FLORIDA ATLANTIC
CAREER CENTER PRESENTS

EMPLOYER
INTERNSHIP
PLAYBOOK

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EMPLOYER INTERNSHIP PLAYBOOK

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WHY HIRE FLORIDA ATLANTIC INTERNS?

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) serves a student body of **30,000+** undergraduate and graduate students within ten distinguished colleges that offer more than **170 degree programs**. With **six campuses** spread across multiple counties, there are plenty of Owls in the South Florida region!

IINTERNSHIP PROGRAM BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Internship programs provide employers with a proven and inexpensive recruiting tool and the opportunity to get a jump start in **training future employees**. Evaluating prospective employees while they are working for the organization can reduce significant costs in finding new talent. Additionally, students are often engaged with current technology and innovative processes and can apply that insight and expertise in their internships.

Interns:

- Are a cost effective recruiting mechanism. Students that intern with an organization and accept full-time positions with that organization are retained at a higher rate. According to the **National Association of Colleges & Employers,** 58.5% of in-person interns and 46% of hybrid interns were converted into full-time roles with the organizations/companies where they interned.

- Often have cutting-edge skill sets developed through their coursework

- Provide opportunities for full-time staff to focus on more senior level projects

- Enhance your visibility on **Florida Atlantic's campuses**

- Provide supervisory experience for junior employees

- Allow your organization to contribute to the professional development of **future leaders**

- Raise your image in the community as supporting educational opportunities for students

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

Students can gain a substantial amount of valuable experience when they are able to apply what they are learning in the classroom in practical ways. This practice allows them to refine skills gained through academic coursework as well as develop new areas through exposure to professionals and the organization in which they work.

Interns will:

- **Learn and contribute** to an organization
- Apply what they learn in class to their internship activities as well as take their skills **developed** on-site back to the classroom
- **Explore** both technical as well as soft skill development
- Learn from and network with **industry professionals**
- Gain transcript notation and possible credit towards degree completion if registered for a course
- Explore and verify major and career **aspirations**
- Potentially secure additional internship or full-time employment opportunities

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WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Excerpted from the **National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Position Statement: U.S. Internships**[1].

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE):

> " *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 workplace setting (across in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities). Internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, develop social capital, explore career fields, and make connections in professional fields. In addition, internships serve as a* **significant recruiting mechanism for employers**, *providing them with the opportunity to guide and evaluate potential candidates.* "

Internships have various titles ranging by industry, organization, and/or geographical location. While there are various types of internships, all share one common denominator: **the intern strives to meet certain preset and supervisor-approved learning goals**. These learning goals must be formally reflected upon and evaluated by both the intern and the internship supervisor before, during, and after the experience.

1   Extracted 8/14/2025, https://www.naceweb.org/about-us/advocacy/position-statements/position-statement-us-internships

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:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom and apply the knowledge gained through academic coursework. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or replace the work of a regular employee.

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.

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

HOW DO INTERNSHIPS DIFFER FROM OTHER JOBS?

Interns should be refining their professional skill set through projects, mentoring, and shadowing opportunities within the organization. All students participating in a **Florida Atlantic Career Center** managed internship or co-op program will develop learning objectives that they will strive to achieve during their internship. These learning objectives are discussed and designed along with the intern's supervisor. This process ensures they are within the scope of the internship and that there is a reasonable assumption that they are achievable before the end of the experience.

WHAT INTERNSHIPS ARE

👍 yes

- Includes developing intentional **learning** objective goals that are structured into the experience and supervised by a professional with relevant and related background in the field

- Promotes academic, career, and/or personal **development**

- Balances the intern's learning goals with the organization's needs

- Often spans three to six months, although shorter experiences are also welcome

- Involves industry related and soft skill development

- May be carefully monitored and evaluated for **academic credit**

- Provides adequate supervision in a reasonably safe environment with the necessary tools to perform the learning goals agreed upon for the duration of the internship

👎 no

- **Free help**

- **Meant to replace an employee**

- More than **20%** busy work (errands, filing, etc.)

- Part-time work focused on repeatable tasks

- Shadowing professionals with no structure or guidelines

- Volunteering where **no learning** is occurring

INTERNSHIP TASKS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Sample internship tasks include:

- Developing Content
  - Handbooks
  - Manuals
  - Lesson Plans
  - Presentations
  - Posters
  - Marketing Materials
- Financial Activities
  - Auditing Accounts
  - Creating Reports

- Administering Activities
  - Laboratory Tests
  - Hardware/Software Modifications
  - Surveys/Studies
  - Research
  - Presentations
- Online Activities
  - Social Media
  - Website Edits

View the Sample Position Descriptions in the **Appendix** of this document for more detailed examples.

With many technological resources available, internship formats are now expanding beyond the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workweek. Internships may include in-person supervision or virtual supervision.

