

Internship Process and Procedures Manual

**Travis County Commissioners Court Guide for
Employing Interns**

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OVERVIEW – EMPLOYING STUDENT INTERNS

This Manual is intended to be a resource for mentors, managers, supervisors, and human resource professionals throughout Travis County. It provides guidance in hiring and utilizing interns.

It is the responsibility of each County Department to ensure the appropriate use and approval of all student interns. To ensure appropriate designation of its workforce, the County establishes procedures and guidelines for the administration of paid and unpaid interns. In partnership with executive agencies, Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) may perform periodic audits of the use of interns to ensure compliance. The principles and procedures set forth in this manual are subject to change and may be modified, suspended, or revoked without notice in whole or in part.

All forms referenced in the manual may be found in the FORMS section of this manual.

Mission Strategy

The Travis County Student Internship Program is focused on investing in our organization's success, in hopes to identify future colleagues and leaders on an academic career path to local government through continuous community outreach and inclusive of all interested and qualified individuals.

DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

Student Internships

Student Internships are a defined form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Student Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, while giving employers the opportunity to manage, guide, and evaluate talent. In addition, a student internship is typically a semester (fall, spring, summer) in duration, may or may not carry credit, and may be paid or unpaid consistent with Department of Labor criteria.

Fair Labor Standards Act

In order to understand whether an intern should be paid or unpaid, it is important to understand the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Background

FLSA defines the term "employ" very broadly as including to "suffer or permit to work." Covered and non-exempt individuals who are "suffered or permitted" to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.

The FLSA makes a special exception under certain circumstances for individuals who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency and for individuals who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for private non-profit food banks. Wage and Hour Division (WHD) also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships in the public sector and for non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Travis County is an equal opportunity employer and adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination against any person based on race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability. Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with disabilities during the application process and/or at the time of employment. Requests for accommodation should be made to the Human Resources Department as early as possible in the application/employment process.

STUDENT INTERNS

Purpose

Student interns are involved in education or training programs designed to provide students with professional experience in the furtherance of their education and training and are academically oriented for their benefit. Internships assist students in reaching their educational goals by giving them the opportunity to augment classroom instruction with exposure to a real world employment setting.

The County may employ student interns to perform work, which will **NOT**:

1. Result in the displacement of regular employees or impair existing contracts for service;
2. Fill a vacant position;
3. Be primarily clerical in nature;
4. Be used to fill a vacancy due to medical/personal leave.

Student Internship Work must:

1. Bear a relationship to their formal academic program or career interest;
2. Be set for a fixed duration of time (one semester in length);
3. Not be meant to fill an open, full-time position. Interns must still apply for available open positions after the internship is concluded.

Qualifications for Student Interns

To qualify as a student intern, students must meet one of the three following enrollment criteria:

- The student is currently enrolled in High School, an undergraduate program or graduate program as a student as defined by the school, organization, or institution
 - *Student must provide proof of enrollment upon hire.*
 - *Proof of continued enrollment must be provided each semester.*
 - *During the summer, the student must provide proof of continued enrollment in the fall semester.*
- For all minor interns 16/17 years of age a Parental Consent Form will be required prior to the start or engagement of any Travis County internship assignments

The Test for Unpaid Student Interns

The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following six criteria must be applied when making the decision for an unpaid student internship:

1. The student internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The student internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The student intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the

intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;

5. The student intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the student intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If **ALL** of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the Act's minimum wage and overtime provisions **do not** apply to the student intern

Procedure for Requesting a Student Internship

Interested hiring managers/mentors must complete the Intern Request Form and return this to your HR Liaison to ensure that the information will be relayed to the HRMD Recruiting team and (if paid) PBO.

If requesting an unpaid internship, the Test for Unpaid Internship form must be completed and submitted to HRMD with the Intern Request form.

The procedure for requesting a **STUDENT INTERN**:

- i. **Define the Work Program.** Prior to requesting an intern, the hiring manager must define a work program and create a project description using the Internship Request Form and Learning Objectives Worksheet. The project description should specify criteria for successful candidates, including qualifications, the length and duration of the assignment, measure of success, the purpose of the project, desired outcomes and objectives for the intern designed to provide meaningful experience applicable to the student's field of study or career interest.
- ii. **HRMD and PBO Review of Request.** PBO must confirm that funding is available and approve for each internship. HRMD will review the department's approved request to ensure compliance policies with applicable labor laws.
 - Requesting a paid intern should mirror the traditional job requisition process, and all interns (paid or unpaid) must be entered into SAP.
 - HRMD will post the position in NeoGov and external recruiting sites.
- iii. **Identify the Candidate.** The hiring manager/mentor will interview applicants consistent with equal employment criteria to select an appropriate candidate(s) for the internship. As semesters are short in duration, the recruitment process may be condensed compared to the normal hiring process.
- iv. **Onboarding.** Interns will complete the same New Hire Orientation that regular Travis County employees are assigned. It is important that every intern (paid or unpaid) attend this session.

