

Internship Definition & Characteristic Matrix



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY
Career Services
Division of Student Affairs

San Diego State University Recognizes the [NACE](#) Internship 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.

Internship Characteristics Matrix

It is recommended that employers, students, and faculty/staff refer to the Internship Characteristics Matrix below in order to find information that SDSU requires, recommends, and finds not applicable to the three categories of internships: paid, paid for academic credit, and unpaid for academic credit.

Characteristics of the Experience	Internship Paid	Internship Paid for Academic Credit	Internship Unpaid for Academic Credit
Similar to training in an educational environment	Recommended	Recommended	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
For the benefit of the student	Required	Required	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
Student does not displace a regular employee at the organization	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
Student works under close supervision of existing staff	Recommended	Required	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
Supervisor is a full time salaried professional in the students intended career field	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student	Recommended	Required	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
On occasion the operations of the employer may be impacted (See examples below)	Recommended	Required	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
Student is not entitled to a job upon completion	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act

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The employer and the student understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Required- refer to the Fair Labor Standards Act
Employer provides the student with transferable skills that can be used in multiple employment settings (See examples below)	Required	Required	Required
Employer is not dependent on the work of the student for the organization to run	Required	Required	Required
Employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow a student to learn certain functions	Recommended	Required	Required
The internship has a clear start and end date agreed on prior to the start date	Recommended	Required	Required
Employer provides student with clear position description	Required	Required	Required
Student is provided with specific learning outcomes	Recommended	Required	Required
Employer provides students with opportunity to make professional connections	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Full time (12+ units) students should work 10-15 hours per week and it is recommended not to exceed 20 hours per week as an intern	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
One unit of academic credit is equal to 45 hours	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Student meets with site supervisor regularly and receives feedback on performance	Required	Required	Required

*Virtual Internships need to be discussed with the Department Internship Contact (<http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/CS/current/internships.htm>)

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*International Internships need to be discussed with the Education Abroad Office (<http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/ISC/>)

*Internships governed by accrediting bodies (for example, Council on Social Work Education) need to be discussed with the Department Internship Contacts (<http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/CS/current/internships.htm>)

*Student learning opportunities (practicums or clinical training) should be negotiated with the appropriate Department Internship Contact (<http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/CS/current/internships.htm>)

Examples

On occasion the operations of the employer may actually be impeded in situations like:

- Training an intern on a new program or process the organization is using
- Meeting with an intern for feedback on his/her progress and career discussion including insight on the industry, lessons learned, tips for success, etc.
- Checking the intern's work and progress on intern project and/or on-going work
- Development and management of the internship experience

Provide interns with opportunities to work on developing Career Readiness Competencies. Career Readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace. The Career Readiness Competencies are:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communication
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Information Technology Application
- Leadership
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Career Management