



Internship Guide for Employers

Information on hiring and supervising a Pilot Intern

Thank you for your interest in hiring a Pilot Intern from the University of Portland!

Whether you have an established internship program, or this is your first-ever intern, this guide contains resources to help you make the most of the experience for both the intern *and* your organization. Your expertise and mentorship will be a valuable resource for their professional growth this semester. We hope that their contributions and fresh perspectives make a lasting impact at your organization. In this guide you will find:

[Components of a quality internship](#)— pg. 1

A quality internship is mutually beneficial for the intern and employer.

[Sample internship position description](#) — pg. 2

Use this template position description to clarify duties and responsibilities.

[Internship compensation criteria](#) — pg. 3

Refer to Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines and UP preferences for criteria on internship compensation.

[Promoting diversity in intern recruitment](#) — pg. 4

Consider candidates through a new inclusive and equitable lens, valuing cultural wealth and lived experience.

[Intern stages of development](#) — pg. 6

Understand the four developmental stages your intern will likely experience throughout their internship.

[Best practices for internship supervisors](#) — pg. 7

Tips to support your intern and set them up to make a lasting impact at your organization.

[Sample evaluation and final feedback conversation](#)— pg. 8

When the internship comes to a close, use this guide for a final feedback conversation with your intern.

Questions?

Contact the Internship & Engagement Coordinator at internship@up.edu or 503-953-7201.



But first, what is an internship?

The University of Portland defines an internship as: *A form of supervised experiential learning that combines critical thinking and intentional reflection within a framework of a liberal arts education. By completing internships, students can sharpen professional skills, develop career interests and employer contacts, assess strengths, and connect classroom theories to practical, real world settings. Internships offer employers the ability to evaluate and mentor upcoming talent.*

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Components of a quality internship include:

- The experience must be an **extension of the classroom**: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be **transferable** to other employment settings.
- The experience has a **defined duration**, and a **job description** with desired qualifications.
- There are **clearly defined learning objectives**/duties outlined by the employer prior to the intern beginning the internship.
- There is **supervision by a professional** with expertise and background in the field of the internship.
- There is **routine feedback** by the experienced supervisor.
- There are **resources**, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals (e.g., computers, desk, training materials).

How are internships mutually beneficial?

Benefits for students	Benefits for Employers
Gaining an understanding of different careers and evaluate their career path.	An opportunity to strengthen recruitment and hiring efforts with a continuous pool of highly qualified students
Setting and accomplishing work-related goals	Interns are enthusiastic, bring new ideas and provide fresh perspectives
Developing and demonstrating core skills and competencies , as well as gaining experience that make them more attractive candidates to recruiters	Helping future talent develop, demonstrate and hone core skills and competencies that will prepare them for a successful transition to the workplace
Confidence gained when they have tangible evidence of their contributions and growth	Supervising interns allows employees to gain supervisory/mentorship experience as a professional development point
Connecting with professionals in a field or organization of interest	Internship programs promote community involvement by teaching the prospective work force—a great public relations tool
Chance to apply classroom knowledge and training to professional context.	Interns can support projects that employees otherwise might not have time to complete

Providing a safe work environment

Internship employer partners must provide a safe work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, or violence, and must promptly report to the University of Portland all allegations of inappropriate behavior involving or impacting our student(s). During the intern’s training and orientation, it is expected that your Human Resources office will share the organization’s anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy, whether it be online or in an employee handbook.

¹ Note. Based off of the [“NACE Position Statement on U.S. Internships,”](#) Adopted by the NACE Board of Directors July 2011.



Internship Position Description

It is crucial for an intern to have a formalized position description. This should outline duties, responsibilities, compensation and a basic schedule so that both the intern and the employer have a mutual understanding and aligned expectations from the outset of the experience. Some of this may be included in an offer letter. The most important thing is to have all these elements in writing before the inter begins working.

What should be included in an internship position description?

The sections below offer a guiding framework for internship position descriptions.