In-Person
An in-person internship format has the student interning at the organization's **physical location**. The intern is provided with resources at the organization to complete assigned tasks such as dedicated office space, technology, company e-mail account, etc. Supervision meetings are held in-person between the student and the supervisor. During these meetings it is expected that progress towards project work will be discussed as well as feedback on overall performance and professionalism.

Virtual
There has been a rise of virtual internship experiences. A virtual intern may or may not be provided with the technology needed to complete assigned tasks (such as a computer, software packages, phone, etc.). For virtual internships to be successful, it is essential that the supervisor and the intern **communicate regularly**. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that supervisors and interns meet (either in-person at a public location or virtually) once a week to ensure proper feedback and mentorship. As with the in-person internships, during supervision meetings, it is expected that progress towards project work will be discussed as well as feedback on overall performance and professionalism.

HOW TO DEVELOP AN INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Developing a new internship program with your organization can seem daunting. The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** is here to assist you throughout the process, from creating your position description to final evaluations.

STEP 1:
ASSESSING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS FOR AN INTERN

The relationship between an intern and the organization brings value to all parties. If you are contemplating creating a new freestanding internship or expanding your current internship activities into a more developed internship program, these questions may help you frame the opportunity:

What does your organization hope to gain from hiring an intern?

- ✓ Does your industry have a **peak season** when additional resources would be helpful?

- ✓ Is your organization looking to fulfill a need on a specific project? How does this project benefit the organization and develop the student?

- ✓ Will this internship encompass one major project, or entail a variety of small projects?

- ✓ What are the tools and workspace necessary to provide to the student?

- ✓ What talents, academic background, and experience do you want in an intern? It is recommended that you decide on qualifications early on to help you select the best candidate.

- ✓ Are you able to hire **international** students?

- ✓ Will the intern be **compensated** (paid hourly or stipend)? Or will the position be un-paid? The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** highly encourages employers to provide compensation to FAU students and finds that employers that do will have a much more robust applicant pool. If the position is unpaid, please pay close attention to the "Unpaid Internships – Are they Legal?" section later in this document.

- ✓ What would be the **capstone** of the experience for the student (such as a presentation to senior leaders)?

- ✓ Who will **supervise** the intern? What training and oversight will the internship supervisor have pertaining to managing a student intern?

- ✓ How **many** interns are you looking to hire? Are the interns working in the same or different departments?

- ✓ If you have multiple interns, how can you establish camaraderie among them and help them share the knowledge that they are learning as a result of their internship?

- ✓ If you have multiple interns with multiple supervisors, is there a main **point of contact** that can administer an internship program on behalf of the organization?

- ✓ What information will you provide to the student during the interview and on-boarding process? What documentation/awareness will be important for the student to have to successfully become a part of the organization's culture? The more successful internship programs are the ones that have a structure and timeline in place prior to the internship assignment beginning.

- ✓ How will you monitor the **progress** of the internship in addition to the regular meetings between the supervisor and intern? Will there be a check-in at the end of the first week to ensure that the student and supervisor expectations are in alignment? Will there be a formal evaluation mid-way through the experience?

- ✓ How will you monitor the **success** of your interns (exit interviews, intern evaluations, internship and/or full-time offers, etc.)? What does success look like to you? What stakeholders will want to see these outcomes?

STEP 2:
CREATING YOUR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Writing Learning Objectives

What do you hope the intern will learn from the experience of working within your organization? Identifying the **learning objectives** for your internship experience will help you develop your position description. Moreover, using and referencing the learning objectives throughout the internship experience will help you and your intern keep focused on your organizational goals. Both the intern and the supervisor should be in agreement about the outcomes for this experiential opportunity.
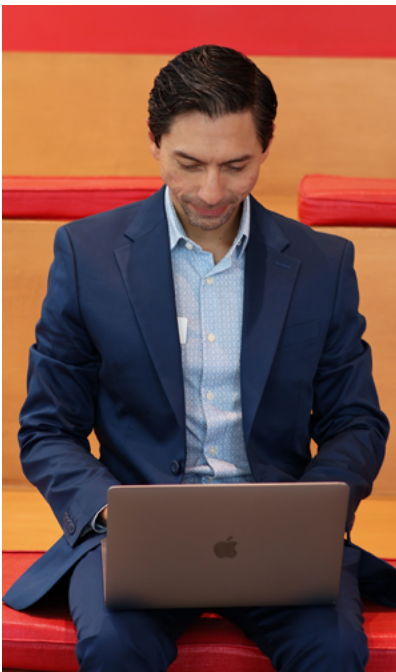
The Florida Atlantic Career Center can help construct internship learning objectives. A typical learning objective should have three parts:

1. **An intended outcome or skill.**
   How will the intern grow as a result of this experience? Which skills (soft skills or technical skills) will the intern develop? What values will the intern learn from your organization? See the **Career Readiness Competencies** on page 10 for ideas on key areas of development for **Florida Atlantic interns**.

