

College (Post-Secondary) Internships – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

AGE & ELIGIBILITY

Q: Is there an age requirement for interns?

A: Most students who are enrolled in a post-secondary institute are at least 18 years of age. In some cases, a student may be a minor. Minors who are at least 16 years of age can be considered for an internship unless the hiring agency has specific restrictions on the hiring age. Agencies with hiring restrictions on minimum age of employment will need to consult with HR and/or legal if they are interested in hiring a minor. Any supervisor of a minor will need to obtain child clearances (see below).

Q: I am supervising a minor. What do I need to do?

A: College students who are minors will need to obtain a work permit that is issued by the school district in which the student resides (home, campus, etc.). If the student lives outside of PA but attends a PA school, the student will need to obtain the work permit from the school district in which the work location is present. In addition to the work permit, any commonwealth employee who is supervising a minor will need to obtain clearances as defined by the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) prior to the student starting in the internship. Please work with your HR office to obtain the appropriate clearances. More information may be found by clicking the following link: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Clearances/Pages/default.aspx>.

Q: Are there restrictions on duties for interns who are under the age of 18?

A: Yes. The federal government has defined prohibited occupations, activities, work hours, etc. for minors. Please review the [PA Prohibited Occupations List for Minors \(pages 1 - 7\)](#) and [Federal “Off Limits” Jobs Summary for Minors](#). Additional questions should be directed to your HR office or to the OA, Work-Based Learning Division at RA-OAEntryPrograms@pa.gov.

Q: Do students need to be full-time students to be eligible for an internship?

A: Some of our internship classifications, such as the Commonwealth Public Service Intern, do require full-time enrollment. However, other classifications such as the Government Services Intern, do not require full-time enrollment. Please refer to the “College (Post-Secondary) Internships” document for additional information on individual classifications.

Q: Does PA residency apply to interns?

A: Yes. To be considered for an internship, a student must either live in PA or attend a school in PA.



Q: Can students from out-of-state schools be considered?

A: If a student is a resident of PA, even if they are attending a school that is outside of PA, they can be considered for internships. Students from out-of-state schools who are not natural residents of PA cannot be considered for internships.

Q. Can I hire an international student for an internship?

A. The Commonwealth requires that any employee (intern) must be eligible to work in the U.S. The intern will need to provide the appropriate documentation as part of the I-9 verification upon employment. Please refer questions to your agency HR office.

Q. Do unpaid interns go through I-9 verification?

A. Volunteers, unpaid interns, independent contractors, and others who are not required to complete a W-2 form do not need to complete an I-9 form. Please contact your HR office for support with hiring an unpaid intern.

WORKING HOURS

Q: How many hours can my intern work?

A: Supervisors should set clear expectations on work hours/schedule with the intern to ensure there is no conflict between the student's academic schedule and work schedule. Interns who are age 18 and older can work up to full-time hours. If an intern is a minor, the PA Department of Labor and Industry's "Abstract of Hours" must be followed. Please note, any agency hiring a minor must print this document and post it in all work units where minors are employed.

Q: Can interns work overtime hours?

A: Overtime requests will need to be determined by the hiring agency in accordance with agency policy.

Q: My intern is going to work more than 750 hours during the fiscal year. Do they need to contribute to SERS?

A: Any employee, including an intern, who will work 750 or more hours within the fiscal year must contribute to SERS. The only exception to this is if the intern is receiving school credit for the internship. SERS will run regular reports to identify employees who will be hitting this threshold and will work directly with the employee and SERS to verify eligibility prior to enrolling them in contributions.

COMPLEMENT & COMPENSATION

Q: How is the intern payroll budgeted?

A: Paid internship positions should be placed in a wage capacity. Please discuss complement or budget inquiries with your agency's HR office.



Q: Do I need to have complement available to hire an intern?

A: Interns should be placed in wage status on the agency complement. Most internships are “unclassified” which means they should not count against an agency’s allotment for wage positions. Additional questions should be directed to your agency’s complement manager in your HR office.

Q: Are agencies limited in the number of interns they can hire?

A: Generally speaking, there is no limit as long as the agency can support the associated costs and work of the internships. Please consult with your agency’s HR office for further information.

Q: Do I need to pay my intern?

A: Internship experiences should be paid and should utilize existing commonwealth internship classifications. If an agency does not have the funding to support an internship, a justification to hire an unpaid intern should be sent to the OA, Work-Based Learning Division at RA-OAEntryPrograms@pa.gov prior to creating the internship.

Q: I have received approval from OA, Work-Based Learning Division to hire an unpaid intern. What do I do now?

A: Once you have approval, you will want to proceed with posting and/or filling the unpaid internship using the standard process for contractors. If you are posting, please use job code U2750, a blank position number, and clearly identify that the internship is unpaid on the posting. Once a candidate is selected, go to “Employee Resource Center – Ask HR – Contractor Actions – Grant Contractor Credentials” to complete and submit the required form. Please refer to your agency HR office with additional questions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Q: Are interns able to work with confidential information?

A: Yes. The hiring agency should work with their HR office to determine the appropriate scope of work. The agency may choose to consult with its legal office with specific questions or concerns.

Q: Are there any confidentiality forms an intern needs to sign?

A: While there are no enterprise-wide confidentiality forms for interns, an agency may have their own internal process, form, etc. that an employee (intern) would need to agree to during their employment or internship.

WORK EXPECTATIONS, TRAINING PLAN, & EVALUATION

Q: Do I need to develop a training plan for my intern?

