



AGENCY TOOLKIT



2025

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Thank you for considering hiring an intern and for sharing your knowledge and experience with our next generation of employees. Regardless of how many interns you plan to hire and train, careful planning and attention to detail will help set the stage for a successful experience. This toolkit is assembled from the best practices of several state offices, partners, and organizations. This guide is intended to be a resource to your office and not a replacement for your current practice. Please follow your office's standard operating procedures and consult with your Human Resources (HR) department when applicable.

PROGRAM MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS

MISSION: To provide professional development for the next generation's workforce, recruit top talent and build strong relationships within the community. Assist and inspire students as they prepare for their future roles in a diverse and dynamic society.

VISION: A centralized, sustainable program that will allow students to easily identify and apply for internship opportunities across the state, expose them to the value of public service and provide structured support for agencies seeking interns.

THE GOALS OF THE STATEWIDE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM INCLUDE:

1. Provide an enterprise level portal where students can identify and apply for internship positions with different agencies according to their interests.
2. Provide meaningful work within the interns' areas of interest and expose interns to a variety of professional experiences.
3. Create a program that is inclusive and accessible.
4. Provide support, guidelines, tools, and toolkit resources to agencies seeking/hiring interns.
5. Create a structured and sustainable program, embedded in the Department of Administration, Office of Personnel Services.
6. Create opportunities for interns to move into full time positions; establish pathways for quality candidates.

ABOUT INTERNSHIPS

A TYPICAL INTERNSHIP:

- Includes developing intentional learning objective goals that are structured into the experience and supervised by a professional with relevant and related background in the field
- Promotes academic, career and/or personal development
- Includes learning objectives, observation, reflection, and evaluation
- Balances the intern's learning goals with the organization's needs while ultimately maintaining education as the priority
- Involves industry-related and soft skill development
- Should be carefully monitored and may be evaluated for academic credit
- Is adequately supervised in a safe environment with the necessary tools to perform the learning goals agreed upon for the duration of the internship

AN INTERNSHIP IS NOT:

- Free help
- Meant to replace an employee
- Busy work (filing, covering phone, errands, etc.)

TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS:

- **High School Students:** High school students are interested in developing interpersonal and professional skills. These skills will allow them to discover areas in which they excel and could create the potential for them to remain with the organization through college.
- **Undergraduate Students:** Undergraduate interns could be beneficial for your organization because of their experience in and out of the classroom. They have an opportunity to apply things they've learned in their undergraduate curricula into the workplace. Many students participate in internships to explore career interests and to develop their professional skills. Ideally an internship for a college student is an opportunity to network, enhance industry-related and soft skills, leading from education to employment. An undergraduate intern is the traditional internship candidate.
- **Graduate / Professional Students:** Graduate or post-graduate level students specialize in a specific field of study. They can add value to a high-level project. Sometimes these projects are proposed by the graduate so they can research, analyze and solve a specific issue. (This is sometimes referred to as a Fellowship or a Fellow.)
- **Veteran, Career Changer or Post-Retirement:** By transitioning to a new industry, they may be hoping to expand a professional network in this new field and incorporate their professional skills into your organization. They bring a wide set of experience, skills, and talents.

It is important to communicate the typical duties that the intern will perform and to identify specific projects that are educationally beneficial and advance the goals and objectives of your office. Many interns will apply for course credit as a part of their degree program; the work assigned should be tied to the student's educational and/or career goals.

