

## Internship Strategy & Information for Employers

Thank you for your interest in American International College (AIC) students! We have created this document to provide helpful information for the planning and development of internship opportunities within your organization. We look forward to working with you in understanding your needs and identifying potential interns for placement in a mutually beneficial experience.

Sincerely,  
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### **Executive Summary**

In brief, an internship is an experiential learning opportunity for students to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to a professional work environment where they can experience practical application of theory and skills development. Read more: [What is an internship?](#)

AIC students are required and/or strongly encouraged to complete at least one internship prior to completing their degree. Internships can be completed for either undergraduate or graduate degrees and may be for credit or simply for the valuable experience gained. Read more: [AIC Internship Requirements](#)

Interns may be students from any one of AIC's schools. The School of Business, Arts & Sciences offers over 40 interdisciplinary programs designed to provide integrated academic experiences that engage and educate students in the areas of business, communication and the arts, social and life sciences to prepare them for an ever-changing world of innovation and creativity. Read more: [Fields of Study](#)

To provide all participating internship students with equitable access to opportunities and career success, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) advocates for paid internships. Providing more paid internships for underrepresented populations will also help fill critical roles throughout the employment landscape and lead to a much-needed diversification of the workforce. Read more: [Paid vs. Unpaid Internships](#)

If you are ready to seek an intern, we will gather some important details about your organization and needs and discuss the process with you further. Read more: [Next Steps](#)

### **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 workplace setting (across in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities). Internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, develop social capital, explore career fields, and make connections in professional fields. To gain this experience, students want to engage in projects and tasks that contribute to the professional work of the organization. In addition, internships serve as a significant recruiting mechanism for employers, providing them with the opportunity to guide and evaluate potential candidates for the future workforce.

To ensure that an experience is educational and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship, the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) believes that an internship should include:

- A learning experience with a real-world opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or replace the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- Learned skills and knowledge that are transferable to other employment settings.
- A defined beginning and end that is mutually agreed upon and consistent with institutional sponsor guidelines and schedules.
- A position description with clear responsibilities and required/desired qualifications.
- Clearly defined learning objectives/goals supportive of the student's academic program goals and institutional requirements.
- Direct supervision by a professional(s) with relevant expertise and educational and/or professional experience who provides productive feedback, guidance, and the resources and equipment necessary to successfully complete the assignment.

If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship.

## **AIC Internship Requirements**

At AIC, the School of Business, Arts & Sciences offers more than 40 interdisciplinary programs designed to provide integrated academic experiences that engage and educate students in the areas of communication and the arts, social and life sciences, and business to prepare them for an ever-changing world of innovation and creativity. The School of BAS fosters individuals who can think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, understand broad societal relations and heritages, and build strong foundations of diversity, equity, and inclusion across our programs. Internships are required of many programs and recommended for all programs to extend students' learning beyond the classroom and provide opportunities to apply knowledge gained from courses to a professional setting.

Students are assigned an AIC faculty advisor with whom they will coordinate any course requirements for their internship. Students will coordinate with both the faculty advisor and employer supervisor to develop learning outcomes toward which the student will work over the course of their internship.

Learning outcomes for an internship generally fall into one or more of the following key areas: 1) specific skill development, 2) general academic enrichment, 3) career exploration, and 4) personal improvement. Specific learning outcomes are then identified for each intern based on their major, the project/job description, and other factors as determined by their faculty advisor.

AIC students are required to complete a minimum of 126 internship hours (approximately 10 hours per week for 12 weeks) to receive course credit. If an internship is to be completed over the summer, it is expected the experience will be gained over the span of at least 8 weeks. Internships may certainly extend to more than 126 hours which is only a minimum amount required.

The host employer will provide an Intern Position Description which includes details such as the job/project duties, required/preferred skills and abilities, specific majors desired, and work location and schedule. Internship supervisors from host employers will be asked to evaluate the student at the midway point and at the end of the internship, utilizing a school-supplied evaluation form.

## **Fields of Study**

With over 40 programs in our School of Business, Arts & Sciences, AIC students could fulfill intern roles in numerous fields, including:

- Accounting / Banking / Economics / Finance
- Athletic Administration / Sport & Recreation Management
- Biology / Human Biology / Biochemistry / Chemistry
- Business / Management / Human Resources
- Communication / Public Relations / Media
- Community / Human Services
- Criminal Justice / Law Enforcement
- Graphic Design / Digital Arts
- Healthcare Management
- International Business / International Studies
- Public Health
- Public Administration
- Sales / Marketing / Digital Marketing
- Social Sciences: Psychology / Sociology / History / Political Science

## **Paid vs. Unpaid Internships**

Internships serve as an important bridge from college to career. NACE research has demonstrated that internship experiences are avenues to increased skills, expanded networks, and enhanced social capital, and offer direct pathways to job offers and jobs. They are used widely by companies across the United States and are readily replicable. While many internships are paid, unpaid internships are problematic for many reasons. Using an equity lens, [NACE's position statement on unpaid internships](#) is a call to policymakers to address the inherent inequities unpaid internships cause.

### **INTERNSHIPS PROVIDE THE CRITICAL LINK TO LAUNCHING CAREERS**

Internships are one of the most effective recruiting tools employers use to identify and hire early careers college graduates. According to a recent NACE poll, 80% of responding employers indicated that internships provided the best return on investment (ROI) as a recruiting strategy, compared to career fairs, on-campus visits, on-campus panels, or other activities. From the employer's perspective, internship experience is often the deciding factor when employers are evaluating two otherwise equivalent candidates.

NACE's annual survey of internship employers has consistently found that 50% to 60% of eligible interns convert to full-time employees. Converted interns offer significant additional benefits for employers. First, interns who have converted to full-time employees are much quicker to onboard and train because they have already gone through many of those processes during their internship. Second, interns who become employees are retained at higher rates than other hires.

NACE research has found that not all college students are equitably represented in internships. According to survey data, women, Black, Hispanic, and first-generation students were significantly underrepresented in paid internships. Conversely, the research shows that white, male, and continuing generation students are disproportionately overrepresented in paid internships.

Providing more paid internships for underrepresented populations will lead to greater access, opportunity, and success for participating students; help fill critical roles throughout the employment landscape; and lead to a much-needed diversification of the workforce.

### **ARE UNPAID INTERNSHIPS LEGAL?**

Yes, currently unpaid internships are legal in certain situations. Based on a test developed by a federal court, [the U.S. Dept of Labor has released a fact sheet](#) that outlines the **Primary Beneficiary Test (PBT)**, which should be used to determine who benefits primarily from the internship. In general, if the student/intern is the primary beneficiary, then the unpaid internship is legal; if the for-profit company is the primary beneficiary, the intern must be paid. Not-for-profit organizations and government agencies are exempt from this regulation. However, the Massachusetts statute concerning internships is even more protective in that the intern must be working “under a training program in a charitable, educational, or religious institution,” to be considered exempt from the statutory definition of occupation. This has been applied to both for-profit and non-profit organizations.

Therefore, it is generally recommended that employers pay students at least the current minimum wage for internships, unless the employer meets the very specific exemptions as set forth by the U.S. Department of Labor and Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards. Please consult your legal professional for specific guidance.

### **Next Steps**

If you are ready to seek an intern, please complete the [Internship Information Submission Form](#) to provide us important details about your organization and needs.

Upon submission of the form, the Saremi Center for Career Development will review to determine if the proposal qualifies as an internship experience.

Upon approval, the Saremi Center for Career Development will actively promote the opportunity to qualified students.