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*Student Interns on the front cover, and winners of the photo contest, are (L-R): Tyler Lockamy, Tanya Theron, Josh Kinchen*
Internships have become an essential part of the educational experience for college students. As students prepare for the professional world by immersing themselves in academic coursework, a viable internship is often a required component to complete a college degree. More and more employers recognize that student interns have a valuable perspective that enhances the workplace. This guide has been developed by the UNCW Career Center to respond to common questions from students internships. Specific issues not answered in this guide may be directed to the UNCW Career Center:

910.962.3174
careercenter@uncw.edu
An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Students may earn academic credit from a degree-granting, educational institution. This work/learning arrangement for academic credit is overseen by a faculty member designated from the academic department within the student’s declared major. The work/learning experience is usually the length of a semester, may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid. A learning agenda in the form of specific learning objectives is established prior to the start of the internship. The internship also may include one or more forms of reflection integral to the experience to distinguish it from a volunteer position or job. Should a student choose not to earn academic credit for the internship experience, then the student should work with their Site Supervisor to assure appropriate learning goals are established and met upon completion of the internship experience.

[Approved by UNCW Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Summer 2011]
**The difference between an internship and a part-time job**

Differentiating between an internship and a part-time job is important for you to consider before beginning an internship.

The following comparisons are helpful in making the determination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INTERNSHIP</strong></th>
<th><strong>PART-TIME JOB</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed for possible options: credit/no credit; credit and pay; pay/no pay</td>
<td>Completed for monetary purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning objectives reflect the goals of the student, the outcomes expected by the employer, and the requirements of the Faculty Internship Supervisor (if for credit)</td>
<td>Learn tasks of job in order to complete the work adequately but not necessarily for personal gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects or ongoing work that is purposeful and of a professional nature</td>
<td>Assigned work that needs to be completed, not necessarily professional in nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration/Hours: typically part-time (10-20 hours/week) in a semester or a summer (2-3 months); occasionally extended into next semester or year</td>
<td>Duration/Hours: no specific start/end date or designated time frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor serves as a mentor figure to aid the student in the learning process</td>
<td>Supervisor serves as an authority figure to whom the employee reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows for learning of transferable skills that you do not yet possess</td>
<td>Serves to fill a basic position within the place of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to obtain “real world” experience in your field of interest and learn first-hand about companies, careers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typically, an internship taken during the fall or spring semester allows a student to intern 10-20 hours a week while taking classes. During the summer, however, many students will opt to intern full-time and forgo taking classes.

Some academic departments at UNCW require internships and many others offer internships as elective credit within the major. It is important that you consult with the departmental Faculty Internship Supervisor to ensure that you are complying with the internship guidelines set by your department. Check out the listing of each department’s Faculty Internship Coordinator in the Internships section of the Career Center web site.

Some internships are unpaid. Some corporations see gaining experience as payment enough. This is especially true if you have little or no practical experience in the industry. Some, however, do offer an hourly wage or a stipend. In evaluating your internship options, the quality of the opportunity should be the primary criterion.
U.S. Government statement on distinguishing paid or unpaid internships

An unpaid internship in a for-profit company is considered legitimate by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) if it meets all of the following six criteria. (May 2010)
1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

Benefits of Internships

1. Test your career choices
An internship allows you to “try on” a career before making a long term commitment. It can help you discover if the career you’re considering is right (or wrong) for you.

2. Increase your marketability
Employers consistently rate internship experience as one of the top criteria used when selecting candidates. Employers look for students with education and relevant experience.

3. Develop skills and apply knowledge
Apply theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to actual on-the-job experiences. Develop skills specific to your chosen industry and confidence in the skills you already possess.

4. Acquire job search skills
Create a professional resume, sharpen your interviewing skills, and practice interacting professionally. These skills are essential for finding a job or for applying to graduate school.

