

Apprenticeships vs. Internships vs. Mentorships

Apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship is a formal employment program where an individual attends training/classes for a particular trade or career path and may complete a certificate or degree. At points within the education tenure, the individual is employed by an organization that offers on the job training in that field of study. The Apprentice is allowed to do the work for that industry alongside a journey level employee. One major factor of an Apprentice is that they are able to do the work and job duties assigned for the role with supervision and guidance from the journey level employee.

The salary for that Apprentice is aligned with the industry and job classification for the entry level classification in that field. While the Apprentice is not paid the full wages of an entry level role, the salary scale should be set so that in the 2-5 years that it takes for the Apprentice to complete the minimum training/classes and on the job training hours, they would be paid wages that closely align to the entry level salary as they move through the program. For example, in year one of on the job training, an Apprentice may make 10% less than the starting salary for the entry level role in the field. In year 2, they may make 5% less and by year 3 of completion of the program, they would be at the entry level salary range.

An Apprentice knows the career that they want to set their sights on and is working to achieve journey level status in that field.

Apprenticeships are given job descriptions. They are an employee of the organization.

There are five components to typical apprenticeship programs. These include:

- **Business Involvement:** Employers are the foundation of every apprenticeship program. They play an active role in building the program and remain involved every step of the way. Employers frequently work together through apprenticeship councils, industry associations, or other partnerships to share the administrative tasks involved in maintaining apprenticeship programs.
- **Structured On-the-Job Training:** Apprenticeships always include an on-the-job training component. Apprentices receive hands-on training from an experienced mentor (journey level) at the job site. On-the-job training focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job. This training is based on national industry standards, customized to the needs of the particular employer.
- **Related Instruction:** One of the unique aspects of apprenticeships is that they combine on-the-job learning with related instruction on the technical and academic competencies that apply to the job. Education partners (Local Educational Agencies or LEAs) collaborate with business to develop the curriculum, which often incorporates established national-level skill standards. The related instruction may be provided by community colleges, technical schools, or apprenticeship training schools – or by the business itself. It can be delivered at a school, online, or at the job site.
- **Rewards for Skill Gains:** Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment. This helps reward and motivate apprentices as they advance through their training.

- **Nationally-Recognized Credential:** Every graduate of an Apprenticeship program receives a nationally-recognized credential. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that apprentices are fully qualified for the job.

Internships

An Internship, paid or unpaid, is meant to be an educational opportunity, not an employment opportunity. An intern is not an employee of the institution. They are brought in to learn and become educated on a particular job or industry sector. They are individuals who come into an organization for short-term periods of temporary work-based learning. Their degree or certificate program does not have to be aligned with the internship organization that they are supporting.

Interns are not meant to replace the role of an open position or be given responsibilities that are the job of another employee. The primary goal of an intern is to teach and train them and give them insight in the field you have brought them into. Each opportunity should be that of a learning opportunity. Project based internships are a good use of interns because it allows interns to learn a program and work with a team or group of people on completing a task. For day to day operations, an intern can be used to support and shadow staff members through their work as they learn the industry and help to support the work alongside a regular employee.

Interns can be unpaid or paid. Some paid interns can have a set amount as a stipend, be paid a lower minimum wage salary, or have no monetary attachment tied to the appointment. Their educational component is their responsibility and whether they receive credits for their internship or not is at the discretion of their educational institution. You may be required to sign or submit documentation as proof that the intern helped to support your program.

Interns receive internship announcements to describe their responsibilities and requirements. They do not get job descriptions and they are not employees of the organization. An Intern does not know the exact job classification they are going to be interning for but they are seeking information in order to make a selection that will align with their educational goals.

Mentorships

A mentorship is a version of job shadowing at the highest level. Mentor programs are meant to connect individuals who obtain a specific skill and knowledge with another individual who wants to learn those skills from a professional. Mentoring consists of a long-term commitment on the side of the mentor focusing on supporting the growth and development of the mentee. The mentor becomes a point of contact for questions, offers support and guidance, advocates and champions the mentee. There is no monetary gain in the mentor/mentee relationship. It is not a paid or stipend program and is solely created for the intention of supporting an individual through their career in a specific field of study. Mentees should choose a subject matter expert and mentors should be willing to fulfill the commitments of being a mentor.