

RUTGERS—CAMDEN CAREER CENTER

Internship Guide for Employers

Definition of an Internship

An internship is a pre-professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work experience related to a student's field of study or career interest. Students have intentional learning goals, and the internship reflects actively on what the student is learning throughout the experience.

Internships allow students to apply principles and theory learned in the classroom in a professional environment. Through internships, students have an opportunity to explore career options and develop new skills.

What Is an Internship?

Although internships vary widely, some common characteristics include the following:

- A time-limited experience that usually lasts about three months and occurs during the fall, spring, or summer semesters.
- Generally a one-time experience.
- May be part- or full-time.
- May be paid or unpaid.
- May be part of an educational program and carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit.
- May be part of a learning plan that has been developed individually.
- Differs from a short-term job or volunteer work and has an intentional learning agenda in a structured work environment.
- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, evaluation, and assessment.
- Has an existing employee working in the department/position to mentor and supervise the intern.
- Seeks to establish a reasonable balance between the intern's learning goals and the specific work tasks of an organization.
- Promotes academic, career, and/or personal development.



INTERNSHIP BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

- A cost-effective opportunity to evaluate a potential future employee; a pipeline for candidates.
- Access to students with special skills or knowledge.
- A way to gain short-term talent to assist current employees.
- Enthusiastic, innovative workers who can contribute new ideas based on their academic learning.
- The personal satisfaction of fulfilling a professional responsibility in helping students progress in their career path.
- Enhanced visibility for your organization within the Rutgers University—Camden community.

INTERNSHIP BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- Provides a full and realistic view of the work world.
- Integrates academic preparation with practical application and skill development in the workplace.
- Acquire hands-on work experience.
- An opportunity to network with professionals in one's field of interest.
- A chance to explore career options and develop transferable skills.

Please contact the Rutgers—Camden Career Center for more information.

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Tips for Creating a Successful Internship Program

- Create a clearly defined position description which includes: information about your organization, description of the internship project or job duties, job title, preferred academic major, competencies the intern should possess, educational value of the internship, desired work hours, duration of the internship, application procedures, start and end dates of the internship, and compensation.
- Offer challenging assignments that benefit your organization while providing tangible work experience for the intern.
- Assign interns to worthy projects where they can apply their academic knowledge as well as enhance or develop new skills.
- Orient interns to the organization. Give a tour, introduce to staff members, and train on equipment.
- Provide a specific work area and office resources such as a computer, telephone extension, and organization email.
- Expose interns to professional staff and clients, as appropriate for professional growth.
- Supervise and mentor to maximize the intern's learning experience by offering guidance and identifying developmental opportunities that strengthen and enhance the intern's skills, strengths, and performance.
- Evaluate the internship. At the conclusion of the internship, conduct an exit interview to review the intern's performance and accomplishments.
- Know your liability. Consult with your organization's attorney or legal team.

For more resources on developing internship programs, we highly recommend reviewing the **National Association of Colleges and Employers 15 Best Practices for Internship Programs**.

Steps to Identify and Recruit Internship Candidates

1. Create an internship description. In sourcing candidates, consider the duties to be performed, level of knowledge and specific job skills required of the intern, desired class level, and the suitable academic majors needed to successfully perform the internship. Employers who do not restrict their internships to specific class levels or majors will benefit from a broader pool of intern applicants.
2. Post your internship. Employers can post their internship opportunities on the Career Center's Handshake database of jobs and internships: cc.camden.rutgers.edu/jobpostings. The Career Center can also post the opportunity on Handshake for employers. Just email the description to careercenter@camden.rutgers.edu.
3. Attend Rutgers-Camden job fairs. The Career Center offers fairs throughout the year, including a career day in October, an internship fair in November, a public service fair in March, and a spring job and internship fair in April. Dates and registration information can be found at cc.camden.rutgers.edu.

Will Your Position Qualify as an Internship?