5. Build networking contacts
An internship is a great opportunity to build a network of contacts in your chosen career field. In addition, over half of all interns are hired by the organization where they interned!
A comprehensive list of internship locations can be found on the UNCW Career Center website: www.uncw.edu/career

Popular Sites for finding internships:

SeaWork: Career Center’s online job posting system. www.myseawork.com

Internships.com - Search for internships in this exclusive online database. You can search the information by your academic major, location of internships, and/or compensation. International internship opportunities also are listed. To access the site, select UNCW and enter our password: seahawk

The Disney College Program - The Disney College Program at the Walt Disney World® Resort is a one-of-a-kind, Disney-designed combination of education and work experience. http://cp.disneycareers.com/en/default/


Green Careers Center http://environmentalcareer.com/

Conservation Internships http://www.thesca.org/

Intern Abroad http://www.goabroad.com/intern-abroad

Internship Series online (Internships USA) This comprehensive source of internships and summer jobs for students. Over 2800 opportunities are listed. Click on Internship Series Online. See the login information in the Internship section of the Career Center website: www.uncw.edu/career.

Internships and International Students

Looking for an internship as an international student has its own challenges. Many employers have concerns about working with international students because they're afraid there will be communication barriers and difficulties adapting to the company's environment.

Make sure you emphasize:
- Intercultural skills
- Your ability to speak another language
- Experiences you have had working in the U.S.
- Be able to verify your ability to work in the United States by having the proper documents available.

Working Under F-1 Status
You can never accept unauthorized employment. See below for the types of employment that are possible while in F–1 Student status.

- J-1 work authorization http://www.uncw.edu/intprogs/documents/J-1EmploymentAuthorization.pdf may include off campus work

For additional information, please visit the UNCW Office of International Programs at http://www.uncw.edu/international/isss/students.html or their office locate in 118 Friday Annex. 910-962-3685
Students who wish to register for an internship need to follow this process:

**Step 1**
- Meet with your faculty advisor to determine your minimum qualifications for interning

**Step 2**
- Explore internship opportunities through resources offered by the UNCW Career Center and through faculty and other networking contacts

**Step 3**
- BEFORE you start working, complete the required paperwork for your major and schedule an appointment with the academic departmental faculty internship supervisor
  - Include the description of what you will learn over the duration of the internship, the supervisor's name, address, email and phone number at the potential internship site when you meet with the academic departmental faculty internship supervisor

**Step 4**
- Once approval is granted, register for the appropriate course, typically a 498 listing

**Step 5**
- Begin working at your internship! Be sure to respond to all emails and calls from your employer and faculty supervisor
Legal Implications

All UNCW students participating in an internship for academic credit must have liability insurance. Students in the College of Arts and Sciences as well as the Cameron School of Business are automatically charged for liability insurance when they register for a course number of 498. Students in the School of Nursing or the Watson School of Education are required to enroll in liability programs in their respective schools but are allowed to enroll in this program in addition to the program in their school.

Upon course registration for a 498 internship, the renewal rate per student per semester is $15.00; $19 if in health related internship
(Information updated December 2011)

Administered by:
North Carolina Association of Insurance Agents
PO Box 1165
Cary, NC 27512
Phone: (919) 863.6522 or (888) 275.890C

If you have a claim, or are sued or threatened with a lawsuit, report the claim immediately to:
Lisa Weatherly, CISR, CPIW Account Manager,
lweatherly@iianc.com
at the address listed above.

Coverage is provided by:
Montgomery Insurance Company

CLAIMS
If you have a claim, you are threatened with a lawsuit or you are sued, report the incident immediately to:
EH&S – Pamela Elliott, 910-962-2950 and Montgomery Insurance Company 910-781-0200

Policy Number: GL 8335325
The University Student Intern Program provides coverage for an insured party that becomes legally liable to pay damages because of property damage, bodily injury or personal injury incurred as a direct result of their participation in an university internship program to which the policy applies. This insurance also will pay those sums, to which an insured party becomes legally obligated because of any act, error or omission in the rendering or failure to render professional services in conjunction with an internship. This program also includes a medical benefit to participants.

Who is an Insured Party?
This program can cover students of participating universities in the NC university system who are engaged in paid or unpaid internships. These student must be included in a list of covered internships must be sponsored, authorized or approved by the participating university, and the students on file with the company.
The faculty supervisor is responsible for helping the intern integrate the internship into his or her total academic experience. She/he provides academic direction and evaluates learning derived from the internship.

Early in the process of finding an internship, the student should approach the designated faculty internship supervisor in the academic department. The student and the faculty internship supervisor should meet to determine if the student is academically eligible to complete an internship with the department and to discuss the student's goals in completing an internship.

Once the student has found an internship, the faculty supervisor will advise the student about the internship site and the site supervisor approval process, registration for the course, number of course credits, required liability insurance and fees associated with the course registration. The faculty supervisor also will help the student define the academic requirements for the internship. Academic requirements may include a final oral presentation to students and faculty on the experience, a journal, paper, relevant research and/or projects.

