

# State of Alaska Internship Program Guidelines



State of Alaska  
Department of Administration  
Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

[workplace.alaska.gov](http://workplace.alaska.gov)

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## **OVERVIEW:**

### **A. Introduction**

The State of Alaska Internship Program has been redesigned to align with the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations (DOPLR) strategic initiative to attract, develop, and retain a qualified workforce. The program merges academic study with on-the-job training to introduce and engage students in the benefits of public sector employment. You are encouraged to design your internships in a manner that inspires students to broaden their education in a manner that complements State career paths for return to permanent employment. Specifically, the program has been expanded to include students from recognized Alaska charter, vocational, correspondence, and private schools for the Student Intern levels; establish staffing, which may be reallocated for advancement of responsibility, job skills, and pay; allow greater flexibility in regard to degree and credit requirements for the College Intern levels; and, to allow for potential out-of-state recruitment of College and Graduate Interns for internships requiring degree areas not offered by Alaskan universities and colleges.

### **B. Benefits of the Program**

- Proactive engagement and retention of the younger workforce, particularly in regard to careers where historic recruitment difficulties exist.
- Effective development of knowledge transfer of agency missions, policies, and procedures.
- Agencies may establish recruitment Pre-Interview Screening Criteria that guarantees interviews to current and former State of Alaska interns who are qualified, eligible, and available.
- Practical experience and reaffirmation of the student's field of study.
- Rewarding source of income and confidence for students.

### **C. Types and Levels of Internships**

There are three series of interns, each requiring different levels of education, experience, and responsibilities: student, college and graduate. Each of the internship series may be reallocated among its respective job classes. Positions may be created and filled at any level, within its

respective series, and may be reallocated to a higher level upon completion of the **Training Plan and Evaluation Criteria**.

1. The Student Intern series is designed for high school / pre-college students. Job duties must be in accordance with Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development's General Duties Work Permitting guidelines (for more information, go to <http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/home.htm> or, <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/lss/forms/workpmit.pdf>, for permit application).

*This series consists of:*

- a. Student Intern I; Entry, trainee level.
- b. Student Intern II; Journey level.

2. The College Intern series consists of technical and/or professional duties in preparation for entry into professional career areas.

*This series consists of:*

- a. College Intern I; Entry, trainee level.
- b. College Intern II; Advanced-trainee level.
- c. College Intern III; Journey level.
- d. College Intern IV; Full proficient, advanced-journey level.

3. The Graduate Intern Series is designed for post-graduate students and the work typically consists of professional duties that are consistent with entry-level work in job classes representative of the intern's degree field.

*This series consists of:*

- a. Graduate Intern I; First working level.
- b. Graduate Intern II; Full-proficiency level.

## **I. ESTABLISH THE INTERNSHIP:**

### **A. Design the Internship**

Thinking in advance about the progressive needs of an internship is necessary for a successful program. The internship program is not to be used as "casual" nonpermanent or part-time work, nor is an internship to be "just a job." When designing the internship consider the program's

special emphasis on providing a training opportunity, as distinguished from getting labor done, and *assign meaningful and varied experiences*. Identify elements needed to create a training plan and evaluation criteria for the internship.

1. The **job duties and responsibilities** must align with the job class. To develop familiarity with agency operations, offer a wide variety of experiences to maximize student learning, specify course or subject knowledge that is needed to participate in the internship, include the student in organization events such as staff meetings to facilitate opportunities for networking and informational interviewing with key personnel, and recognize that lower level responsibilities are assigned with the intent of developing progressively complex responsibilities.
2. Develop a **Training Plan** that governs the student's progressive responsibilities and advancement. The plan should identify the knowledge and skills required to perform the different levels of work. Condense these into *learning objectives* that define *what* each segment of training covers, *how much time* the training plan is expected to take, and in what sequence the learning objectives will be covered.
3. The student's progress in relation to the Training Plan should be certified through formal **Evaluation Criteria**. These criteria should list *which* learning objective is being evaluated, identify *what* criteria will be used to determine if the learning objective has been met, and define *how* the incumbent will be rated for each criterion (e.g., "Acceptable/Unacceptable," "Pass/Fail," "Proficient/Requires Additional Training," etc.). This information will be used to create a rating device that ascertains if the student is prepared to perform the duties of the next highest level and certify that the student has/has not completed the required level of training.

