

# California State University, Fresno

## Department of Economics

### Internship Program

#### I. WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is a form of instruction and learning utilizing off campus learning worksites. Typically, an internship must provide at least one of the following:

- **Several job related experiences:** These experiences should provide for progressive learning rather than repetitive activity. In addition, these activities should provide meaningful output for the organization.
- **Possible rotation through different functional areas or departments each involving different assignments.** A single major project requiring the intern to interact with multiple departments, functional areas, or customers. Multiple assignments or projects within the same functional area. These assignments should require a variety of skills, outcomes, and exposure to different aspects of an individual department's operations.
- **Involvement in the learning of day to day operations and specific activities associated with the operation of the organization**

While all internships require some degree of clerical or repetitive work, only a limited portion of the internship time may be spent on duties of a clerical or repetitive nature such as selling, stock keeping, telemarketing, or data entry.

#### II. WHAT ARE THE MAIN GOALS OF AN INTERNSHIP?

Each student intern is required to develop a set of learning objectives including:

- **Skill Development:** Apply what you have learned in school. Learn to work as part of an organization's team. Learn and improve specific skills (writing, verbal, research, computer, interpersonal).
- **Broader Knowledge:** Gain competencies not offered in regular, on campus, classes. Develop a better understanding of the work place, operational procedures, and organizational structure.

- **Career Awareness & Development:** Exploration and clarification of academic and career alternatives. Develop contacts in career related fields. Obtain potential recommendations for permanent employment or graduate/professional schools.
- **Personal Development:** Develop values and confidence, assertiveness, and decision making abilities.

### III. HOW TO APPLY?

1. Schedule an interview with the Internship Program Coordinator.
2. Once you have identified an internship of interest to you, email or phone the contact person.
3. In your conversation state your interest in the specific internship position. Tell the contact person a little about yourself (major, when you plan to graduate, any experience you may have related to the internship, etc.). You may also want to mention your hours of availability as well as the best way to contact you.
4. If the conversation occurs through email, attach a copy of your resume to the email as a WORD document.
5. Give the contact person at least one full week to get back to you. If you have not heard from them, email or call them again to verify they received your resume.

### IV. THE INTERNSHIP PROCESS

#### IF YOU ARE GRANTED AN INTERVIEW

1. Go to the interview prepared. Research the company/agency/organization. Know the job description of the internship position.
2. Be prepared for an interview. Be prepared to market yourself -why are you the best candidate for this internship position. Most employers also want to know your long term career goals and how this internship will help you prepare for those goals.
3. Arrive on-time and dress business professional (suit, tie, etc.). Be sure to know where you are going prior to the interview so you won't be late. Take extra resumes (take more than one -you may talk to several people or have a panel interview). Take a portfolio including pen and paper with questions already written down.
4. Before you leave the interview be sure you fully understand what the internship duties, responsibilities and outcomes will be for this particular internship.
5. Ask the interviewer or contact person when they plan to make a selection and how you will be contacted.

## IF YOU ARE SELECTED FOR AN INTERNSHIP

1. Contact the Internship Program Coordinator as soon as you have accepted an internship offer.
2. Complete the **Letter of Agreement** and **Student Internship Code of Conduct**. These forms must be submitted to the Internship Program Coordinator before you can enroll in an internship course for credit. Be sure both you and your internship supervisor have read and completed the Letter of Agreement.
3. Obtain permission to enroll in the appropriate internship class (ECON 191) from the Internship Program Coordinator.
4. Read over the "Requirements for Credit" on the main menu of the Internship program.

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDIT?

As soon as you have accepted an internship:

1. Complete the **Letter of Agreement** and **Student Internship Code of Conduct**. These forms must be submitted to the Internship Program Coordinator before you can enroll in an internship course for credit. **Be sure both you and your internship supervisor have read and completed the Letter of Agreement.**
2. Enroll in the appropriate ECON 191 class.
3. Be sure you are familiar with how to use your e-mail account. Some important communication may occur through e-mail.
4. Familiarize yourself with university policies regarding off site employment and learning experiences. CSU Fresno is committed to providing a learning environment free of harassment, discrimination, and sexual harassment extending to all remote learning sites.

## During the Internship

1. Complete the on-site experience. **A minimum of 45 hours are required for 1 unit of credit (3 units maximum).**
2. Maintain a log of hours worked to be signed by your work station supervisor at the completion of the internship. Download a **Log of Hours Form**.
3. Check for emails from the Internship Program Coordinator.

### **At the conclusion of the internship**

1. Write a final report. Summarize the learning that took place during your internship. In your report include:
  - specific skills developed
  - new or expanded knowledge gained (include one or more specific examples of what was learned)
  - personal development that took place
  - application of classroom concepts
  - how career awareness was expanded

**Note:** The paper must be a minimum of **TWO** pages double-spaced and typewritten. Email your completed paper to the Internship Program Coordinator as a word document.

