



EXPERIENTIAL GUIDE

INTERNSHIPS, EXTERNSHIPS AND MORE

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

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Creating a Mutually Beneficial Relationship

What is the best experiential option for your organization?

Experiential Learning provides students with professional experience through which they apply ideas gained from the classroom to their experience. Experiential Learning encompasses a range of position types. Determine what the best fit for the organization is by considering the following definitions:

Clinical Preparation/Practicum provide hands-on experiences of a predetermined duration directly tied to an area of study, such as nursing students participating in a hospital-based experience or teacher education students participating in classroom settings.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) alternates classroom learning and productive paid work experiences in a field directly related to a student's academic and career goals. Co-ops are formal partnerships between an educational institution, an employer, and one or more students, and typically provide meaningful work experiences for students. Co-Operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning of Canada states that "the usual plan is for the student to alternate periods of study with periods of work experience in appropriate fields of business, industry, government, social services, and the professions".

Externships (Job Shadow) provide an initial exposure to a career, industry, and organization for a brief period by having students "shadow" an experienced employee or professional. Activities may include: a tour of the workplace, observing day-to-day activities, meeting with other members of the organization, involvement in projects, and/or attending meetings.

Internships are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as: "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting." An internship is typically a semester (fall, spring, summer) in duration, may or may not carry credit, and may be paid or unpaid based on the Department of Labor criteria.

Micro-Internships/Gig Employment are short-term, paid, professional assignments that are project-based. They are shorter than internships, typically ranging between 5 and 40 hours of work and include projects that be completed between one week and one month.

Undergraduate Research is defined by The Council for Undergraduate Research as "an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline". Research offers the opportunity to build clear mentor relationships and advance academic studies.

Service Learning is curriculum-based volunteer work emphasizing hands-on learning while addressing real world concerns and community needs. In-class learning enhances service experience and service experience enhances in-class learning.

Simulations and Hackathons aim to imitate a system, entity, phenomenon, or process. They attempt to represent or predict aspects of the behavior of the problem or issue being studied. Simulation can allow experiments to be conducted within a fictitious situation to show the real behaviors and outcomes of possible conditions.

Volunteer is a person who performs a service willingly, without pay or credit to support a cause. Opportunities include one-time assistance or continual service.

Internships: A Closer Look

Often an internship is the ideal fit for an individual and employer. An internship is any carefully monitored meaningful learning experience in which an individual has intentional professional goals and reflects actively on what they are accomplishing throughout the experience. Developing an internship program is an excellent strategy for investing in your organization's future successes, often leading to discovering future colleagues and leaders.

One of the more significant advantages to providing internships is the opportunity to select and develop your future talent. You can evaluate and screen potential employees prior to making a full-time position offer, which leads to financial savings. Employers have reported converting more than half of eligible interns into full-time hires. If hired in a permanent position, previous interns assimilate faster to their new roles and have shorter learning curves than external hires.

Distinguishing between internships, volunteering, and part-time employment:

An internship will primarily focus on the learning connected to the student's field of interest and the benefits of organization/employer are secondary. In an internship, supervisors serve as mentors who establish learning objectives and guide learning throughout the experience. Unlike an internship, the focus of the volunteer position is primarily on the service being completed and the impact on the individual or issue receiving that service. Similarly, the focus of part-time employment is primarily on the tasks being completed and the impact on the business, services, and clients.

Developing the Internship

Prior to hiring an intern, an employer must understand how interns will fit within the company's goals and culture. Since organizations vary in age, size, industry, and product, so too will internship activities.

Questions that may determine what kind of program will work best for you:

- What does your organization hope to gain from the program?
- Is your organization looking to fulfill a need on a specific project? Will this internship(s) encompass one major project, or entail a variety of small projects?
- What are the tools and workspace necessary to provide the student?
- What talents, academic background and experience do you want in an intern? Decide on qualifications early on to help you select the best candidate.
- Who will be primarily responsible for the intern(s)? Will that person be a mentor, supervisor, or both?