A preformatted Internship Training and Evaluation Criteria form is located at

<http://dop.state.ak.us/website/index.cfm?fuseaction=resources.hrforms>

to aid in development of the internship learning objectives and evaluation criteria.

## **B. Create the Internship**

Internship positions are established through the Online Position Description (OPD) system:

1. Login to the OPD system at <https://dop.state.ak.us/opd>. Use LDAP login information.
2. From the OPD Homepage, select "Request a nonpermanent position." Select "Continue" for the new nonpermanent position. The system will assign a temporary tracking number under the naming convention of "New12345."
3. Select the number of internships requested under "Number of positions." Select "Establish Program Nonpermanent" and the appropriate internship job class series (i.e. Student, College, or Graduate). Briefly describe why the position is needed in the appropriate text box.
4. Use the "Go To Form" button to access and fill-out the Position Control Information and Duties pages.
5. You may use the "# requirements left" feature, under the Quick Links, to assess remaining steps.
6. Attach the Training Plan and Evaluative Criteria form for all relevant levels as either a Microsoft Word or PDF document.
7. When all required fields are complete, use the "Send Forward" button, found at the bottom of the Submission Management (Main) page, to forward through the approval process.
8. When the position is approved by Classification, the OPD system will send you a notification that verifies establishment of the internship. The position will be formally assigned a Position Control Number (PCN) xxINxx (e.g., the first new intern established for the Department of Administration under revised guidelines will be assigned PCN

02IN001). You may then begin the recruitment and selection processes in coordination with your HR service center.

**C. Recruit the Intern**

Once an internship is established through OPD the next step is recruiting for a qualified student. Finding a student is all about communication, the better defined the internship is, the more likely an agency will receive qualified, eligible and available students. Agencies are *encouraged* to announce an internship 2 to 3 months prior to the expected start date. This will allow sufficient time for the recruitment and selection process.

1. The State of Alaska Internship Program must be student-oriented and accessible to applicants from significantly diverse educations, experiences, and geographic locations. Due to numerous students contacting DOPLR to seek available opportunities for internships, **agencies are required to use Workplace Alaska** as the primary means of announcing and recruiting vacant internships *unless* otherwise waived by the Director of DOPLR. This provides a consistent, centralized, and invaluable recruitment tool to agencies and students alike.

Please refer to the Internship checklist forms, which are found on the DOPLR HR Forms page, and Workplace Alaska Hiring Managers & Supervisors Home Page, to review all appropriate steps and documentation required.

*Prior to conducting the recruitment and selection, hiring manager/supervisor must have taken the Workplace Alaska Self Learning Guide course and/or attended the Academy for Supervisors.*

2. The Executive Branch of the State of Alaska is committed to hiring qualified Alaskans whenever possible. Under no circumstances will out-of-state recruitment be authorized for the Student Intern job classes. College or Graduate Interns must be either Alaska residents, non-Alaskan residents enrolled in an Alaska university or college, or waived by the Director of DOPLR.

**Please note:** out-of-state recruitment is reserved for those internships where:

- a. Alaskan universities and/or colleges do not offer specific course of study related to internship.
  - b. Or, a 10-day minimum recruitment was conducted through Workplace Alaska for Alaska residents, producing fewer than 5 qualified, eligible and available applicants; additional recruitment efforts were conducted in the specific location of the internship; and, there is a demonstrated coordination with an Alaskan university and/or college to assist with filling the internship. *Agencies must clearly demonstrate why all qualified, eligible, and available resident students do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the internship.*
3. The interview and selection process is among the most important of all hiring manager/supervisory duties. Candidates should be screened consistent with the merit principle. This process enables a hiring manager/supervisor to gather information needed to determine which student may be selected for the internship. Proper interviews and reference checks yield more profitable uses of time. The key to a successful interview and selection process is good planning. Planning helps the hiring manager/supervisor learn the necessary information about each student while at the same time avoiding potential legal pitfalls of the process.

