

Internships

Employer Frequently Asked Questions

Samford University Career Development Center

What is an internship?

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.

For guidelines about what constitutes an internship, please see "[Hosting Interns-Important Guidelines](#)".

How long do internships last?

An internship is typically a one-semester in length, with a definite beginning and end, and involves direct supervision by an employer. If it is for academic credit, it also involves oversight (and assignments) by a faculty member.

What kinds of tasks can I have an intern work on?

The tasks assigned MUST be related to the student's major or minor and cannot simply be administrative in nature.

Do I need to pay an intern?

The Department of Labor (DOL) has set guidelines outlining the requirements that must be met for an internship to be unpaid. Currently, non-profit and government organizations may be exempt from paying interns, although we encourage *all* interns to be paid. The DOL guidelines are available for review at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm#.UPWlBJZ0iSp>.

When in their college career do students typically intern?

Students typically intern in their junior and senior years, after they have had coursework in their major or minor that is pertinent to the internship experience.

Does Samford University have the majors that I need student interns to have?

Samford offers more than 150 undergraduate majors, minors, and concentrations, covering a wide-variety of subjects. A listing can be found at <http://www.samford.edu/programs/undergraduate/>. If you have questions regarding specific majors offered at Samford, feel free to contact the Career Development Center.

How do I start an internship program?

Review important guidelines- Review internship guidelines set by the National Association of Colleges & Employers, as well as ones set by the Department of Labor, by going to [Hosting Interns-Important Guidelines](#).

Set goals- What does the organization hope to achieve from the program? What do you (and the student & faculty member, if for academic credit) want the intern to have learned by the end of their experience?

Write a plan- Create a job description and requirements and decide issues such as who will provide supervision, space for intern, organization and safety training, etc.

When should I start the recruiting process for an intern?

Depending on your particular internship program, we recommend starting the recruiting process about a semester prior to the intended internship semester. Students need to have time to register for an internship

course, and therefore, the sooner you advertise the position, the simpler the process will be for recruitment and registration. Fall internships should be marketed in the spring rather than summer.

How do I recruit an intern?

There are a number of ways to recruit a Samford student intern. We suggest you start by registering with the Samford Job Board, called HireSamford.com and powered by [Handshake](#). Once your registration is approved, you can begin posting internship opportunities. Individual interview sessions can also be held in the Career Development Center. If you are interested in recruiting in person, please contact the CDC at 205-726-2980.

What paperwork is involved?

IF a student would like to receive academic credit for an internship, the student should work with the appropriate faculty member in their major or minor at Samford and the organization to complete an Internship Learning Agreement. A Learning Agreement will outline the student's duties, responsibilities, and expected outcomes for the internship. Internship Learning Agreements may vary by department, but a sample agreement can be found [here](#).

The internship supervisor may also be required to complete an Intern Evaluation, which would be sent prior to the end of the semester. These evaluations are typically used by the faculty for course grading.

Is a student required to receive credit for an internship? No, a student does not have to receive credit for an internship unless it is required as a part of the course curriculum. The above-mentioned paperwork, or something similar, is only required if the internship is for academic credit.

Are virtual internships allowed?

While the Career Development Center does allow virtual internships to be posted on HireSamford.com/Handshake, if a student wants to receive academic credit for an internship, approval of the experience is the privilege of the Faculty Instructor of Record. The more detailed the internship description, and the more relevant the duties, responsibilities, and outcomes of the internship are to the student's major, the more likely it is to be approved. Detailed information on the Internship Learning Agreement about training, supervisor contact, duties, etc. is particularly important for virtual internships.

How many hours does an intern work?

The amount of hours an intern works depends on guidelines set by the internship instructor of record, as well as the student's class schedule and the employer expectations. To gain 3 hours of course credit, a student typically needs to work between 10-15 hours per week. Internships can be up to 40 hours per week depending on the course requirements.

Once I have hired an intern, what are some best practices for ensuring that the internship meets the specific internship guidelines?

Be sure to review both the NACE Guidelines and the Department of Labor Facts Sheet before and after securing an intern. Read the tips below for more helpful advice on hosting an intern. If there are ever any questions regarding internship guidelines, do not hesitate to contact the Career Development Center. Tips include:

- Ensure that the intern does not take the place/job of regular paid employees.
- Specify clearly if the internship is paid or unpaid (see "Hosting Interns- Important Information" for DOL and NACE guidelines).
- Don't promise a job with your organization to the intern. Obviously it is fine to offer a full-time position at the *conclusion* of the internship, but it should not be a promise prior to the experience.
- Prior to the start of the internship, create a space where the intern will work (if internship is in person).

- Designate a mentor and/or supervisor for the intern that will provide instruction and feedback throughout the experience.
- Provide an orientation to the organization's policies and procedures at the beginning of his/her experience, including safety rules and regulations.
- Invest in the intern, including helping him/her network within the organization in order to learn as much as possible.
- Keep accurate records of the hours worked by the intern.
- Have the scope of duties, which should be educational in nature, clearly written out.
- Maintain open communication relationship with intern and Instructor of Record before, during and after the internship.

How do I find out more information?

Contact the Career Development Center at 205-726-2980.

***For more information, stop by or call the Career Development Center
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