

Employer Guide
For Higher Ed Internships
in Polk County, Florida

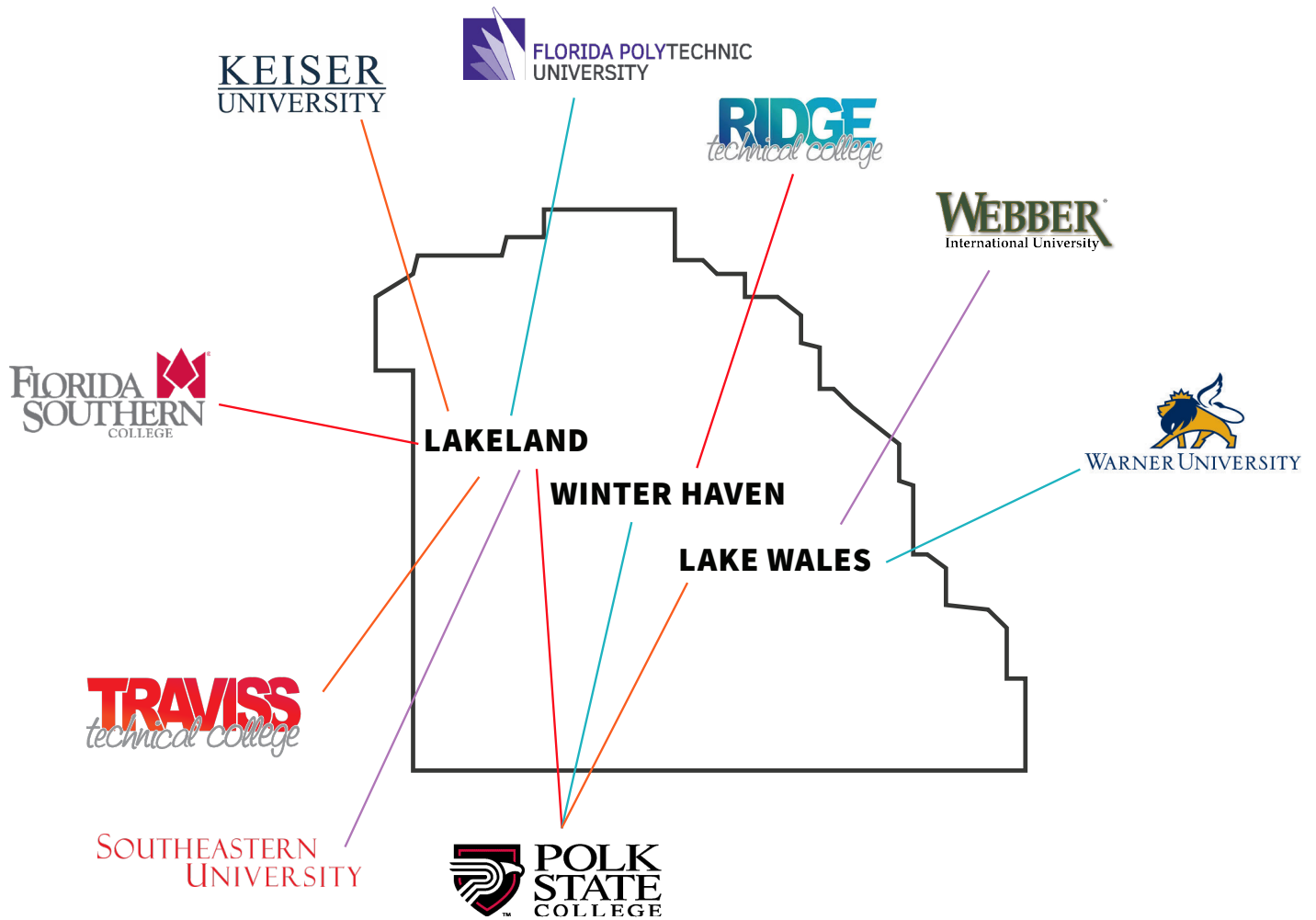


Compiled and Edited by

Polk Vision/CFDC Talent Pipeline

Countywide Higher Education Workforce

Special thanks to CampusPhilly and South Florida's Talent Development Network for sharing their Internship in a Box materials.



