



**ST. JOHNS RIVER**  
STATE COLLEGE

# **Business Partner Internship Handbook**

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## **Business Partner Internship Handbook 2023-2024 Academic Year**

This handbook is a resource for business partners who are hosting St. Johns River State College interns.

Thank you for your interest, support, and partnership with SJR State by offering an internship opportunity for our students. As the Internship Site Supervisor, you will provide informative, and in some cases, transformational experiences and guidance that will help the student reach his or her career goals. [To help us to better assist you, please click here to register your internship opportunity.](#) This will enable us to place an intern who meets your position requirements.

With campuses in Palatka, Orange Park, and St. Augustine, SJR State can offer interns to business partners in the three-county area. Accessing top talent through an internship program benefits employers by reducing recruiting costs, evaluating potential employees, and bringing a fresh perspective to solving problems.

For additional information or clarification regarding internships, please contact Dr. Karen Balcanoff, Director of Student Success and Baccalaureate Admissions at [karenbalcanoff@sjrstate.edu](mailto:karenbalcanoff@sjrstate.edu)

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates classroom knowledge with career-related work experience to prepare students for the demands of the workplace. Students should pursue internships that provide learning goals, supervision, and evaluation where they can apply their classroom learning to “real-world” experiences, enhance their education, and add value to the employer. Internships should be related to the student's career goals and interns need to work with managers to understand their daily challenges.

An internship project is:

- Researching and planning a new project
- Creating a budget for a project
- Social media or website content creation
- Planning an event or meeting
- Accompanying employees to client, sales, or other outside meetings
- Generating a marketing plan or financial forecast

An internship is not:

- Answering phones as a receptionist
- Filing or busy work
- Serving in a restaurant instead of helping a manager
- A telemarketer

## **Terms and Definitions**

- **Experiential Learning:** Job shadowing, micro-internships, volunteering, part-time or full-time jobs in the student's area of study.
- **Internship, For Credit:** On-the-job work experience for college credit.
- **Internship, Not for Credit:** On-the-job work experience not for college credit.
- **Internship Instructor:** SJR faculty who is facilitating the internship program.
- **Internship Site:** The business where the intern will work.
- **Internship Site Supervisor:** The professional at the business to whom the intern reports.

## **Intern Responsibilities and Requirements**

Interns must be completing their last semester of their degree program to be eligible to complete an internship. Other responsibilities and requirements include:

- Students must have a 2.0 GPA.
- Students are responsible for inquiring and finding an internship.
- Students are required to complete any special requirements (i.e., background checks) prior to the internship.
- The Internship Site Supervisor cannot be a relative or current supervisor.
- Students cannot intern at a family-owned or -operated company.
- Internships can be paid or unpaid.

- Internship hours will count from the first day of class to the last day of class.
- Internship hours will not count until the required paperwork is signed and submitted to the Internship Instructor.
- Students must have their Internship Site Supervisor complete evaluations and upload them to the Capstone course.
- Students must complete a time sheet every Friday and upload them to the Capstone course.
- All interns must present an in-person presentation at the end of the semester.
- Students will receive three credits toward their degree.

Working as an intern involves discipline, responsibility, and commitment to get the most from the internship experience. It is important that internship goals are realistic, and the internship is appropriate for the student. Interns need to work with a manager and perform management duties.

### **Employer Benefits for Hosting Interns**

Employer benefits include:

- Part-time employment, without the traditional employee-employer obligations.
- A relatively risk-free recruitment source for full-time employees in the event the employer determines that the skills and abilities of the intern match his or her long-term employment needs.
- Increased productivity by allowing better utilization of professional personnel for more difficult and critical projects while assigning interns to semi-professional responsibilities.
- Reduce recruitment costs.
- Bring new and innovative ideas to the workplace.
- Serve as a mentor, coach, and educator to an aspiring young professional.
- Interact with college faculty and leaders.
- Extend and improve his or her relationship with the college community.

### **Employer Responsibilities**

The following are guidelines for the Internship Site Supervisor and the Internship Instructor to achieve a beneficial internship experience.

- Take time to get to know the intern so you can assist them as a supervisor.
- Ask about the intern's goals and about their needs and expectations.
- Share the employer's needs and expectations of the intern.
- Build a supportive professional relationship that cultivates open communication. This should take place at the work site only. Contact with interns outside of business hours is discouraged.
- Ensure that the internship is a meaningful learning experience for the intern by providing opportunities to apply information learned in the classroom.
- Provide training and all necessary resources for the position. Provide the intern with information that would be given to any new employee.
- Assure that the intern is engaged in real work, completing their assigned duties efficiently and effectively, and striving to improve performance.

- Meet on a regular basis to assist the intern in critical thinking and problem solving. Use of “coaching” skills is an important tool so the supervisor can help the intern gain independence.
- Evaluate the intern’s progress and provide feedback in a constructive manner.
- Provide opportunities for increased responsibility.
- Share any concerns, questions, changes, or issues to the Internship Instructor.

The employer plays a significant role in the internship. Although the employer receives benefits, they also assume responsibilities. Employer's responsibilities include:

- Complete the Memorandum of Understanding and signing required documents.
- Complete three evaluations during the internship period and return to the Internship Instructor for review and consideration as a part of the student’s grade.
- Provide work assignments in line with internship goals and objectives.
- Designate an Internship Site Supervisor who will work with the intern to achieve the student's goals and learning objectives.
- Abide by all provisions of state and federal government relative to wage and hour regulations or other conditions of employment.