Utilize the [Internship Design Worksheet](#) to develop an internship outline that focuses on learning, training, and mentorship, and to develop a position description.

Recruiting Interns

How can I recruit at PLU?

Pacific Lutheran University offers a range of opportunities to recruit students including Career & Internship Fairs, Informational Workshops and Webinars, On-Campus Interviewing, Connections to Student Organizations and Academic Programs, Career Treks, and more.

To begin recruiting, create an account on Pacific Lutheran University's online job and internship database, the [Opportunities Board](#). You will then be able to post the opportunity to all current students and alumni.

For assistance engaging in recruiting at PLU, contact Alumni & Student Connections at career@plu.edu

When should internship recruitment begin?

While the recruitment timeline varies by industry, most organizations begin recruiting 4-7 months before the internship start date. Starting early allows more students to apply and gives employers a chance to fully screen applicants.

Paying an Intern

Pay for interns varies by location, industry, size of organization, and role of the intern. Wages are usually determined before the intern is hired and is uncommon for them to be negotiated.

Can the internship be unpaid?

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. 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.

Reference [the U.S. Department of Labor, Fact Sheet #71](#) for further information.

If a student is doing an internship for credit, do I still have to pay them?

Yes, compensation and academic credit are not mutually exclusive. One does not preclude the other.

Supplemental Funding Options

What is the State Work Study program?

State Work Study is financial aid for low- and middle-income students. Qualifying students get an approved job, or internship, to support their education. The state contributes a percentage to the wages of work study employees, so participating employers benefit from educated, motivated workers at a lower cost.

How is Work Study employer eligibility determined?

PLU’s work study students work with government agencies, for-profit corporations, small businesses, and non-profit organizations. The state bars any business or organization involved in political or religious activity from participating in the State Work Study (SWS) program.

In selecting employer participants, PLU will review the:

- Nature of the position;
- Organization’s compatibility with our mission; and
- Work environment to ensure that it promotes a positive learning experience.

In addition, we make sure the position will:

- Not displace regular workers or impair existing contracts;
- Give students the opportunity to explore or gain experience in a career interest; and
- Be adequately supervised.

For more information on State Work Study, contact us at career@plu.edu.

Micro-Internships: A Closer Look

Micro-Internships make it easy to identify and build relationships with potential candidates for internships and full-time roles. The short-term nature and limited commitment requirement of micro-internships allow both the employer and students to engage, explore fit, and build skills.

Developing the Micro-Internship

Prior to hiring a micro-intern, an employer must understand how interns will fit within the organization's goals and strategies. The first step is to identify specific projects or initiatives where a student could assist, and that have a clear outcome. Then ask the following questions to ensure there is support to increase student learning:

Questions to ask:

- What are the tools and workspace necessary to provide the student?
- What talents, academic background and experience do you want in an intern? Decide on qualifications early on to help you select the best candidate.
- Who will be primarily responsible for the intern(s)? Will that person be a mentor, supervisor, or both?
- What structured learning or training experiences will be incorporated into the experience?

Utilize the [Micro-Internship Design Worksheet](#) to develop an internship outline that focuses on learning, training, and mentorship, and to develop a position description.

Micro-Internships typically range between 2 and 4 weeks, with 5-40 hours of total work. Consider the amount of time needed for both completion of the project and training and support.

Recruiting Interns

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To begin recruiting, create an account on Pacific Lutheran University's online job and internship database, the [Opportunities Board](#). You will then be able to post the opportunity to all current students and alumni.

For assistance engaging in recruiting at PLU, contact Alumni & Student Connections at career@plu.edu.

When should internship recruitment begin?

Different than internships, recruiting for micro-internships typically occurs within one month of the start date. Because of the project-based nature of micro-internships that may not fit a typical timeline and may hire quickly.

Paying a Micro-Intern

Pay for interns varies by location, industry, size of organization, and role of the intern. Employers are expected to pay fair market value for the work. Both hourly wages and stipend (contract) wages are common. It is the responsibility of the employer to determine which type of pay is appropriate.