The faculty supervisor maintains appropriate contact with the student throughout the internship to give direction and support. The faculty supervisor is asked to initiate a phone call to the site supervisor prior to the signing of the internship approval form to establish contact and communication. Other forms of recommended contact throughout the internship are site visits, email, phone calls with the intern and the site supervisor, progress reports and feedback sent between the intern and the faculty supervisor. The amount and form of contact are determined by the faculty supervisor.
Suggestions for Success

Set realistic goals and expectations
Meet with your supervisor to discuss your work plan. What specific skills and competencies do you need to acquire and demonstrate? What is the time frame? What training is available? Monitor your progress and arrange to meet with your supervisor regularly. Share your career interests and ideas. Communicate concerns early.

Maintain a “can do” attitude
Show your eagerness to learn new things by welcoming new assignments. Understand all positions engage in a wide range of activities ... some that catch your eye while others do not. Tackle all assignments and projects with enthusiasm. Seek additional projects when appropriate.

Perform to the best of your ability
Be sure you understand the assignment and its deadline before you begin. If you need assistance, ask. Check your work before submitting it to your supervisor. Ask for feedback.

Be respectful of colleagues
You are the new person in the office and you can learn from every colleague, regardless of rank. Show all of your colleagues that you value their opinion and experience.

Support the team
Your ability to work well with others is key to your success. The team’s goals are your goals. Understand how your work fits into theirs.

Understand the unwritten rules
As a new employee, you will absorb a tremendous amount of information. Observe. What is appropriate attire? What are expected hours? How do things get done? How do colleagues interact with one another? Are there office politics to steer away from?

Be flexible
You may be near the end of a project when you are asked to start a new one. Be aware that priorities in an organization change. Your willingness and ability to switch gears easily is required for your success. Your supervisor will help you to prioritize your assignments.

Identify a mentor
A mentor may be assigned to you or you may need to identify your own. This is often a more senior, respected professional in your field who would like to take a personal interest in your career development. With your mentor, you will feel free to ask advice about your career decisions.

Document your success
Record assignments, projects, and achievements. Keep copies of evaluations and samples of your work. Ask for letters of recommendation. Keep these handy for future career conversations.
As an intern, you are expected to behave in a specific manner and take advantage of the numerous resources and opportunities provided. In order to accomplish your learning objectives and develop a professional reputation, keep the following points in mind:

- **Understand and respect company policies.** Be aware of and respect company policies about when and where you can use personal devices. Until you are clear about the rules, turn off your cell phone and music, and use the Internet only as allowed.

- **Define your goals.** You may be invited to attend staff meetings, decision-making discussions, client negotiations, or other gatherings. Clarify your role prior to going to these meetings so you behave in the expected manner.

- **Ask questions and request feedback.** Don’t hesitate to ask questions if you need clarification. Meet regularly with your supervisor for feedback about your efforts, to learn more about the company, and learn more about his or her opinion.

- **Attend events.** When invited to company-sponsored events, it is in your best interest to attend and behave in a professional manner. If you choose to go out after work with other interns or full-time staff, use discretion and common sense.

- **Display a positive attitude.** You could be asked to complete a task you do not like. Avoid expressing your frustration, speaking negatively about other employees, or bragging about your weekend activities. You may be rewarded for your positive attitude with more responsibility.

- **Wear professional attire.** Dressing for the culture where you work sends a strong and appropriate message of respect to the position and organization. Check with your supervisor before your first day about dress codes and dress accordingly.

### Successful Practices

- Maintain an open channel of communication with formal and informal meetings
- Keep busy and directed towards your learning objectives.
- Ask for opportunities to increase responsibility
- Build your professionalism by developing human relations skills, decision-making abilities and managing office politics
- Look for role models and a possible mentor
- Develop connections to support future networking opportunities
What do we mean by measurable learning objectives (MLO)?
Measurable Learning Objectives (MLOs) refer to a set of statements that clearly and precisely describe what it is that you intend to learn and/or accomplish during your internship work term.

Why have learning objectives in an internship program?
Internships are primarily academic programs. Credit is granted not for working, but for learning, which occurs as a result of working. Learning objectives are the most effective method yet devised to assess the intent and value of this learning.

