



Internship Guidelines

JBU is excited to collaborate with you to develop internships that benefit both students and your organization. Internships provide experiential learning and career exploration opportunities. Key considerations are essential in designing a successful program.

An Internship Should Include:

- **Real-world learning experience** applying classroom knowledge (across in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities).
- **Direct supervision** by a professional with relevant expertise who provides feedback, guidance, and resources.
- **Clearly defined learning objectives** supportive of academic goals and institutional requirements.
- **Learned skills and knowledge that are transferable** to other employment settings.
- **Position description** with clear responsibilities and required/desired qualifications.
- **Defined beginning and end** - mutually agreed upon and consistent with institutional guidelines and schedules.

Employer Benefits	Intern Benefits
✓ Access to the latest information and technology students are learning in class.	✓ Real-world experiences in relevant industries that help develop skills.
✓ Higher return on investment.	✓ Enhanced social capital.
✓ Recruitment for potential employees*	✓ Establishment of a professional network.
✓ Professional staff are freed to pursue creative and advanced projects.	✓ Supervision and mentor relationships.
✓ Build a networking relationship with JBU for future employment opportunities.	✓ Direct pathways to job offers.

*Higher retention rates: 75.5% of former interns are still with the organization after one year, compared to 51.5% of non-intern hires (NACE 2023).

Why Should Internships Be Paid?

All internships should be paid for three main reasons:

1. **Equity and access:** Paid internships remove financial barriers for broader participation.
2. **Work recognition:** Interns perform valuable work that deserves compensation.
3. **Workforce diversity:** Paid opportunities foster inclusivity, enabling diverse candidates.

Unpaid internships disproportionately affect underrepresented groups and deny basic labor rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act ([FLSA](#)), leaving interns unprotected against harassment and discrimination. Research by NACE (2022) shows paid interns earn higher starting salaries (\$62,500 vs. \$42,500 for unpaid interns), with the gap widens over time.

Are Unpaid Internships Legal?

Yes, if the student benefits *more* than the for-profit company according to the Primary Beneficiary Test (PBT). JBU encourages employers to consider if an unpaid role provides an 'irreplaceable stepping-stone.'. We have high expectations for the learning value of positions to ensure they do not simply replace the labor of a regular employee.

Can Nonprofits or Government Agencies Offer Unpaid Internships? Yes, under the FLSA. However, unpaid roles may exclude those facing financial hardship. Organizations should consider funding alternatives, like partnerships with chambers or universities.

Is Academic Credit a Substitute for Pay? No, NACE opposes using academic credit to justify unpaid internships. Students pay for academic credit, and compensation should not be paid by the intern. NACE advocates for internships that offer both academic credit and pay.

Other Types of Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning: Work-based experiences outside the classroom, such as internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, and research projects, that enhance academic learning.

Co-op: A program where students alternate between full-time study and paid, discipline-related work terms, gaining career experience and often earning academic credit.

Apprenticeship: Paid on-the-job training combined with classroom instruction, preparing workers for skilled careers and supported by the federal Registered Apprenticeship Program - click [here](#).

Get Started and Get the Word Out!

✓ **Write the position description and post your internship on our job board - [Handshake](#). Include:**

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Targeted majors (see majors here). | ☐ Internship length, required hours, and flexibility. |
| ☐ Education requirements (year, GPA, etc.). | ☐ Indicate if it's paid or unpaid. |
| ☐ Skills gained (e.g., design, writing, analysis). | ☐ Application instructions and contact info. |
| ☐ Benefits: pay, credit, and unique learning opportunities, defined learning objectives and goals. | ☐ Supervisor's job title. |

***Create an account at [JBU Handshake](#) and post your job!**

Employer Visit Day or Branding Table

Schedule visits during the semester ([campus calendar](#)). We will promote your visit. Register 2 weeks in advance.

Employer Partnership

The Career Development Center's Partnership Program enhances brand visibility and recruitment opportunities by connecting employers with JBU students. Explore our [Partnership Opportunities](#).

Participate in Career Events

JBU hosts in-person networking events to connect students and alumni with professionals, supporting career exploration, internships, and job opportunities. Check our [Networking Events](#).

Disclaimer Shared with Students

John Brown University hosts and advertises external events, activities, and in-house fairs in Handshake and through other communications that it believes may be of interest to members of the JBU community. This does not indicate University sponsorship or endorsement of any organization, employer, activity, or event. It is the participant's responsibility to apply due diligence when participating and to research any employers or organizations before sharing personal information or making commitments. Concerns may be reported to JBU Career Development at cdc@jbu.edu.

❖ *Internship guideline information is adapted from [NACE](#)*