

CORNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Employer Handbook

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For Internships



**SUNY**  
**CORNING**  

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**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

A form of applied or experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in professional or community settings. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers/community partners the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. (adapted from <https://www.naceweb.org/advocacy/position-statements/united-states-internships.aspx>)

### Characteristics Include:

- An important element that distinguishes an internship from a short-term job or volunteer work is that an intentional “learning agenda” is structured into the experience.
- An effort is made to establish a reasonable balance between the intern’s learning goals and the specific work an organization needs to have done.
- Internships promote academic, career and personal development.
- An internship is part of an educational program, and includes monitoring and evaluation by a faculty supervisor.
- An internship is generally a one-time experience. It may span a single semester when unpaid or may be on-going while the student is in school, if paid.
- May be part-time or full-time.
- May be paid or unpaid. (See the chart below and reference the Legal Issues section to help you determine what is best for your organization.)

PAID INTERNSHIPS	UNPAID INTERNSHIPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be taken for credit or just for pay: CREDIT OPTIONAL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be taken for academic credit: CREDIT REQUIRED</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance provided by Employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance provided by College</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracked by the Coordinator of Applied Learning and a faculty supervisor if seeking credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracked by faculty supervisor and Coordinator of Applied Learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin and end at any time: TIMING FLEXIBLE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lines up with semester dates: TIMING DETERMINED BY SEMESTER</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may stay longer in their positions and be trained to do more advanced work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may stay in their positions only as long as they continue to receive credit or transition to a paid position with the organization</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid interns are less likely to have competing job demands and can often work more hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpaid interns are only able to work hours appropriate to their credit requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance evaluation and site visit required if getting credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance evaluation and site visit required unless prevented by location</li> </ul>

### How Do Internships Benefit Employers?

- Year round source of highly motivated pre-professionals
- Students bring new perspectives to old problems
- Campus internship advertisements increase awareness of your organization
- Quality candidates for temporary or seasonal positions and projects

- Opportunity to mentor students and make an impact in their lives/careers
- Freedom for professional staff to pursue more advanced projects
- Flexible, cost-effective work force not requiring a long-term employer commitment
- Proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential employees
- Opportunity to provide feedback to the college to shape the training of future professionals

## STEPS TO MANAGING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### Step 1: Set Expectations and Write a Plan

What does your organization hope to achieve from the program? Draft a position description that clearly explains the duties of the intern.

#### Questions to consider:

- **Will you pay the intern?** While organizations differ and your company may not be in a position to pay much, carefully consider whether you can offer a paid opportunity. Remember that students have expenses, including tuition for credit-bearing internships, and even a small wage or stipend can make a big difference in recruitment and retention.
- **Where will you put the intern?** Do you have adequate workspace for them? Computer, phone, e-mail address? Is free parking available?
- **What qualifications do you want in an intern?** Establish expectations for skill requirements beforehand — it will help you pre-screen the applicants and find the best candidates. Keep your expectations realistic. Students want to learn and be challenged, but they are new to their fields and are seeking internships to enhance their skills and experience as well as to contribute to your organization.
- **Who will have primary responsibility for the intern?** A very important part of your plan should be the assignment of a site supervisor — that is, someone who will be in charge of guiding and evaluating the intern. This person should be selected because he or she likes to teach or train and has the resources to do it.
- **What will the intern be doing?** Be as specific as possible when writing your position description. Interns, like others in the process of learning, need structure so they don't become lost, confused or bored.
- **Will the intern be receiving academic credit?** If so, be sure to communicate regularly with the faculty supervisor. The faculty supervisor will assist you in the creation of learning outcomes for the internship. If not, remember that you must pay your intern and provide workers compensation and liability insurance coverage in order to comply with the labor standards described in the latter part of this handbook.

### Step 2: Recruit an Intern

Submit your internship posting to Corning Community College. The internship will be posted for students. With the assistance of a faculty supervisor the student will reach out to you for an interview.

Timing is everything! When possible we recommend posting positions in consideration of the semester schedule:

- Spring Semester Dates: Mid-January to early May
- Summer Semester Dates: Mid-May to early August
- Fall Semester Dates: Mid-August to early December

We find that most employers are successful posting 1- 3 months before the semester begins.

Non-credit internships are not required to fit within the semester schedule. They may start and end at any time.