How do I develop and write my own learning objectives?
Start by carefully reviewing your job, noting areas where you feel you can gain new skills, increase your knowledge or improve your attitudes or feelings. It is important that you avoid broad general statements and confine your objectives to those that can be accomplished during a single term.

Usually, an MLO combines four major variables to form a single sentence. The variables or components are ACTIVITY, FORECAST, TIME FRAME and EVALUATION. The activity is the desired outcome or expected achievement, the forecast is the proposed level of accomplishment, the time frame is the expected completion date and the evaluation is the stated method of measurement.

EXAMPLE:
By the end of the term (TIME FRAME) I will review effective pricing and value setting (ACTIVITY) which meet corporate marketing specifications (FORECAST) as evaluated by my work site supervisor (EVALUATION).

A very important element in the development of MLOs is often called the ACTION WORD. There is one action word used in the example above (review). Action words are found in all MLOs, because they lead to measurable outcomes. Other examples of action words are demonstrate, describe, develop, draw, discuss, operate, perform, summarize, recognize, etc. See a longer list of action words at the following link: www.uncw.edu/career/actionverbs.html

SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:
Avoid broad, general objectives. Make them specific and as measurable as possible. Try to confine them to those that can be accomplished during the work period.
Be sure you have enough knowledge, skill, time and freedom at work to accomplish your learning. Indicate the level of achievement you expect to obtain, expressed whenever possible in numerical terms (e.g. Increase speed by 15%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>CREDIT INTERNSHIP</th>
<th>NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How long is the experience?</strong></td>
<td>During the academic year. About 12 to 14 weeks or the length of the semester. In the summer: Three to four months.</td>
<td>The length of an experience may vary. Generally, the experience will last several months, though length is up to the discretion of the supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May I take a full academic course load?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Credit internships can be done concurrently during the semester or over the summer.</td>
<td>Yes. Non-credit internships are done concurrently during the semester or the summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will I get academic credit?</strong></td>
<td>Credit varies for each academic program. See the department Faculty Internship Supervisor for specific information.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can I get academic credit if I do not have a major?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will this experience be documented on my transcript?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. A satisfactory/Unsatisfactory will be listed on your transcript in accordance with the rules governing credit internships for your major.</td>
<td>No. The experience can be listed on your résumé.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When do I begin the application process?</strong></td>
<td>It is recommended that you give yourself at least six months of preparation time. Summer internships are more competitive, and application deadlines may be as early as October.</td>
<td>It is recommended that you give yourself as much time as possible. Summer internships are more competitive, and application deadlines may be as early as October.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do I have to speak to someone at UNCW in order to participate?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. You should check the eligibility requirements for your major located in the Student Internship Guidebook and if you qualify visit the departments’ internship program contact BEFORE beginning the search.</td>
<td>No. It is recommended that you schedule a meeting with a staff member of the UNCW Career Center about making the most of the opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do I need to complete paperwork for UNCW?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. You will need to complete the online permission to enroll paperwork and possibly provide additional information to qualify the organization where you intern. See your departments’ internship program contact for details.</td>
<td>No. Some employers may have forms for you or the university to sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there a UNCW fee for me to participate?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. The number of credits you receive for the internship determines the costs. If completed during the semester, the cost will likely be absorbed into your full-time tuition. A small fee for liability insurance coverage also may be assessed.</td>
<td>No. Non-credit internships incur no fees as there is no academic credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May I participate in more than one?</strong></td>
<td>It depends on your specific departments academic requirements. Visit with departments’ internship contact to determine the best option.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May I participate in an opportunity outside the U.S.?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Depending upon your major requirements, this may be an option. Plan a year in advance if you plan an internship abroad.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please take this evaluation seriously, as is an assessment of not only your performance, but also your work site. It will be used to determine the value of your work experience for future internship students. Check the box which best describes your experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was dependable and reliable at work</td>
<td></td>
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<td>I arrived at work on time</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was receptive to learning new things</td>
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<td>I was accepting and responsive to feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>I conducted myself in a professional manner</td>
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<td>I worked to my highest potential</td>
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<td>I displayed a positive attitude</td>
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<td>I took initiative in my work</td>
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<td>I was friendly and courteous with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>I contributed to the team effort (when possible)</td>
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**Evaluation of Work Site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of Work Site</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor was available to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My co-workers were helpful and supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I felt prepared for this position</td>
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<tr>
<td>My duties here increased my knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>My duties here were relevant to my major</td>
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<tr>
<td>My duties matched the original job description</td>
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<tr>
<td>I agree with my supervisor's evaluation of me</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would recommend this work site to another student</td>
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Be sure to leave room for comments and student signature and date
Sample Employer Evaluation

Intern Name: ______________________________
Organization: ______________________________
Site Supervisor: ______________________________
Faculty Supervisor: ______________________________

Please write a short narrative with respect to the following items:

1. What were the types of work assigned to the student during the semester?

2. Was the student able to complete a suitable portion of the assignments? Were you satisfied with them? ( If not, please explain.)

