WHEN BUSINESS AND ACADEMIA WORK TOGETHER
BRILLIANCE HAPPENS

EMPLOYER FAQs

General

What is Education Connection?
Education Connection is a partnership between the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce and the educational institutions in the Tampa Bay Area. The partnership includes the University of South Florida, University of Tampa, St. Leo University, Hillsborough Community College, Stetson University College of Law, and Hillsborough County Schools.

Why was Education Connection established?
Education Connection was established to increase collaboration between academia and the business community. This collaboration will create new opportunities for internships within the Tampa Bay community, establish a channel for locally applicable research partnerships, and provide a conduit for feedback on education curriculum. Aligning these initiatives will allow the Tampa Bay community to take advantage of expertise within our educational institutions, establish expertise clusters based on business/academia experience, and provide local employment opportunities for the brightest students.

How can Education Connection help my business?
Education Connection can help you to connect with potential employees, establish relationships with academic experts relevant to your business challenges, and help influence what students are being taught so that they are aligned with your needs as a business.

How do I start the process?
Business can engage with any of the 3 initiatives by completing the inquiry form located at tampachamber.com/educationconnection.

Internships

What is an internship?
An internship provides professional training, exposure to large tasks and projects, experience working on teams, an opportunity for an individual to gain skills needed in his/her career fields. An internship is not cheap labor, a clerical support, or a replacement for a current member of your staff.

Must an intern be compensated?
The answer to whether you must pay an intern can be found in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Pursuant to this law, the Department of Labor has developed six criteria for identifying an unpaid learner/trainee. All six factors must be met: 1. The training is similar to what a student might experience in an educational environment, even though taking place at the employer’s facilities; 2. The training is for the benefit of the student; 3. The student does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff; 4. The student is not entitled to a job at the end of the
training period; 5. The employer derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student; 6. The employer and the student both agree that the student is not entitled to wages. It is the sole responsibility of the employer/host site to determine if this criterion is met. Please consult legal counsel or the Department of Labor if more information or clarification is needed.

What do I need to do so that a student can obtain college credit?
Each educational institution and the individual education programs within the institutions have unique requirements, standards, and accreditation standards. Please contact the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce or complete the inquiry form located at tampachamber.com/educationconnection to discuss your specific needs and to be referred to the most applicable institution.

What is the average compensation of an internship?
Compensation varies from industry to industry. Academic credit is not a form of compensation. Interns that are paid must meet the state’s minimum wage criteria. However, to attract the most desirable candidates competitive compensation is recommended. Average pay rates defined by the NACE 2012 Internship & Co-op Survey range between $13.50 and $17.50 per hour.

How long do internships normally last?
Internships typically start within the first three weeks of the academic semester and last the duration of the semester (8-12 weeks).

What is the timeline of the recruiting process?
Recruiting for internship opportunities is very competitive. In many cases employers recruit for summer internships in the fall semester. There are exception to this length, but the best companies recruit for internship opportunities at least 6 months in advance of the positions availability.

What are the requirements to host an intern?
Employers interested in hosting interns must provide - Physical office space (office space cannot be located inside the home), General liability insurance coverage, Direct in-person supervision, and Compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act.

What are the elements of a successful internship program?
Increasingly, employers demand that applicants for entry-level positions possess prior work experience as a requirement for employment. Fortunately, employers report that a meaningful internship during college will satisfy that requirement. The following have been identified as elements of a meaningful internship program: Ensure the internship offers relevant experience in the student’s chosen field; Encourage interns to initiate products, ask questions, absorb information and provide feedback as a part of their experience; Create an internship description that is structured to simulate an actual job; Define clear beginning and end dates; Establish in writing an agreement between the organization and the intern regarding expectations, responsibilities, evaluation, resources, learning goals, supervision, work schedule, duration and wage; Assign an employee to mentor the intern.

Research Partnerships

What is a research partnership?
A research partnership is a collaboration between a business entity and an educational institution that is formally defined to investigate and potentially resolve specific challenges identified by the sponsoring business. A research partnership is led by a faculty member of an educational institution and, in most cases, will employ undergraduate or graduate level students during the duration of the partnership. The intellectual property rights associated with the outcomes of the partnership are negotiated and defined at the onset of the partnership.
How are the institutions compensated for the research?
Institutions are compensated directly by the business for which they are providing research services. The business and the institution will establish a goal for the partnership, establish a scope of services, and define cost and fees as applicable.

What are the specialties of the individual institutions?
Each institution participating in Education Connection has unique strengths. Please contact the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce or completing the inquiry form located at tampachamber.com/educationconnection to discuss your specific needs and to be referred to the most applicable institution.

Curriculum Influence

Why is it important for businesses to influence curriculum?
In order for our institutions to provide the best education possible, they need feedback from the business community. With this feedback our educators can better understand what is needed, can craft curriculum that meets those needs, and can provide graduates with skills needed to be effective in today’s business environment.

What channels does Education Connection make available for curriculum feedback?
Education Connection provides employers direct access to our community’s educators through a series of events, roundtable discussions, and individual introductions.

What institution programs are the best fit for my feedback?
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