

Red Rocks Community College Criteria for Internships

The criteria below ensure that Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) students have access to high quality learning experiences that integrate academic knowledge and internship experiences in professional environments.

Definition of an Internships

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.

Criteria for an Internship

To ensure that an experience is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship, RRCC uses criteria developed by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#).

- 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.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a position description with desired qualifications and learning objectives.
 - A position description must be developed for each internship and the position description must clearly state the learning objectives that the intern will achieve during their internship as well as the required qualifications and job duties of the internship.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.

Final approval of all internship sites is at the discretion of Red Rocks Community College.

Types of Internships

Paid Internships

- Paid internships pay the intern an hourly wage and cover the intern's worker's compensation and liability similar to any other employees within the organization.
- **You may be required by law to pay your interns.** *Private sector employers* need to be familiar with the United States Department of Labor guidelines for legally offering unpaid internships, as most opportunities are actually employment that requires payment. This fact sheet produced by the United States Department of Labor provides general information to help determine whether interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#).
 - The most important criteria to determine if an internship in the private sector should be paid or unpaid is the employer cannot gain any immediate advantage from the activities of the intern.

Unpaid Internships

- Your organization can host an unpaid intern, but you must meet the criteria for an internship and provide a position description with learning objectives to the internship office.
 - If you are hosting an unpaid internship the student should be taking the internship for credit. When a student is taking an unpaid internship for credit RRCC covers the Worker's Compensation. *If you have an unpaid intern and they are not taking the internship for credit they would not be covered in the cause of an accident.*
- It is important to note that unpaid internship opportunities may not receive as many applications as those internships offering paid opportunities.

Stipend Internships

- Internship sites that are unable to pay an hourly wage but meet all the criteria of what defines an internship may consider providing the intern with a stipend. The stipend can be paid to the student at the conclusion of their internship and can be used by the student to offset the cost of receiving credit for the internship. A three credit internship costs the student approximately \$500 to register for.
- Similar to an unpaid internship the student receiving a stipend must be registered for internship credit through RRCC to ensure they are covered by Worker's Compensation.

All Internships Must Meet the Following Criteria:

- Unpaid internship cannot exceed 20 hours per week
- The company/organization must have a tax I.D. number, and preferably be located in commercial space.
- Businesses based out of a home will be considered on an individual basis. When possible, students may intern remotely, communicate regularly with the supervisor by phone or email and meet weekly with the supervisor in a public location.
- *Worker's Compensation:* All interns are required to be covered by Workers Compensation. Employers provide Workers Compensation for paid interns. RRCC provides Workers Compensation for unpaid interns enrolled for internship credit.
- *Liability:* Employers are required to provide liability insurance for all paid interns. Employers who hire interns in the skilled trades (e.g. Water Quality, Solar, HVAC) are required to provide liability coverage for paid and unpaid interns.

Examples of experiences that DO NOT qualify as internships:

- Positions that displace a regular employee.
- Positions that are 100 percent commission-based.
- Positions where interns are expected to perform tasks that the staff does not have the skills to perform (e.g. create a website or database).
- Positions that require door-to-door canvassing, cold-calling, telemarketing, or petition gathering as the primary activity.
- "Independent contractor" relationships that require the intern to set up his/her own business to sell products, services and/or recruiting other individuals to set up their own business.
- Positions in which the student is required to pay the employer for any part of the experience (e.g., fees for training, placement, equipment needed for internship, etc).