

▶ internships



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EXPECTATIONS

The Department of Journalism Internship program looks to connect companies and students to achieve a meaningful experience for both parties. To facilitate this, we ask the organization and student to understand the following minimum expectations:

For the organization:

- Ensure that the internship position is a meaningful, learning experience for the student
- Provide regular feedback
- Provide an end-of-semester evaluation
- Comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act
- Contact the Department of Journalism internship coordinator if problems arise that cannot be solved internally

For the student:

- Act responsibly, professionally and dependably
- Seek out opportunities to become engaged in the position and organization
- Contact the Department of Journalism internship coordinator if problems arise that cannot be solved internally.

INTERNSHIP PROCESS

Our students can help your organization in three key areas:

- Multimedia Journalism
- Public Relations
- Multimedia Journalism - Advertising

They understand the value of an internship and are anxious to get real-world experience that allows them to build their portfolio. The steps below will help you build a quality experience and acquire an intern to meet your needs.

Develop a Relationship With the Internship Coordinator

First, contact the Department of Journalism Internship Coordinator, Sara Steffes-Hansen at hansen@uwosh.edu. She can answer your questions and assist you in developing a meaningful experience for both you and your intern.

Determine What Type of Internship Suits Your Needs

There are several options available when choosing what type of internship will best suit your needs. Many companies choose to hire interns on an as-needed basis; others prefer to have a consistent internship that is available each semester or during the summer. Your needs should determine what option fits your company the best.

Create Some Written Guidelines for Your Program

Some companies create extensive guidelines, detailing week by week what they expect the intern to do and who will supervise him or her. Others have a general guideline of what they want to accomplish and tend to “go with the flow.” What type of guidelines you create will depend on your company and its structure. But having something in writing helps to assure that you have enough projects for the intern to work on and that you can provide the necessary supervision.

Announce Your Internship Opportunity

Once you are ready to announce an internship position, email your job posting to hansen@uwosh.edu. Be sure to include a description of the position, and include duties, necessary skills, typical hours, pay, timeframe and application process and deadline. After your position is posted on the department bulletin boards and online at our website - www.uwosh.edu/journalism - students are responsible for contacting you. You can then interview and select the applicant who best meets your needs. If the student you select is taking the internship for credit you must fill out the Employer Participation Internship Agreement Form, available from the student or online at www.uwosh.edu/journalism/internships. Return it to the internship coordinator, preferably before the internship begins.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Professional Journalism Internship class?

The Department of Journalism ensures that all students enrolled in the three-credit Professional Journalism Internship course, 61-427, are prepared in that they must have completed several core classes in their area of emphasis. To qualify for the class, students must work a minimum of 200 hours, be supervised by a mass media professional, and receive regular feedback from their direct supervisor.

The actual class is meant to prepare the students to enter the job market, with students updating their resume, creating references and business cards, writing cover letters, participating in mock interviews, creating portfolios and more.

Can students accept an internship without taking the class?

Yes, students may accept an internship without enrolling in the Professional Journalism Internship course; however, then students are not required to have completed all of the core classes in their emphases. It is up to each employer to decide if a student has the necessary skills to do the required work. Either option requires the same amount of dedication from the student and company.

Must I pay interns?

Although students can accept paid or non-paid internships, the Department of Journalism strongly encourages employers to pay their interns a competitive wage or stipend.

What software does the Department of Journalism teach?

Students can take a variety of classes in which they learn Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Flash and Dreamweaver; Microsoft Word and PowerPoint; and others.

EMPLOYER FEEDBACK

"We have hired numerous interns from UW Oshkosh's Journalism Department over the past decade because we have opportunities for young people who have solid writing skills and know how to communicate. Some of those interns have become full-time staff members following graduation. These interns bring us new ideas and fresh thinking."

—Dick Knapinski
Media/Public Relations Director, EAA

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

The FLSA applies to all companies that have at least two employees directly engaged in interstate commerce and have annual sales of at least \$500,000. It restricts an employer's use of unpaid interns.

Six Prong Test

According to the FLSA "interns are, in most cases, employees of their host organization and therefore as employees they should receive monetary compensation equal to or greater than the federal minimum wage."

There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in for-profit private sector internships may do so without compensation. The students are not considered employees, if **all** the following criteria apply:

- The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in an educational environment
- The training is for the benefit of the students
- The students do not displace regular employees, but work under their close observation
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the students, and on occasion operations may be impeded
- The students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period
- The employer and the students understand that the students are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training

FAQ on the FLSA

What is a fair wage?

The FLSA defines a fair wage as the federal minimum wage. If an intern works in an area with a state minimum wage, he or she is entitled to the higher wage amount.

Can an employee be required to perform work outside of the employee's job description?

Yes. The FLSA does not limit the type of work an employee can do. However, this should be communicated between the employer and employee to avoid confusion.

Does it matter what other organizations or corporations are paying?

No, according to a recent survey of college students, interns care more about experience rather than pay. But students are time-

strained and may have to choose a paid job over an unpaid internship.

For more information check:

The Department of Labor
<http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/index.htm>

U.S. Office of Compliance
<https://www.usa.gov/federal-agencies/office-of-compliance>

DECIDING ON INTERN COMPENSATION

When determining whether or not to pay interns, the answer relies on whether the intern is covered by the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The FLSA covers "any individual employed by an employer." The verb "employ" is defined to mean "to suffer or permit to work." Although the law does not require all interns to be paid, studies have shown benefits, for both the employer and the intern, when the positions offer even a small wage.

Students are aware that most internships are not going to bring in **the big bucks**, but a modest wage could increase the level of intern applications. According to past studies, students are often attending school fulltime and working at least one part-time job. Consequently, unpaid internships are often not an option for students who come from low-income households.

FACTS TO REMEMBER

- Unpaid internships in the public sector and for non-profit organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.
- Unpaid internships generally should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the internship period.
- In general, the more an internship is structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to the employer's actual operations, the more likely the internship will be viewed as an extension of the student's educational experience.