Internships must meet the following criteria:

1. At least 80 percent of the position must consist of professional or pre-professional work assignments related to the student's major and/or career goals.
2. The company/organization must be a legitimate established employer located in commercial space. Home-based entities cannot be approved due to liability and risk issues.
3. An experienced professional with expertise in the content area of the internship must be assigned to supervise/mentor the intern student. This person trains the student as needed, monitors, and evaluates the student's work performance.
4. Interns must be given an orientation to the organization, safety procedures, training, ongoing supervision, and evaluation.
5. Interns should not be considered "consultants" or be expected to provide a function that your professional staff does not have the skills to perform (e.g., create a company website, start a social media campaign, write a grant, develop a marketing campaign).
6. Interns must have an appropriate workspace and tools with which to perform their duties (e.g., access to a computer, software, etc.).
7. No student may intern for an organization owned or managed, fully or in part, by a family member. The on-site supervisor may not be a member of the intern's family or anyone working under the supervision of a family member. To prevent any potential conflicts of interest, students wishing to earn credit for an internship must disclose any familial relationships with employees of the organization where they wish to intern.
8. If a confidentiality agreement is required, it must be stated in the job description upon posting.
9. There are no requirements for the student to pay the employer in any form for any part of the experience.
10. Background checks, if required, should be at the expense of the employer.

Opportunities **NOT** Considered an Internship

- Positions consisting primarily of clerical tasks. Clerical tasks should comprise no more than 20 percent of an internship.
- Jobs that provide little or no opportunity for students to gain practical experience that complement their academic learning.
- Part-time jobs with little or no training, guidance, and supervision.
- Volunteer positions.
- "Independent contractor" relationships that require the intern to set up his/her own business to sell products or services, and/or recruiting other individuals to set up their own business.
- Positions in which the student is required to pay the employer for any part of the experience (e.g., fees for training).

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Virtual Internships Qualifications

All virtual internship position descriptions must meet the **National Association of Colleges and Employers criteria** for internships in addition to the below criteria for virtual internships. The Rutgers–Camden Career Center will review descriptions carefully to see that both sets of criteria are met before approving the posting.

- The internship site must use some type of online project management tool, such as Google Docs or Basecamp, so that work is stored in the “cloud” and not on a personal computer.
- The internship includes a regular report (weekly, at a minimum) in which the student provides information such as hours worked, challenges or problems encountered, and results obtained, and asks any questions that he or she may have.
- The internship includes a weekly virtual meeting with the supervisor on Zoom or a similar technology (highly preferred); if this meeting is impossible, weekly phone conversations are expected.

Internship Hours and Duration

- Rutgers–Camden operates on a semester system: fall (September through December), spring (January through April), summer (May through August).
- During the academic year, internships are generally part-time, approximately 10 to 12 hours per week.
- For summer internships, students can work up to 40 hours per week.
- Minimum requirements for credit-bearing internships are 120 hours during the fall, spring or summer semesters.
- Ideally, an internship program’s hours/days will be flexible to meet the needs of the student’s academic schedule. If an employer can only accommodate an intern on specific days or hours, they should state those days/hours in their job description.

Internship Compensation

Although an internship can be paid or unpaid, the Career Center encourages employers to compensate interns. An internship should not be viewed as a form of “cheap labor.” Academic credit is not a substitute for compensation.

If an intern is considered an “employee” (any individual employed by an employer), according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, then the employer must pay its interns at least minimum wage.

In determining an intern’s compensation you should take into consideration your industry type, location of the internship, desired competencies, the intern’s class level, and preferred academic major.

If you are a for-profit organization and considering offering an unpaid internship, you are responsible for understanding the legal criteria for an unpaid internship as specified by the U.S. Department of Labor (see [dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm](https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm)).

Academic Credit

As an employer, you cannot grant credit for an internship — only the University can. Rutgers University–Camden internships are offered through the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, and some individual academic departments.

ARTS AND SCIENCES INTERNSHIP COURSE CREDIT GUIDELINES

Students are able to earn three credits by working 120 hours in the summer or during the fall or spring semesters. Students are also required to participate in the Arts and Sciences internship class during the semester that they are working at their internship. Internship course instructors may request a site visit during the semester.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS INTERNSHIP COURSE CREDIT GUIDELINES

Students are able to earn three credits by working 120 hours during the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Internship instructor requires a site visit during the semester. Note: Accounting students who secure a full-time internship/co-op can earn six credits during a semester.

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