Thank you for your interest in offering internships to students at Pacific Lutheran University. We appreciate your decision to serve as co-educators. This worksheet is designed to assist you in creating an internship outline that focuses on learning, training, and mentorship.

Internships are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as: “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.” For further assistance developing the internship opportunity and information on recruiting, please contact Alumni & Student Connections at career@plu.edu.

Step 1: Learning Outcomes

Begin building your internship by starting with the projected learning outcomes for the student. Think about the variety of industry-related skills that you expect the student to acquire by the end of the internship.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the internship, the student will be able to...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Step 2: Training + Support

Identify the specific training methods you will use to ensure the intern achieves each learning outcome. Consider the type and frequency of mentorship and feedback you will provide and any materials, assignments, or orientations the intern must complete as part of the ongoing training process. Below, list training methods specific to your learning outcomes.

Proposed Training Outline:

To help the student achieve the proposed learning outcomes, I will...

Learning Outcome #1:

Learning Outcome #2:

Learning Outcome #3:

Learning Outcome #4:

Step 3: Tasks

Finally, develop specific tasks, projects, or assignments that are intended to demonstrate the student’s progress towards achieving the learning outcomes related to their academic studies. While administrative tasks are important, we ask that any administrative assignments account for no more than 20% of the intern’s time throughout the internship.

Tasks, Projects, or Assignments:

The intern will demonstrate their learning outcomes by...

Learning Outcome #1:

Learning Outcome #2:

Learning Outcome #3:

Learning Outcome #4:

Step 4: Complete the Position Description

Once outlined, remember to also include the following information in your position description:

- Summary of organization
- Length of internship & approximate start and end dates
- Hours per week and level of flexibility in the work schedule
- Wage (Reference [FLSA and Department of Labor Rulings](#) for more information)
- Location
- Qualifications including academic background and experience
- Instructions for applications
- Information on Equal Opportunity and Diversity & Inclusion



Thank you for your interest in offering micro-internships to students at Pacific Lutheran University. We appreciate your decision to serve as co-educators. This worksheet is designed to assist you in creating a micro-internship outline that meets your organization's needs and provides a strong learning experience for the student(s).

Micro-internships are short-term, paid, professional assignments that are project-based. They are shorter than internships, typically ranging between 5 and 40 hours of work and include projects that be completed between one week and one month. For further assistance developing the micro-internship opportunity and information on recruiting, please contact Alumni & Student Connections at career@plu.edu.

Step 1: Identify Expected Outcomes

Begin building your micro-internship by identifying organizational needs where students could provide expertise and new perspective, resulting in a clear deliverable. Then identify potential learning outcomes for student participants. When the micro-internship is complete, what will the student have learned?

Summary of organizational need:

Outcome/Deliverable expected for organization:

Summary of learning outcomes for student:

Step 2: Plan Training + Support

Identify the specific training methods and support that will be provided to ensure the active learning of the student(s) and identify the person or persons who will oversee it. Consider the type and frequency of mentorship and feedback you will provide and any materials, assignments, or orientations the intern must complete as part of the ongoing training process.

Supervisor and Mentor:

Training Opportunities:

Available Resources:

Step 3: Outline Tasks

Finally, develop specific tasks that are intended to demonstrate the student's active learning and meet organizational needs.

Core tasks to result in outcome/deliverables:

Step 4: Complete the Position Description

Create a description that clearly explains the project. Once outlined, remember to also include the following information in your position description:

- Summary of organization
- Total hours expected to complete micro-internship & approximate start and end dates
 - Most micro-internships require between 10 and 40 hours of work and are completed within 1 week to 1 month
- Wage
 - Employers have some options on payment types. Many employers will employ micro-interns as W2 employees, paying an hourly wage (over minimum wage). Other employers will employ micro-interns as contract employees, paying a stipend amount. For questions regarding internship pay, [FLSA, and Department of Labor rulings](#) on internships, please contact Alumni & Student Connections at career@plu.edu.
- Location/Remote Availability
- Qualifications including academic background and experience
- Instructions for applications
- Information on Equal Opportunity and Diversity & Inclusion