BENEFITS OF AN INTERNSHIP TO YOUR STATE OFFICE

- Provides a cost-effective means to work with and develop talent for a potential employee
- Offers a new perspective for projects or processes that need updated
- Presents opportunities to effectively work together with diverse populations
- Creates positive marketing of state careers and training opportunities
- Builds relationships with collegiate partners, community agencies and organizations with the same passion and mission for workforce development

HIRING THE INTERN

BUILDING AN INTERN POSITION

Whether this is your first time creating an internship position, or if you train interns regularly, these resources provide some guidance to help either way. These best practices have been suggested from state offices to help with the comfort level of hiring an intern. Take a moment to reflect on the big picture: What do you want this intern to accomplish? Think through the specific tasks that will be assigned to an intern. What will this person be doing on a daily basis? These position or project duties will define their time in the internship. In the collegiate world, you may hear it called “learning objectives” when an intern would like to complete the internship for course credit. A very important part of your plan should be the assignment of a supervisor and mentor — that is, selecting someone from the intern's department who will be in charge of leading the intern. This person should be selected because he or she likes to mentor and has the resources to do it. (View the [Mentor guide](#) for more information related to roles.)

In order to host a successful internship, ensure you have projects and duties in mind for the intern to complete. Check out this helpful list of [examples of project ideas](#).

Once you set your goals, think critically about what your specific resources and needs are regarding an internship experience:

- Do you want someone for a specific project?
- Do you want to give the intern an overview of everything your state office does?
- What are the skills that someone would need to be an intern in your office?
- How much will you pay the intern? Wages vary widely from field to field and OPS has given suggestions below. Make sure that yours are competitive to attract candidates.
- What sort of academic background or experience are you looking for in an intern?
- Do you have adequate work for an intern?
- Will you help with parking arrangements?
- Who will have the primary supervisory responsibility? Will this person be a mentor in addition to supervising? What will the intern be doing? Be as specific as possible. Interns need structure so they don't become lost, confused or bored.

- Do you want to plan a program beyond the work you give to your interns? Will there be special training programs, performance reviews, lunches with executives, social events? Keep in mind that your interns are walking advertisements for your office or department. If they have a good experience working for you, they're likely to tell their friends.
- Where is the location you will need the intern to work?
 - Each agency will determine the location of intern positions; interns do not have to work in Topeka or Shawnee County.
 - The majority of intern positions are Unclassified and **Job Code: 033500**
 - [Steps to request an unclassified position](#)
 - Intern positions must not exceed 999 hours per year
 - Intern positions are temporary and do not count as an FTE

PAY GUIDANCE

Paid internships have become the industry standard and compensation is expected by students, particularly in this challenging workforce time. Best practice wage is preferably a minimum of \$15.03/hour, though some state offices pay \$18.00/hour for specialized talent (e.g. engineering, law and/or IT students). Compensation should be determined by your office's budget and the project complexity. Wages for internships should be determined before the intern is hired and are not typically negotiated.

Participant	Suggested Hourly Wage
High School:	\$15.03 hour
Undergrad / All Majors:	\$15.03 -18.00/hour
Science / Lab Student:	\$16.00 -22.00/hour
Law Student:	\$16.00 -22.00/hour
Engineering:	\$18.00 -22.00/hour
IT Student:	\$18.00 -22.00/hour

Recommended by the Department of Administration, Office of Personnel Services based on Spring/ 2025 statewide wages for Job Code 033500 (Intern classification)