- **Title for the internship**
- **Description of duties**
 - An outline of the main objectives, tasks and priorities of the internship
 - Action verbs usually describe the main responsibilities or tasks for the position
 - The organization’s name, mission or values are referenced in this section
 - Outlining the learning components or competencies that the student will gain as an intern establishes that the position is primarily learning-based
- **Qualifications required or preferred**
 - Skills, knowledge, training or education that the intern should possess to be successful
 - Preference for specific year in school or coursework desired
 - Qualifications can be listed as preferred or desired, but not necessarily required
 - To comply with Equal Employment Opportunity laws, discriminating factors such as gender, age, ethnicity should never be included
- **Compensation information**
 - Hourly wage and/or stipend
 - Additional benefits that are “perks” of the internship (e.g., travel reimbursement, lunch vouchers, tickets to events, etc.)
- **Internship duration**
 - The minimum number of hours per week (if applicable) or total hours for the entire internship period is included
 - The start and end dates (even if only generally listed – e.g., spring semester)
 - Agreed-upon work schedule
- **Supervisor and team information**
 - Who will the intern report to?
 - Supervisor and mentor information

*If the internship is based remotely, there are additional ways to structure a quality virtual internship experience. View the [UP Virtual Internship Guidelines here](#).



Internship Compensation Criteria

One of the University of Portland’s criteria on Handshake is that internships within *for-profit* organizations meet minimum wage laws based on the state in which the opportunity takes place. Many non-profit organizations and government agencies offer unpaid internships, and those will be approved. **The University of Portland Career Education Center will not post unpaid internship opportunities in for-profit organizations on the main job/internship board, [Handshake](#).** *It is the student’s responsibility to arrange credit for an internship through his/her specific college forms and a signed University Internship Learning Agreement.*

Fair Labor Standards Act Information

A “for-profit” organization faces legal obligation under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to provide eligible employees with at least the federally mandated minimum wage. However, if the intern is deemed as a “learner/trainee,” the organization is not held to the same legal obligation for compensation. The Wage and Hour Division of the DOL has developed six criteria for identifying a learner/trainee who may be unpaid in the [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#).

These criteria include:

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.

As noted in the Fact Sheet, “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.”

It is also noted in the Fact Sheet that “Unpaid internships in the public sector and non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.”

For internships that employers offer academic credit only for compensation, the University of Portland will assess the merits of the experience based on the above criteria first. In keeping with the spirit of the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#), and in recognition of the correlation between paid internships and employment opportunity, it is University of Portland’s preference that internships within for-profit organizations offer compensation in addition to receipt of course credit.

The University of Portland currently uses [Handshake](#) to post all part-time, internship and job opportunities. Employers are encouraged to contact the Internship and Engagement Coordinator in the Career Education Center at internship@up.edu or 503 943-7201 for assistance.



Promoting diversity in internship recruitment: Consider Lived Experience

Many companies desire cultural diversity in the workplace. Certainly, recruiters and hiring managers are looking for qualified, well-rounded candidates. The University of Portland has bright and motivated students and graduates, and we want to affirm the deep cultural knowledge that has helped to define many of them. We believe that their whole story matters. This includes their *lived experiences*, in addition to whatever academic accolades, work or internship experiences, or club involvement they have. Particularly with economically and racially marginalized groups and first-generation college students, their unique perspective, cultural knowledge and diversity of thought can enhance the quality of any work environment. Students often undersell themselves as candidates even though their life experiences have equipped them with rich cultural and success skills.

Tara Yosso’s article, “Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth,” takes a strength-based approach to cultural wealth by reframing motivations, passions and skills that are often overlooked and undervalued when evaluating qualified candidates. The following is a framework that we encourage underrepresented students to consider as [they craft their career narrative](#) and application materials

Definition:

Cultural wealth – *an array of knowledge, skills, strengths and experiences that are learned and shared by people of color and marginalized groups; The values and behaviors that are nurtured through culture work together to create a way of knowing and being.*²

The six dimensions of cultural wealth—**Familial, Social, Aspirational, Navigational, Linguistic, and Resistant capital**—are interconnected, working together to strengthen an individual's ability to function in multiple environments. Below are examples of skills drawn from personal experiences.

Skills:

- Self-awareness
- Connectedness
- Value-orientation
- Creativity
- Resourcefulness
- Agility
- Dedication
- Persistence
- Problem solving
- Taking initiative
- Adaptability
- Social justice orientation

Moving Forward/Implementation

We encourage recruiters and hiring managers to incorporate questions into the application and interview process that create space for students and graduates to talk about the diverse experiences that have shaped and prepared them for the world of work. We expect all organizations follow legal and ethical guidelines and follow HR protocols.

