

Internships

A Quick Guide for Employers

An internship

is a carefully monitored work experience in which students have intentional personal and career-related learning goals. The student reflects on learning throughout the internship experience.

1. A defined duration ranging from several weeks to six months, during which the intern is closely mentored and supervised. It is recommended that the student and supervisor set new goals quarterly or on another regular schedule.
2. May be part time, full time, paid, or unpaid. It is recommended that unpaid interns do not work more than 10–15 hours per week. Unpaid internships must also meet Department of Labor criteria.
3. The internship should have two to three learning objectives.
4. Internships may be part of an educational program, during which the work will be monitored and evaluated for academic credit. Academic internships must be approved in advance by the Career Center and a Luther College faculty member. In this case, students should share their learning plan with the employer.
5. The employer provides resources (primarily in the form of time) to support the intern's learning objectives.

Why hire an intern?

- Develop a pipeline to a diverse, well-educated pool of students.
- Create positive press for your organization via student testimonials, brand recognition, and peer-to-peer messaging.
- Gain valuable insights from a fresh perspective by establishing creative projects for your intern.
- Provide leadership opportunities for your employees through supervision and mentorship of an intern.

Crafting an Internship Description:

the Basics

Students are excited to work hard and create results, but also want an internship that will aid their long-term professional development. Describe your organization and internship position with as much detail as possible. It will help the students decide if they can picture themselves within your organization, industry, and internship position. Don't forget to include interesting facts about company culture; these are often the most attractive to students. Concise, detailed postings will lead to interested, qualified applicants.

Responsibilities and Position Description

1. List day-to-day duties and tasks
2. Keep in mind that internships should entail no more than 25 percent clerical work

Qualifications

1. Degree or field of study; if open to all majors, be sure to list this fact
2. Years of experience: If the position does not need experience, be sure to state that in the position description
3. Skills and abilities
4. Technical knowledge needed

Learning Objectives

Well-developed learning objectives are an integral part of providing a positive internship experience and demonstrate a well-organized and robust program.

1. What are two to three projects in which the student will participate?
2. What are three to four hard and/or soft skills the student will learn?
3. How will the intern be supervised and mentored during the experience?
4. Will the intern participate in company meetings, networking events, or professional conferences?

Time Frame

1. What are the starting and ending dates for your internship?
2. Do you have some flexibility around these dates?

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Compensation: Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

The Luther College Career Center encourages interns to be compensated for their work, but we understand that it is not always possible. Compensation most commonly comes in the form of an hourly wage; however, other compensation options include a stipend upon satisfactory completion of the internship, or a structured, commission-based compensation model.

Providing compensation for an internship will:

1. Attract a more diverse and competitive pool of candidates. Paying your interns will get you more applicants!
2. Paying your interns allows them to be more focused. They will be less likely to worry about having another job to pay bills.
3. Test the need and feasibility of adding a full- or part-time position to your organization.

If you decide an internship must be unpaid, it is important that the position meet all of the following Department of Labor standards under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Department of Labor "Seven-Point" Test for Unpaid Interns:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment.
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
5. The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
6. 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.
7. 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.

How can my organization recruit interns from Luther College?

Contact the Career Center at (563) 387-1025 or email us at career.luther.edu for more information. Organizations can promote their opportunity to Luther students in the following ways:

1. Post internship opportunities through our CareerConnection system directly on our website at www.luther.edu/careers/employers/.
2. Attend one of our job fairs.
3. Set up a table in Dahl Centennial Union on campus.

International Students

International students bring a unique global perspective to an organization. Visa sponsorship is not required to hire an international student as an intern. Most international students have a Social Security card and their hiring paperwork for the employer is the same as it is for a domestic student.

Managing Your Intern

1. **Communicate:** Communicate with your intern often, whether it is to provide feedback, offer training, or check on the intern's progress. By keeping the lines of communication open you will not only build trust, respect, and a positive relationship, but you will learn how quickly projects are being completed.
2. **Mentor:** Schedule a weekly review meeting with your intern. For many interns, the most important and beneficial element of an internship is the mentoring they receive from their direct supervisor and colleagues. Mentoring is a critical and essential part of any internship experience, and an attribute that differentiates internships from part-time employment. Internships are an opportunity for students to learn professional behavior in the workplace. As a mentor, it is important to give your intern honest feedback on professionalism and career preparedness.
3. **Integrate:** To foster learning outside of your intern's job duties, bring him or her to meetings, conferences, and networking events. Allowing your intern to gain a broader understanding of your organization can help generate new ideas, and create a more meaningful experience.
4. **Connect:** Encourage your intern to develop relationships with employees outside of his or her immediate team or department. Suggest several people with whom the intern should initiate informational interviews. Helping your intern learn more about your organization, industry, and potential career paths through informational interviews will not only aid in long-term professional development, it will make the intern a more effective and contributing member of your organization.
5. **Revisit Learning Objectives:** Periodically revisit the learning objectives established at the beginning of the internship. Discuss what the student has learned and how it can be applied in the future. Be sure to also provide timely feedback on performance and congratulate your intern on a job well-done, as well as address "opportunities" for growth.