2. **A specific project, task, activity, or responsibility.**
   How will the intern reach the intended outcome or skill level? What specific actions will lead to those developed skills?

3. **Evidence or project result.**
   How will you determine the success of the intern? What criteria will you use to evaluate the intern? What will indicate the successful completion of the project or internship?

Here are some examples of learning objectives for an internship, highlighting the three main parts:

✓ By creating quotes and invoices (project/task), the intern will improve upon their **critical thinking skills** (intended outcome), as evidenced by producing thorough and accurate reports on a weekly basis (evidence/result).

✓ The intern will **develop communication skills** (intended outcome) by managing the several social media accounts on a daily basis (project/task), resulting in an increase in online followers and social media presence (evidence/result).

CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

The **National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)** promotes **seven** career readiness competencies identified by employers as most often sought in future employees. Interns registering for an **Florida Atlantic Career Center** managed internship or co-op program, along with their supervisors, will identify a learning outcome tied to each one of the **NACE Career Readiness Competencies**. Below are the eight career readiness competencies that pertain to a student's development of key soft skills.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task. The individual is also able to apply computing skills to solve problems.

LEADERSHIP
Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

CRITICAL THINKING
Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

PROFESSIONALISM
Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

COMMUNICATION
Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

CAREER & SELF-DEVELOPMENT
Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

TEAMWORK
Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

For more information on NACE's career readiness competencies, visit:
www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined

Interns will submit **one** learning outcome for each of these competencies, along with some additional information, in their mid-term evaluation as part of the curriculum for the Internship courses at the **Florida Atlantic Career Center**.

COMPENSATION LEVELS

How much should my organization pay an intern?

Compensation will vary by major, progress towards degree completion, and technical acumen.

2024 NATIONAL AVERAGE
$23.04/HR

2025 FL MIN. WAGE
$14/HR

2025 AVG. PAID FAU INTERN
$23/HR

The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** has salary resources that can further refine average compensation based on industry, region, and other metrics[2].

You may consider **other compensation offers**, such as a stipend, tuition reimbursement, mileage reimbursement, etc. However, keep in mind that a competitive compensation attracts a strong applicant pool. We encourage you to contact the **Florida Atlantic Career Center** to obtain salary information related to your opportunity.

2   National Average obtained from NACE 2025, Internship & Co-op Survey Report, 2025. Average FAU intern rate from reported internships in Handshake, Summer 2025.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS, ARE THEY LEGAL?

If you are planning on hiring a student into an unpaid internship, the **Florida Atlantic Career Center** strongly encourages you to review the **United States Department of Labor's Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act**[3] and ensure that your organization is in compliance with that act. What follows below is an excerpt from this act:

The Test For Unpaid Interns

There are **some circumstances** under which individuals who participate in "for-profit" private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term "suffer or permit to work" cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the **training meets certain criteria**. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following **six criteria** must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;

2. The internship experience is for the **benefit** of the intern;

3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;

4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;

5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and

6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the **FLSA**, and the Act's minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern. This exclusion from the definition of employment is necessarily quite narrow because the **FLSA's** definition of "employ" is very broad.
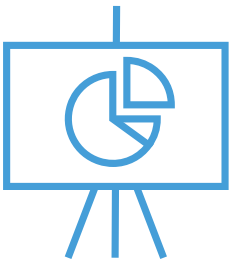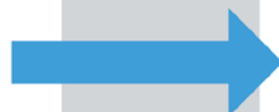
3   United Stated Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm

MYTHBUSTING
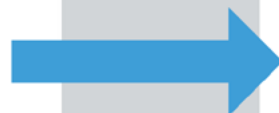# UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

MYTH	TRUTH
Students **cannot** earn academic credit and earn wages at the same time.	Students **can** earn academic credit and transcript notation while still earning wages.
Most internships are **unpaid**.	Internship compensation varies across industries, but most internships are **paid** at competitive wages.

STEP 3:
RECRUITING AN INTERN AT FLORIDA ATLANTIC

The first step in promoting your internship opportunity at FAU is to post it in the **Florida Atlantic Career Center** managed job and internship portal called **Handshake**. It is recommended that your internship description contain the following aspects:

- A **clear title** that refrains from company specific acronyms
- Start date and end date (if the end date is negotiable you can indicate TBD – To Be Determined)
- Hours per week
- Compensation (if the salary has a range, you can enter a range)

- Information about the organization
- Information about the position
- **Learning outcomes** expected to be derived from the position
- Desired qualifications
- How students should apply for the position
- Students can send their résumés through our portal to you

(If you would like an internship specialist to review the opportunity prior to posting it, please email the position description to **intern@fau.edu**. We can also post the internship on your behalf.)