*Agency hiring managers/supervisors must complete appropriate hiring documentation and work with the appropriate DOPLR HR Service Center for hire approval of internship.*

4. The agency has the flexibility to recruit for multiple job classes within the established job class series.



## II. THE INTERNSHIP:

### A. **Responsibilities**

1. Just as an agency should provide any permanent employee with a warm welcome, it is very important to provide students with a warm introduction, for not only are students new to the organization, in many cases, they are new to the workforce and/or profession. The practice of Onboarding plays a vital role in establishing a relationship with the student that provides constructive feedback, builds invaluable knowledge and skills, and proactively integrates potential permanent employees in the agency.

**The supervisor** should explain program goals and expectations and review and discuss the duties, training plan, and evaluative criteria with the student. The supervisor mentors and trains students, serves as a role model for career field or discipline of the agency, and is dedicated to learning about and teaching about the major aspects of the career field, including issues and controversies. The supervisor should assign interesting and meaningful work to maximize student learning, ensure that the student is progressing through the training plan, take action for reallocating the student, and provide a professional reference at end of the successful internship.

2. **The student** engages in the program as a learning experience, demonstrates workplace expectations, maintains confidentiality guidelines, fulfills the work plan requirements, and abides by the rules and conditions outlined by the employer.

### B. **Intern Advancement**

1. When the student has successfully completed the relevant training plan, the agency contacts the appropriate DOPLR Management Services section and provides the necessary documentation required to reallocate the student and position to the next job class. Necessary documentation must include a completed:
  - a. Internship Reallocation Request form
  - b. Internship Performance Evaluation form

- c. Completed Training Plan and Evaluation Criteria certifying that the student has completed the plan, met all reallocation criteria, and meets the minimum qualifications of the next higher level.

Management Services reviews and verifies all information, certifies that the student meets all criteria and minimum qualifications, and notifies the Classification Operations Team.

2. The Classification Operations Team updates the OPD and AKPAY records to reflect the appropriate change in levels.
3. Coordinate all relevant personnel changes and documentation with the appropriate HR Service Center.

**C. Reappointment of Students to Ongoing Internships**

Internships must be conducted with respect to the student's academic schedule. As a result, most students will only be available to work during summer, winter, and spring breaks. Agencies may reappoint a returning student without conducting an open recruitment through Workplace Alaska when:

1. The internship is the same PCN from which the student separated in good standing.
2. The student has separated to attend an academic program.
3. The PCN has remained vacant during the interim.

*If the agency intends to reallocate the returning student into the next highest established level, all appropriate procedures and documentation must have been completed and approved by Management Services prior to reappointment. Please refer to Part B, **Intern Advancement**, for further details.*

**D. Conclusion of the Internship**

1. Upon graduation from an academic program, with no intention of continuing education, the student must be separated from the

internship in order to facilitate the introduction of new students to the program.

2. A summer transition between the months of June through August may be considered before graduated students must be separated. This transition is not to exceed the last business day of August.
3. Upon early graduation (i.e., students complete academic programs at the end of the fall semester), students not immediately entering into a new academic program must be separated. *Waivers to allow an intern to remain in his/her current position may be authorized by the Director of DOPLR on a case-by-case basis, when continued academic programs may only start in fall semesters.*
4. An internship can only be a true learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. An effective written evaluation, provided through the Internship Program Evaluation form at the close of the internship, will focus the student's continued learning objectives that were identified as part of the internship. Supervisors should take the time to evaluate both a student's positive accomplishments and weaknesses. If a student was unable to meet their learning objectives, suggestions for improvement should be given.
5. The entire internship should be structured as an introduction to permanent career opportunities with the State of Alaska. At the conclusion of the internship, review the learning objectives of the internship with the student to employment potential in relation to agency missions.
6. Provide encouragement to apply for permanent positions for which the student is qualified and interested. Offer assistance with continued utilization of Workplace Alaska and adequate navigation of the State of Alaska application process.