### **Step 3: Hire an Intern**

Remember to choose your interns carefully. After all, they might be permanent employees someday. You're making an investment; time and money will go into this person. We strongly encourage a face-to-face interview. It is a chance to determine if the intern is truly motivated to learn or just wants a job. Does he or she have the level of education and skills you need? Will the intern fit into your organization's culture? For the student, it is an opportunity to find out if your internship is the right match for his or her goals. It is also a chance for the student to learn and practice interviewing skills. An intern provides an opportunity to bring diversity to your organization, so consider the benefits of potential differences in perspective from the rest of your staff.

For both paid and unpaid internship we will have interested students contact you directly after reviewing their records. While a faculty supervisor may make exceptions, the minimum qualifications are 30 credit hours and good academic standing. For some academic programs there are required prerequisites courses the students must complete before seeking an internship.

If the student is not seeking credit for their internship we recommend that you follow your normal hiring procedures for the position.

### **Step 4: Manage the Internship Experience**

- **Orient your intern to his or her new workplace.** Introduce him or her to co-workers and provide a complete tour of the facility. Make your intern at home in the office. Cover organizational structure, safety regulations, security or confidentiality policies, and acceptable dress and appearance standards.
- **Give your intern the resources and structure he or she needs to do the work.** Develop challenging work assignments relative to the student's abilities and academic background. Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility. Design a list of work activities and potential projects to guide the student workflow. Efforts should be taken to provide guidance in long term project goals, day-to-day responsibilities, and overflow work assignments for down times.
- **Be available to your intern.** Remain accessible to answer questions and provide guidance.
- **Provide lots of feedback to your intern.** Make sure to address both positive observations as well as recommendations for improvement. Include assessment of learning objectives and goals in your meetings and make sure to monitor the successful completion of tasks.
- **Weekly meetings.** We recommend setting aside a little time every week to touch base with your intern to make sure they are on track, have a chance to ask questions, and receive your feedback.
- **Communicate with the faculty supervisor (if student is receiving academic credit).** The faculty supervisor is available to help both you and student. They will assist you in the process of establishing learning outcomes and evaluating your intern's performance. The faculty supervisor can also help you with any concerns you may have regarding your intern.

### **Step 5: Evaluate the Intern**

- **Host a site visit.** Your intern's faculty supervisor may contact you to schedule a site visit to discuss the student's progress. Generally this is a 30 -60 minute meeting, which includes the

student, to share the intern's accomplishments, discuss any concerns, and give feedback to the university.

- **Complete an evaluation.** Toward the end of the semester you will receive an electronic evaluation. Timely completion of the evaluation is important to ensure that faculty supervisors have the information necessary to grade the student. We encourage you to go over your comments and ratings with the student.
- **If the student is not receiving academic credit, feedback is still important.** Internships are a learning experience for students. We recommend giving the students regular feedback and an end of internship evaluation similar to the yearly reviews you may conduct with your other employees.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF...

### The Student is Seeking Academic Credit?

Corning Community College requires unpaid interns to receive academic credit because that allows us to cover the student for Worker's Compensation and Liability. This is our way of protecting you and the student. Paid interns are not required to seek academic credit, but many students may need the credit to apply toward their degree. Some employers will make the decision to require their paid interns to get credit even if the school doesn't. This is your decision and CCC will support you in implementing this policy. When a student is seeking academic credit they must follow the process outlined below:

1. **Application for Credit Paperwork:** Upon accepting an internship, students need to connect with the Coordinator of Applied Learning or the appropriate faculty member in their program of study. The Coordinator or faculty member will assist them in completing the paperwork.
2. **Approval Process and Course Registration:** Approval is formalized with the creation of a shared learning agreement signed by the site supervisor, faculty supervisor, and student. Learning objectives must meet departmental standards. Students will work with their site supervisor to revise the position description to ensure appropriate learning outcomes. Upon receiving the signed agreement, the academic department or internship coordinator will register students for credit. You will be sent a copy of the final form.
3. **Evaluation:** As a site supervisor you do not have the responsibility to assign your intern's grade. Instead, internship grades are assigned by faculty supervisors based on the student's documentation of learning as well as an assessment of performance. The site visit and evaluation you receive toward the end of the semester is an important part of the assessment process.

### Issues Arise with your Intern?

Although uncommon, performance and/or professionalism issues may arise with your intern. When a situation arises, address your concerns immediately and directly with the intern. If you are unable to reach agreement, or if the student is unresponsive to correction, please involve the student's internship coordinator or faculty advisor before termination occurs. Appropriate handling of performance issues can be a beneficial learning experience for students.

