

University of Arizona

Internship Policies, Forms and Practices

Frequently Asked Questions

Approved by the Faculty Senate, May 6, 2019

Q1: The disclosure of insurance coverage statement related to internships mentions that it is preferable for the University to have training agreements on file with internship sites with which we have an ongoing relationship, especially in cases where interns are not considered employees. What circumstances dictate whether these agreements are necessary?

Keeping in mind that a very limited number of individuals on campus have signature authority on behalf of the University, faculty and internship coordinators should generally not negotiate or sign any agreement with a site related to internships that contains provisions related to risk, liability, indemnification, or other terms that may determine the University's obligation and exposure for the student's internship experience. If you are asked by a site to sign off on an agreement other than the UA Internship Work Plan, please contact the appropriate University contracting office for support for the negotiation and eventual signature to the agreement, if appropriate.

The following circumstances generally require an agreement between the University and the site hosting the intern because the sites request terms related to UA's role in administration of background checks, etc. or want to specify the parties' obligations in regard to insurance coverage or specific training:

Clinical Training Affiliation Agreement for Internships: Clinical placements have unique risks and liabilities associated with the placements, given the medical/health field in which they are conducted. If such an agreement requires any modification of the terms and conditions, it is generally elevated to a corporate legal review and executive officer signature within the site. Certain degree programs are accredited by third-party accreditation bodies that audit for the best practice of written Affiliation Agreements with sites where students are placed for training purposes. Given the liability risks and formal negotiation/signature of these types of agreements, departments must forward them to the appropriate University contracting office for negotiation and signature.

Education Field Placement Agreements or other internship agreements involving contact with minors (under the age of 18): These agreements are often with the district superintendent or charter president/ executive officer of the schools involved in the placement. Often these officials have signature authority and can sign the agreement, but in some cases a district or charter may need to take it to their governing board for review and signature and may prefer to execute it as an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). The district or charter may want to have their legal counsel review and negotiate that sort of agreement with the appropriate UA contracting office.

Internship agreements that contain a funding mechanism, involve University research activity, or a specific deliverable expectation from the UA to the site as a result of the internship: These internships fall in the realm of "sponsored activity." To administer these arrangements, they are given a Sponsored Project account # and are administered by Sponsored Projects.

Q2: Our department prefers that students arrange their own internships. Although we may work to develop relationships with community partners or businesses where our students may find meaningful practical experience, it is up to the organization and the student to choose each other and agree to the terms of the internship. Neither our department nor the site is obligated to provide a certain number of internships on a regular basis. These are not clinical or educational field placements. Do we need to execute contracts with sites for these internships?

No. The UA Internship Work Plan, which may be customized by your department within the parameters of UA policy, has been approved by Risk Management and Office of General Counsel as sufficient documentation of the agreement in these situations.

Q3: A site has asked us for an MOU or contract, or we want to create one because we have elevated concerns about the risk to our students involved in the type of experience offered with this organization. What should we do?

If the unique risk profile of the experience or relationship with the site involves additional desired terms, either on the part of the academic organization or the site host, please contact the appropriate UA contracting officer for review of the circumstances and support to reach a negotiated agreement with the University signature authority.

Q4: Our department or college has developed a unique relationship with a partner who only wants to supervise interns from our program(s). These are not clinical or educational field placements, and they do not involve a sponsored project, a commitment to provide a certain number of interns for a fee, or any other criteria that would require an agreement per Q1 above. May we make an agreement to this effect?

When negotiating University-level signature for internship agreements, the preference is to create multi-year blanket agreements that cover UA internships with the partner broadly, regardless of the department(s) offering a student's academic program. That said, organizations that offer internships are always welcome to express their preferences for certain majors and to hire or select student volunteers according to those preferences and any other qualifications required for success as an intern with that organization. Departments are encouraged to build strong relationships with partners, to support partners in valuing the particular knowledge, skills and preparation of their student population, to promote the value of learning opportunities with particular partners, and to create opportunities for meaningful connections between their students and internship site hosts. Internship offers only to students with specific qualifications, such as a preferred academic background, can often be handled through effective recruitment practices.

Q5: Whom should we contact if we want to create an agreement with an internship site for ongoing training placements, per Q4?

The following contacts are available to support University-negotiated agreements with internship sites:

- For non-UAHS Clinical or Educational field placements or internships connected to Sponsored Projects, contracting@email.arizona.edu.
- For UAHS agreements, submit the request according to instructions at <https://healthsciences.arizona.edu/research/research-administration/clinical-trials-contracting>

Q6: The organizations where our students perform their internships often require more work hours as a part of their agreement with the student than the number of credit hours for which the student is registered or which our department has approved. Does this practice conflict with the University policy on contact/homework hours per unit of credit?

No. While the department may not require students to perform more hours on site in order to award credit, students may make agreements with their internship sites that go beyond the hours required for credit in order to gain additional experience. In other words, a student may elect, through agreement with the internship supervisor, to work more hours on-site than required for the number of units for which they registered. For example, this is particularly common when the student interns for pay as a temporary employee of the organization, perhaps working full-time for a significant portion of the summer term, though the student may only want to register for 1-6 units of credit.

Q7: Why does our department need to maintain and provide an electronic file of all approved internships to the Provost's Office?

There are internal and external institutional reporting obligations that the University cannot meet without information from departments about their internships and other field placements approved for their students. The request to prepare and to provide such a file is an interim measure until the University can develop a system that would automate collection and reporting of that data campus-wide. A business case for such a system will be developed in Summer 2019 for consideration within the University's strategic approach to efficient operations. Until then, we recommend developing an excel file, pdf, or a web-based form based on the UA Internship Work Plan template that collects responses for your department in a way that allows users to easily export the data for reporting purposes.