Compensation

Student intern compensation, if applicable, may be determined by their academic program or by the specific work, which will be performed within your department. It is vital that we work to ensure fair and equal compensation standards for equal work among all interns and departments.

Student Intern Compensation			
Intern Classification	Academic Status	Pay Grade	Compensation
Student Intern 1	High School, Undergraduate, Community College, Graduate	NCF01	Unpaid
Student Intern 2	High School, Community College	NCF02	\$16.00 - \$20.79
Student Intern 3	Undergraduate Student	NCF01	\$20.80 - \$23.99
Student Intern 4	Graduate Student	NCF01	\$24.00 - \$26.00

The hiring manager will ultimately determine and justify a recommendation for compensation, and PBO/HRMD must approve recommendations to ensure that the funding is available and the wage is fair. Approval for compensation level will follow departmental standard practices. HRMD will work with individual departments to ensure that the County maintains consistency related to both educational level and professional field (i.e. while graduate students in IT fields may be paid more than graduate students in other fields in order to remain competitive with other potential employers, compensation will remain comparable for all graduate student interns in IT fields).

Paid student interns are considered hourly employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regardless of their classification and are, therefore, overtime eligible. It will be up to the individual departments to determine if an intern will be allowed to work overtime.

Employment Status and Duration

By definition, student internship assignments are temporary in nature and as such student interns may not be eligible for benefits (medical, paid time off, leave accruals, retirement contributions, etc.). As such, they must be classified as Interns (not as temporary employees) in our system of record.

The hiring authority or the student intern may terminate the employment relationship without cause or prior notice.

Unless required by the academic program, all paid internships must be **one semester in duration** and it is advised hours should be limited to 12-20 hours per week. If you would like to invite a paid intern to come back for a second semester, you (or your HR Liaison) must complete a Personnel Action Form (PAF) and discontinue their first semester service before reinstating them for a second semester.

Please Note: *If a paid intern is employed for more than 6-months, they may become eligible to participate in the Travis County retirement system benefits. After 9-months of 30+ hours a week on a rolling calendar year, paid interns must be provided with benefits.*

Making the Offer

All paid and unpaid student interns must be provided with an official offer letter outlining all stipulations regarding pay, hours, and duties performed. It is up to the hiring manager to ensure that all necessary paperwork and office logistics are completed before the intern's first day.

Monitoring

The hiring manager should regularly review the duties performed by student interns to ensure that they are engaged in meeting their learning objectives. A restriction on the number of hours a paid intern may work in a given week is at the discretion of the hiring department in conjunction with the student's availability and academic requirements and recommended not to exceed 20 hours per week. The total hours worked may be limited by HRMD to ensure the Travis County remains in compliance with relevant rules and regulations regarding pay and benefits. HRMD will monitor the number, duration and application of student internships throughout Travis County for policy, procedural and labor law compliance.

Evaluating the Student Intern

HRMD encourages the evaluation of interns to include attendance, work performance, work quality and workplace conduct. This is an opportunity to help with student develop, grow and learn what he or she has done well and where he or she can improve. We encourage you to document your evaluation through methods provided by the school or university or by using the Internship Evaluation Form either manually or sent via online survey.

Ending the Internship

Student Internships must have a start and end date, based on ACA (Affordable Care Act) requirements. The County may be at risk when an intern is employed for a long duration of time without a revised written agreement. It is critical for the department to notify HRMD if they wish to extend the length of the internship or if an offer for full-time, part-time, temporary or regular paid employment is extended.

The duration of a paid or unpaid student internship is typically one semester (fall, spring, or summer) in length as determined by the student's academic calendar. The internship may be extended or ended at any time and for any reason, at the discretion of the manager, with review and approval by HRMD, and should not exceed two semesters in length.

Upon the completion of the student internship, all interns are asked to complete an exit survey. This will help us evaluate the program and ensure that each department is providing an acceptable learning experience for their student interns.

Affected Departments and Elected/Appointed Officials Opt-In

This manual applies to employees who work for the Commissioners Court and those who work for Elected and Appointed Officials who have opted into these procedures.

