



Academic Internships

Thank you for your interest in hosting a Titan as an academic intern. Academic Internships are a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application, training, and skills development in a professional setting. Academic internships give students opportunities to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide, train and evaluate talent.

Below you will find all the information you need to know to start hosting CSUF students for academic internships. You should read through this before you begin recruiting to ensure you know all the requirements and regulations.

Register to host CSUF students

Follow these steps to get started hosting our students.

1. Read the information in the sections below to learn hosting requirements and how to plan and run an academic internship.
2. Register and post by clicking [Titan Connection](#). When the new window opens, click on the “Register and Post” button to complete the online forms.
3. If you are offering an unpaid position you will receive an email requesting you to complete an online Learning Activity Placement Agreement. ([Sample agreement](#))

The system also allows you to recruit students, and provides access to other resources offered by the [CSUF Career Center](#).

Please also see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section (page 6).

Employer / Site Manual

I. Benefits of offering an Academic Internship

Offering an academic internship is your opportunity to educate and nurture the professionals of tomorrow, and enhance your workforce with a short-term infusion of talent. Hosting students has many benefits for employers:

- Internships are a proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate prospective employees and new talent.
- Mentor and train talented and highly motivated students who plan to enter your field.
- Build a partnership with Cal State Fullerton and increase access to the campus community.

II. Designing an Academic Internship

Hosting a student for an academic internship is a substantial undertaking and requires advance planning. We recommend that you refer to the “Approval Criteria and Requirements” section below to ensure your academic internship meets all criteria necessary to be approved for academic credit. In general, an academic internship should:

1. Train the intern in industry-relevant best practices, not simply advance your organization’s operations.
2. Develop skills or knowledge transferable to similar employment settings.
3. Have specific start and end dates (consult the [academic calendar](#) for semester dates).
4. Include a job description that describes specific tasks, assignments, and desired qualifications.
5. Have clearly defined learning objectives/goals that relate to the student’s major.
6. Provide supervision by a paid staff member with expertise and/or educational training in the tasks or field the intern will experience.
7. Include regular feedback by the experienced supervisor (minimum one hour per week).
8. Provide resources, equipment, and facilities that support learning objectives/goals.

Consider who should be involved in the internship. Setting up internships often requires oversight by the employer’s Human Resources department (agreements, organization policies, risk management, safety regulations) and department supervisors (orientation and training, job duties, supervision and mentorship, program structure and timelines).

Tools to assist you in designing and developing your position:

- [Academic Internship Design Worksheet](#). Use this to formulate learning outcomes, training and tasks for your position.
- [Promotional Flyer template](#). Modify this template to describe the position. Then, send the completed form to cice@fullerton.edu and request to have it posted on our notice board and distributed to students (once the position is approved).

We are here to help! Please call our office if you require assistance building your internship experience.

III. Approval Criteria and Requirements

In approving an internship for academic credit, CICE is required to assess [Academic Validity](#) and [Risk Management](#).

- a. **Academic Validity.** To be approved, an academic internship position must demonstrate that there is deliberate intent to teach the student. The following four criteria are used to evaluate.
 1. **Description of Tasks.** The majority (80%+) of duties must be professional or para-professional and sufficiently complex to earn college credit. You will be prompted to provide a list of such tasks. Some clerical and general office work is acceptable but shouldn't be the main focus.
 2. **Training.** Thoughtful and deliberate training is critically important for credit-bearing internships. You will be prompted to provide details of the training that students will receive during this

placement, which includes information on the type and frequency of supervisor-student interactions. Examples of training include:

- General employer orientation (mandatory) including information about your organization, history and philosophy, the market in which you operate, your competitors/other providers, company policies and general human resources and work safety policies.
 - Weekly scheduled one-on-one mentor meetings
 - Job shadowing
 - Workshops/skills trainings
 - Overview of assigned tasks
 - Guide books, training manuals, and/or other assigned reading.
- 3. Mentorship.** You will be prompted to enter the title of the person who will supervise the intern to confirm that the supervisor is sufficiently qualified in the intern's proposed tasks/field, or in managing interns. This person should provide consistent supervision, be available to the intern for questions and feedback, and have time scheduled each week specifically to work with interns. This person also may be asked to evaluate the intern's performance.
- 4. Learning Outcomes.** You will be prompted to list industry-specific as well as general skills and competencies that the internship has been designed to provide for the student. The U.S. Department of Labor's [approved list of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities \(KSAs\)](#) related to your field. To use this site, enter a position title into the search box and choose the position that is the best match for the one being offered; you may want to select some of the associated KSAs in your position description.
- b. **Risk Management.** Policies are in place to reduce the likelihood of physical injury, property damage, and liability exposure and ensure safe and meaningful experiences for students participating in academic internships and service-learning. You will be prompted to answer questions that help to identify areas of potential concern.
- **Driving.** Driving responsibilities raise concerns about proper insurance coverage for business purposes. The student and employer should verify with the policy provider that coverage is appropriate (with necessary gap coverage if needed) to insure the student for personal injury, third-party and liability coverage while driving as part of the duties of the academic internship. You will be prompted to affirm this when completing the position posting.
 - **Vulnerable Populations.** Students may work with these populations as long as they are supervised by your paid staff at all times and are never alone with them. You will be asked to affirm this statement: "I affirm that CSUF students engaged in unpaid academic internship or service-learning positions will not be left alone for any amount of time with minors, elderly individuals or any other vulnerable populations."
 - **Work Sites and Special Circumstances.** Some settings raise concerns for safety. You will be asked to describe any of the following: sparsely populated or remote areas (such as ranger stations); working alone at night; working in a high-crime area; interacting with individuals who have a criminal background or a history of physical violence; working with hazardous materials, heavy machinery or heavy equipment; working at a different location than the supervisor's site.

Learning Activity Placement Agreements. Within two weeks of the position being approved a Learning Activity Placement Agreement (for unpaid internships) will be sent via email with instructions for completing an online agreement. ([sample agreement](#))

IV. Student Hours and Schedule

In order to earn course credit for an academic internship, students must complete a minimum number of hours of work/service. The number may vary by department or units, but generally these are 3-unit courses that require 120 hours of service over a 15-week semester (usually about 10 hours per week, allowing for finals week and semester break). Employers are asked to

- calendar the internship between the first and last week of the [academic term](#)
- allow a reasonably flexible work schedule to accommodate the student's other courses while also meeting the employer's expectations and needs
- track and verify the student's actual hours on the job
- if requested, evaluate the student's performance.

[Information cards](#) explain each department's academic internship requirements and prerequisites.

V. Paid or Unpaid Internships?

Whether the internship is paid or unpaid, students may earn course credit as long as the internship meets requirements and is approved for academic credit.

Please consider offering fuel reimbursements or a stipend to offset the costs students incur for traveling to work sites and enrolling in the internship course.

a. Paid positions (hourly wages or stipend)

- We strongly encourage offering some form of compensation, in addition to course credit, whenever possible.
- Typically, students are paid as temporary employees and the employer reports the compensation on a W2.
- In general, paying a student as an independent contractor is inappropriate and may be considered misclassified by the State of California.
- Contact CICE for clarification or visit the [California Employment Development Department](#).

b. Unpaid positions

Be aware of [Fair Labor Standards Act's](#) 6-prong test concerning unpaid internships.

VI. Credit Verification (Proof of Enrollment)

If proof is required that a student is receiving academic credit for the internship, CICE will generate a letter on request. Students should visit the CICE office to request the letter; it can be faxed or mailed to the employer on request.

VII. Ineligible positions

Review and approval of academic internship positions is at the discretion of CICE on behalf of the departments and colleges we represent. CICE may decline positions that do not appear to support the best interests of students and/or the University. Ineligible positions include but are not limited to those that:

- predominantly or entirely consist of administrative or clerical work (filing, answering phones, data entry, etc.)
- predominantly or entirely consist of sales/lead generation (cold-calling, client referrals, prospecting, etc.)
- are posted by third-party recruiters
- require an initial investment or payment by the prospective intern. Investments include but are not limited to payment to attend orientation or training sessions, purchase or rental of a starter kit or product inventory, sales kit, sample or presentation supplies and/or professional licensure fees
- require students to act as independent contractors (some exceptions may apply; contact CICE to evaluate). These positions could still be offered as regular, non-academic internships contingent on approval.

