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Career Services Office

## Employer Internship Guide

The Internship Program at Anderson is designed to allow students to apply the principles and theories taught on campus to real life projects and to give employers a cost-effective connection to future workers. Internship programs can be an excellent return on recruiting investment for many reasons. A well thought out and effective internship program can benefit your organization in the following ways:

- Find future employees.
- Give you an opportunity to try out the student talent, to experience how the student performs on the job.
- Increase your organization's visibility, brand awareness, and allure on campus.
- Increase employee-retention rates. Employers have reported a higher five-year retention rate among employees they'd hired via their internship program.
- Provide assistance with short-term projects.
- Offer a cost-effective source of new talent.
- Provide ambassadors on campus and valuable word-of-mouth for your recruiting efforts.
- Retain quality trained human capital to help strengthen our regional and national economy.

### What is an internship?

Until recently, there was no universally accepted definition for internships or criteria for what constitutes a valid, legitimate internship. In 2010, the [National Association of Colleges and Employers \(NACE\)](#) published a document that brought some clarity to this topic. To review the **NACE Position Statement on U.S. Internships** in its entirety, please [click here](#). The NACE definition and criteria for an internship are below.

### According to the NACE Definition

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 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.

### NACE Criteria for an Experience to Be Defined as an Internship

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 by the NACE definition, all the following criteria must be met:

- 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 be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.



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- There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship.

### **Academic Credit for Internships**

Decisions regarding whether or not a student will be able to receive academic credit for an internship are made at the academic departmental level, not at the university level. The student is responsible for initiating the application for academic credit with the academic department.

### **Additional Criteria We Use to Evaluate Internships**

While the NACE definition and criteria are exceptionally helpful, they are also necessarily light on details and specifics, because the details and specifics vary so much across professions, fields and industries. Following are additional criteria we use at Anderson when reviewing internships and deciding whether or not we will allow them to be posted to our systems.

### **Does the internship posting meet our Job & Internship Posting Standards?**

Organizations wishing to recruit students and alumni of the UNM Anderson School of Management using [Lobo Career Connection](#) can do so free of charge. However all submissions to UNM Anderson Career Services job and internship databases are reviewed and approved/rejected based upon the information contained in the postings.

Employers should put as much thought into their internship descriptions as they put into their job descriptions. Provide students seeking internships enough information in position descriptions to be able to evaluate the opportunity and make a decision as to whether or not they should apply. Don't assume students will inherently recognize what a great opportunity interning for your company will be. Some may say, *"but it will be a great resume-building experience."* If it is a great resume-building experience, please use the position description to tell them precisely how. Don't make them guess.

In most instances, students doing internships for academic credit will be required to present a portfolio of work samples at the end of the semester, write a journal chronicling/reflecting on their experience and/or write a report of some kind to quantify and give evidence of the internship experience. Make sure you are giving interns substantive work so they can fulfill the course requirements and earn the academic credit they paid for.

During the fall and spring semesters, student interns usually have to balance their internship schedule with their course schedule, part-time job schedule and personal schedule. Students doing summer internships often have more schedule flexibility, but usually still have other time commitments they



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must consider. UNM Anderson School of Management students must complete at least 160 hours of work over the course of a semester; approximately 10 hours per week during fall and spring semester and 15-20 hours per week during the shorter summer semester. Internship start and end dates are flexible and we will work with students who want to receive academic credit for their internship.

### **Has the recruiter agreed to abide by our Recruiting Policies & Guidelines?**

Employers who wish to make use of the assistance, services and/or facilities offered by the Career Services Offices at The University of New Mexico must also comply with [UNM's Employer/Recruiter Policies for Use of Career Services](#).

As part of the University's commitment to leadership in the area of ethics and professional conduct, we require employers utilizing UNM Anderson's Career Services to adhere to employment laws and principles of professional practice, as outlined by the federal government and The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) [Principles for Professional Practice](#), respectively.

### **The Ethical Use of Interns to "For-Profit" Private Sector Employers**

Unpaid internships remain widely available in the American workplace. There are federal rules to guide employers on when an internship may legally be unpaid.

The [Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA) prescribes standards for the basic minimum wage and overtime pay employers must pay for covered employees who are not otherwise exempt. Subsequently, in 1980 the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued a six prong test for determining whether an employer must pay interns for their work. Essentially, if the six criteria are met, the Department of Labor considers there to be no employment relationship. The six criteria established by the DOL are:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the employer's facilities, is similar to training that would be given in a vocational school.
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the student.
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the close observation of a regular employee.
4. The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern. Occasionally, the operations may actually be impeded.
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time in the internship.

### **Is the unpaid intern afforded the same protections as an employee?**

Many employers, particularly small employers, are unaware of the liability they take on when hosting an unpaid intern. We at the University are keenly aware of this, and this is why we only approve internship sites that have adequate business liability and worker's compensation insurance. All tenants in commercial office space must carry adequate insurance coverage; it is a cost of doing business. Many home-based businesses do not carry the same types and levels of insurance, so we do not typically allow postings for unpaid internships in home-based businesses. And, this protection extends beyond simple workplace safety. Just like employees, interns should not be subjected to



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sexual harassment or other conditions that would constitute a hostile work environment. Treat interns with the same respect you treat regular employees and offer them similar workplace protection.

The best way to cover your bases legally is to consult with your company's legal counsel prior to initiating your internship program.

### **Will the intern be provided the necessary supervision?**

Interns should be supervised by experienced professionals. The supervisor should be on-site, and physically present and accessible to the intern on a regular basis. The supervisor should be able to evaluate the intern's performance, train and coach the intern, offer feedback and input and otherwise be a resource to the intern. In the case of internships for academic credit, internship supervisors should conduct mid-term and final evaluations of the intern's performance, and the results of these evaluations should be shared with the UNM Anderson faculty/staff internship coordinator and the intern. Interns should also evaluate their internship experience and share this evaluation with their university faculty/staff internship coordinator.

### **Is it an Internship or a Part-time Job?**

We have a very narrow definition for internships. If we are going to allow a posting in our online databases to be called an internship, we want it to meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria because we want to be sure that it is an experiential learning experience and therefore potentially eligible for academic credit.

If your posting does not meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria, chances are it isn't an internship; rather, it is a part-time job. Our students need part-time jobs, too! Part-time jobs are great; they are just not internships – and this distinction is very important. While internships can meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria AND also be paid, part-time jobs – paid employment are not internships unless they meet the NACE Internship Definition and Criteria.

*I hope this document provides clarity to the issue of what is and what isn't an internship. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me (505.277.8870) or email me, [nmead60@unm.edu](mailto:nmead60@unm.edu), at any time.*

*We look forward to reviewing both your internship AND job postings to help you connect with our students.*