



**CAMERON
UNIVERSITY**
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Internship Handbook

Updated Spring 2026

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Welcome to the Student Internship Program – Department of Psychology

The mission of the Department of Psychology at Cameron University is to prepare the diverse student body for entry-level and advanced positions in the field of psychology, family studies, research, and service; to provide education that is focused on the principles of psychology and counseling that apply to work, family and responsible citizenship; and to prepare students for further education in the field, licensure, or related careers in order to support the cultural life and economic development of the region.

The Department of Psychology student internship program provides students with the opportunity to explore and develop a thorough understanding of careers and jobs available in the fields of psychology and family and child studies. In addition, internships provide experiential learning in which students apply skills learned in the classroom to the real world. Finally, internships provide excellent opportunities to develop professional skills and relationships.

A Psychology academic internship is open to students who meet the following qualifications

- junior level or above (60 or more hours completed)
- Major GPA of 3.0 or higher
- completion of either FAMS 1123 or PSY 1113 and at least 12 additional hours of PSY courses (for Psychology majors), or FAMS or CD courses (for Family and Child Studies majors).

Contact Information

Dr. Stephanie White, Assistant Professor and Chair, swhite@cameron.edu

Dr. John Geiger, Professor, johng@cameron.edu

Dr. Jeff Seger, Professor, jseger@cameron.edu

Dr. Paul James, Assistant Professor, rjames@cameron.edu

Dr. Joe Williams, Assistant Professor, joewilli@cameron.edu

Dr. Casey Frye-Davies, Assistant Professor, cfrye@cameron.edu

Megan Culbert, Instructor, mculbert@cameron.edu

Section I

General Purpose of Program

A. Why Should Students Want To Serve In an Internship?

The Internship Program provides students with quality avenues for career exploration and valuable work experience opportunities. An internship experience also provides students with first-hand knowledge of what employers expect regarding skill levels, attitudes, and work climate, which are necessary components for successful employment.

The internship also gives students an opportunity to use their developing skills while functioning as a part of a team. The goal of the program is to place students with organizations that provide hands-on experiences. Those learning experiences should enable students to make informed career decisions.

Information on available internships is disseminated through Handshake (<https://www.cameron.edu/sec/workforce-readiness/handshake>) and through internship course instructors.

This section of the handbook outlines requirements for student interns. Questions that arise about a particular internship should be addressed to the internship course instructor.

B. What is the Student Internship Program?

The Student Internship Program provides students with opportunities to explore various careers and gain work experience and knowledge regarding current practices, innovations, improvements, and changes in psychology and related fields.

The Student Internship Program allows students to take responsibility for initiating their own self-improvement in the classroom. By observing and experiencing firsthand the demands of a “real-world workplace,” interns receive the tools needed to bring about specific changes in their study habits. This type of experience is invaluable.

A student may already be employed by the company with which they complete an internship. However, for credit to be approved, the student must be learning a new position, working on a new project, or taking on completely different duties within the company.

Program Duration

Psychology internships operate for one semester and can be offered for 1-3 hours of academic credit through the PSY 4461-3 course. As a general rule, the standard minimum is 40 hours of work per credit hour of enrollment. For example, in a 3 credit hour course, a student must intern for a minimum of 120 clock hours; these hours can include training as assigned by the internship site and academic assignments given by the faculty advisor, in addition to duties completed for the internship site.

The balance of on-site duties, training, and academic assignments will be negotiated between the site, student, and faculty advisor, but a minimum of 75% of the internship hours must be comprised of duties completed for the internship.

Assignments may include, but are not limited to, performance reports, weekly journal, papers/reports, lessons learned, portfolios and presentations.

Level of Commitment

- Internship – Students interested in enrolling in the Internship course are responsible for locating an organization at which to complete the internship.
- Monetary – The internship option may be unpaid or paid. The decision as to whether to provide compensation is between the employer and the intern.
- Time – 1 credit hour = 40 clock hours; 2 credit hours = 80 clock hours; 3 credit hours = 120 clock hours

C. Internship Mission

The two primary internship goals are to provide a real-world experience for the student and to improve the quality of education by providing “hands-on” experiences.

