

Internship Validation Statement for Students and Organizations

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.

At the foundation of such an assessment is the tenet that the internship is a legitimate learning experience benefitting the student and not simply an operational work experience that just happens to be conducted by a student. The core question then is whether or not work performed by an intern will primarily benefit the employer in a way that does not also advance the education of the student.

Students pursue internships because they want to gain professional experience that links their academic coursework to the disciplines they want to pursue for their careers. To gain this experience, students want to engage in projects and tasks that contribute to the professional work of the organization. This means that the employer may benefit from the work of the intern while, at the same time, it provides a meaningful experience that allows for the application of academic knowledge.

To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional internship, or one conducted semi-remotely—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the UCF College of Business, 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 by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.
8. There is mentorship provided by professional staff members in the form of defined/scheduled meetings, shadowing, and general advice regarding the student's career path and professionalism development.

If these criteria are followed, it is the posture of the UCF College of Business that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship.