



Call for Proposals:
Unpaid Internships and Career Outcomes

January 15, 2015

National Association of Colleges and Employers
62 Highland Avenue
Bethlehem, PA 18017
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Introduction

The NACE Foundation is requesting proposals for the development of ***a study exploring the relationship between a student engaging in an unpaid internship experience and post-graduate outcomes.***

Organization Information

Founded in 1967, the NACE Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable, not-for-profit organization created to foster leading-edge research and educational resources that facilitate the employment of the college educated.

The Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of members of the National Association of Colleges and Employer's Executive Committee. The Trustees include college career services directors, HR/staffing/recruiting directors, and the NACE Executive Director. The Trustees are responsible for identifying research and educational priorities and making all funding decisions. The NACE Executive Director and the NACE staff implement the Foundation's work.

The Foundation is supported by tax-deductible contributions from individuals and organizations. In recent years, the NACE Foundation has funded research studies, educational programs, and conference scholarships.

Project Overview

NACE research has consistently supported the positive relationship between experiential education and "success" in the labor market. Data from NACE Job Outlook surveys show that employers place high value on a graduate's work experience when conducting college recruiting. NACE student surveys have consistently demonstrated that students entering the job market upon receiving the bachelor's degree are more likely to receive an offer of a full-time position if they have had an internship and/or co-op experience. The NACE Internship Survey has documented that graduates hired with an internship and/or co-op in their backgrounds are more likely to be with the employer five years after being recruited than are graduates with no internship experience.

While this past and ongoing research clearly supports the proposition that experiential education helps college graduates when they leave academia and enter the workforce there are nevertheless continuing questions about the relationship between experiential education experiences and their impact on graduate career outcomes. One of the most prominent of these questions involves whether there are differential consequences associated with whether or not the internship experience is a paid experience.

There is more than one type of internship experience available to a student. An unpaid internship experience can be differentiated by:

- whether or not the student is monetarily compensated by the employer;
- the nature of the employer (industry, size, location);
- the nature of the work involved (academic, professional); and

- the relationship of the work experience to the student's course of study. Each of these differences may or may not affect the correlation between an internship experience and career outcome success.

NACE research has posited that in the limited period prior to graduation students seeking a full-time position with an unpaid internship experience in their background are less likely to receive a job offer than are students with a paid internship experience. In fact, students with an unpaid internship experience appear to succeed in getting a full-time offer at about the same rate as a student graduating with no internship experience at all. However, this finding is limited by the timeframe in which outcomes are evaluated and by a lack of differentiation across various types of unpaid internship experiences.

The NACE Foundation is currently focused on exploring the relationships between different types of unpaid internship experiences and career outcomes. Specifically, the Foundation is interested in supporting research papers investigating topics such as:

- unpaid internships and their effect on employment and salary;
- the value of an unpaid internship in pursuing career goals in specific industries (journalism, entertainment, fashion, government, etc.);
- the value of an unpaid internship for students majoring in specific disciplines (accounting, communications, engineering, the liberal arts);
- unpaid internships and career outcomes five to ten years after graduation; and
- unpaid academic internships and their effect on a graduate's continuing education.

Research proposals may be submitted to the NACE Foundation covering these or other topics that will elucidate the relationship between an unpaid internship experience and career outcomes.

The proposal will need to include:

- A detailed research design identifying the question(s) to be addressed by the study and the approach, including data sources, to be used in answering the question(s).
- Specific hypotheses to be tested in the course of the research and what measurements will be used to test (confirm/disconfirm) these hypotheses.
- Estimated and itemized project budget, timeline, and project plan
- A listing of at least three references
- Biographical sketches for the team involved in this project – specify research experience

Evaluation Criteria – Proposals will be judged on:

- Technical Merit
 - Quality of approach and methodology
 - Clarity and succinctness of proposal
- Organizational Capabilities
 - Demonstrated ability to perform projects
 - Qualifications and experience of staff who will conduct the project
 - Related organizational experience
- The overall cost of the project
 - The Foundation may support all or only a portion of the projected costs. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of the ability to complete the project with the amount of support provided by the Foundation.

If chosen, project deliverables will include:

- Quarterly progress reports that detail steps taken to advance to the completion of the project based on the proposed timeline. The Foundation will distribute its grant in quarterly installments upon successful submission of the quarterly progress report.
- A detailed written report that (1) reviews the issue and summarizes the existing literature relevant to the issue; (2) explains the research approach used in developing the study; and (3) details the findings of the research.
- A PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the research findings and can be used as the basis for a conference presentation.
- A summary article highlighting the findings of the research to be submitted for publication to the *NACE Journal*.

NACE staff will:

- Consult with the researcher(s) to be sure the end product conforms to expectations.
- Provide timely review and feedback to vendor partner presentations, questions, and so forth.

NACE will hold the copyright to the research project as written. The researcher may use the data for other research projects upon written approval of the NACE Foundation.

Proposal Deadline: September 1, 2015.

Please send proposals and any questions to:

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