COURSE CREDIT

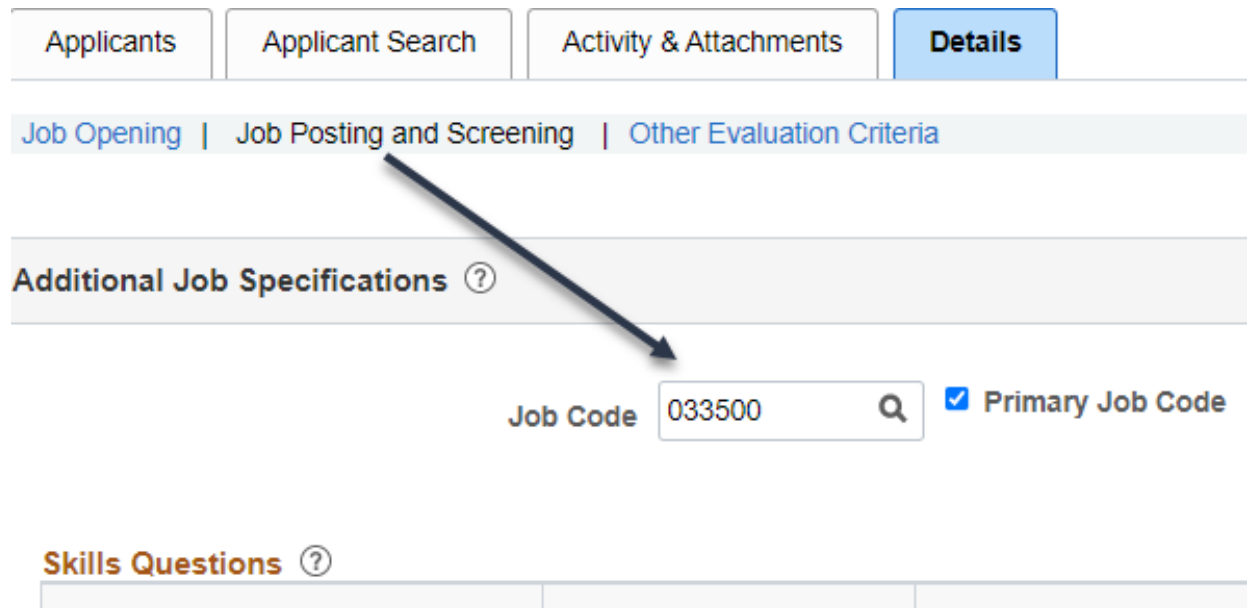
As a provider of a for-credit internship you may be asked to answer specific questions, outline duties or oversee other responsibilities for the student to qualify for college credit hours. The student will take the lead and may request the following:

1. Description of the expectations of your organization, specific responsibilities, learning objectives/ position duties, work schedule and contact information for the designated on-site supervisor.
2. Information outlining the duration of the internship, number of hours and responsibilities in a letter signed by the supervisor. This letter is used to gain academic approval and credit for the internship.
3. Weekly written evaluations to review performance and provide feedback.
4. Formal evaluation of the quality of the intern's job performance at the end of the semester. Evaluation forms may or may not be provided to the supervisor and will likely need to be completed by a specific date.

ADDING THE POSITION TO SHARP

After the position has been approved to fill, you may add the position to SHARP if you choose. The benefit of posting on SHARP is the increased visibility of your opening to be found on the Internship page. For the position to populate in the Intern section, the **Job Code: 033500** must be used for data tracking. Please consult with your HR department and, if a job description or ad text is needed, the Statewide Internship Program will supply additional resources customized to your needs.

A look at how the job code will be used:



The screenshot displays a web interface for managing job postings. At the top, there are four tabs: 'Applicants', 'Applicant Search', 'Activity & Attachments', and 'Details'. The 'Details' tab is currently selected and highlighted in blue. Below the tabs, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Job Opening | Job Posting and Screening | Other Evaluation Criteria'. A dark arrow points from the 'Job Posting and Screening' link to the 'Additional Job Specifications' section. This section contains a 'Job Code' input field with the value '033500' and a search icon. To the right of the input field is a checked checkbox labeled 'Primary Job Code'. Below this section is a 'Skills Questions' section with a question mark icon, followed by a table with three empty columns.

Next, on the Job Posting page, please select the “Internship Program Website – Job Summary” template. This will ensure the text aligns properly on the Intern page. It will preview the first 255 characters. The Intern page will update once a day, at midnight. Changes made to the job order will appear on the regular refresh on Careers.

Posting Information

Job Postings ?

