

ALA Diversity Internship Program

FAQ

What is an internship? Internships are supervised on-the-job learning experiences. They are designed to provide students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom in a work environment.

Are internship positions paid or unpaid? Internship positions can be paid or unpaid based upon the needs and policies of the participating firm. Paid internships can be fashioned by way of an hourly wage or stipend.

How long is an internship? The length of an internship and the number of hours per week is determined by a combination of the needs of the internship site, the availability of the student, and the number of credit hours needed by the student. Usually a student fulfills the internship requirement within a 16 week semester.

How many hours do the students work? City College of San Francisco offers different credit opportunities for 10/20/30 hour per week internships. The internship coordinators work hard to select CCSF students that will meet the hourly needs of the participating firms.

How does a student qualify for an internship? To be eligible for an internship students must be currently enrolled at a college or university, have an overall have grade point of 3.0 or higher, submit an application, resume and transcript.

How do I get started? For more information contact the ALA Golden Gate Chapter Diversity Chairs/Internship Coordinators: Jennifer Beckey at 415-677-3179 or Lori McCracken at 415-627-3423.

What are the benefits to participating firms? CCSF students will bring enthusiasm, fresh ideas, and creativity with them. As an internship site you're helping to develop the local workforce, promote diversity and influence the educational process. You'll have the opportunity to communicate business and industry needs through the Internship Coordinator as we build partnerships between business and education. Many firms also take advantage of internships as a way to evaluate potential employees without making a long-term commitment.

What are the responsibilities of the participating firm? Participating firms are responsible for providing meaningful work experiences for students in their field of interest. Tasks and duties assigned should be based on learning objectives that have been identified with the student. The supervisor should provide adequate oversight of the student's work to be able to complete an evaluation of the intern and their work at the end of the semester.

What are the guidelines for unpaid internships?

In order to avoid violating minimum wage laws, for-profit companies should be able to show that unpaid interns will be "trainees" rather than employees. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has developed six criteria for differentiating between an employee entitled to minimum wage and a learner/trainee who, while an employee, may be unpaid. The criteria are:

1. The training, although it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school.

2. The training is for the benefit of the students.
3. The students do not displace regular employees, but work under the close observation of a regular employee or supervisor.
4. The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of students, and, on occasion, the operations may actually be impeded by the training.
5. The students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.
6. The employer and the student understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the time spent in training. Students who work without pay cannot be considered “volunteers” unless they are working for a nonprofit, charitable or humanitarian organization (i.e. not a for-profit).

Please also note **unpaid internships should be structured as Part-Time**. One way many firms use to show that interns are “trainees” is to ask the students to obtain college credit for the internship (see below).

Does my firm allow unpaid internships? You may think that all firms allow for unpaid internships and in theory all firms may want to. However, one of the reasons a firm may not host unpaid interns is dependent upon the firm’s worker’s compensation policy. If the firm’s policy accepts volunteers and/or unpaid interns then most firms are set up to accept an unpaid intern. You will need to check on your firm’s workers’ compensation policy.

What is expected of an employer that is hosting an intern?

1. We ask employers to offer students a real-work experience where they would get similar training to an entry level employee who is just getting started; training and tasks appropriate for the position they are in.
2. We ask employers to offer constructive and honest feedback to students if issues arise (Program Staff is always available to support you with any concerns).
3. We ask employers to provide all the necessary equipment to perform the tasks associated the position they are fulfilling.
4. Treat the intern like an employee and give them tasks and allow them access to equipment, information and whatever they will need to succeed in the assigned position.
5. We ask employers to complete an evaluation and go over it with the student at the end of the internship.

What are the expectations of the student at the Participating Firm?

Students are expected to treat the internship LIKE A JOB, which means:

1. Adhere to the designated schedule.
2. Dress appropriately.
3. Be respectful of the employer, co-workers, customers, etc.
4. Stay on track with assignments and demonstrate accountability.
5. Fulfill the agreed time frame for the duration of the internship.
6. To notify their internship if they need to change a shift, or if they will be late – like any regular employee.

Is/Can the schedule of the intern be flexible? Yes. The schedule can be as flexible as the participating firm allows. For example the interns schedule may be M, W, F from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. However, during times of class finals, the student may request an alternate schedule so as to accommodate the finals’ schedule.

How are student applicants placed with the participating firms? The ALA Golden Gate Chapter Diversity Committee in conjunction with CCSF accepts applications from interested students. The internship coordinators review the resumes, transcripts and career tract desire. From there we look to see if we have a matching career track firm. The internship coordinators conduct the interviews with both the participating firms as well as the potential interns. Upon completion a best match is made. If however the participating firm would like to conduct their own interviews that is fine too.

What if any assistance does the Golden Gate ALA chapter provide at the beginning of the program? The internship coordinators will provide the participating firm with either a matched intern or a set of resumes that can be reviewed by the participating firm. The participating firm will also receive an internship packet that includes: job descriptions; initial correspondence between the firm and intern, the intern and ALA and the ALA and CCSF; career track checklists; and expectations memos for both the participating firm and intern.

Can the internship tracts be changed and/or blended during the intern's semester? Yes. If a change is requested by either the participating firm and/or the intern, the internship coordinators should be notified so as to ensure that the requested change results in a better opportunity for all parties. If the participating firm has more blended roles and responsibilities and can't provide a specific career tract for the intern, then, of course there can be a blending of the tracts.

Will my firm be recognized as a participant? Yes. All participating firms are recognized in the ALA Golden Gate Chapter Newsletter and at the Annual Holiday Luncheon.

What if the student intern is not working out? How do I get rid of him/her? Simply contact the internship coordinators to discuss the issues. Together we will work with you to find an alternate solution.