



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

Career Services
Division of Student Affairs

SDSU Internship Definition and Characteristic Matrix

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
The student and employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
The internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions	Recommended	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
The internship is tied to the student's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit	Recommended	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act

Updated February 5, 2018

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Characteristics of the Experience	Internship Paid	Internship Paid for Academic Credit	Internship Unpaid for Academic Credit
The internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar	Recommended	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
The internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning	Recommended	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
The student's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the student	Recommended	Recommended	Required by SDSU Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
The student and employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship	Not Applicable	Recommended	Recommended Refer to the Updated Fair Labor Standards Act
Student works under close supervision of existing staff	Recommended	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU
Supervisor is a full time salaried professional in the student's intended career field	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Employer provides student the opportunity to develop career readiness competencies (see page 5) that can be used in multiple employment settings	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

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Characteristics of the Experience	Internship Paid	Internship Paid for Academic Credit	Internship Unpaid for Academic Credit
Employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow a student to learn certain functions	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
The internship has a clear start and end date that corresponds to the semester schedule in which they are enrolled agreed on prior to the start date	Recommended	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU
Employer provides student with a clear position description	Required	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU
Student is provided with specific learning outcomes	Recommended	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU
Employer provides students with an 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	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
One unit of academic credit is equal to 45 hours (may vary by department)	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Student meets with site supervisor regularly and receives feedback on performance	Recommended	Required by SDSU	Required by SDSU

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The following types of internships need to be discussed with the Department Internship Contact in the academic department. View contact information at: <https://goo.gl/Jwnfyw>

- **Virtual/Remote Internships**
- **International Internships**
- **Internships governed by accrediting bodies**
(for example, Council on Social Work Education)
- **Student learning opportunities**
(practiciums or clinical training)

ARE YOU CAREER READY?

Employers are looking to hire college students and recent graduates who know how to use their talents, strengths, and interest. These students are Career Ready.

How do you become Career Ready?

Mastering these Career Readiness Competencies will prepare you to a successful transition into the workplace.



CRITICALLY THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING

Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking; use knowledge, facts, and data to solve problems and make decisions.



ORAL/WRITTEN 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.



TEAMWORK/COLLABORATION

Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religion, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.



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.



PROFESSIONALISM/WORK ETHIC

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.



CAREER MANAGEMENT

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, understand and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understand how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.



GLOBAL/INTERCULTURAL FLUENCY

Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns and students working for “for-profit” employers are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).¹

Background

The FLSA requires “for-profit” employers to pay employees for their work. Interns and students, however, may not be “employees” under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work.

The Test for Unpaid Interns and Students

Courts have used the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA.² In short, this test allows courts to examine the “economic reality” of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the “primary beneficiary” of the relationship. Courts have identified the following seven factors as part of the test:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express 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 that which would be given in an educational environment, including the 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 the internship 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.

¹ The FLSA exempts certain people who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency or who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation, for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships for public sector and non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.

² E.g., *Benjamin v. B & H Educ., Inc.*, --- F.3d ---, 2017 WL 6460087, at *4-5 (9th Cir. Dec. 19, 2017); *Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Inc.*, 811 F.3d 528, 536-37 (2d Cir. 2016); *Schumann v. Collier Anesthesia, P.A.*, 803 F.3d 1199, 1211-12 (11th Cir. 2015); see also *Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.*, 330 U.S. 148, 152-53 (1947); *Solis v. Laurelbrook Sanitarium & Sch., Inc.*, 642 F.3d 518, 529 (6th Cir. 2011).

Courts have described the “primary beneficiary test” as a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the FLSA necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case.

If analysis of these circumstances reveals that an intern or student is actually an employee, then he or she is entitled to both minimum wage and overtime pay under the FLSA. On the other hand, if the analysis confirms that the intern or student is not an employee, then he or she is not entitled to either minimum wage or overtime pay under the FLSA.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

This publication is for general information and is not a regulation. For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

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