*Posting Title

Job Descriptions ? 1 of 1

*Description Type: Job Posting → Template: Internship Program Website - Job Summary

*Visibility:

[Required. Replace this text and brackets with a short description of your internship. The first 255 characters of the job posting will appear on the job search page with the job]

Important Recruitment Information for this vacancy

- Job Posting closes:

RECRUITMENT

Finding someone to intern for your office or department may not be as difficult as it sounds, if you know the right place to look and have a network of contacts. The Statewide Internship Program in the Department of Administration, Office of Personnel Services is available to answer any questions and support your recruitment efforts. Working with the Statewide Internship Program is optional, especially if your office has a comfort level of recruiting and has established connections that work well. The extensive network of connections the Statewide Internship Program offers may be helpful if a recruitment plan is not in place. Some offices may choose to appoint an intern for their project by finding their own intern and bypassing the recruitment process; this is also acceptable.

APPLICATION CLOSE

After the application has formally closed, it is time to review applications and see which applicants most closely align with the position requirements. The HR department will forward the applications for you to review; follow their guidelines for office procedures as you schedule to meet potential candidates.

INTERVIEW

Agencies may interview at the office location and offer a tour to the intern when they come for the interview. Virtual interviews have been very effective as well. Interviewing an intern looks different than a full-time employee. Some offices may interview with two or more candidates. However you choose to structure your interviews, having the questions and format prepared in advance is strongly advised. Most intern interviews are around 30 minutes long.

Here is a [sample of an interview form with procedure steps](#) if one is not adopted in your office. The scoring can be deleted from the copy if you do not wish to utilize it as well as the extra lines for additional questions. Typically, an intern interview is 4 or 5 questions but there is no set limit to the questions you may ask. The Office of Personnel Services has a valuable resource available if you seek additional questions to ask during the interview and it is organized by skill category for convenience and tailoring to your needs: [Behavior Interview Question Generator](#).

The **STAR (Situation Task Action Result)** method is a very common interview technique for behavioral and situational interviews. Encouraging the candidate to use the **STAR** method when they respond to your questions will help the communication stay on task and focused. As you record your notes on the interview form, look for these key points as well.

CHECKING REFERENCES

By checking references on a final applicant, you may hear more details regarding the applicant's accomplishments that were not communicated on a résumé or in an interview. Why is this? Most people do not like to brag on themselves; however, a reference check may reveal this for you. References are typically professional contacts, meaning someone who can confirm that the applicant shows up, does a great job and would be a valuable asset to your office. Some agencies choose to verify at least two contacts, some require three. The online application requests the name and contacts of references and will be viewable when you receive the applications. A [Reference Check template](#) is available for your use.

OFFER STAGE

- After two or three references have been made for whom you wish to hire, quickly make a verbal offer to the candidate. Offers may be conditional on testing or screening; please follow your office's standard operating procedure for the onboarding process.
- Your state office creates and forwards a formal written offer letter to the intern and typically emails for time sensitivity. An offer letter will contain the employment details agreed upon in the verbal offer. A well-written offer letter will include start date and pay. A standard practice is adding first day details to the email, including dress code, parking, and any other details you believe will be helpful. Two versions have been added to this toolkit if you choose to use them: [Sample of 2 offer letters](#)
- Unclassified positions: Follow your office or department's standard operating procedure for requesting to fill a position. The next step will be to submit a request for a Governor's letter to officially appoint the candidate. Please do this as soon as you have secured the intern's acceptance of the offer.
- It is a best practice to reply to applicants who were not selected with a formal letter commonly called a "regret letter." The majority of these letters are sent through email or automatically emailed on the careers portal, though some offices may choose to send a letter via US mail. As long as the applicant learns they were not selected, this is respectful of the time they took to apply. If you are unsure of what to include in a letter of this capacity, two examples are provided, one who received an interview and not selected for an interview: [Sample of 2 regret letters](#)