USING HANDSHAKE

Handshake is available to all currently enrolled degree-seeking FAU students and registered alumni. It allows employers to:

- Post for full-time and part-time jobs, as well as co-op & internship opportunities.
- View student résumés and profiles.
- Set up on-campus interviews with students.
- Stay informed on **Florida Atlantic Career Center** events.

As a new employer wanting to post an internship opportunity, the process involves two steps. First you will create an account in the system. Once your account is approved, you will have access to post your positions. Here is how you can get connected to FAU on Handshake:

1. Go to **fau.edu/career/employers**
2. Click on the Handshake icon and follow directions to **"Register for a Handshake Account"**
3. Be sure to **read and agree** to the following which can be found on our website:
   - Job Posting Policy
   - FAU Third Party/Staffing Agreement (if applicable)
   - Internship & Co-op Agreement

If you need any assistance in the internship posting process, please email **intern@fau.edu** or call **561-297-3533**.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS:
FIELDS TO COMPLETE FOR POSTINGS IN HANDSHAKE

·BASICS

POSTING FIELDS	EXAMPLE
*Job Title:	Social Media Intern
Company Division:	Marketing Department
Where should students submit their application?	Apply in Handshake
Display your contact information to students?	Name only
Job Type:	Internship
Employment Type and Duration:	Part-time Temporary/Seasonal
Start & End Date:	January 2027 – May 2027

·DETAILS

POSTING FIELDS	EXAMPLE
Description:	Learning Objectives • Learn to effectively market and advertise programs to constituents sing a variety of methods (social media, print, in-person interaction, etc.) • Develop relationships within and outside the department (within meaning student groups, outside meaning campus partners and local community)
Job Function:	Advertising, Media & PR
How many students do you expect to hire for this position?	2
Approximate Salary:	Paid, $20.00 per hour
Job Location:	Boca Raton, FL
Required Documents:	Resume

·PREFERENCES

The following items allow for you to screen which students can see your postings. For example, if you select "Screen Majors: Yes" only the Majors selected will be able to access your job posting. This will exclude all ineligible students. For the broadest reach, the Florida Atlantic Career Center recommends to refrain from screening your internship posting and allow all students to view it.

POSTING FIELDS	EXAMPLE
Graduation date range & School years:	May 2026 - May 2027 Junior, Senior
Minimum GPA:	3.0
Major Categories:	Communication Studies

STEP 4:
SELECTING AND HIRING AN INTERN

Once you have identified the student(s) that you would like to hire, we recommend that you extend the offer(s) in a **timely manner**. It is customary to provide students with a deadline whereby they will need to respond (one to three weeks is typically an acceptable time frame).

Often a conversation between the organization and the future intern will occur in which the intern verbally accepts the internship offer. It is recommended that the organization follows up with a letter confirming the internship offer and providing key onboarding information to ensure that everyone is clear on the next steps. The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** recommends including the following aspects in your internship offer letter to students:

- Title of the Internship
- Department in which the intern will be working
- Internship modality (fully in person, hybrid, or virtual)
- Start date
- Rate of compensation
- Days and hours scheduled to work per week
- Supervisor's name and title
- Onboarding procedures, such as Human Resources paperwork and the steps/timeline for completion
- Primary point of contact (and contact information) for any questions prior to beginning the internship

STEP 5:
REPORT THE HIRE

Upon the student's acceptance of the internship, please reach out to an Internship Specialist via **intern@fau.edu** or **561-297-3533** to report the hire. Then, a member of the internship team will reach out to the student to invite him or her to register for either a zero credit or a credit bearing course to receive transcript notation and support in developing his or her career readiness skills. The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** manages two programs: the Professional Internship Program and Co-op courses on behalf of select colleges.
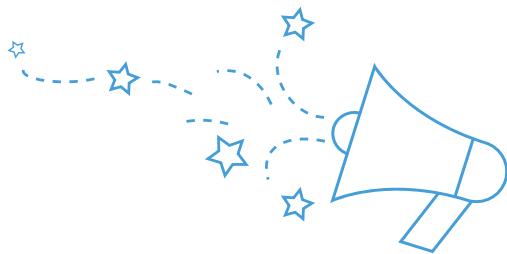
STEP 6:
ORIENTING AND TRAINING AN INTERN

Whether you are hiring one or twenty interns, it is strongly recommended that you **develop an onboarding process** that can be standardized across the organization as well as replicated by multiple employees.

Key areas to cover include:

- Organization's vision, mission, and structure (**staff organization chart**)
- Security/confidentiality areas of importance
- Company/industry language that will prove helpful in completing tasks and understanding the organization's culture
- Tour of the facility and staff introductions
- **Expectation** of work hours, breaks, and lunches
- Logistics – parking, company email, work station, shared office equipment procedures, break room, etc.