Questions for consideration:

- What qualifications are truly essential for the role and which are listed out of unchecked habit?
- How can we reframe “[culture fit](#)” to “[culture contribution](#)”? What’s missing from our culture? What perspectives and experiences are lacking on the existing team, and why are they important to add? How can we find and leverage those different skillsets?
- For each role, have we assembled a diverse interviewer panel, reflective of different backgrounds and perspectives?

² Note. Based off the article Tara J. Yosso (2005) Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8:1, 69-91.



- What is our organizational culture, emphasis, and expectation around understanding the perspectives of colleagues from different backgrounds?
- What trainings have there been about implicit bias within our organization?
- Is there a sense of evaluating “culture fit” in the application and interview process?
- Have we standardized the interview process for every candidate? Have we created a rubric to help eliminate the [various forms of bias](#) that can take place during an interview?

Questions to ask candidates:

For any behavioral-based interview question, explicitly tell *each* candidate that they can share an example from *any* experience, whether academic, work-related, or a personal life event if it is relevant to the question.

- Look to evaluate organizational value alignment above “culture fit.” Tell every applicant what the shared values of the workplace are, define what they mean at the company, and then ask behavior-based interview questions around those values.
- What personal values are most important to you?
- What are some of your convictions/motivations that keep you going?
- What is an accomplishment that you are most proud of, and why?
- What are ways you feel included in your work community?
- Describe an example in your previous experience where you have worked with diverse populations or communities?
- Are there any experiences not mentioned on your resume that you would like to share with us? Is there anything else you’d like us to know about you as a candidate?

Additionally, if your organization is in early stages of implementing more diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, consider the support systems that are or might not be in place for your early-career hires:

- Is there anyone else on their team who looks like them? If not, is it possible to connect them with someone from a different department who could be a mentor and support for them in their transition to and navigation of the workplace?
- How does your company training/onboarding manual address workplace discrimination and avenues for reporting concerns? How is this communicated to all new hires?

You can find more detailed explanations of the six dimensions of cultural wealth, along with additional resources in the [Promoting Diversity in Recruiting](#) guide.



Intern Stages of Development

As the intern navigates and familiarizes themselves with this new professional work environment, their confidence and abilities will grow over time. Here is the typical process of development for interns, their feelings per stage, and how you can support them:

- 1. Anticipation:** Student seeks out and secures internship, holding idealistic expectations for their experience. As they prepare to start, they feel excited and highly motivated, while at the same time nervous and self-doubting.
 - **What you can do:** From the outset, take an interest in their learning goals and help them during the adjustment from classroom to workplace.
- 2. Exploration:** Upon initial arrival at site, the intern learns a lot of new information and begins establishing a workplace identity and understanding of the organizational culture. During this orientation period, they are overloaded with information and may feel underutilized and underwhelmed by routine tasks. The sooner the intern understands what the organization does and how it operates, the sooner they can assume assigned responsibilities and become productive. Workplace structure is very different than the classroom and might take some adjustment.
 - **What you can do:** Provide clear instructions. Encourage them to come to you with questions through regular check-in meetings. Let them know that this is normal and expected, but requires their initiative.
- 3. Contribution:** Starting to feel more settled in their role and confident in their abilities, the intern productively accomplishes tasks and seeks new projects and responsibilities. Over time, the intern feels an increased sense of self-confidence, productivity, familiarity and independence. They are more accustomed to the social and cultural work environment, connecting with other interns and colleagues.
 - **What you can do:** Provide a participatory framework in which the intern can bring new ideas to the table, and seek additional development opportunities such as: joining in meetings, conducting informational interviews, or shadowing other departments.
- 4. Culmination:** Nearing the end of the internship, the intern will evaluate their performance and experience, identify transferable skills and engage in closure with colleagues and clients. They might feel extreme satisfaction and accomplishment if they met their learning goals and can see what they contributed to the organization. However, they also might feel sadness about leaving, fear of not being recognized by colleagues, disappointment at incomplete projects or unmet goals, and jealousy at incoming interns.
 - **What you can do:** Provide the intern with a chance to present their project or findings to a broader audience, and encourage student self-reflection while providing feedback on their contributions. Let the intern know if you are an available reference and professional connection for them moving forward.