General Internship Objectives

1. To apply the knowledge of the academic environment to “hands-on” situations in organizations;
2. To increase awareness of the importance of teamwork and leadership;
3. To encourage students to continue to expand their skill base;
4. To expand students’ knowledge of applications within their chosen area; and
5. Additional specific internship objectives may be provided by the instructor.

Section II

Expectations of the Business/Non-Profit/State Agency Client

A. Why Should Organizations Get Involved?

Businesses, non-profit organizations (NPO), and state agencies are recognizing a public duty and a self-serving need to support the efforts of universities to improve the quality of higher education.

To improve the quantity and quality of their labor force in a cost-effective manner, businesses, NPOs, and state agencies are taking more proactive approaches in cooperative ventures with universities.

Businesses, NPOs, and state agencies across the nation have voiced increasing needs for competent workers who are:

1. Well-schooled in fundamental skills;
2. Capable of adapting to change in the workplace;
3. Job-ready for work that is available now; and
4. Able to quickly learn tomorrow's job requirements.

An important part of the interaction between businesses, NPOs, state agencies and education is the provision of student internships. These internships are meant to provide students with a more thorough understanding of their operations. However, in addition to the obvious long-term benefits to businesses, NPOs, and state agencies —as students are more adequately instructed about the “real world of work”—there is an additional short-term benefit. Internships also provide businesses, NPOs, and state agencies with enthusiastic employees who offer current knowledge in their field of study for short-term projects.

This section of the handbook outlines what is expected of businesses, NPOs, and state agency participants in the internship process. Questions may arise as you review its content. In that event, please feel free to contact the Department of Psychology, 580-581-2380 or the internship course supervising instructor.

B. Business, NPO, and State Agency Requirements

All businesses, NPOs, and state agencies participating in the Student Internship Program are asked to provide the following:

- Internship slots for a minimum of 40, 80, or 120 hours total for 1, 2 or 3 credit hours respectively.
- A written job description (or descriptions) for each internship slot;
- An onsite Mentor/Supervisor assigned to the intern(s) throughout the program;
- Periodic communications with the Instructor of Record or the supervising professional instructor including, but not limited to:
 - On-site visitation with the Instructor during internship;
 - Evaluation of internship via provided evaluation form; and
 - A follow-up visit with the Instructor upon internship completion;

Internship hosts are asked to provide an in-house orientation for each intern to familiarize them with the businesses, NPOs, or state agencies, clarify their work assignments, outline work expectations, finalize their schedule and timeline, and arrange for work space and equipment needs. Periodic meetings should be held between Interns and the Mentor/Supervisor to assist in the transfer of ideas and materials for any assignments.

Compensation Issues. Cameron University is not involved in any negotiations between businesses, NPOs, state agencies and an intern regarding the payment of compensation. Internships may be offered with or without compensation; however, the Department of Labor provides specific criteria for determining whether an employment relationship exists with interns for purposes of complying with minimum wage compensation laws. The criteria are listed in FLSA Fact Sheet #71, which is attached at Appendix B7. Please review the rules provided by the Department of Labor to determine whether the internship qualifies for an exemption from minimum wage compensation.

Equal Opportunity Compliance

In the event a business, NPO, or state agency wants Cameron University to assist in recruiting interns, Cameron must advertise the opportunities in order to ensure compliance with Equal Opportunity laws. Faculty and staff may not hand-select students to complete internships or other opportunities, regardless of whether such positions are paid or unpaid.

Section III

Requirements of Participating Student Intern

Prospective Interns who are seeking academic credit should work with a faculty member or the Department of Psychology to secure internship approval. Students who are interested in an internship must have completed PSY 1113 or FAMS 1123, plus an additional 12 hours of PSY or FAMS courses, with a major GPA of 3.0 and be classified as a Junior.

