conducting internship site visits
- Maintaining communication with interns and employers and mediate potential conflicts
- Reviewing Agency Memo of Understanding
- Assisting interns in writing learning objectives
- Managing academic issues related to the internship
- Assigning relevant academic coursework
- Meeting with site supervisors upon request
- Reviewing supervisor evaluations



# How to Start an Internship Program

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## Factors to Consider Before Starting an Internship Program:

- Your reasons for starting a program
- Your organization's needs
- Intern accommodations (i.e., workspace, technology provisions, parking)
- The availability of site supervisors (individuals within the intern's department that can function as overseers and mentors)
- Possible workload and/or projects for an intern
- Potential goals for the program
- Preparing interns for management positions

## Writing an Internship Job Description:

- What will the intern's primary responsibility include?
- What will the intern have the opportunity to learn?
- Will the intern need a specific major or previous experience?
- Will the intern be paid?
- How many hours will the intern work a week?
- What additional benefits will the intern receive?
  - Will there be special training programs, performance reviews, lunches with executives, social events? Keep in mind that your interns are walking advertisements for your company. If they have a valuable experience working for you, they're likely to tell their friends.

## Recruiting a Messiah University Intern:

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- Information about Messiah Job and Internship Database and Recruiting Events can be found here: <https://www.messiah.edu/info/23058/employers>
- Advertise the internship opportunity is on your organization's website. Encourage the current intern to share the internship experience with friends and students in their major.

## The Intern Experience: Making Interns Feel Wanted and Needed

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### First Day:

- Introduce them to everyone in the office
- Tour the facility
- Provide:
  1. Organizational chart so they know who is in the office and what they do
  2. Background information on the organization so they have context for role
  3. Email or phone number to contact supervisor
  4. Schedule regular check-in appointments

5. Dress code information
6. Technology login information and training
7. Job-specific resources

### **During Internship:**

- Give them lots of feedback. Your intern will want to know if their work is meeting your expectations, especially if they have never done the type of work before.
- Provide regular check-in appointments
- Include them in meetings, conferences, client appointments, supervision, and/or other learning opportunities
- Evaluate intern progress

### **End of Internship:**

- Hold one final meeting to bring the experience to a close
- Sign off on work/reflection log
- Encourage intern to share with other students about the opportunity

### **Evaluating the Program**

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- Are you meeting your goals and fulfilling your needs?
- Is the program adding value to your organization?
- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis
- Where are interns going? Are they becoming full-time employees?
- Are the interns performing well?
- Is your supervisor enriching the interns proportionately to how the interns are enriching your organization?
- Are you continually receiving applicants for internship openings?

# Hosting International Interns

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An F-1 visa is granted to a person coming to the United States to attend a college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or language training program approved by the U.S. Attorney General for study by foreign students. The visa holder plans to return home after completing studies. This is the most common non-immigrant visa for an international student attending undergraduate and graduate school. Students are granted F-1 status until the completion of the academic program and 12 months of post-program practical training. The purpose of the F-1 visa is to provide an opportunity for study in the United States. Anything outside of study, including employment, is an exception to the visa. Authorization for employment is strictly limited to certain situations.

- The student holding F-1 status for a full academic year and in good academic standing may work off campus. When school is in session, they may work for no more than 20 hours per week when school is in session, but may work full time during holidays and vacations, including breaks between terms, provided the student intends to register for the next school term.
- If an international student is working/interning off-campus, they must be registered for internship credit.
- Curricular Practical Training: An F-1 student may perform curricular practical training prior to the completion of the educational program as part of his or her educational experience. The INS defines this type of training as "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through agreement with the school."
- Optical Practical Training: This is temporary employment directly related to the student's major area of study that takes place after the student completes a full course of study. Authorization for this training may be granted for a maximum of 12 months of full-time or part-time work. Those on a student visa can only gain authorization once for this type of training.

The above information is adapted from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (reprinted with permission of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder). For more information on these and other legal issues, visit <https://www.naceweb.org>. Also see the website of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services- <https://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>.

Employers can take advantage of a nationwide service provider who handles all the necessary paperwork for international students desiring to work in an organization.

Immigration Support Services- 1300 Bent Creek Blvd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

[www.immigrationsupport.com](http://www.immigrationsupport.com)

# Legal

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- Liability Insurance
  - Students completing an internship for credit are covered under Messiah's liability insurance policy.
- U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division Standards
  - The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which applies to all companies that have at least two employees directly engaged in interstate commerce and annual sales of at least \$500,000.00, severely restricts an employer's ability to use unpaid interns or trainees. It does not limit an employer's ability to hire paid interns. (See Fact Sheet #71 from the U.S. Dept. of Labor- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>)
  - Though it is not required that you pay your interns, we ask that you strongly consider offering some sort of monetary compensation. Many students work their way through college and often give up a paying part-time position to take an internship, so receiving some form of remuneration is appreciated. If your organization (for-profit or non-profit) is unable to offer a regular wage, please consider compensating the student with a stipend or consider paying for internship-related expenses such as parking fees, mileage, meals, etc.
- Criteria/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.<sup>2</sup> 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:

- 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 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.