- **Professionalism** – dress code, attendance, punctuality, calling out sick/emergencies
- Position expectations, project overview, goals, and areas requiring supervisor approval
- Supervision schedule, meeting times, and the supervisor's preferred method of communication regarding questions etc. (email, stop in)

In the event that the intern's primary supervisor is unavailable, a **secondary point of contact** should be identified so the intern always feels supported during the experience and has a resource should questions arise.

STEP 7: SUPERVISING AND EVALUATING AN INTERN

Additionally, if you are in the process of developing a new internship program, or are revisiting an existing program to identify areas of refinement, we recommend that you review the **NACE** guide of the **15 Best Practices for Internship Programs**:

15 BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Best Practice #1:
Provide interns with real work assignments.*
Providing interns with **real work** is number one to ensuring your program's success. Interns should be doing work related to their major, that is challenging, that is recognized by the organization as valuable, and that fills the entire work term.

You can guarantee that hiring managers provide real work assignments by checking job descriptions, emphasizing the importance of real work assignments during a manager/mentor orientation session, and communicating with interns frequently throughout the work term to determine how they perceive what they are doing.

Note: The best practices presented here assume the organization's goal is to convert interns to full-time hires and is therefore paying its interns. Unpaid internships present a number of problems for organizations focused on intern conversion, not the least of which is legal issues that arise if the unpaid intern is given real work assignments.

Best Practice #2:
Hold orientations for all involved.
It's important that everyone is "on the same page," so to speak. Make this happen by holding an **orientation session** for managers and mentors as well as a session for students. Orientations ensure that everyone starts with the same expectations and role definitions. This is time well spent—the effort you put into these sessions will pay off throughout the program.

Best Practice #3:
Provide interns with a handbook and/or website.

Whether in paper booklet format, or presented as a special section on your website, a handbook serves as a guide for students, answering frequently asked questions and communicating the "rules" in a warm and welcoming way.

A separate intern website serves many of the purposes of the handbook, but has the advantage of being easy to change. You can use your website as a communication tool, with announcements from the college relations staff or even articles of interest written by the interns themselves.

Best Practice #4:
Provide housing and relocation assistance.

Few employers can afford to provide fully paid housing for interns, but you'll find that you get a lot of appreciation if you offer **any kind of assistance** toward housing expenses. If that's not possible, provide assistance in locating affordable housing: For those relocating to the job site, the prospect of finding affordable, short-term housing can be daunting. Easy availability of affordable housing will make your opportunity more attractive to students, broadening your pool of candidates.

If you can pay for all or some of your interns' housing, be sure to design (and stick to) a **clear policy detailing who is eligible**. This will eliminate any perceptions of unequal treatment. In addition, be aware that employer-paid or employer-subsidized housing is considered a taxable benefit. Check with your internal tax department on exceptions to this.

You will also want to consider the issue of relocation, which is separate although related to housing. Many organizations **pay some or all** of their interns' relocation expenses to and/or from the job site.

Best Practice #5:
Offer scholarships.

Pairing a scholarship with your internship is a **great way to recruit** for your internship program–and this is especially true if you are having difficulty attracting a particular type of student or students with a specific skill set to your program. Attaching a scholarship can increase your pool of candidates with the desired qualifications.

Best Practice #6:
Offer flex-time and/or other unusual work arrangements.

Students mention flex-time as **one of their most-desired features** in a job. (A flexible time schedule during their internship eases their transition to the workplace.)

If you think about how students spend the day on campus (varied schedule each day, with varied activities such as work, class, social time), you can understand that 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday is a bit of an adjustment for them. A **flexible schedule** can make them feel less chained in by an unchanging routine.

Other work arrangements that have been found successful with students include keeping them on as part-time, remote employees after they go back to school (depending on the type of work they do for you and whether they have a willing manager), and having them come back and work over school breaks for a couple of weeks. These are excellent ways to keep communications open and build a stronger bond.

Best Practice #7:
Have an intern manager.

Having a dedicated manager for your intern program is the best way to ensure that it runs smoothly and stays focused on your criteria for **success**. Unfortunately, the size and resources available to most internship programs mean that this isn't always possible. If your program isn't big enough to warrant a dedicated full-time staff member, an excellent short-term solution is to hire a graduate student (look for a student working toward an advanced HR degree) to be your intern, and put this college relations intern in charge of the daily operation of the internship program. This gives the interns a **"go-to" person**, and gives you and your staff a break from the many daily tasks involved in running a program of any size. For this to work, you have to plan the program structure in advance (don't expect your intern to do it), and be very accessible to your college relations intern manager.

Best Practice #8:
Encourage team involvement.

Involve your college recruiting teams– whether they are "**volunteers**" who participate in college recruiting, staff members dedicated to college recruiting, or some combination of both–in your intern program. They can sponsor social or professional development events, and help to orient the interns to your company culture. In my experience, college team members served as cooks at intern picnics, hosts at speaker events, and drivers for social outings such as ball games.

Best Practice #9:
Invite career center staff and faculty to visit interns on site.

