

Internship Definition:

An internship is a form of experiential education that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom, with practical application and skill development in a professional, work setting. Students may earn academic credit, as determined by an educational institution, or there is another connection to a degree-granting educational institution.

Key Components of an Internship Include:

- Established duration – typically an academic term or summer, though the end date may be extended;
- Hours – may be part- or full-time; during an academic term more common to be part-time if student is taking other courses; in the summer, it is common for internships to be full-time;
- Structure – incorporates a dedicated staff, resources, and projects to guide the experience;
- Learning – organization provides opportunities and experiences for the intern that are not directly related to tasks or projects associated with the position, which aid the student’s career interests;
- Reflection – situations are created and designed which allow the intern to review and reflect;
- Evaluation – student is offered an evaluation at mid and end points of the internship;
- Credit – determined by the educational institution where the student is enrolled;
- Compensation – may be paid or unpaid; if unpaid, employers are directed to follow guidelines for unpaid internships as outlined by state, regional, or national guidelines. (See the [CEIA Position on Unpaid Internships](#) for more information).

CEIA’s Role:

CEIA aims to provide resources and guidance for educators and employers, engaging in internship programs across the world. This organization actively supports participation in internship experiences that provide dedicated supervision and mentoring from individuals who are experts in the student’s major or career goals, provides responsibilities that enable the student to connect classroom to industry, and offers opportunities for networking and reflection. These experiences provide value to all parties, allowing for purposeful and effective learning outcomes that may enhance or advance the student’s career.

CEIA recognizes that there are not universal procedures within higher education for approving, documenting or offering credit for internships, so it is suggested that employers and educators discuss nuances and particulars unique to each circumstance. Those students seeking to earn credit will need to review their institution’s policies to determine eligibility and work with employers accordingly.