3. How would you rate the following skills as demonstrated in the assignments that the intern performed?
   a) Research skills (ability to gather relevant information in a systematic manner):
   b) Analytical skills (analysis and application in a problem-solving situation):
   c) Written expression:
   d) Initiative:
   e) Personal organization:
   f) Dependability:
   g) Promptness:
   h) Reasoning and common sense
   i) Quality of work

4. Did the intern have a good personal relationship with his/her fellow workers?

5. What traits may be of particular help in his/her future work experience?

6. What traits may hinder the intern in his/her future work experience?

7. What is your overall evaluation of the intern (in terms of adaptability, competence, personality and general skills)?

8. Would you like to employ another UNCW student intern in the future?

9. Overall/additional comments which we may use in writing recommendation letters for this student in the future.

Employer Name / Signature: ______________________________
Date: ______________________________
Minimum suggested length: 10 pages typed

STUDENT FINAL REFLECTION OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

1. Write a brief job description, including employer, location, tasks and type of setting.
2. How did you obtain your internship? Tips for other students?
3. Describe your on-the-job training/orientation.
4. What are the connections between what you learned on the job and what you learned in the classroom? Highlight contributions of course work in major to work experience.
5. Did your work experience affect the quality of your classroom work?
6. How does your internship relate to what you want to do after graduation?
8. What skills did you acquire/enhance on the job? How did this experience stretch you?
9. What did you contribute to the organization (company)?
10. What difficulties or problems did you encounter?
11. Describe the culture of the organization - dress, level of formality, physical structure of offices, staff meetings, hierarchy, worker input in decision-making, reward system, etc.
12. Is the percentage of women, minority and disabled employees in your organization representative of the community population? Have you observed any discrimination in your work setting? If so, how did you feel and respond?
13. What did you discover about your fit in this type of career or organization?
14. What changes did you see in yourself or the organization as a result of your experience?
15. Describe the management style of your supervisor. What style do you prefer? How did the leadership style affect employee morale?
16. How valuable was the experience? What were the payoffs for you?
17. What recommendations would you make to improve the experience?
18. As a result of the work experience, do you still plan to pursue the same career goals? Why or why not?
National member organizations can offer excellent assistance. The following organizations and individuals have provided valuable assistance in the development of this employer guide:

**National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)**
62 Highland Avenue
Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085
800.544.5272
www.naceweb.org

**Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA)**
16 Santa Ana Place
Walnut Creek, CA 94598
800.824.0449
www.ceiainc.org

**National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE)**
515 King Street, Suite 420
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.706.9552
www.nsee.org

**Weighart, Scott, Exceeding Expectations, Mosaic Eye Publishing, 2006**
16 Crowninshield Road
Brookline, MA 02446
617.566.1574
www.mosaiceyePublishing.com

**Bottner, Richard, Intern Bridge Inc. Total I**
136R Main Street, Suite 3
Acton, MA 01720
800.531.6091
www.internbridge.com

Kendall Lipsey
More students pursue experiential learning, particularly internships, and a greater number and variety of employers offer these experiences in the form of internships. Significant national discussion has developed, particularly around the concept, purpose, structure, and function of internships, and the conditions under which internships can be accomplished on an unpaid basis.

UNCW has a rich history of students participating in internships—both for credit and not-for-credit, both paid and unpaid. Our current efforts at establishing “Applied Learning” as the theme for our QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) for our SACS accreditation further emphasize internships as one of the approaches for students to participate in applied learning activities. In addition, our new University Studies will include “Explorations Beyond the Classroom” as part of UNCW’s core curriculum.

