UNLV Internships: A Step-by-Step Guide for Employers

UNLV's Career Services Office is here to help you develop your internship program and recruit, hire, and manage interns. This step-by-step guide has been developed to assist you, but please contact the office at careerservices@unlv.edu or 702-895-3495 if you have additional questions.

Step 1: Plan Your Internship Program

- Understand what an internship is

  An internship is any carefully monitored work or service experience through which students can pursue intentional learning goals and reflect actively on what they are learning throughout the experience. Students can earn academic credit toward their degrees for approved internship opportunities **and/or** receive compensation from the host business/organization. During an internship experience, the student should be guided by a mentor skilled in the area in which the intern is working.

  An internship is designed to be:

  - An opportunity to promote a student's academic, career, and personal development
  - An experience that involves learning activities, such as observation, reflection, evaluation, pursuit of learning objectives, and assessment
  - An opportunity to develop a future full-time hire for a career-track position
  - A part-time or full-time commitment
  - Paid or unpaid (See additional information below.)
  - A duration of three to six months, typically

  An internship is not designed to be:

  - A source of free or inexpensive labor for an organization
  - A temporary solution to short-term or peak-period workloads
  - Menial work, such as errand running, data entry, clerical duties unrelated to a collegiate-level, academic program

- Determine if it is a Paid or Unpaid Internship

  Internship opportunities can be paid or unpaid. Please determine ahead of time if you will be able to compensate your intern.

  - Review the [Department of Labor's criteria](#) for unpaid internships offered by for-profit companies.
  - Compensation should be in the form of an hourly wage.
  - Students are able to receive payment and earn academic credit simultaneously.
  - Unpaid internships must be part of an education program that offers academic credit, and an internship coordinator from a UNLV academic unit must oversee the internship.
  - Employers must review/complete certain forms if the intern is seeking academic credit.
  - Be aware that international students studying in the U.S. can obtain internships, but they are bound by some unique visa limitations. Contact Career Services to learn more about possible restrictions.

- Start early

  It is recommended that employers start the internship process three to four months before they expect the intern to start. The longer the lead time, the better the chances of finding the best applicant for the position.

Step 2: Establish Internship Goals

- Identify the goals of your company's internship program

  Look at current business activities and consider what ongoing work you would like to expand or projects you would like to initiate or complete.

  - Consider projects that are beneficial to your organization that also provide challenging learning experiences for students.
  - Create a detailed job description for the position.
  - Identify goals, expectations (including timelines), a workspace or a plan for virtual supervision, and a general description of projects. Share these with colleagues and mentors so that everyone understands what is expected of the intern. Learn more about special considerations for [virtual internships](#).

- Identify who will mentor the intern

  A supervisor should be selected to help orient, train, and mentor the intern. The supervisor should have the resources (including time) to help guide the intern when s/he has questions or faces obstacles.

Step 3: Recruit with UNLV's Help

- Use UNLV's online platform for recruitment and selection

UNLV Career Services uses an online system called [Handshake](#) that offers a variety of useful features. Once registered there, employers can manage internship/job postings, review student resumes, sign up for career fairs, and much more. Also, four UNLV colleges – the [Lee Business School](#), [Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering](#), [William F. Harrah College of Hospitality](#), and [William S. Boyd School of Law](#) – offer more specialized internship guidance in their respective areas. All UNLV staff involved in promoting internships are here to help. To begin the process, follow these steps:

- Set up an employer account in [Handshake](#) today by calling our Career Services Office at 702-895-3495. Use this centralized hub to assist with the application and the review process.
- Once your employer profile is created and verified, you will be able to post your internship opportunity. Students will be able to view your posting and apply through the same platform.
- It is recommended that employers start this process three to four months before they expect students to start their internships.

Step 4: Plan for the Intern's Arrival

- Formalize an internship on-boarding process.

  - Hold an orientation and/or provide written material that explains company policies and answers questions that new interns might have.
  - Introduce the intern to coworkers and supervisors, and provide a tour.

- Give your interns the resources they need to succeed.

  - Share clear goals with the intern. This should include expectations, weekly goals/timelines, and a general description of projects.
  - Have the workstation and computer/email access ready before the intern starts.

Step 5: Manage the Intern Effectively

- Monitor the intern's progress.

  - Keep in mind this could be an intern's first work experience. When work is assigned, make sure detailed explanations are provided. A few extra minutes of explanation will pay off later when the intern produces good work independently.

- Help your intern set goals and timelines for completion of various tasks, including daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Guide them so they develop a solid work ethic for the future.

- Evaluate the intern's progress periodically and give feedback.

  - Communicate progress/feedback to the intern periodically (formally and informally) so s/he is aware of what is working well and what areas need improvement. The results of the formal evaluation at the end of the internship should not come as a surprise.
  - UNLV's Career Services or departments may require onsite visits or conference calls during the internship to facilitate the evaluation process.
  - UNLV internship coordinators will contact you to share what is expected if the internship is being performed for academic credit.

- Involve the intern in experiences beyond the actual work of the internship.

  - Include interns in training programs, social events, and networking opportunities with colleagues, managers, and executives.
  - Many companies host an end-of-program experience (i.e., a lunch, reception, etc.) to celebrate the intern's accomplishments.

Step 6: Assess the Value of the Internship

- Evaluate the success of your program.

Determining the value of your intern's work will help you provide hard evidence to your organization that it is getting a return on investment with its internship program.

  - Analyze the intern's work in the context of the organization's bottom line, productivity, and efficiency. Other common performance measures may include the number of interns who remain with your organization (conversion to full-time hires), the number of requests for interns, and growing numbers of qualified intern applicants.
  - Evaluate non-tangible benefits of having an intern (i.e., improving morale, enhancing culture, contributing to social/community responsibility, integrating new ideas/perspectives, etc.).
  - Conduct exit interviews to determine if interns are leaving the organization with positive impressions of the experience. This could provide valuable feedback as you plan for the future of your internship program.

We hope this guide is helpful! Please contact the Career Services Office at careerservices@unlv.edu or 702-895-3495 if you have further questions.