



# INTERNSHIP INSIDER

A QUICK-START GUIDE  
TO CREATING YOUR  
PROGRAM



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Center for Career and  
Professional Development

Nacogdoches   
Economic Development Corporation

NACOGDOCHES COUNTY  
  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

 RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

# WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

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.



## DESIGN YOUR INTERNSHIP

There are certain factors to consider regarding compensation when designing your internship. These are provided below.

**Unpaid internship guidelines:** The U.S. Department of Labor provides guidance, based on recent court decisions, for circumstances where unpaid internships are appropriate.

1. The extent to which the intern and employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, expressed or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee and vice versa.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to the training given in an educational environment, including clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
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 it 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.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet No. 71

**Paid internship guidelines:** To ensure that an experience – whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually – is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship, all the following criteria must be met.

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

National Association of Colleges and Employers (June 2012)





## POSTING YOUR INTERNSHIP AT SFA

### *Concierge program for local and alumni employers:*

Stephen F. Austin State University's Center for Career and Professional Development offers a concierge program for local employers and alumni partners to assist in streamlining the process to #hirelumberjacks. Contact the CCPD for more information.

Internships at SFA are advertised through Handshake, which is the employment website SFA students are directed to when seeking an internship; a part-time, off-campus position; or full-time employment. This site is operated and maintained through CCPD and allows employers to post internships and other employment opportunities for free.

If you prefer, you can visit the Handshake website directly to post your internships. Include **"Nacogdoches"** in your posting to allow us to highlight your internship locally. Visit [jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu](https://jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu), and click the "Employer" tab to get started.

Employers may post credited or uncredited internships. Credited internships must be set up before the beginning of the semester, and a faculty member will serve as the student's on-campus contact. CCPD staff members can assist in outlining the appropriate faculty member or department to contact. Many students also complete uncredited internships for additional experience.

## CCPD CONTACT

(936) 468-3305 • [ccpd@sfasu.edu](mailto:ccpd@sfasu.edu)

## TESTIMONIALS

"An advantage of hiring interns for jobs is that our agency has already seen their work ethic. We know what to expect from them, and they already know most of what will be expected from them. Their work as an intern gives our agency a good feel for them and a preview of how they work as part of our team. It eliminates many unknown aspects of a newly hired employee. The hiring process is time consuming and costly, and hiring an intern can definitely streamline the process."

- Greta Rich, *community outreach coordinator at the Janelle Grum Family Crisis Center of East Texas*

"Insurance is a dynamic and ever-changing industry. We are constantly looking for the best and brightest people; however, it is a relatively unknown industry to college students. By coordinating internship opportunities through universities such as SFA, we are able to show college students, through a hands-on learning experience, that our industry offers stability, flexibility, income potential and a chance to make a difference."

- Carolyn Ballenger, *senior professional in human resources and vice president of Texas Operations, R3 Team Lead at BXS Insurance*

"The diverse academic offerings at SFA translate to limitless opportunities for the Convention and Visitors Bureau in terms of bringing in interns. From hospitality to film to business, a strong intern program allows us to benefit from a variety of talents while exposing interns to the industry of travel and tourism."

- Sherry Chaney Morgan, *executive director at the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau*



## ORIENTING AND SUPERVISING YOUR INTERN

Once you have selected SFA students to serve as interns, they must be oriented and supervised like any other member of your team. We encourage you to make it a priority to set aside ample time at the onset of the internship to acclimate your intern to the organization. Your willingness to provide an organized and thoughtful orientation (whether formal or informal) will probably be the single most important influence on an intern's impression of your organization. Whether the intern will work in one or many areas of your organization, assign him or her a mentor who will remain consistent during the intern's experience.

The sooner your intern understands what your organization does and how it operates, the sooner he or she can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. You can communicate this information to your intern in several ways.

- Take your intern on a tour of the facilities and introduce him or her to employees.
- Provide organizational materials for your intern to read, such as newsletters and annual reports.
- Encourage your intern to spend breaks and lunch times in places where employees gather.
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings.
- Invite your intern to observe or participate in professional meetings.
- Allow your intern to shadow and get to know company personnel in a variety of areas.
- Encourage your intern to walk around and observe others at work.

The intern also should receive regular feedback on his or her performance, as well as a formal evaluation at the end of the internship. Remember the student's learning experience and a strong connection to his or her major is a key component of the internship criteria.

## CLOSING OUT THE INTERNSHIP

The internship should have a clear beginning and end date. You can always welcome the intern back the next semester to continue the experience, or bring him or her on as a part-time or full-time hire. Credited internships will require site supervisors to complete paperwork about the intern's performance. Uncredited internships should still end with specific, constructive feedback on what the student did well, as well as how the student can improve his or her performance in the future.

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

If you would like to speak with other local companies concerning best practices in offering internships, the following have agreed to speak with you concerning their insights on running a successful internship program:

Greta Rich, *community outreach coordinator at the Janelle Grum Family Crisis Center of East Texas*

- (936) 639-1681
- [familycrisiscenterofeasttexas.com](http://familycrisiscenterofeasttexas.com)

Sherry Chaney Morgan, *executive director at the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau*

- (936) 564-7351
- [visitNacogdoches.org](http://visitNacogdoches.org)

Carolyn Ballenger, *senior professional in human resources, vice president of Texas Operations, R3 Team Lead at BXS Insurance*

- (936) 564-8823
- [bxsi.com](http://bxsi.com)