To arrange an internship, the student must select a site, secure site approval, and submit a typed internship proposal letter and internship application (See Appendix A1) to a Psychology faculty member. The letter and internship application should propose the business, NPO, or state agency, internship on-site supervisor, days/hours of internship, internship responsibilities, internship goals, and internship job description. For approval to be granted, the quality, conditions, and goals of the internship will be evaluated. Work performed in the internship should be aimed at preparing students for professional duties (i.e., observation/job shadowing of professional staff, assisting professional staff with projects, any appropriate direct work with clients); some clerical duties are allowed in the spirit of orienting students to the day-to-day activities, but should be kept to a minimum.

A. Student Internship Guidelines

Student Interns will be expected to do the following:

- ___ Complete the internship class application form (Appendix A1). It must be typed or printed so as to be legible and submitted before the last business day in March (for Fall internships) or October (for Spring internships).
- ___ Read Student Instruction Sheet, Section III and follow instructions.
- ___ Submit any back-up documentation you feel pertinent to the application prior to the start of the semester (e.g., a resume is highly recommended, references, letters of support, etc.)
- ___ Carry out responsibilities as outlined by their site supervisor;
- ___ Actively seek opportunities to learn about the business, NPO, or state agency and about available career opportunities;
- ___ Attend any required orientations with instructor and with the employing business, NPO, or state agency to discuss expectations;
- ___ Request and schedule any needed meetings with the business, NPO, or state agency and faculty mentor/supervisor;
- ___ Respond to periodic evaluation and visitations by the instructor;

- ___ Complete assignments as assigned by faculty mentor/supervisor
- ___ Participate in oral communications, emails, virtual meetings, or postings to Blackboard with instructor; and
- ___ Complete a ***minimum*** required hour (1-credit hour course = 40 hours of supervised internship, 2-credit hour course = 80 hours of supervised internship, or 3-credit hour course = 120 hours)
- ___ Students will be evaluated monthly by the client supervisor/mentor for workplace performance. Refer to the Evaluation Form (Appendix B6) regarding criteria for evaluation.
- ___ Students must also refer to the course syllabus and any assignment schedules for additional information regarding course requirements.

B. Student Instruction Sheet for CU Credit Internship

The following is required of each student **prior** to the semester in which the student intends to complete an internship:

1. Read the Internship Handbook thoroughly. Be prepared to complete all Section Three requirements.
2. Complete and submit STUDENT FORMS Appendix A **before the last business day in March** (for Fall internships) or **October** (for Spring internships).
3. After you are approved to pursue an internship, and in advance of the semester in which you propose to complete an internship, find an organization willing to provide an internship, and share with the organization a full copy of the Internship Handbook. Ensure the organization is willing to meet the requirements of Section II: Expectations of Business, NPO, and State Agency Internship Provider.
4. Obtain and submit to the faculty instructor by Week 1 the following information and completed forms from the Organization providing the internship: Appendix: B1 to B7. Be sure you have all of the following information from the organization providing the internship:
 - i. Full name of organization, street address & telephone number.
 - ii. Letter, memorandum, or email from proposed Internship Provider stating the student has the internship, internship title, and job description.
 - iii. Proposed Supervisor's name, email, and telephone number.
 - iv. Beginning and ending date of proposed Internship.
 - v. Hours student is expected to work each week **and** schedule of work.
 - vi. Full or part time, paid or unpaid. (See Handbook regarding Department of Labor requirements and guidelines)
5. CU supervising faculty name. *Note: Faculty is responsible for providing the student with a syllabus and requesting the creation of the internship class from the Chair of the Department. Course number is dependent on HOURS. Additionally, the Chair of the*

Department will not create a class until the contract has been signed by all parties

6. Students are required to obtain all appropriate signatures and return the document to the department admin to prior to the end of the semester before the internship is to begin.
7. Students will follow the syllabus provided by the CU Faculty member.

C. Interview Procedures

Whether you apply for an existing internship or whether an internship is created at your request or the request of Cameron University, you may be required to participate in an interview. If the opportunity already exists and is one for which you apply, the general process is as follows.