The Talent Pipeline & the Countywide Higher Education Workforce

MISSION: Our mission is to promote the development of a motivated professional pipeline of talented people seeking and securing exciting career opportunities in Polk County, Florida. Education and training are only part of the equation. Work experience for students will foster growth and give them a chance to practice and perfect the skills they are learning. For the future workforce to be successful, internship and experiential learning are essential. In establishing professional internships with business partners and community organizations, Polk students will have the chance to work with and be mentored by industry professionals. This motivated professional pipeline will ensure continuing success for your company and the workforce of the Central Florida community.

PARTNERS:



Polk County's Economic
Development Partnership




The Perfect Partnership

Do you wish someone would guide you through the internship process? We are glad to help!

Attract. Engage. Retain.

Our member schools work to attract students who go to school in Polk County, to engage students in the life of the region while they're in school, and to retain them as residents and workers after they graduate. We maintain relationships with colleges and students in all stages and at key points of the post-secondary experience.

Career Platforms: Always Working

Every day of the year, you can look for interested students to match your internship needs—for free. The resource page of this handout lists the schools and the career platforms that are in use in Polk County. You may notice that some members use Handshake  and this career platform will allow for one stop shopping for most of your talent needs. Once you register, you can search the extensive database or post your position and wait for the resumes to come to you. Please contact those schools using other platforms directly about advertising internship and employment opportunities.

Special Events

Throughout the year we host programs for employers looking for hardworking and talented students. Use the following events to fill your internships and open positions:

- 1 Online Career/Internship Fairs**
Each spring, some of our schools participate in an online/virtual event which provides employers the opportunity to place their internships and open positions in front of hundreds of interested traditional and online college students.
- 2 Countywide College Career Fair**
Each year, we invite current students and recent graduates from our participating schools to attend a Polk County-specific, in-person hiring event where they can network with business representatives and submit resumes/apply, find matches for internships, full-time jobs and volunteer opportunities.
- 3 Meet Your Industry**
Several times throughout the year, we organize small, more personalized events that connect students in specialized programs with industry-relevant professionals to discuss employment needs, market data, and HR expectations.
- 4 Polk Meet Ups**
At an employer's request, we facilitate "Meet Up" events. These meetings are held at one of the partner schools or at the employer's place of business, and function as an orientation to the employer's HR needs. Likewise, the Career Services/Internship staff from the schools can discuss our academic offerings, the employment support provided to the students, and our outcomes goals. Furthermore, we can invite students/graduates to the meetings, if the employers would like to connect with potential talent. Meet Up events provide your company an excellent opportunity to educate the institutions on how we can best help you. The students who attend are interested in what you do and are eager to network with you. It's a win-win!

Employer Responsibilities & Benefits

1 Create an Internship “Job” Description

Describe the intern’s role/responsibilities, including tasks, potential projects, a tentative schedule, and required skills.

2 Enable Active Learning

Interns want to work, and they need meaningful work experience. It’s important for the student to complete tasks that are purposeful and impact-worthy. Enable their growth by:

- Including them in significant projects
- Discuss their impact/success

3 Perform Proper Training

Interns require on-boarding and training, similar to new hires. Hosting a training session that addresses your expectations, job-specific tasks, office/company culture, and organizational processes/procedures is of utmost importance. Remember, training is often ongoing, so you will need to be a resource to your intern throughout their time with your company.

4 Treat Interns as Team Members

An intern is essentially an employee- a representation of your organization. Include your intern in staff/project meetings, training/staff development opportunities, office communications, etc. Shared projects and a sense of belonging can translate into increased effort and loyalty.

5 Provide Feedback and Evaluation

Schedule regular check-in opportunities with your intern, and use the meetings to provide regular and quality feedback. Encourage open communication and lead them in honest but encouraging discussions about their work. Share internal resources, and conduct midpoint and final formal reviews.

Structured internships often entail formal evaluations to be filled out at established intervals. Prior to starting the internship experience, ask the school or the intern about these requirements.

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Employers find value in internships, just as the interns themselves do. Here are just some of the ways an internship program can positively affect your organization:

1 Filling a Specific Skill Need

Students of all majors are looking for internships, and even those outside your field can bring value to your organization. If you realize that your company or project requires additional skill sets, consider hiring an intern.

2 Check Off Back-Burner List

Almost all companies have ideas of “future,” “down-the-pipeline,” or “back-burner” projects, many of which go unrealized because of time or budget constraints. Interns can:

- Complete standard tasks, allowing current employees to take on new projects
- Contribute to organizational growth

3 Fresh Ideas for the Office

Just like any new employee, an intern comes armed with a new perspective and a knowledge of or training in the latest techniques and technology. Interns can help you recognize new opportunities, reach out to new audiences, or even stimulate a “growth mindset” within current employees.

4 Train the Future Work Force

In hiring an intern, you are creating a talent pipeline. You are identifying new employee candidates and closing the skill gap for our local workforce.

5 Foster Leadership Opportunities for your Current Staff

Many companies opt to have their interns report to mid-level employees. Leading interns is a great way for staff develop resume-building management skills and to learn more about a supervisory role. Furthermore, you can mentor your staff throughout the process, training them before promoting them to an official supervisory role.

6 Advertisement to Students

Organizations that employ interns have regular access to the population of well-connected, tech-savvy, and highly social college students. Motivate your intern and put your company on the map. Word of mouth travels fast!

“The ideal intern is committed, creative, organized, ambitious, independent, and able to crack a smile, whether meeting a celebrity or folding a pair of socks.” - Emily Weiss

Ready, Set, Hire Awesome Interns

For a smooth and successful process, companies should plan the entire internship before it starts—job description, team and supervisor assignments, hours, compensation, projects and tasks and evaluation. Our team can help you throughout the process, and we even have sample job descriptions.

Step 1: Determine What You Want to Accomplish - Assess Needs and Set Your Goals!

Conduct an internal, organization-wide assessment. Key considerations include:

- Does my business need to fill a specific role or gap? Are we having difficulty attracting a specific type of talent?
- Will we need assistance with additional projects or during peak times?
- Would the business benefit from adding a fresh perspective?
- Do we have current staff who could function as mentors? Might current staff benefit from leadership opportunities?
- What role could an intern play, and what skills/talents/educational background is preferred?

Step 2: Write Internship Description and Determine Compensation

Like all job listings, internship descriptions should clearly state the company background, goals of the position, hours and necessary/preferred skills, plus required coursework or majors. While creating the description, the company should determine how the student will be compensated, what type of work schedule will be expected, who will serve as their supervisor/mentor, a location for the internship workspace, and the length of the internship experience.

Step 3: Post Internship Opening

Publicize your open position. Post it to your own organization’s website and then send it out to career office representatives at nearby colleges. *See the resource list on page 9 for contact information.*

Step 4: Interview Candidates, Evaluate Potential, Hire the Best Fit

This is an important step in the internship process. Students need interviewing experience and feedback. They need to learn to present themselves professionally and to answer questions succinctly. Practice makes perfect! Once you’ve found the right candidate, offer them the internship position and move to the onboarding process.

71.4%
One Year Retention Rate For Internal Interns
2019 NACE Internship and Co-Op Survey

The Million-Dollar Question: Paid or Unpaid?

U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division



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.

Common Definitions

Compensation: The pay or other recompense that is exchanged for the intern's labor and efforts. Interns may be paid an hourly wage (dependent upon the standards dictating the internship experience). However, some organizations may provide compensation in the form of scholarships, gift cards for books/supplies, stipends, discounts, etc. Please contact the Career Center/Internship Staff of the participating school with additional or specific questions or concerns.

Evaluations: Interns should receive periodic performance reviews by their site supervisor. At a minimum, evaluations should be conducted at the midpoint and end of an internship assignment.

Hours Log/Time Sheet: Interns log and document the hours which they spend at their or working for their internship. The Internship Site Supervisor (ISS) reviews and verifies this log sheet before the intern submits it to their internship coordinator at their school.

