



INTERNS:



Trends & Best Practices
in Management & Pay

INTERNS

THEIR ROLE IN ORGANIZATIONS

The majority of organizations employ interns. Most notably, interns help develop a talent pipeline in organizations. They are frequently used as a source for bringing more talent and skills into organizations and expanding the regional economy with more educated workers. Additionally, interns commonly assist with special project work and are sources of temporary, skilled, and affordable workforce support.

Interns also help organizations increase their exposure at local colleges and universities, allow employers to test potential employees before hiring them, and are sought-after to provide creative/innovative input and fresh ideas. In addition, they are sometimes used to assist with administrative support and help develop internal supervisory or management skills.

The following summary highlights trends and best practices for finding, compensating, managing, and training interns, and is based on research findings from the [ERC/NOCHE Intern & Recent Grad Pay Rates & Practices Survey](#).



Finding Interns:

SOURCING

Interns are recruited using many different sources and recruiting strategies, most commonly including colleges and universities, intern job boards, referrals, and social media. Other sources used to recruit interns include company websites, career web pages, conferences, and industry/trade associations.

Colleges and universities. Many employers find the most success in recruiting interns by using a targeted approach at colleges and universities. At colleges and universities, employers generally rely on the following to source interns:

- Job postings on college/university career websites
- Building relationships with faculty and professors and faculty referrals
- Alumni contacts within a college/university
- College/university job fairs
- Partnerships with college/university career centers

Locally, the most common colleges and universities in which organizations have hired interns or recent graduates are the University of Akron, Kent State University, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, The Ohio State University, and John Carroll University; although interns are recruited from a broad range of colleges and universities.

Job postings. Interns are frequently recruited via college graduate or intern focused job boards or websites, whether national or regional in nature (e.g. NEOintern.net). Some employers also use job postings on general or industry-specific job boards/websites and via OhioMeansJobs or OhioMeansInternships.

Referrals. Referrals from other employees and customers are generally a common and effective way that organizations recruit interns.



48%

of surveyed organizations' entry-level positions are filled by new graduates

SOURCING (cont.)

SELECTION

- A pre-screening interview
- An interview
- Work sample such as a writing sample, exercise, or portfolio
- Background screening

Education. Most employers consider education, primarily major, academic year (typically junior or senior), coursework, and grade point average (typically around 3.0). To a lesser extent, employers may also evaluate extracurricular activities, specific projects, and the college or university attended.



31%
of companies surveyed
use social media to
recruit interns

Finding Interns:

SELECTION

Communication and professional skills. Professionalism (maturity, image, etc.) as well as interpersonal and communication skills are important and common criteria that employers use to select interns. Employers also consider work ethic and skills related to business acumen.

Work experience. Work experience is a key criterion used to hire interns. Considering past jobs, internships, and co-ops as well as the skills gleaned from those employment experiences clearly plays a role in whether candidates are hired for an internship.

Interests and goals. Career interests and goals also should be considered, as the experience typically should help the intern in their career path and aid them in their personal and professional development. Ideally, the intern would have interest in a career aligned with the internship opportunity.

Quality of work samples. Although not the most commonly used criteria, work samples, writing samples, and portfolios are helpful tools to gauge the quality of interns' work. These are especially helpful tools to use when interns have not had much work experience or when references are not available.



On-boarding

Once an intern is selected for an internship, like other employees, they should be provided with an orientation within the first week of their employment at the organization to acquaint them with the organization's policies, procedures, and culture.

It's important to properly orient and on-board interns into the organization and make yourself available for questions and concerns. Initial training is crucial in getting interns started on the right foot. Here are some suggestions for on-boarding interns.

- Set up their work area including voicemail, PC, software/programs, email, and work supplies
- Create and give them a schedule for their first week
- Give them a tour of the office
- Make introductions to colleagues
- Schedule them to meet with key people in the organization with whom they will work
- Take them out to lunch
- Provide them with the employee handbook and other relevant company materials
- Explain organizational rules, policies, procedures, safety guidelines, and expectations
- Have them attend your next new-hire orientation program (if applicable)
- Provide them with a job description outlining their responsibilities, tasks, and projects
- Train them on critical technology and systems

Most importantly, during your intern's first days with the company, give them a warm welcome and make sure they notice that you are excited to have them on-board.