NOTE: For additional information on how to prepare your resume, and how to prepare for interviews, be sure to take advantage of the resources available in the Student Enrichment Center. <https://www.cameron.edu/sec/workforce-readiness>

If you are contacted for an interview, please consider the following:

- Dress in **conservative** business attire. ***Dress for the job you really want – not for the current internship opportunity you seek!*** This attire may change once you are hired, but for the interview, dress accordingly.
- Arrive a few minutes early to be sure you are in the right place, and to have time to collect yourself. You do not want to go into an interview out of breath, sweating, or ruffled. It is always a good idea to have time to stop by a restroom with a mirror and make sure you look polished and professional, ready to impress the interviewers.
- Prepare for the interview by putting together a short list of questions you may ask when the opportunity arises. At the end of almost every interview, your interviewers will ask whether you have any questions for them. Show you have prepared for the interview by having well-thought out questions that reflect you know something about the organization. These questions will help you define the position as well as the employer's expectations of you.
- Follow up immediately with any requests from your interviewers for additional information. The timeframe is tight; any delay in submitting requested information may result in your elimination from consideration.
- Respond to any internship offer within 3 days by informing the instructor and the business, NPO, or state agency.

Section IV

Responsibilities of the University

A. Departmental Internship Coordination Procedures

If internship opportunities are brought to faculty or to the school/department by an organization or individual, by law these must be turned over to Career Services (x6769) so they may be properly advertised. Departmental Required Forms are: A1, B2, B3, & B4 plus syllabus.

1. Internship Course Instructor will:
 - a. Obtain Chair's signature on Form B3.
 - b. Coordinate with the Chair to secure appropriate course number and CRN (based on hours required – allowances vary by department).
 - c. Provide student and chair a copy of the Internship syllabus and go over all instructions with the student.
 - d. Verify the course has been created.
 - e. Follow-up on all syllabus requirements.
 - f. Grade the class based on requirements of syllabus.
 - g. Talk periodically with the Internship Supervisor to ensure student is meeting expectations, appearing for work, etc.
 - h. Department Chair will:
 - i. Create the Internship Class.
 - ii. Sign appropriate forms.

B. Student Internship Class

Responsibilities of the Instructor

Internship instructors will do the following:

- Serve as the liaison between business, NPO, or state agency and the student;
- Formally promote the program;
- Assist business, NPO, or state agency in setting up interviews (as requested);
- Orient interns on the expected outcomes of the internship;
- Conduct periodic communications with each intern and his or her mentor as needed;
- Conduct evaluations with the business, NPO, or state agency and the intern;
- Evaluate each intern based on assignments.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT FORMS

Cameron University Student Internship Program

* Student Internship Application

Name _____
Last First

Home Address _____
Street/P.O. Box City State Zip

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail _____ Alternate E-mail _____

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Course Name & Number _____

Academic Major _____ Minor _____

Classification _____ Expected Graduation _____ month _____ year

What classes are you currently taking? _____

Please describe your dream job. _____

What work experience do you possess? _____

What are your occupation & career goals? _____

List other interests or hobbies: _____

What do you hope to gain from this course and experience? _____

APPENDIX B EMPLOYER FORMS

Cameron University Student Internship Program
INTERNSHIP/PRACTICUM CONTRACT

I. CONTRACT PARTNERS	
Internship/Practicum Sponsor (“Organization/Facility”)	
Organization	Mailing Address
On-site Supervisor	Supervisor’s Title
Supervisor’s Phone	Supervisor’s E-mail address
Student	
Last Name	First Name MI
Student ID Number	Phone
E-mail address	Major/Degree
Faculty Liaison	
Last Name	First Name MI
Phone	E-mail address

INTERNSHIP DETAILS		
Internship Course Title:		
Course Prefix:	Course Number:	Number of Credit Hours Available: _____
Internship Semester: <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Year: _____		
Beginning Date:		Ending Date:
Hours/Week:		Total Hours:
Is this a paid internship? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, how much? _____		
Is the internship a required course for your degree: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Cameron University Student Internship Program

INTERNSHIP/PRACTICUM CONTRACT

II. INTERNSHIP/PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Academic student learning outcome objectives and assignments are listed in the Course Syllabus. The Employer and the student should agree on and report to the faculty mentor/supervisor the specific internship objectives and tasks to be accomplished.

III. THE UNIVERSITY, FACILITY AND STUDENT JOINTLY AGREE:

1. Access to student records shall be governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, commonly known as "FERPA," and all other applicable laws.
2. As applicable, the provisions of Executive Order 11246, as amended by EO 11375 and EO 11141 and as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (41 CFR Part 60 et. Seq.) are incorporated into this Agreement. The parties represent that all services are provided without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, political beliefs, or veteran's status; they do not maintain nor provide for their employees any segregated facilities, nor will the parties permit their employees to perform their services at any location where segregated facilities are maintained. In addition, the parties agree to comply with the applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Vietnam Era Veteran's Assistance Act of 1974, 38 U.S.C. § 4212.
3. This agreement entails no compensation or payment between the University and the Facility; it is recognized that any agreement for compensation is solely between the Facility and the Student. All parties acknowledge that the performance of services by the Student for the Facility is on an at-will basis, terminable by either party at any time. If the Facility releases the Student from the internship/practicum, or if Student resigns from the Facility, Facility and Student will promptly notify the University of the termination of services.
4. Neither party nor any of its participants shall publish any materials as a direct result of the internship/practicum, without giving the non-publishing party an opportunity to review and object to the publication in advance. No confidential information of the Facility, its staff or clients may be included in any publication without prior written notice to the Facility.
5. When circumstances indicate that a student must be immediately withdrawn from the internship/practicum, the Facility shall promptly inform the Faculty Liaison, and the Faculty Liaison shall withdraw the Student.
6. The parties agree not to use each other's names or logos in any publications or advertising without prior written approval from the other party.
7. An Internship/Practicum may require the Student to obtain a security clearance. The Facility is responsible for assisting and guiding the Student through the security clearance process.
8. The Faculty Liaison will assign the course grade, based upon the criteria identified in either the course syllabus or in Section II of this document.
9. The Student acknowledges that the performance of services under this internship/practicum agreement does not entitle the Student to any future employment with the Facility, and that any arrangement for future work opportunities with the Facility is a matter of negotiation solely between the Student and the Facility, at the sole discretion of the Facility.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY:

- 1. The University shall designate a Faculty Liaison to coordinate all aspects of the internship/practicum with the Facility. The Faculty Liaison shall ensure that the Student and Facility have completed all necessary documentation, assist with the development of student assignments and training activities, and assign the final course grade.
- 2. The University shall require each participating student to complete, sign and return Attachment A, "Student Acknowledgement and Release."

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY:

- 1. The Facility is responsible for the actual supervision and control of the Student's activities within the Facility. The Facility will designate one or more staff persons with appropriate qualifications ("Supervisor(s)") to instruct and supervise the Student.
- 2. The Facility is responsible for providing the Student with the training and resources necessary to support the Student's learning experience, including training about the Facility's policies, procedures, and performance expectations.
- 3. The Facility will be responsible for prompt submission of reports that adequately describe the Student's progress, if the University requires.
- 4. The Facility will communicate immediately with the Faculty Liaison any concern regarding the Student's performance or progress.
- 5. The Facility will work to create an Internship/Practicum work schedule that minimizes conflicts with the Student's and University's schedules.
- 6. Upon reasonable request, the Facility agrees to permit the University or its accreditation agencies to inspect the areas of the Facility relevant to the Internship/Practicum.
- 7. The Facility agrees to provide each Student in the Facility with the relevant policies, rules, procedures, and expectations with which the Student is required to comply.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT:

The Student's responsibilities are specified in Attachment A, "Student Acknowledgement and Release". A Student may not participate in an Internship/Practicum at Cameron University until the Student Acknowledgement and Release has been signed and returned to the Faculty Liaison.

Signatures of Approval

Please obtain the signatures in the order in which they appear below. This Internship/Practicum Contract is not effective and the student is not eligible for course credit until all of the following signatures have been obtained.