Although some programs—especially those that are very structured on the university side—make visits by career center staff and faculty a regular practice, most do not. In general, career center staff and faculty members have relatively few opportunities to visit employer work sites to see firsthand the types of experiences that their students are getting. By inviting them to your site, you will build a better working **relationship** with these groups, which can lead to more student referrals, enhanced campus visibility, and increased flexibility on their parts when your business needs dictate it.

Best Practice #10:
Hold new-hire panels.

New-hire panels are one of the best ways to **showcase an organization** to interns as a great place to work. These are panels of five or six people who were hired as new grads within the last three years. They act as panelists in a meeting of interns, giving a brief summary of their background and then answering questions from the intern audience. Your interns get insight about your organization from your new hires—people who they perceive are like themselves and who they consequently view as credible sources of information.

In these meetings, I've found that the interns consistently bring up the **same topics**: *Why did you choose this employer over others? What was your first year like? How is being a full-time employee here different from being an intern? Do you recommend getting a graduate degree? In the same field, or an M.B.A.? Is it better to go straight to graduate school after the bachelor's or better to work a while?*

It's also fairly consistent that the new hires will **offer other types of advice** to your interns, such as how to handle finances those first couple of years out of school. (Their typical advice: Don't run right out and buy a new car, and, Start contributing the maximum to your savings plan as soon as you are allowed.)

College relations staff should attend these sessions, but should remain unobtrusive, staying in the back of the room so as not to stifle the conversation. By being there, you **stay aware** of what is on the minds of your target group, and you can answer any detailed questions that may come up, such as those related to benefits.

Best Practice #11:
Bring in speakers from your company's executive ranks.

One of the greatest advantages to students in having internships is the access they get to accomplished professionals in their field. Consequently, speakers from the executive ranks are very popular with students – it's a great career development and role modeling experience for interns. Having a CEO speak is especially impressive. Best scenario: Your CEO speaker is personable, willing to answer questions, and willing and able to spend a little informal time with the students after speaking – **your interns will be quite impressed**.

For you, having your executives speak to interns is another way to "**sell**" your organization to the interns, and get your executives invested in (and supporting) your program.

Best Practice #12:
Offer training/encourage outside classes.

Providing students with access to **in-house training** – both in work-skills-related areas, such as a computer language, and in general skills areas, such as time management – is a tangible way to show students you are interested in their development.

You may also want to consider providing interns with information about nearby community colleges: Many students will be interested in attending during their work term to take care of some electives and/or get a little ahead with the hours they need to graduate. If you have the budget, you may also want to consider paying the tuition for courses they take while working for you, but, as is the case with housing, any assistance you can provide – even if it's just providing them with information about local schools – will earn you points with students.

Best Practice #13:
Conduct focus groups/surveys.

Conducting focus groups and feedback surveys with the representatives of your target group is a great way to see your organization as the students see it. Focus groups in particular can yield information about what your competitors are doing that students find appealing.

Best Practice #14:
Showcase intern work through presentations/expo.

Students work very hard at completing their work and are generally proud of their **accomplishments**. Setting up a venue for them to do presentations (formal presentations or in a fair-type setting such as an expo) not only allows them to demonstrate their achievements, but also showcases the internship program to all employees.

Best Practice #15:
Conduct exit interviews.

Whether face-to-face or over the telephone, a real-time exit interview done by a member of the college relations team is an excellent way to **gather feedback** on the student's experience and to assess their interest in coming back. Having the students fill out an exit survey and bring it to the interview gives some structure to the conversation.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Florida Atlantic University Internship Program Agreement

Thank you for your interest in participating in Florida Atlantic University's student internship program ("Internship"). By accepting a Florida Atlantic student intern, you acknowledge and consent to the terms of the Florida Atlantic University Internship Program Agreement.

The employer agrees:

1. To comply with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) position statement on U.S. Internships:
    a. 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 workplace setting (across in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities). Internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, develop social capital, explore career fields, and make connections in professional fields.
2. To treat the internship as an **extension of a student's learning experience** and coordinate the assigned duties so that work is closely related to each student's specific academic degree program and/or career goals.
    a. Clerical responsibilities must not exceed **20%** of the intern assignments.
3. To certify that the Internship/Co-op position is **not a permanent position** that provides employee benefits or guaranteed employment upon graduation. The position has a defined and agreed upon start and end date, average hours per week and/or total number of hours to be completed.
4. For **paid** Internship/Co-op positions, to pay students a rate determined at the time of the offer.
5. To explain in detail to the selected intern their role, responsibilities, and expectations, including **specific** tasks and projects.
6. To conduct **regular** supervisory and/or mentor meetings with the intern.
7. To conduct an **orientation** of your organization with the intern(s), including philosophy, industry of operation, competitors/other providers, company policies, and work safety policies.
8. If a student is registered for an Internship or Co-op course, to submit **required** paperwork and evaluations necessary for registration and grading purposes.
9. To abide by the Florida Atlantic University Career Center's Employer Recruitment Standards and Policies.
10. To understand and agree not to discriminate on the basis of any protected class as required by law and University regulations and policies. The employer agrees to abide by the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Laws and Regulations.**
11. To adhere to the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor's Fact Sheet #71 Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