FOLLOW UP COORDINATION PRIOR TO ONBOARDING

- Keep in contact (i.e. email, call, etc.) and keep the intern excited about your opportunity as they will most likely be receiving additional offers
 - *Optional, per agency discretion:* Forward [generic graphic](#) for the intern to display on their social media as this can be an important step for them
- Send swag to the intern early or reserve for onboarding
- Start thinking about the offboarding activities you would like to do and if any pre-ordering or planning needs to be arranged in time before the closing of the semester
- Determine if a final presentation will be required from the intern
- Ask the designated mentor to review the [guide](#), if appropriate for your office

INTERN'S FIRST DAY: ONBOARDING

The first day will help set the experience for success. By being prepared, you will help the interns feel more comfortable and welcome as they acclimate and become a part of your team.

A list of best practices from other offices has been developed if you are unsure what to do:

[Sample Onboarding Checklist for the Supervisor](#)

- New hire paperwork, (typically with HR)
- Supervisor meets with the intern
- Review position duties, expectations and the [Intern Guide](#)
- Topeka Kickoff event details, determined by semester and provided by the Statewide Internship Program

THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER

- At least weekly check in with supervisor to ensure goals are being met.
[Sample weekly evaluation tool](#)
- At least weekly check in with mentor (*if other than supervisor*)
- Professional development or onsite tours with statewide interns to learn more about state government. These should be arranged by your office as the opportunity presents and the Statewide Internship Program on the semester event calendar.
- Success quotes or experiences for social media can be submitted from the agency, supervisor or Intern to Internships@ks.gov As appropriate, please sign or request the intern to sign a [Media Release](#) before publishing.

CLOSING THE SEMESTER: OFFBOARDING

At the end of the semester or project completion, here are several best practices from state offices who have had a positive offboarding. [Offboarding Checklist](#)

- Interns may present their internship project to supervisor, mentor, career services and/or any stakeholders you wish to be a part of this
- Intern completes an [exit survey](#)
- At the intern's request, complete any documentation for course credit
- Recover equipment, badge, keys, etc. from the intern
- Some offices prepare a "going away" gift, party or luncheon of appreciation
- Some may present a personalized gift or [certificate of completion](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does an intern position count as an FTE?

- Internships are temporary positions and do not count toward FTE.
View [Unclassified Service - Executive Branch Position Reference Table](#) (pages 63 & 64)

How many hours can an intern work?

- Internships are temporary and may work up to 999 hours per year.

Do I need a position description?

- Some offices create a formal [State of Kansas position description](#) and some do not. The position description communicates to both the student and the office what is expected and the minimum requirements.

Is there a minimum age requirement?

- Agencies should follow the [Kansas Department of Labor's Wage and Hour](#) guidance.

Am I guaranteed an intern?

- The Department of Administration does not place students into internships and therefore cannot guarantee that a student will apply to your internship. However, effort is made to market your internship position(s) and inform students about opportunities. Paid internships typically receive a larger, more competitive candidate pool.

Can I have an unpaid intern?

- The priority of the statewide internship program's branding and community reputation is to offer a fair wage. One of the program goals is retention of talent for full-time career opportunities when the time is right. Please consult with your legal services team regarding having a volunteer intern. If you wish for the intern to participate in the professional development activities, connect with the Statewide Internship Program as an unpaid volunteer's information will not be recorded in SHARP.

RESOURCES

[Example of position duties/project ideas](#)
[Steps to request an unclassified position](#)
[Interview form with procedure steps](#)
[Behavior interview question generator](#)
[Sample reference check](#)
[Sample offer letters](#)
[Sample regret letters](#)
[Sample onboarding checklist for supervisors](#)
[Intern guide](#)
[Sample weekly evaluation tool](#)
[Media release](#)
[Exit survey](#)
[State of Kansas position description form](#)
[Kansas Department of Labor's Wage and Hour](#)
[USDOL Young Adult Employment Guide](#)
[Generic graphic for social media](#)
[Mentor guide](#)
[Sample certificate of completion](#)

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Internships.ks.gov

Internships@ks.gov