VIII. Internships outside of the U.S.

Internship opportunities that occur outside of the United States are encouraged! The process of registering and posting positions is the same as for all academic internship opportunities, but we also require an **International Learning Activity Placement Agreement** (see [sample](#)).

IX. Background Checks and Medical Tests

Postings must include a disclosure if the position requires a background check or medical test (such as a TB test if working with young children). The employer must indicate who is responsible for the cost of the necessary checks.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am looking for help for my business. Can I hire an unpaid academic intern for this?

Academic internship duties may include assignments that support a business, but if that is the primary motivation for recruiting a student, then an unpaid internship is probably not right for you. For-profit organizations can only offer unpaid internships that are in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Department of Labor, Fact Sheet #71 describes six parameters which, when met, allow an internship to be unpaid. At CSUF, we are concerned with ensuring our students receive learning experiences relevant to their academic majors, and are placed in safe work environments. In order for students to earn academic credit, employers should design the internship as a learning experience and be prepared to dedicate staff resources to train, teach, mentor, and guide the intern. If you wish to recruit an intern purely to help your business you should provide compensation of minimum wage or above, per State regulations.

I've decided whom I am hiring, how do I ensure the student gets academic credit?

To ensure a student earns academic credit, the employer must have registered with us, and the academic internship position must be approved in our system. Refer to the sections above to do this. If you have already done this, refer to the Requirements during a Student Placement section.

Timekeeping: How do I report a student has completed internship hours?

Interns are responsible for recording their hours and reporting them to their academic departments. They should provide you with a timesheet for your signature as verification of their hours. With instructor approval, students may submit a copy of your company's timekeeping record in lieu of our timesheet.

Home-based business: Can I host a student for an academic internship at my home-based business?

Academic Internships with home-based businesses can be approved under two circumstances:

1. Internships can be designed as Remote Internships if the students conduct their duties at a location other than the business address, such as the student's home or campus. Remote Internships must adhere to the following directives:

- Meetings between you (or your agents or employees) and interns should take place in a public setting (such as a coffee shop) or using teleconferencing (eg. Skype).
- Interns may commute to work at a public site such as an event location.
- Interns may conduct interviews or client visits provided they are accompanied by a representative of your organization. Interns may NOT conduct these activities alone or unsupervised at any time.

2. A site visit is conducted. However, site visits will only be conducted if the opportunity offered is sufficiently rare to warrant a site visit. A site visit is no guarantee of approval.

Can a student travel as part of an academic internship?

Yes. We welcome opportunities that allow students to travel to other parts of the United States for professional purposes. International travel is permitted if interns are covered with appropriate insurance while the travel occurs. Travel to attend conferences and other professional development opportunities is highly encouraged wherever possible.

How many hours does a student serve in an academic internship?

Most three-unit academic internship courses require students to serve 120 hours (40 per unit) over a 16-week semester. In some cases students can enroll in less than three units of internship credit, but this is not typical. Child and Adolescent Studies students complete two 60-hour practicums over two semesters. Contact CICE for requirements of the majors you are targeting for your recruitment.

Can interns drive as part of their academic internship duties?

CSUF students are permitted to drive as part of their duties for an academic internship or service-learning experience ONLY IF the host organization ensures sufficient personal injury, third-party and liability insurance is provided to cover the student while driving as part of their duties in an academic internship. You will be asked to affirm this when posting an academic internship position.

When to recruit: What is the best time to post my positions?

The best time to recruit is during the weeks just prior to the start of a semester. While these dates can differ during any calendar year, target early August (for fall), early December (for spring), and mid April (for summer).

How many students are too many to oversee?

We recommend limiting the number of positions at your site to three interns per supervising staff member during a semester. Requests for additional students will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the CICE staff, and will depend on the nature of the position and the number of hours scheduled for each intern.