Student _____ Date _____

On-Site Supervisor _____ Date _____

Faculty Liaison _____ Date _____

Chair _____ Date _____

Cameron University Student Internship Program

* Work Assignment Form

Job Title: _____

Business/NPO/State Agency Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone No. _____

Mentor/Supervisor Name: _____ Phone No. _____

Instructor Name (if different): _____ Phone No. _____

Internship Job Description: _____

Duration of Assignment: _____ Normal Work Hours: _____

Hours per Week: _____ Duties and Responsibilities of Intern: _____

Preferred Education: _____

Required Skills: _____

Desired Skills:

Other Requirements:

Cameron University Student Internship Program Intern Evaluation Form

INTERN NAME: _____ COMPANY: _____

INTERNSHIP COURSE INSTRUCTOR: _____ DATE: _____

INTERNSHIP WORK SUPERVISOR: _____ DATE: _____

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION: To assess productivity and job performance of the intern.

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are a number of characteristics and skills. Place an "X" mark in each rating box, using the following scale as the rating guide.

Excellent=Outstanding	Poor=Substandard but making progress
Good=Definitely above average	Unacceptable=Unsatisfactory
Fair=Doing an average job	

You are encouraged to document your evaluative comments for each of the qualities evaluated, especially if the rating is exceptionally high or low.

Three common mistakes in rating are: (1) a tendency to rate nearly everyone as "average" in every category instead of being more critical in judgment. (2) The "Halo Effect", which is a tendency to rate the same individual "excellent" on every trait or "poor" on every trait based on the *overall* picture one has of the person being rated. (3) The "Recency Error", which is a tendency to rate an individual based on *recent* factors (could be positive or negative). You must evaluate the individual's performance for the entire period of time being considered.

QUALITY is the correctness of work duties performed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

QUANTITY OF WORK is the amount of work an individual does in a work day.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

COURTESY is polite attention an individual gives other people.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

INITIATIVE is the desire to attain goals, to achieve.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

CONFIDENTIALITY is the ability to be trusted with information of a confidential nature.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

PERSONAL APPEARANCE is the personal impression an individual makes on others (Consider cleanliness, grooming, neatness, and appropriateness of dress on the job.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

DEPENDABILITY is the ability to do required jobs well with a minimum of supervision.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

ATTENDANCE is faithfulness in coming to work daily and conforming to work hours.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

VERSATILITY is the flexibility to adapt to changing situations.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

TIME MANAGEMENT is the proper utilization of working hours as well as attention to limits on lunch and rest periods.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

OVERALL EVALUATION:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable

Describe professional & technical skills that the student developed. _____

Additional work supervisor comments _____

EVALUATED BY:

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

Phone Number

U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division

(Updated January 2018)

Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns and students working for “for-profit” employers are entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).¹

Background

The FLSA requires “for-profit” employers to pay employees for their work. Interns and students, however, may not be “employees” under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work.

The Test for Unpaid Interns and Students

Courts have used the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA.² In short, this test allows courts to examine the “economic reality” of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the “primary beneficiary” of the relationship. Courts have identified the following seven factors as part of the test:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee—and vice versa.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
5. The extent to which the internship’s duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
6. The extent to which the intern’s work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
7. The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

¹ The FLSA exempts certain people who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency or who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation, for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships for public sector and non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.

² E.g., *Benjamin v. B & H Educ., Inc.*, --- F.3d ---, 2017 WL 6460087, at *4-5 (9th Cir. Dec. 19, 2017); *Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Inc.*, 811 F.3d 528, 536-37 (2d Cir. 2016); *Schumann v. Collier Anesthesia, P.A.*, 803 F.3d 1199, 1211-12 (11th Cir. 2015); see also *Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.*, 330 U.S. 148, 152-53 (1947); *Solis v. Laurelbrook Sanitarium & Sch., Inc.*, 642 F.3d 518, th Cir. 2011).

Courts have described the “primary beneficiary test” as a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the FLSA necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case.

If analysis of these circumstances reveals that an intern or student is actually an employee, then he or she is entitled to both minimum wage and overtime pay under the FLSA. On the other hand, if the analysis confirms that the intern or student is not an employee, then he or she is not entitled to either minimum wage or overtime pay under the FLSA.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

This publication is for general information and is not a regulation. For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

1-866-4-USWAGE
TTY: 1-866-487-9243
[Contact Us](#)