12. 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, NACE believes that an internship should include:

   a. A **learning** experience with a real-world opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or replace the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.

   b. Learned skills and knowledge that are **transferable** to other employment settings.

   c. A **defined beginning and end** that is mutually agreed upon and consistent with institutional sponsor guidelines and schedules.

   d. A **position description** with clear responsibilities and required/desired qualifications.

   e. Clearly defined **learning objectives/goals** supportive of the student's academic program goals and institutional requirements.

   f. Direct **supervision** by a professional(s) with relevant expertise and educational and/or professional experience who provides productive **feedback**, guidance, and the resources and equipment necessary to successfully complete the assignment.

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

If you have any questions about this agreement, please contact the **Florida Atlantic University Career Center** at **intern@fau.edu** or **561-297-3533.**

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION #1

Job Title: Accounting Intern	**Wage/Salary:** $24/hour
Organization Name: XYZ Company	**Start Date:** 1/9/26
Number of Openings: 1	**Expiration Date:** 2/6/26
Hours per Week: 15-20	**Job Location City:** Boca Raton
Paid or Unpaid: Paid	**Job Location State:** FL

Job Description
- To collect and analyze financial and non-financial information.
- To conduct research using subscription database services and the Internet.
- To create reports to be used by the attorneys and accountants within the Division.
- To assist the attorneys and accountants with projects on an as needed basis.
- To perform other duties and special projects as needed.

Qualifications
- A student at an accredited university or college majoring in Accounting.
- Students will have completed at least one semester of intermediate accounting.
- Proficient with Microsoft software applications and use of the Internet.
- Able to organize and meet deadlines.
- A willingness to work both as a team member and independently.

Employer is willing to support the student to use their internship to gain academic credit. Please reach out to the Florida Atlantic Career Center to learn more.

Where should students submit their application?
Apply in Handshake.

Job Title:
IT Intern

Wage/Salary:
$20-$22/hour

Organization Name:
XYZ Company

Start Date:
1/9/26

Number of Openings:
1

Expiration Date:
2/6/26

Hours per Week:
15

Job Location City:
Miami

Paid or Unpaid:
Paid

Job Location State:
FL

Job Description
- Build and manage web scrapers, crawlers, and routines for harvesting data from the web and 3rd party APIs.
- Gather and process raw data at scale (including writing scripts, web scraping, calling APIs, write SQL queries, etc..).
- Build and manage large database.
- Work with analyst and sales force.
- Purchase data.

Qualifications
- Ability to design web crawler.
- Ability to build large data base.
- Ability to create intuitive, clean user interfaces.
- Ability to work efficiently with non-technical teams.

Employer is willing to support the student to use their internship to gain academic credit. Please reach out to the Florida Atlantic Career Center to learn more.

Where should students submit their application?
Apply in Handshake.

Job Title:
Public Relations Intern

Wage/Salary:
$18/hour

Organization Name:
XYZ Company

Start Date:
1/9/26

Number of Openings:
2

Expiration Date:
2/6/26

Hours per Week:
15-20

Job Location City:
Boca Raton

Paid or Unpaid:
Paid

Job Location State:
FL

Job Description
Company is looking for an intern interested in learning all aspects of the public relations field. The intern who fills this position should expect to learn the field from top to bottom, and will complete this program ready to enter any fast-paced firm with excellent skills. It's essential that applicants to this position have excellent communication skills, demonstrate creativity, and understand the importance of attending to even the smallest details.

Learning Outcomes
- Navigate through a fast-paced work environment.
- Know the operations of a successful business.
- Make business decisions and meet goals set out.
- Navigate through a professional work place with the skills needed to succeed.
- Negotiate and execute business decisions.
- Apply academic knowledge in a professional setting.
- Develop professionally relevant competencies and relationships in a work environment.
- Gain exposure to a chosen field and an understanding of business etiquette.
- Observe and begin to understand an organizational culture.
- Evaluate one's own performance in light of one's expressed goals and learning outcomes.
- Compare and contrast one's self-perception to the professional perception of the supervisor.
- Clarify one's calling through reflection on the internship experience.
- Critically evaluate the internship experience as an exemplar for the field.

Employer is willing to support the student to use their internship to gain academic credit. Please reach out to the Florida Atlantic Career Center to learn more.

Qualifications
Students applying for this internship must have strong communication skills and should be majoring in Public Relations, Communications, Marketing or Journalism. Applicants should also have strong writing skills, as well as a solid understanding of social media. Knowledge in Microsoft Office applications is a plus.