90%
provide interns
with an orientation
the first week of
employment

Compensating Interns

The majority of internships are paid. Pay rates typically span \$10.00-\$16.00 per hour, depending on the type of intern and the functional area in which they work. In general, engineering and IT interns are among the highest paid. Sales/customer service, scientific research, and human resources interns generally earn lower wages.

| Functional Area | Median Pay Rate | Average Pay Rate |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Accounting/Finance | \$13.00 | \$13.64 |
| Engineering | \$15.50 | \$15.51 |
| Human Resources | \$12.75 | \$13.30 |
| Information Technology | \$14.00 | \$13.71 |
| Marketing/Non-Profit | \$12.75 | \$12.99 |
| Operations | \$13.00 | \$13.29 |
| Research (Non-Scientific) | \$15.00 | \$14.00 |
| Research (Scientific) | \$12.00 | \$13.28 |
| Sales/Customer Service | \$11.25 | \$13.09 |



UNPAID INTERNS ARE MOST COMMON IN THESE AREAS:

**non-profit/
health &
human
services**

ACROSS 10 ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED, THEY REPORTED...



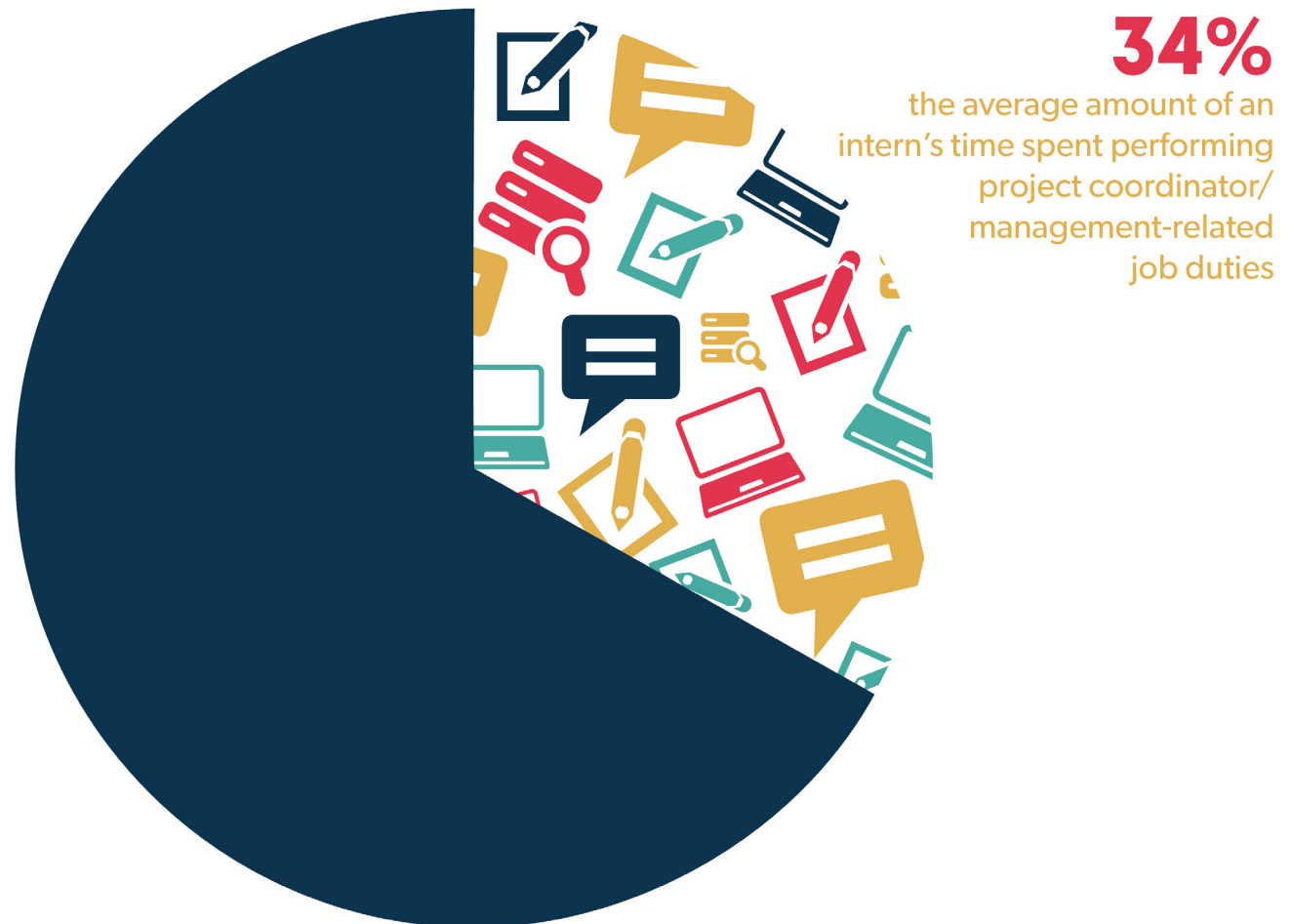
33 UNPAID INTERNS



Compensating Interns (cont.)

When determining whether or not to pay interns, it's important to consider minimum wage and overtime provisions under the Fair Labor Standards Act as well as the Department of Labor's guidelines for internship programs.