Intern: (noun) A student who works as a trainee to gain experience and practice skills learned in school. (verb) To perform the duties of an internship.

Internship: A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable, applicable experience and make connections in the professional fields they are considering for career paths. These experiences also give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. (NACE)

Internship Site Supervisor (ISS): The person at a company or organization who is responsible for coordinating the intern's successful experience. The ISS mentors the intern, orients them to the workplace, makes sure that they know what is expected, and provides regular feedback on performance. The ISS provides meaningful work assignments and ensures the student's questions are answered.

Non-Credit Internship: Students may elect to complete internships that are not associated with a course or are not components for graduation. These students simply want to acquire experience, to make connections with employers, and to establish a foundation in their chosen industry. Because these internship experiences are not necessarily formalized and therefore subject to academic calendars, the students may be available to work additional hours, especially during holiday breaks and the summer months.

Placement Site: A placement site is the business or organization which provides the internship opportunity and employs the ISS. The placement site can be physical or virtual.

Student: A person who is studying at a college or university.

Tuition: A sum of money charged for teaching or instruction by a school, college, or university.

Practicum: A course of study designed especially for the preparation of teachers, clinicians, and business professionals that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory.

Apprenticeship: An arrangement in which someone learns an art, trade, or job under another.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if I need an intern?

Many different types of organizations (large, small, nonprofit, for-profit, technical, non-technical) benefit from internship programs. Talk to managers in your company to assess your needs. Could you use help with a specific project, task or research? Would a new, fresh perspective boost an area of your organization? Do you have a technical need, such as updating your website? Would any employees be more productive if they had some assistance? Add an intern to your staff!

Do I have to provide health care for interns?

No; most students are covered by their parents or guardians' health care plans, or they obtain it through their school.

Interns are young, inexperienced and don't have a real tie to the company. Are they more trouble than they're worth?

On the contrary, most interns prove to be enthusiastic employees who bring new life to projects or procedures. After all, when they aren't working at their internship, they're learning the most up-to-date information about their chosen field of study.

How long are internships?

Typically, internships last 8 to 16 weeks and follow the timeline of semesters: fall (August through December), spring (January through April) and summer (May through July). However, most internships can be customized to fit your needs. For example, if you have a two-month project that calls for additional help, look for students who can work with your timeline.

My organization can't afford to pay for an intern. Are there alternatives?

Sure! Not all interns are paid an hourly wage. As you're determining the resources needed for your internship program, be sure to explore all options. For example, some employers are surprised to find that they actually can afford to pay their part-time interns. Others choose to offer a stipend or a scholarship to cover the cost of a credited internship.

Do I have to pay interns for their time?

Most students have commitments beyond school. They have to make decisions about the most beneficial way to spend their limited time. You can offer volunteer opportunities but be aware that if you offer an opportunity with no compensation, there may not be many students rushing to apply. For an unpaid internship program to meet Department of Labor regulations, you must ensure your interns are learning, gaining experience and bolstering their related coursework. Discuss the issue with your human resources representative and/or lawyer, and see the following webpage for more information:

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

Can I hire an intern as a full-time employee at the end of their internship?

That's one of the great advantages of an internship program. It gives employers the opportunity to find talented young professionals before they graduate. Companies are encouraged to offer interns permanent, full-time positions at their organization.

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Institutions Collaborating

College & Career Offices in Polk County, Florida

Florida Polytechnic University 

<https://floridapoly.edu/student-affairs/career-development.php>

Florida Southern College 

<https://www.flsouthern.edu/career-services>

Keiser University

<https://www.keiseruniversity.edu/career-development>

Polk State College 

<https://www.polk.edu/career-development-services>

Southeastern University 

<https://www.seu.edu/academics/compass-calling-career>

Traviss Technical College

Ridge Technical College

<https://polkschoolsfl.com/>

Warner University

<https://libguides.warner.edu/Careers>

Webber International University 

<https://webber.edu/career-services>

 - denotes institutions using Handshake

Other Resources:

Florida Association of Colleges & Employers (Florida ACE)

<https://floridaace.memberclicks.net/>

Hiring Interns Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

<https://www.naceweb.org/>



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DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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