2. Obtain an internship completion letter from the employer. The letter should basically explain that the internship has concluded and a brief explanation of the activities performed. The letter can be sent directly to the Internship Program Coordinator or can be given to the intern.
3. Schedule an exit interview with the Internship Program Coordinator.
4. For the exit interview bring your completed log of hours signed by your supervisor or other verification of hours (payroll stubs, etc.) and the internship completion letter (if it was not sent directly to Internship Program Coordinator)

### V. FAQ for Students

1. **I don't have any experience, can I still apply for an internship?**  
Yes, an internship is the opportunity needed to gain the experience you need in starting your career. Some internships will require some advanced skills.
2. **How many internships can I do?**  
One or more internships can be used as an upper division elective towards your degree for a maximum of 3 units of credit. Therefore, after completing 3 units of credit and although additional internships are encouraged, they cannot be used as a second elective.
3. **Will I get paid?**  
Employers determine their ability and resources to pay interns. If the position is paid it will be noted near the position description. Just as a word of advice, seek out internships that will assist you in your career path.

Internships are not part-time jobs but rather learning experiences. If you think of an internship as an applied experience class and not a job the pay will become less of an issue.

4. **Can I set up my own internship?**

Yes, if you have contacts with organizations, companies and people who could provide a great internship experience for an economics student. The requirements will be the same-the internship must be a progressive learning experience that will last 45 hours minimum per unit and be under the supervision of an experienced mentor or supervisor. The proposed internship must be approved by the Internship Program Coordinator. To have a proposed internship considered for credit please bring a job description along with the name and contact information of the proposed supervisor or mentor to the Internship Program Coordinator.

5. **Can my current job count as an internship?**

In most cases you cannot count a position you are already in for internship credit. If the organization you are working for can offer you a new type of position or project related to your option there is a possibility this could count. Please see the Internship Program Coordinator for consideration.

6. **Do I have to take an internship for credit?**

Yes, it is preferred that students who use the internship program register for credit. Enrolling in units will assure that you will have the guidance and direction of the Internship Program Coordinator if the need arises. Students must be enrolled in units to be covered under liability policies of the university. The Internship Program also conducts evaluations of all internship students and internship worksites. The only way to collect that data is to keep track of students and worksites. This can only happen if the student is enrolled in the course and in contact with the Internship Program Coordinator on a regular basis.

7. **What if I can't complete the total number of hours in a semester?**

An internship can be spread over two semesters. Students will receive an incomplete if the credit requirements are not satisfied at the end of the semester they enrolled in ECON 191. Once all requirements are completed the grade will be changed to credit.

## VI. HOW TO ADVERTISE AN INTERNSHIP POSITION

Contact the Internship Program Coordinator with the following information:

1. Name of organization and internship contact person's name, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address if applicable. Please provide contact information for the intern's supervisor or mentor
2. Required skills and other qualifications. Examples include computer skills, language skills, communication and writing skills, year in school, grade point average, or course work completed.
3. Work schedule. Approximate number of hours per week. If work times are fixed, please specify, otherwise it is assumed that work hours can be arranged around the student's school schedule. Most full time students plan on 10-15 hours per week for an internship.
4. Pay status. Indicate if paid or unpaid. If paid, state rate of pay (e.g. hourly, salary, stipend, performance bonus, etc.). Include any other benefits (e.g. employee discounts, event tickets, etc).
5. Description of internship activities. Include a description of duties, responsibilities, and specific project assignments, if applicable. In order to qualify for academic credit, the internship must provide for:
  - o A progressive learning experience: Intern assignments should provide for progressive and/or multiple learning experiences rather than repetitive activity. While all internships require some degree of clerical or repetitive work, only a limited portion of the internship time may be spent on duties of a clerical or repetitive nature such as selling, stock keeping, telemarketing, or data entry.
  - o Opportunities to enhance existing skills and develop practical knowledge. Internship activities can involve: (1) learning about and assisting with day to day operations and/or (2) one or more projects which allows students to apply classroom knowledge and enhance both technical and behavioral skills.
  - o Supervision and mentoring. Internships should provide for a periodic review of performance and opportunities to obtain feedback, information, and assistance from a mentor.

## VI. FACTORS LEADING TO A GOOD INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

**COMMUNICATION:** Clear communication is the key to effective communication in every internship. The following guidelines suggest how to establish a good communication network during the internship experience:

1. Clarify intern's role through the formal learning environment (clarify job responsibilities, set goals, set regular work hours, etc.)
2. Schedule regular meetings with the intern to discuss new and past assignments, to answer any questions, and discuss dynamics of the organization.
3. Give the intern opportunity to attend meetings (staff, community, or legislative) whenever possible.
4. Explain to the intern how decisions are made. What are the options? How did the supervisor draw certain conclusions?
5. Discuss career opportunities in the field, and career paths of college graduates.
6. Structure and supervise the internship more highly in the beginning, and ease off when the time seems appropriate.