Where should students submit their application?
Apply in Handshake.

PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP (IDS 3949)

This **0-4 credit course** offers students the opportunity to gain "real-world" exposure and supervised experience related to their major, specific field of study or career interests. The 0 credit option is tuition-free. The Professional Internship course is offered twice per semester (full and second-half terms); fall, spring, or summer. Students can participate multiple times with one employer or different employers. Students receive a transcript notation for the experience. The course is **graded** Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory and is open to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Student Requirements:
- Must have completed **one semester** at FAU
- Course requires a mid-term and final evaluation
- Must work the minimum number of hours according to the amount of credits they are enrolled for:
  - 0-1 credits – 60 hours
  - 2 credit – 90 hours
  - 3 credits – 135 hours
  - 4 credits – 180 hours

Employer Requirements:
- Internship must be approved by the **Florida Atlantic Career Center**
- Employer must agree to the **Florida Atlantic Career Center Internship Agreement** (see the Resources section of this document)
- Work with the student to develop learning outcomes for the internship experience
- Complete a final evaluation of the student's performance at the end of the semester
- Promote the student's technical and soft skill development

What is proper work authorization for an international student?

That depends on the student's status. International students in the United States can attend a university in any one of a number of immigration statuses:

1. Students using "**dependent**" visas (for example, dependents of spouses or parents who are in the United States in a work-authorized visa status, such as H-1B, E-1/E-2/E-3, L-1, O-1). In general, students attending school using a dependent visa are ineligible to work, unless the work is voluntary under the six-factor test.

2. Students in **F-1 status** (which is a typical "student" status for students enrolled in an academic program). F-1 students are not permitted to engage in employment without the requisite authorization. For F-1 students, the work authorization options are:

   - **On-Campus Employment**: F-1 students maintaining their status may work on campus for up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full time during school vacations, as long as they intend to register for the following term. The work must be on campus, or at an off-campus location educationally affiliated with the school. No U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) authorization is required for this employment.

   - **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**: F-1 students can be approved by a school's designated school official (DSO) to work for a specific off-campus employer for a specific time period as CPT. In order to qualify for CPT, the work must be an integral part of the established curriculum in the student's course of study. CPT can be approved either for part-time (20 hours or less per week) or full-time employment (for example, in a cooperative situation). DSO approval, and notation of that approval to the student's SEVIS record and Form I-20, are required prior to beginning CPT.

     Employment letter including the following: (a) name of employer and physical location of employment; (b) proposed occupation ± including title, description of duties, salary, hours per week; (c) exact dates of employment.[4]

   - **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**: OPT is another common way for F-1 students to work as employees or trainees. OPT allows the student to work for any employer in a job related to the student's degree program. Most students in F-1 status are eligible for a total of 12 months of OPT, which can be used during the degree program or can be used to work after graduation. OPT can be part time while school is in session, or full time during breaks. OPT used during the degree program is subtracted from OPT time available after the degree is completed.

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4   Extracted from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Practical Training https://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training

- **Economic Hardship**: An F-1 student who has maintained F-1 status for an academic year and is in good academic standing may apply for off-campus employment based on "economic hardship." Economic hardship refers to financial problems caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control. The student must apply to USCIS for authorization to work based on economic hardship.

- **Designated International Organizations**: Certain organizations are permitted to hire F-1 students for work experience (United Nations, IMF, World Bank, and so forth).

3. Students in **J-1 status** (for "exchange visitors" engaged in designated programs at a U.S. university). For J-1 students, the options are:

- **On-Campus Employment**: J-1 students may engage in part-time employment on campus for no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session and full time during breaks and holidays. The employment must be authorized in writing by the university foreign student adviser before it begins and can be for no longer than 12-month increments at a time.

- **Employment Related to Scholarships, Assistantships, and Fellowships**: This employment requires written approval by the university DSO in advance of commencement of employment. If the J-1 program is sponsored by an agency other than the school, then the student will need to obtain from that agency written authorization for employment. The J-1 student can work no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session and full time during breaks.

- **Unforeseen Economic Circumstances**: A J-1 student may be authorized for off-campus employment when necessary because of serious, urgent, and unforeseen economic circumstances that have arisen since acquiring J-1 student status. This type of J-1 student employment is subject to the 20 hour per week maximum while school is in session.

- **Employment Pursuant to Academic Training for J-1 Students and Post-Docs**: Most J-1 students are eligible for academic training during or after completing their education in the United States (18 months for most J-1 students; up to 36 months for post-doctoral research). This is similar to F-1 optional practical training; however, unlike F-1 students, the J-1 students engaging in academic training do not require formal employment authorization from the USCIS.

The **Florida Atlantic Career Center** works closely with the **International Services** office to ensure compliance with all federal regulations, and can be a resource throughout the process of hiring international students as interns.