According to these guidelines, interns must be paid at least the minimum wage and in compliance with overtime provisions. Additionally, unless your intern meets all of the factors in the [Test for Unpaid Interns](#), (e.g., the internship is mainly educational in nature and doesn't benefit the organization), they should be paid. It is important to be aware that most internships do not comply with all of the criteria within this test.

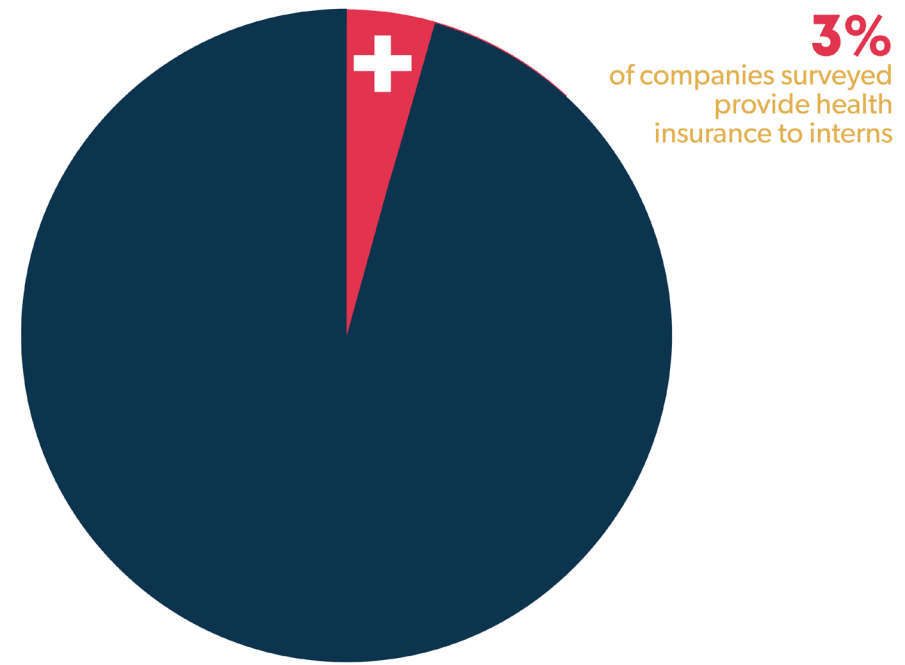
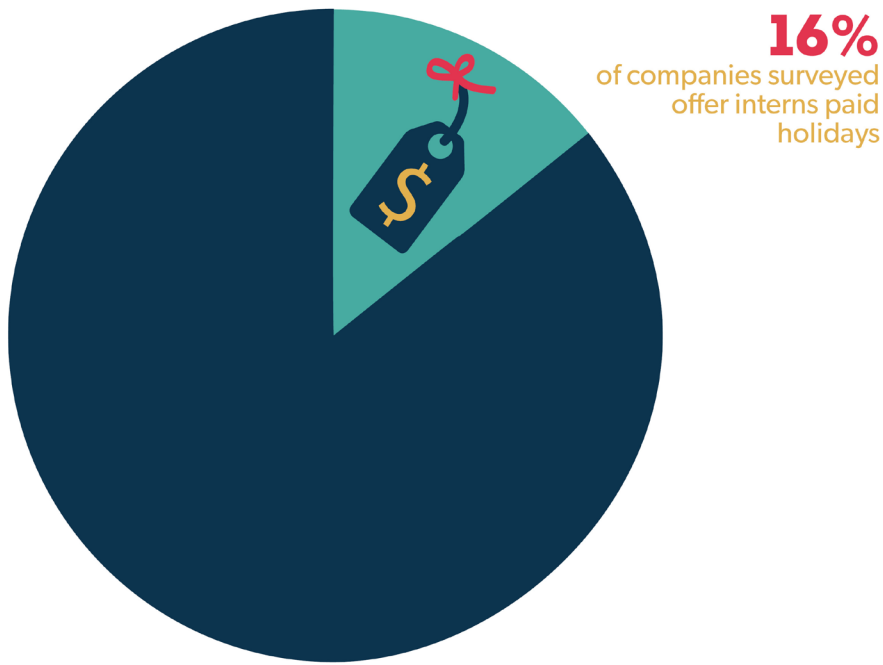


Benefits

Benefits are also part of interns' compensation. While many employers do not offer any benefits to interns, the majority offer at least one perk, including:

- Paid time to attend the organization's social events or networking events
- Rewards and recognition
- On-site perks such as a cafeteria or fitness center
- Training, development, and mentorship

Some organizations even offer interns paid holidays, credit towards benefits for time worked if hired after graduation, performance incentives, subsidized parking, and 401(K) plans - though these benefits generally aren't common.



