



Internships and Unpaid Internships

In accordance with NACE and the U.S. Department of Labor, UCO Career Development Center defines an internship as the following:

- An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.
- 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 the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

As such, all internships posted with UCO Career Development Center should meet the following criteria:

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. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
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.

It is the responsibility of each employer to determine whether an internship should be paid or unpaid, based on labor laws. Each employer should be familiar with labor laws in order to determine eligibility based on the organization's specific internship opportunity.

For more information about unpaid internships and labor law, please review the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Guidance Letter.

For additional questions, please contact the Career Development Center at 405-974-3346.