

What is an internship?

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 and create a pipeline. Students at NAU complete both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing internships.

Criteria for internships

In order to mitigate risk to host sites, students, and the university, NAU complies with the criteria set forth by the Fair Labor Standards Act (Fact Sheet #71) and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) position statement on U.S. Internships when evaluating internship postings.

Internships can be paid or unpaid but must be a learning experience for the primary benefit of the intern. To ensure that an experience is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship, 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. 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 from the supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

Legal considerations of internships

In the case of credit-bearing internships, NAU requires an Affiliation Agreement between the internship host and NAU/Arizona Board of Regents to aid in defining the relationship between parties. The agreement must be signed and on file prior to the intern's first day at the internship site.

Affiliation Agreements are valid for five (5) years unless otherwise stipulated. In some cases, non-standard or multiple agreements may be needed if the duties of different internships require specific language or exceptions to the universal Affiliation Agreement.

Credit-bearing internships

Credit-bearing internships at NAU are a partnership between the internship host site, student intern, and NAU departmental internship coordinator or faculty member. This tri-lateral partnership supports a successful internship experience for all by articulating clear expectations, supporting process compliance, and focusing on the intern's roles as student and learner.

If a student wishes to gain credit for the internship with your organization, the student will need to contact the departmental internship coordinator or faculty member in the appropriate academic program. Paperwork may vary by department.

Non-credit-bearing internships

Not all internships are (or can be) credit-bearing, and NAU supports students gaining practical, hands-on experience in their field whether they are gaining credit for it or not. In either case, NAU encourages internship sites to follow best practices:

www.naceweb.org/internships/15-best-practices.aspx

Advertising internships

Step 1: Craft an internship description

The first step is to develop a job description for the internship(s) that is clear about the intern's duties *and* what they will be learning from their experience. Be sure to include specific projects and responsibilities.

Step 2: Create an account in *Handshake*, NAU's online internship and job platform

All NAU students have access to *Handshake*, and it is the first place we direct students when they inquire about internships. The platform will allow internship host sites to promote their internship(s), collect applications, and select candidates.

Follow these steps to create an account:

- Visit <https://app.joinhandshake.com/register> and select 'Employer'
- Fill out the information requested and verify your email
- Join your company (if it already exists) or create a new company profile
- Connect with Northern Arizona University



Step 3: Post your internship in *Handshake*

- Login to your *Handshake* account at <https://nau.joinhandshake.com> and select 'Post a Job' from the main dashboard
- Complete the required fields in Job Basics, Job Details, Job Preferences, and Schools. Pay special attention to the following:
 - Select 'Temporary/Seasonal' for duration as to not imply a full-time position is guaranteed at the conclusion of the internship.
 - Specify preferences for applicants to target your position based on qualifications such as graduation year, major, etc.
 - Configure who at the internship site should receive complete applicant packages and when.

Additional resources

- Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act (Fact Sheet #71) at www.dol.org
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) position statement at www.naceweb.org
- Handshake Help Center at <https://support.joinhandshake.com>
- Performance evaluation templates that can facilitate the feedback process between interns and supervisors are available at nau.edu/internships

Questions?

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact NAU Career Development:

career@nau.edu | (928) 523-1087 | nau.edu/internships