Best practices for internship supervisors

This may be the first time your intern has worked in professional work environment and is applying classroom theories in a real-world context. The more support and tools you equip them with in this new environment, the more easily they will adapt and begin contributing to your organization in meaningful ways.

Setting up for success

- **Review student’s learning goals together:** Prior to the academic internship, students must identify 4-6 learning goals to be completed during the course of the internship, which the supervisor will approve via the online Handshake Experience (Learning Agreement). Goals could incorporate desired industry-related knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful career advancement. Work with the intern at the beginning of the internship to develop expectations and a plan to ensure that the established goals are met, and check in regularly throughout the internship to see if the intern is on track to meet these goals.
- **Thorough onboarding and orientation:** In order for the intern to get oriented and established in their new working environment, supervisors should plan for the intern’s first day on the job to be focused on orientation and training. This should consist of: touring the facility, meeting other employees, learning about the organization, reviewing organization-wide communication standards and workplace expectations (including taking required legal breaks, lunches, and system of tracking hours), and reviewing the student’s defined learning goals.
- **Give them real work assignments:** Interns crave having projects and deliverables that are going to make a difference within your organization. Provide detailed explanations of your expectations, and resources that the student has and might need in order to complete the task or project. Rather than just assigning tasks, give them context and communicate why the work is important. What is it contributing towards or connected to? How will this project contribute to the greater good of the department/organization?

Encouraging growth and progress

- **Schedule regular check-ins:** Supervisors should meet with interns on a regular basis to provide consistent feedback. Students can share what they’ve been working on, ask questions, and together you both can discuss areas of strength and ongoing areas for development, and get a sense of what work might be coming up next.
- **Provide varied learning opportunities:** For most students, internships are a way to explore new industries and job functions that they have not yet had exposure to. Activities such as “lunch & learns” with executives, informational interviews, shadowing different departments, or professional development workshops all add value to the intern’s personal and professional growth.
- **Promote skill development, documentation and reflection:** Students often have a difficult time recognizing and articulating the skills (“soft” and technical) that they develop while interning. Your guidance can help them reflect and see how key employability skills might be transferrable to future experiences inside and outside the classroom. Encourage them to keep work samples and talk about their accomplishments: what did you do? But more importantly, how did you do it? How did you get better at it over time?

Providing Closure

- **Evaluating growth and progress:** Towards the end of the internship, we would encourage you to do evaluations with the intern. This builds student confidence, fosters reflection of skill acquisition and accomplishment, and brings to light opportunities for continued growth.



Final Feedback Conversation and Sample Evaluation

Towards the end of the internship, it is important to share final feedback with your intern. If they are earning academic credit from the University, this is a requirement and this will be facilitated online via Handshake. If they are not earning credit, the following can serve as a guide for conversation, which you can adapt to address their specific context. We would encourage you to arrange a time where you can have a formal discussion about their accomplishments, strengths, and opportunities you see for continued growth and professional development.

Internships are a great way for students to apply classroom learning in professional settings. Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of core skills and competencies that broadly prepare college students for a successful transition into the workplace upon graduation. Through this internship, you have developed and demonstrated many of these competencies! The following section is based on the eight core competencies identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

For questions 1-8, circle your level of demonstration per competency.

1. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving: I exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions and overcome problems. I obtain, interpret and use knowledge, facts and data in this process and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

2. Oral/Written Communications: I articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. I have public speaking skills; am able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

3. Teamwork/Collaboration: I build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. I am able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

4. Digital Technology: I leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. I demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

5. Leadership: I leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. I am able to assess and manage my emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA



6. Professionalism/Work Ethic: I 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. I demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and am able to learn from my mistakes.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

7. Career Management: I can identify and articulate my skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. I am 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.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

8. Global/Intercultural Fluency: I value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. I demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

1 - Acquiring (demonstrate rarely) 2 - Advancing (demonstrate sometimes) 3 - Accomplished (demonstrate consistently) 0 – NA

My outstanding work qualities are:

The work qualities I should strive to continue developing are:

In what ways have you changed as a result of this experience (i.e., new skills developed, self-discoveries, career awareness, new knowledge acquired)?

How do you plan to effectively use the remainder of your time at this internship site? (ex: completing informational interviews, seeking final feedback, connecting on LinkedIn, etc).

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment? Were there any learning goals that you did not accomplish? What are your plans for working on them?