Training & Developing Interns

TRAINING

Interns often participate in many different types of training at organizations, including on-the-job training, operational training, technical training, online courses, seminars, webinars, speaker series' conferences, and other educational activities such as reading books and assignments. Intern training typically includes:

On-the-job training: Training provided on how to carry out specific job tasks and responsibilities; industry specific training

Operational/procedural training: Training on organizational operations, processes, and procedures that affect the intern; safety training

Technical training: Training on systems, software, and computers that the intern will access throughout their internship.

Developmental training. Training to help interns learn, grow, and develop new skills and competencies that help them accomplish their tasks and projects.



56%

of companies surveyed
provide interns with
formal training
opportunities

Training & Developing Interns

MENTORING

Providing interns with mentors can be extremely beneficial to their training and development. Mentors may be other employees and subject matter experts in the organization. The relationship can be mutually beneficial, providing interns with further learning and growth experiences, but also offering mentors experience in coaching, training, and management.

Mentors can provide feedback and coaching, train or teach new skills, make sure that the internship is a learning experience, and expose interns to subject matter experts in the organization. Additionally, mentors can also be involved in on-boarding, helping interns assimilate into the organization's culture, and participating in various activities with them. Mentors can also help assign or manage projects and evaluate intern performance.



66%
of companies
surveyed provide
interns with access
to a mentor

WORK MANAGEMENT

Most commonly, organizations give interns engaging and challenging tasks related to project coordination, project management, and analytical problem solving. Interns are also sometimes given administrative, clerical, and communications responsibilities.

- Researching the prospect of a new program, initiative, product, or service
- Writing business proposals, reports, and plans
- Managing and maintaining databases and spreadsheets
- Planning or coordinating an event or meeting
- Creating a study, analyzing the results, and producing a report
- Developing support documents, briefs, presentations, and visuals for reports (graphs, charts, etc.)
- Proposing or recommending solutions to a business problem
- Helping with general customer service duties
- Assisting in responding to inquiries, leads, and referrals



78%
indicate that ensuring
the internship is a
learning experience
is the supervisor's
responsibility

Managing Interns

WORK MANAGEMENT (cont.)

Additionally, below is a table which details the types of projects and assignments you may consider providing to interns within certain functional areas.

| Functional Area | Types of Projects/Assignments |
|--------------------------|---|
| Accounting/Finance | Accounting, accounts payable/receivable, financial analysis and reporting, billing, auditing, tax, financial modeling |
| Engineering | Mechanical, design/drafting, industrial, computer software, application, electrical, systems, chemical, bio-engineering, researching projects, inspection, drawing checks |
| Human Resources | Administration, recruiting, training and development, benefits, employee relations program coordination, performance management, wellness, employee recognition |
| Information Technology | Help desk support, network administration or maintenance, application development, programming, database development or management, web development, software development, business analysis/intelligence, technical writing |
| Marketing/Communications | Social networking, market research, promotional materials, program and event coordination, mass communication/ mailing lists, web content or administration, graphic design, reporting/editing, public relations/press releases, advertising, media design of video or audio |
| Non-Profit | Program development, fundraising and development, counseling/social work, managing groups, project work |
| Research | Data collection and analysis, data cleaning, economic or policy research, quality control and testing, social science research, primary and secondary market research, business assessment and recommendations, quality control and testing, laboratory research (scientific) |
| Sales/Customer Service | Administrative/clerical work, customer database administration, customer service, account management, customer intake, inside sales, customer intake |

Performance Management

Managing the performance of interns should be similar to the approach your organization takes with its employees, however, may require being a little more “hands-on.” Interns typically require more feedback and coaching than other employees, given that they are new to the workforce and many of their responsibilities and tasks are new.

Interns generally need to be more directly managed than other employees, so be sure to schedule regular check-ins with interns to review assignments and project work. Use this time to provide regular feedback and coaching, which are important in managing and developing interns. The widespread majority of organizations provide regular feedback and coaching to interns. Usually supervisors provide this feedback.

Additionally, the majority of organizations evaluate interns’ performance, particularly in terms of work quality, ability/willingness to learn and develop, attitude, dependability, communication, professionalism, productivity/efficiency, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and problem solving. Evaluating performance can be helpful in gauging whether the intern should be offered full-time employment following their internship.



Ending the Internship

At the end of an internship, your organization will need to decide whether to offer employment to the intern or not. This decision should be based on positions you have open in the organization, the intern's performance, whether they are graduating, and their career interests. Even if your organization does not have a position available or if the intern is not graduating, if the intern was a good fit and performed well, you may keep them in mind for future opportunities in your organization.

Internships commonly result in full-time employment. Often, this is an ideal scenario for employers who can develop a talent pipeline from the internship. But, if the internship needs to culminate, be sure to conduct an exit interview at the end of the internship to gather their feedback about the internship and your organization. In addition, keep the relationship open for future staffing needs.

job offer?