A: Supervisors of interns should develop a training plan to outline and define what the student can expect to learn, perform, and achieve. This plan should include student responsibilities and expectations, as well as information related to the type of work and projects a student will be contributing to during the internship, and should be shared with an intern on, or before, the first day of employment. A training plan template can be requested through the OA, Work-Based Learning Division by emailing RA-OAEntryPrograms@pa.gov.

Q: Do I need to develop a position description for my intern?

A: A training plan is required for any intern and will serve as a position description during the internship. At the discretion of the agency, supervisors may also be required to complete a position description in addition to the training plan.

Q. Should I conduct an evaluation on my intern during the internship?

A. Yes, you should complete at least one formal evaluation for your intern during the internship. In addition to the evaluation, you should be providing regular, consistent feedback on a daily or weekly basis to your intern. This will help an intern better understand your expectations and how they are meeting those expectations.

Q: Can I use an intern to perform bargaining unit work?

A: No. Internships cannot be used to take the place of bargaining unit employees. Internships should provide an opportunity for students to gain practical experience in their field of study, interest, or industry. Work duties should be enriching and provide an opportunity for skill development and professional growth. Please see the “College (Post-Secondary) Internships” document for additional information on internship experiences and work responsibilities.

RECRUITMENT & POSTING

Q. How do I know if an intern is right for my program area?

A. Please consult with the OA, Work-Based Learning Division at RA-OAEntryPrograms@pa.gov to discuss your specific needs and interests.

Q: I’m interested in creating an internship opportunity. What is my next step?

A: Thank you for investing in the next generation of the workforce! An intern is a Commonwealth employee, so you will want to follow your standard acquisition process to identify a wage position, obtain necessary budget approvals, and post the internship on the “Intern and Apprenticeship” page of employment.pa.gov. Your agency HR office can provide support throughout the posting process.

Q: Do PA schools and students know about internship opportunities within the Commonwealth?

A: Yes. The OA, Recruitment Division works closely with PA schools to actively recruit students for internship opportunities in state and local government. Our recruiters share open positions which hiring agencies post on the “Intern and Apprenticeship” page of the employment website with schools and on Handshake, an online career management system for students and recent graduates. If you have specific recruitment requests, please contact the OA, Recruitment Division at RA-OAentrecruit@pa.gov.

Q: What should I include on the posting to make sure I’m attracting the candidate I want to my internship?

A: To ensure you are getting the best fit for your internship, it is important to use a working title that accurately describes the work, a description of the work duties or projects the intern will be doing, preferred majors, and other details about the schedule and duration of the internship. Below is an example:

- **Working Title:** Financial Programs Intern (College)
- **Description of Internship:** This intern will provide support to our finance team and will participate in special projects and initiatives to improve financial processes and systems for the PA Office of Administration. The intern will primarily conduct market research, analyze economic trends, and compile data to support financial decision-making. Work duties will also include assisting in analyzing financial statements, preparing reports, conducting variance analysis, and maintain financial databases and spreadsheets to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.
- **Preferred majors:** Finance, Economics, Accounting, or a closely related field.
- **Other information:** Be sure to include the season you want to hire an intern (spring/summer/fall), work hours, and telework schedule, if offered.

Please consult with your agency HR office on additional posting language and options.

Q: Can a student apply for permanent positions before they graduate?

A: Yes. If a student is interested in employment, and is a good fit for the agency, internships can be a useful recruitment tool to fill vacancies. Non-Civil Service (NCS) job opportunities can be posted internally for the intern to apply to during their internship. Civil Service (CS) jobs will need to follow the standard CS acquisition process unless they were hired as a CPSI. In this case, the intern will automatically be reclassified to the permanent position once they complete the internship requirements. Please consult with your agency HR office on posting options for your intern.



Q: If there is a specific requirement for my intern, such as for credit hours or major, who is responsible for verifying this information during the application process?

A: Some classifications may require specific eligibility criteria to be met. Depending on the classification, the evaluation process may occur in the Bureau of Talent Acquisition or in your agency HR Office. If you have a requirement on credits, field of study, etc., please work directly with your agency HR office to ensure candidates are evaluated in accordance with the appropriate position requirements.

TELEWORK

Q: Can an intern work remotely?

A: Interns can work remotely on a hybrid schedule as determined by the hiring agency. Supervisors should align the intern's work schedule with theirs to ensure they are in the office on the same days/times as their assigned interns. As a note, interns who do work remotely should receive regular feedback and increased engagement while they are working from home.

CREDITS & AGREEMENTS

Q. Will my intern receive credit for the internship?

A. Credit is determined by the school. You should ask your intern if they are receiving credit for their internship.

Students who are receiving credit for their internship are exempt from paying UC tax. If your student indicates they are receiving credit for their internship, this must be included on the Hire PAR to ensure the student does not pay the UC tax.

If the student is not receiving credit, no additional action is necessary.

Q. Does a student need to be unpaid if the student is getting credits for the internship?

A. It is recommended to pay a student for their internship experience regardless of whether they are receiving credit from the school or not.

Q. Can I sign an agreement from the school?

A. If you receive an agreement, MOU, etc. from the school for the internship, you will need to connect with your agency HR office and agency legal office to determine next steps.

Q. Is there an enterprise-wide agreement that exists for interns?

A. Currently, there is no statewide agreement. If you receive an agreement from your intern's school, please work with your agency HR and legal team to determine next steps.