The employer does not enter into any formal agreement with the college. The intern is not obligated to accept employment with the company upon graduation nor is the company obligated to offer employment to the intern. The intern is considered an employee and should be held responsible for performing the assigned duties in a satisfactory manner. All company regulations, conditions of health and safety, and legal requirements apply, and any company policy violations should be handled according to the employer’s policies and procedures. Any salary should be comparable to other employees of similar experience and seniority doing similar work. Scheduled job rotations and involvement in special projects are a desired means of acquiring experiences during limited employment.

## **Intern Placement**

A resume, cover letter, and in-person interview are recommended for the intern selection process. The selection process for interns should resemble your company’s process for hiring regular employees. The success of the internship depends on a good match between the company and the intern.

In the introductory meeting, the intern and Internship Site Supervisor should discuss expectations including goals, time commitment, and work hours. The Internship Site Supervisor and intern need to complete the Employer Internship Application, Partnership Agreement, and Confidentiality Agreement and the intern will upload the forms to the Capstone course.

All internship positions need to have a company job description. If there is not a job description, this would be a good project for the intern. Formswift.com has a template for a job description.

## Internship Contact Hours

Course Number	Credits	Hours of Internship (minimum)*	Classroom (Contact) Hours	Research Project	Intern Project
MAN 4900 (Intern)	3	180	9	No	Yes
MAN 4900 (Traditional)	3	0	45	Yes	No
GEB 2930 (Intern)	3	120	0	No	Yes
GEB 2930 (Traditional)	3	0	45	Yes	No

\*Bachelor intern hours average 12 hours per week for 15 weeks.

Associate intern hours average 8 hours per week for 15 weeks.

## Interns on the Job

The intern is considered an employee of the company. All company regulations, conditions of health and safety, and legal requirements will apply. Interns are expected to act in a professional manner. Unethical or undesirable conduct while interning may result in dismissal from the employer.

**Legal Safeguards and Confidentiality.** Depending on the setting, interns may be exposed to highly sensitive information. Interns must understand and adhere to the policies and legal liability guidelines related to business. Interns are responsible for knowing and complying with policies and guidelines that govern assignments at the internship site. If an intern witnesses questionable activities, they need to discuss it with their Internship Site Supervisor and Internship Instructor. An intern's knowledge of illegal or unethical conduct or actions can make them liable. Ignorance of the law does not presume innocence, nor is it a viable defense. Consequences include termination of the internship and an incomplete grade for the course. Depending on the severity of the issue, further legal actions may apply.

Interns must maintain confidentiality regarding the company, customers, clients, and associates, and disclose information only on a "need-to-know" basis for the purpose of completing internship assignments. Interns should not name individuals in any context outside internship communication or discuss clients or staff. Interns must sign a Confidentiality Agreement and upload the form to the Capstone course.

Internships are governed under the [U.S. Department of Labor](#), and the [State of Florida Department of Labor](#) guidelines apply. This assures the intern will be treated equitably and fairly under the law. Internships are "entry-level" positions. If the intern believes they are being taken advantage of unfairly, they need to discuss these concerns with their Internship Instructor.

**The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.** If interns are working in a healthcare environment, they must understand The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule which assures that an individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public's health and well-being. Strict compliance with all aspects of HIPAA is required of interns. [Click here for additional information about the HIPAA Privacy Rule.](#)

**Accommodations.** If an Intern needs disability accommodations, they need to notify the Internship Instructor. SJR State and the employer will collaborate to provide reasonable accommodations. SJR State may loan the student and employer necessary adaptive technology for the length of the internship.

**Safety.** The employer must maintain a safe work environment as required by law. Interns need to be familiar with and comply with site-specific safety standards and policies while working. Interns should work closely with their Internship Site Supervisor to ensure they are prepared to safely conduct any internship assignments that could pose a risk to their health, safety, or well-being. Interns should talk to the Internship Site Supervisor and their Internship Instructor if they have concerns. [Click here for information on safety and related workplace issues.](#)

**Harassment.** Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and should not be tolerated. Interns need to treat their coworkers, clients, and vendors politely and professionally. Unwelcome, uninvited behavior with sexual, racial, or ethnic overtones occurring in the workplace is unlawful harassment and it is illegal. Interns need to alert the Internship Site Supervisor and their Internship Instructor if they feel victimized by such behavior. [Click here for additional information about discrimination against an employee.](#)

### **Dismissal of an Intern**

Since the internship period is brief, dismissal is usually unnecessary. If needed, the employer should contact their attorney with any questions or for further information. Intern dismissal should only occur in cases of major misconduct (theft, assault, use of controlled substances in the workplace, etc.) or instances of significant willful violation of organization policy after prior instruction. Interns should be given a fair opportunity to become part of the organizational culture. The Internship Site Supervisor is responsible for giving clear, accurate direction, and following up with corrective feedback if the work is unsatisfactory. The Internship Site Supervisor recommending dismissal must clearly articulate in writing the reason(s) for dismissal.

### **Employer Evaluation of Internship**

After the internship concludes, the Internship Site Supervisor is asked to complete an Exit Survey evaluating the internship experience. Feedback is important to SJR State as we continue to grow our internship program and provide qualified interns to our business partners. Questions will include:

- Did the internship benefit the company or organization?
- What changes will improve the internship?
- Were sufficient resources available for the intern (space, equipment, compensation, and supervision)?
- Are there other areas of the company where internships could be developed?