**Remember:** Interns need to receive regular descriptive feedback on their progress. Are they meeting expectations? Let the Internship Program Coordinator know. If problems do occur, speak directly with the intern.

**REWARDS:** No rules exist in this area. Supervisors are encouraged to use creativity in rewarding interns for work well done. Some suggestions include:

1. Note the intern's name on any finished project to give them credit and recognition.
2. Give the intern opportunities to attend professional seminars, workshops provided within or by the organization.
3. Give the intern the opportunity to interview or observe in other departments/areas of the organization.
4. Give them the opportunity to meet the administration, or board members, VIP's or director.
5. Suggest how the intern could transfer their skills to other positions they may apply for.
6. Write about them in the organization's newsletter- Add the intern's name to the telephone directory sheet.
7. Post the intern's picture on the bulletin board.

8. Recognize them for doing things right.
9. Give them a title other than "intern", "student" or "volunteer."
10. Provide student with contact people known to you for help in future job hunting.
11. Offer a salary or stipend to pay for college credit or expenses.
12. Offer a paid staff position in your agency following the internship.

**MOTIVATION:**

1. Make interns feel like a member of the team.
2. Challenge the intern and show respect for the intern's talents and abilities.
3. Give the intern a designated work area.
4. Give the interns a sense of planning and involvement by hearing their ideas.
5. Select/organize assignments so that progress is observable for interns (having the feeling of making a difference is a big motivator!).
6. Train the intern for assignments.
7. Give constructive, descriptive criticism.
8. Help interns to understand their job in relation to other jobs.

**COMPLETION:** Agencies, schools, and interns must plan for an ending date from the beginning. It is important to allow for realistic guidelines for completing projects and for transferring them to other personnel. This prevents incomplete work, abandoned clients and helps to keep a time line. A good way to end the internship is by holding some form of celebration. This is a comfortable means of recognizing the completion of the internship experience. This way, if the student returns to visit, volunteer, or for future employment, this distinguishes an internship experience from the new experience, thus keeping rules and responsibilities clear.

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## VII. WORKSITE CHECKLIST

### **Explain the Mission of the Organization**

- How did the organization start? Why?
- What is unique about your product or service?
- Who benefits from your product or service?
- What are the organization's current objectives?
- How many interns contribute to those objectives?

### **Explain the Organization Structure**

- Who reports to whom?
- Who, specifically, is the intern's supervisor?
- What is the intern's department responsible for?
- How are decisions made?
- Which personnel can answer different types of questions?

### **Explain Organizational Rules**

- Is there specific industry jargon?
- What are the specific work standards and procedures?
- What hours will the intern be working, and when can they take breaks?
- If interns are being paid, when will they receive their paycheck?
- What access to the supervisor (days, times and duration) does the intern have?
- How should they handle work processing requests?
- How do the mail and telephone system work?
- What are the approved forms for correspondence?
- What safety regulations must they abide by?
- Is there a procedure for signing off completed work?
- What periodic forms or reports need to be completed?
- Are there deadlines that the intern should be aware of?
- Are there any security or confidentiality issues that the intern should be aware of?
- What is acceptable with regard to dress and appearance?
- How should they maintain the premise and work area?
- Where is the bathroom and water fountain?
- What are the company's policies and procedure on harassment, discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace?

### **Define the Intern's Role**

- What is the intern's role?
- What resources are available to the intern?
- What training is necessary?
- How does the organization want the intern to deal with clients and vendors?
- What tasks can be completed without supervisory approval?
- Do other employees understand the intern's role?

## **Monitor the intern's adjustment and understanding of what is expected**

- Make yourself visibly available to the intern.
- Assign someone who can periodically "check in" with the intern.
- Provide feedback and constructive criticism.
- Encourage the intern to ask questions.

Adapted from "Orientation Checklist," Messiah College, Internship Program.

## **VIII. FAQ for Employers**

### **1. Do interns have to be paid?**

We leave it up to employers to decide if students will be paid or not. According to FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) it is important to remember that any student not paid must indeed be part of a training program and not completing work that would be provided by a regular employee. Interns can be paid an hourly wage or a stipend. Hourly wages vary from \$7-\$14 per hour (avg. \$9.75 per hour). Stipends range from \$300-\$500 for 45 hours of work. Interns do receive units of credit towards their degree upon completion of an internship based on the number of hours of work.

### **2. Will the Internship Program Office pre-screen interns?**

Students will discuss some basic career paths with the Internship Program Coordinator to help the student choose an appropriate internship placement. Ultimately the worksite decides if the intern is a good match for the organizations's culture and if the student qualifies for the internship project offered by the worksite.

### **3. When are interns available?**

Students will seek internships prior to the beginning of each semester. CSU Fresno operates on a three-semester system--spring, summer and fall. Organizations that post internship positions 2 to 3 weeks prior to the start of a semester will be assured the best pool of potential students.

- Fall Semester--post positions by early August
- Spring Semester--post positions by early January
- Summer Semester--post positions by early May