



Mineral



Question of the Week

May 27, 2026

Question

What should we know about hiring summer interns?

ANSWER

Internships offer students opportunities to gain real-world experience and hands-on career development. The most important thing to know is that interns are, in many cases, employees and need to be paid as such. There are some practical things to consider as well.

Here are the steps we recommend you take before hiring an intern:

- Determine whether the internship should be paid or can be unpaid. For this, use the Department of Labor's "primary beneficiary test" explained in the guide linked below. If there's any doubt about whether an intern should be paid, the safest option is to pay.
- Define the internship clearly so both parties understand their duties and expectations, including any pay and benefits offered.
- Be clear about how much supervision the intern will receive, and who should be providing it. Reliable supervision is key to preventing problems and maximizing the benefit for both parties.
- If the internship is unpaid, get documentation from the intern's school explaining the educational relevance of the internship and whether it will earn the student credits.
- Review your business liability insurance policies for coverage or exclusions of unpaid interns.
- Ensure that you're complying with child labor laws. If you're hiring minors, federal and state child labor provisions might apply.

You can learn more about internships by viewing our [Hiring Summer Interns](#) guide on the platform.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.