Definition of “Internship”
To establish uniformity in the use and application of the term “internship,” UNCW has approved the following definition:

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Students may earn academic credit from a degree-granting educational institution. This work/learning arrangement for academic credit is overseen by a faculty member designated from the academic department within the student’s declared major. The work/learning experience is usually the length of a semester, may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid. A learning agenda in the form of specific learning objectives is established prior to the start of the internship. The internship also may include one or more forms of reflection integral to the experience to distinguish it from a volunteer position or job.

Should a student choose not to earn academic credit for the internship experience, then the student should work with their Site Supervisor to assure appropriate learning goals are established and met upon completion of the internship experience.

[Approved by UNCW Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Summer 2011]

To effectively implement this definition, it is necessary to develop criteria that UNCW students, faculty, staff, employer recruiters, and the Career Center can use to identify workplace experiences that can legitimately be identified as “internships.” The discussion of these criteria is framed by several conditions. These conditions are the legal definitions set by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL); the varying guidelines set by individual academic departments; employer perspectives on and objectives for internships; and the unique experiential learning objectives of students.

The legal considerations are addressed through six criteria for unpaid interns for the service they provide to “for-profit” private sector employers articulated in the Fair Labor Standards Act (see FLSA Fact Sheet #71). Essentially, if the six criteria are met, the Department of Labor (DOL) considers there to be no employment relationship. The six criteria established by the DOL are:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the employer’s facilities, is similar to training that would be given in a vocational school.
• The internship experience is for the benefit of the student.
• The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the close observation of a regular employee.
• The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern. Occasionally, the operations may actually be impeded.
• The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
• The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time in the internship.

While the DOL standards are a matter of law, they were originally created for vocational training programs. The National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) has recommended to the DOL that it reconsider and revise the FLSA criteria regarding “the employer….derives no immediate advantage” to ensure they account for the incredible diversity of students, higher education institutions, and employing organizations involved in such programs. In fact, a recent decision by the 6th Circuit Court in Solis v. Laurelbrook Sanitarium addressed the issue of students working unpaid. The case turned on the issue of “primary benefit,” and the court held that students in this case were not “employees” for purposes of the FLSA. The ruling in this case bolsters NACE’s position. It should be noted, however, this case concerned a not-for-profit organization.

To advance this assessment, the ethics must be considered. At the foundation of such an assessment is the tenet that the internship is a legitimate learning experience benefitting the student and not simply an operational work experience that happens to be conducted by a student. The core question then is whether or not work performed by an intern will primarily benefit the employer in a way that does not also advance the education of the student.

Standards for an Experience to Be Defined as an Internship

To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the UNCW definition, all the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. Prior to the beginning of the internship there are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework. At the end of the internship, there is an established process for reflection on the learning objectives established earlier.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

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

While academic credit legitimizes an unpaid experience, in order to be identified as an internship, that experience must fit the criteria. For experiences that employers make available only if academic credit is awarded, the college or university’s requirements in combination with the criteria laid out in this paper should be used to determine if the experience is a legitimate internship.

Academic credit for an internship requires registration for the appropriate 498 course in the major and the payment of associated tuition and fees for the course. See the UNCW Student Internship Guide for information about requirements for internships for credit by individual academic departments.

**Conclusion**

This paper examines how to assess experiences often promoted to students as “internships” with the goal of determining the implications for compensation by exploring three components:

- The experience’s legitimacy as an internship must be determined. To do so, the educational value of the experience must be considered of most importance.
- Once the experience can be ethically identified as an internship, the implications for compensation can be determined. An experience that meets all the criteria may be offered unpaid.
- Only an experience that meets the criteria presented in this paper should be labeled an internship.

Sources for this document include the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), the Cooperative Education Association (CEA), and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

Revised September 2011
Definition of “Internship”
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[Approved by UNCW Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Summer 2011]

Standards for UNCW Internships
To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the UNCW definition, all the following criteria must be met:

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- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- Prior to the beginning of the internship there are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework. At the end of the internship, there is an established process for reflection on the learning objectives established earlier.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.
If Unpaid
If an intern is unpaid for the service they provide to a “for-profit” private sector employer, in addition to the criteria above, the experience must meet all of the following six criteria as outlined by the U.S. Department of Labor:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the employer’s facilities, is similar to training that would be given in a vocational school.
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the student.
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the close observation of a regular employee.
- The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern. Occasionally, the operations may actually be impeded.
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time in the internship.

For more information, see “Guidelines for UNCW Internships” at this web site: www.uncw.edu/stuaff/career/internships.htm
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