### Are internships allowed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, internships are still allowed. If a virtual experience or partially virtual experience in an option please consider it. Face-to-face internships currently require an additional waiver. The employer is expected to follow current state safety guidelines. Students are expected to follow the safety guidelines of the

College, State, and Organization. Should safety expectations differ the strictest guidelines should be followed.

### **The Internship Location is Virtual or in a Home Office?**

Ideally, internships allow students to gain experience in a physical work environment where they interact on a regular basis with their supervisor and other employees. This helps them learn interpersonal work skills, organizational culture, and workplace professionalism. The workplace is changing, however, and learning to function in a non-traditional environment can also be an excellent experience. In those instances, we require home-based or virtual employers to hold their initial meetings with applicants in a public setting, to maintain a business atmosphere, to schedule regular face-to-face meetings, and to establish a system for ongoing communication. Note, with the ever changing pandemic a virtual setting with limited face to face contact is acceptable.

## **POTENTIAL LEGAL ISSUES**

### **Do You Have to Pay Interns?**

Paid interns make ideal workers - hungry to learn, eager to make a good impression, and willing to perform a multitude of tasks. The relatively small amount of money employers spend on intern wages and benefits is a good investment. If pay is not possible, unpaid internships must comply with the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This legislation applies to all companies that have at least two employees directly engaged in interstate commerce and annual sales of at least \$500,000.00 and provides guidance for the legal use of unpaid interns, or trainees. The FLSA does not limit an employer's ability to hire paid interns or restrict a paid employee's ability to get college credit for their work. It also does not limit unpaid internships for non-profits who rely on volunteers for their labor. Please reference the following link for U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71:  
<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>.

### **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. 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.

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: <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov> 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).

#### **Workers’ Compensation**

Unpaid interns are only covered for Worker’s Compensation and liability insurance if they are getting credit. For credit-bearing, non-state unpaid internships, Corning Community College will provide coverage for Workers’ Compensation and limited liability insurance. In paid internships, it is expected that the employer will provide such coverage. A stipend is considered a paid position and the employer is responsible for Workers’ Compensation.

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The employer will comply with all federal, state statutes and college policies relating to nondiscrimination, including but not limited to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, creed, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation or preference, gender identity and expressions, age, marital status, disability, Vietnam-era Veteran or other Protected Veteran.

#### **Mutual Agreement on Position Terms and Expectations**

The employer should identify the specific terms and conditions of employment (ex: the start and end dates of the internship; compensation; organizational and/or reporting relationships; principal duties, tasks or responsibilities; working conditions; confidentiality; and any other expectations of the employer). These should be discussed when recruiting an intern, and also at their orientation, so there is no misunderstanding regarding these matters. Also, take time to advise your interns of appropriate workplace behavior, the organization’s harassment policy, and complaint procedures. It may make good sense to document such a discussion with a written agreement.

#### **CLOSING THOUGHTS FOR DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIP:**

##### **TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNS**

- 1. Give me real work**

It can’t be said too many times that interns want to work and learn. They want to contribute to your organization and become discouraged if they feel they are just doing busy work or routine administrative work that should be done by paid support staff.

- 2. Please provide feedback**

Remember that interns are students, and they may not have the business skills and experiences that you take for granted. If your intern makes an oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.

**3. I want to be included too**

Is there a staff meeting they can attend? Can they tag along to that next project meeting or office luncheon? Include them in the daily life of your workplace. After all, if you help them gain a broader perspective, it will help everyone involved.

**4. Please explain**

When you assign work, make sure you give a detailed explanation. While the work may seem trivial and obvious to you, it may not be obvious to someone who's never done it before. Patience and a few extra minutes at the beginning will pay off later when your intern can produce good work independently.

**5. I want to see my supervisor, please**

Make sure that you remain accessible to your intern and avoid any isolating work that leaves the intern without direct access to supervision and guidance. As newcomers, interns may not speak up if they're feeling ignored, so the burden of making sure they're okay is on the mentor. Regular times should be scheduled to meet with the intern.

**6. Be prepared for my arrival**

Brief your staff on the student's impending arrival, and help the intern get started on a positive note. Have the workspace, supplies, and tools ready for the intern's arrival. Also, make sure you provide the intern with a clear list of roles and responsibilities, highlighting any relevant deadlines and expectations.

**7. Appreciate me**

Remember to enjoy your intern! You will both benefit if you take time to appreciate the contributions made by your intern.

For additional information, questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Coordinator of Applied Learning:

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