Unless specifically excluded, this chapter applies to all employees in departments under the direction of the Commissioners Court. It does not apply to the employees of any Elected Officials unless that Elected Official expressly adopts it in writing. A list of those Elected Officials who have adopted it may be obtained at HRMD.

The County reserves the right to change any provision of this procedures manual unilaterally at any meeting

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of the Commissioners Court without specific notice of the potential change to any employee.

No employee, supervisor, official, or representative of the County has any authority to change any portion of this procedures manual without the express and specific authorization of the Commissioners Court.

Online Internship Forms

Printable forms are available at the end of this packet. Online forms are preferred. Completed forms are sent to HRMD.

Department forms:

- Student Internship Request Form [Student Intern Request Form](#)
- Learning Objectives Worksheet [Learning Objectives Worksheet](#)
- Test for Unpaid Student Interns [Test for Unpaid Student Interns](#)
- Student Internship Performance Evaluation [Student Internship Performance Evaluation](#)

Intern Forms:

- Student Internship Exit Survey [Student Internship Exit Survey](#)

TRAVIS COUNTY STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STUDENT INTERN REQUEST FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> External Posting Required		<input type="checkbox"/> External Posting Not Required	
Student Intern Compensation (circle requested classification)			
Intern Classification	Academic Status	Pay Grade	Compensation
Student Intern 1	High School, Community College, Undergraduate, Graduate	NCF01	Unpaid
Student Intern 2	High School, Community College	NCF01	\$16.00 - \$20.79
Student Intern 3	Undergraduate Student	NCF01	\$20.80 - \$23.99
Student Intern 4	Graduate Student	NCF01	\$24.00 - \$26.00

Do you need assistance with recruiting an Intern?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Department/Division Name:	
Name of person submitting Intern Request Form:	
Has PBO confirmed funding?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Intern Supervisor Name:	
Title:	
Email / Phone:	
Number of Interns Requested:	

Brief Department Description:	
Duties to be Performed/Project(s) to complete: (Please be specific)	
Qualifications: (Focus on Knowledge, Skills and Abilities, e.g. computer skills, communication/language skills, research skills, writing ability)	
Preferred Work Days:	
Preferred Work Hours:	
Preferred School(s) to recruit Interns (if applicable):	
Worksite Location:	
Semester Preferred Start Date:	Start Date: End Date:
Do you currently have an Intern(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Intern(s) end date: _

If you have questions, please contact Michelle Perez 512-854-5283. Please email the completed document to: michelle.perez@traviscountytexas.gov.

Learning Objectives Worksheet

Name: _____

School: _____

Education Track or Program of Study: _____

Learning Objectives of Internship Associated with Program of Study:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Personal Learning Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Travis County Internship Offer Letter Template

DATE

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

Dear NAME:

Congratulation and welcome to Travis County division or section! This letter confirms your appointment to the position of Student Intern I, II, III or IV in the division at Travis County. This Internship is scheduled to take place from DATE- DATE.

This position reports to supervisor, title. Your primary work location will be in the division offices located at address.

This position's standard workweek is 12-20 hours and normal work hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. You may discuss your specific schedule with your supervisor. You are scheduled to attend a New Intern Orientation at time on date. Your supervisor will arrange additional, position-specific training for you.

In this position you will summary of duties.

This internship is unpaid -OR- You will be compensated at \$ /Hour. You will be paid on a semi-monthly basis, with the first pay date for the new position occurring on date. This position is an hourly position governed by the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and/or relevant state statute and is eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time accrual. However, you must receive prior approval from your supervisor before working any necessary overtime hours to meet your position responsibilities.

You are required to comply with federal government work authorization requirements. Prior to starting employment, you must present document(s) that identify both your identity and ability to work in the United States.

Student internships are programs that provide students with exposure to workplace activities, which are related to the intern's field of study. As a student intern, you may be considered an at-will temporary employee and either you or the County may terminate your employment at any time with or without cause or prior notice.

Travis County Internship Offer Letter – Pg 2

The following items are important for you to know:

- *As a student intern, you are not eligible for Travis County benefits.*
- *You may be separated from your internship prior to the completion of the assignment date without cause or prior notice.*
- *You are not represented by a labor union.*
- *To be eligible for hire as an employee of Travis County, you must first apply online and compete in a formal selection process.*

To qualify as a Student Intern, the following criteria must be met:

- *You must be enrolled as a student in an accredited school, organization or institution.*
- *You must provide proof of enrollment.*
- *You must provide proof of continued full-time enrollment to qualify for a summer internship (proof of enrollment in the fall term will qualify).*

Please understand that the provisions of this letter do not constitute an expressed or implied contract but rather a statement of a number of matters important to you. If you have any questions about your position or any information in this letter, please contact Travis County Human Resources at (512) 854-9165.

Congratulations on your appointment, and again, welcome to **division!**

Sincerely,

HIRING AUTHORITY

CC: HRMD

Parental Consent Form

Required for all minor interns 16/17 years old

Your son/daughter has been accepted as a student intern at Travis County. An internship is a work-based learning experience in a field related to a student's academic and career objectives. The internship is traditionally unpaid and is considered an extension of the student's regular school program. Work-based activities with an assigned mentor at participating locations may include special projects and a variety of tasks related to different positions in a career field.

Permission to Participate as a Student Intern

_____ may participate in a student internship with Travis County.

Medical Authorization and Insurance Information

Should it be necessary for my son/daughter to have medical treatment while participating as a student intern, I hereby give the intern site personnel permission to use their best judgment in obtaining medical service for my child, and I give permission to the physician selected to render whatever medical treatment he/she deems necessary and appropriate.

Health Insurance Company:

Name of Policyholder:

Name of Parent/Guardian/Other Contact:

Daytime Phone for Parent/Guardian/Other Contact:

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Exit Survey – Student Interns

We hope you enjoyed your learning experience with Travis County. So that we may learn from your experiences with us, we would appreciate your completing this survey. Survey responses provide valuable information that the County can do to improve the learning experience of interns in the future, and your information will be kept completely confidential. *Your honest responses are appreciated!*

Name: _____ **Supervisor/Mentor:** _____

Department/Division: _____ **Employee Id:** _____

Area of Study/Major: _____ **Semester:** _____

School Level (circle one): High School, Undergraduate, Graduate

Were the following reasons important in your decision to student intern with Travis County	Yes	Somewhat	No
Desire to work in the public/government sector after graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travis County’s reputation as a good learning environment for interns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School credit or meeting an educational requirement from your student internship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe your internship experience at Travis County including projects on which you participated and a description of typical daily activities performed

Please describe how this internship complimented your educational learning objectives

Please tell us about your experiences with your supervisor/mentor	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My supervisor/mentor was accessible and approachable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor/mentor exhibited genuine interest in my development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor/mentor provided learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us about your experience at Travis County	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I was able to develop skills related to my area of educational study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood the learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

objectives of my internship				
I received feedback on progress toward meeting my learning objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses are valued and appreciated.

**Please send completed surveys to your HRMD representative Ext. 4-4824 or Ext. 4-1137
 700 Lavaca Street, Suite 420, Austin TX 78701 careers@Traviscountytx.gov.**

Student Internship Performance Evaluation

HRMD encourages you to evaluate your student interns each semester as a way to enhance their learning and professional growth. Please feel free to use this as a template as you share insights and helpful feedback with your intern during or after their student internship.

Student Intern Name: _____

Department Name: _____

Supervisor: _____

Performance Evaluation	Needs Development	Meets	Exceeds	Comments
Attendance (punctuality)				
Productivity (volume, promptness)				
Quality of Work (accuracy, completeness, neatness)				
Initiative (self-starter, resourceful)				
Dependability (thorough, organized)				
Attitude (enthusiasm, curiosity, desire to learn)				
Interpersonal Relations (cooperative, courteous, friendly)				
Ability to Learn (Comprehension of New Concepts)				

Use of Academic Training (Applies Education to Practical Usage)				
Communication Skills (Written and Verbal Expression)				
Judgement (Decision Making)				
Overall Performance				

Recruitment Resources for Travis County Departments

As an equal opportunity employer, it is vital that we recruit from a variety of Universities and educational settings in the Central Texas area. These are just a few of the many local colleges and universities where we can post internships and jobs free of charge.

Austin Career Institute

Austin Community College

Concordia University

Huston-Tillotson University

Southwestern University

St. Edward’s University

Texas A&M University

Texas State University

The University of Texas at Austin

- HireUTexas/Hire-A-Longhorn
- LBJ School of Public Affairs
- McCombs School of Business
- School of Law
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Communication
- School of Social Work

This list is just a start, and many of these schools offer specific skills training which is in high demand throughout Travis County.

HRMD Recruitment has contacts and accounts with each posting location and is a centralized resource to finding the most qualified candidates for your needs.

We also attend recruitment fairs on behalf of the County at many local colleges, along with the Texas Workforce Commission/Workforce Solutions and other local events with an emphasis on vocational training and workplace readiness. Posting your positions through HRMD allows the recruitment team to source candidates and collect applications on your behalf at these locations and many more.

For questions or support, contact us anytime at careers@traviscountytexas.gov