

Orange County Sanitation District: Student Internship Program Internship Guidelines



I. INTRODUCTION

The Orange County Sanitation District's (OCSD) Student Internship Program (Program) offers a range of challenging opportunities for *undergraduate*, *graduate*, and *vocational* students.

An internship is designed to provide career-related work experience to supplement and enhance a student's academic and vocational studies. The program offers OCSD the opportunity to do something for its community, and to help develop and prepare the future workforce. In addition, it is an excellent environment for students to develop workplace readiness skills, gain practical work experience, and learn about different career opportunities.

OCSD's internship program will be part of a student's educational plan to explore a given career path that integrates classroom study with planned, supervised work. It will enable the student intern to experience the daily challenges and rewards of public service, and the ability to explore opportunities in a variety of disciplines, including: Engineering; Wastewater Operations and Collections; Mechanical, Instrumentation and Electrical Maintenance; Information Technology; Laboratory and Ocean Monitoring; Public Affairs; and Human Resources.

II. GOALS

Listed below are a number of different goals that OCSD expects to accomplish with the program. These goals reflect OCSD's desire to help students, give back to the community, and provide a cost effective means to prepare the future workforce.

- Provide meaningful career-related knowledge and on-the-job experience to students, through a *paid* internship.
- Expose students to real-world challenges and trends in various occupations.
- Enable the student to establish effective working relationships and build a professional network with subject matter experts.
- Provide firsthand knowledge and understanding of government processes and OCSD's Core Values.
- Help educate communities, universities, and colleges on environmental protection issues.
- Provide awareness of opportunities and requirements in a chosen career field in the public sector.
- Broaden the student's skills and competencies to meet the future workforce needs for OCSD and other public agencies.
- Promote collaboration between public sector employers and educational institutions to support workforce development.

- Promote OCSD as an employer of choice among students, universities, colleges and the community.
- Integrate the student as a contributing member of OCSD.

III. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Internship positions are requested and approved through OCSD's budget process. The requesting division prepares and submits a decision package during the annual budget cycle. Internship opportunities may be announced on multiple job websites, including: OCSD, local colleges, universities, technical and vocational schools (as applicable). All interested students are encouraged to review OCSD's internship guidelines (this document), and job announcement requirements to determine their eligibility to participate in the program. The intern application process is detailed later in this document.

Each student intern will report to a division manager (or designee), who will serve as the primary point of contact for the duration of the internship. The student intern and division manager (or designee) will establish learning objectives that will be achieved over the course of the internship. The internship is the joint responsibility of the student intern, the division manager (or designee), and the school-assigned internship coordinator.

IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

OCSD, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to modify, revise or eliminate this program at any time. Participation in the program is contingent upon meeting the established eligibility requirements, and may continue as long as OCSD's workload dictates a need.

Interns are not considered regular employees and therefore are not eligible for organizational benefits (retirement, health, dental, sick, vacation time, etc.) or holiday pay. However, student interns are considered temporary employees, and are subject to the following terms and conditions:

- Students selected for an internship must successfully complete a pre-employment screening process, which may include: background investigation, drug screening, and physical exam.
- Participation in the program does not constitute an employment contract nor does it guarantee employment with OCSD upon completion of the program.
- Interns will receive an orientation and general safety training provided by OCSD. Intern work assignments will not be made until all safety training and orientation has been completed.
- Interns are not authorized to attend any training outside of the required safety training.

- The internship ends when the student has worked the total number of hours requested by the division through the budget process or after 12 months, whichever comes first.
- Undergraduate/Graduate student internships only: Department Heads may request to extend the duration of a student internship for an additional 12 months subject to budget approval. No internship shall exceed a total duration of 24 months.
- Students may apply subsequently for an internship in a different division/department within OCSD.
- Student intern experience does not qualify as professional, exempt-level work experience or journey-level experience.

V. WORK HOURS

A. *The following restrictions apply to work hours for student interns:*

- Work hours will be established between the intern and division manager (or designee), and will be between the core hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Interns are not authorized to work overtime or to perform unsupervised work under any circumstances.
- Interns are not authorized to flex time or otherwise make up for missed hours in a work week, which is defined as Friday to Thursday to coincide with OCSD's payroll cycle.
- Effective June 1, 2016, work hours will be capped as follows:
 - a. Undergraduate and graduate students may work a **maximum** of 20 hours per work week.
 - b. Vocational students may work a **maximum** of 28 hours per work week as determined by the Human Resources (HR) Department, and depending on the arrangements made with the participating schools.

VI. ELIGIBILITY

A. *This section applies to all student interns:*

- Students must be enrolled in a college, university or vocational school to be eligible to participate in the program.
- Students must be in "good standing" at their school, and maintain a GPA of 2.0 or better to remain in the internship program.
- Students must have at least one year remaining in school at the beginning of their internship.
- Students must be at least 18 years of age and legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Students may be required to provide a letter of recommendation from a professor as part of their application materials.
- Students must have satisfactory performance and attendance, and will be evaluated throughout the internship to determine eligibility to continue in the program.

- Students must have the oversight of a school-assigned internship coordinator responsible for monitoring the intern’s progress, and having periodic contact with the intern and OCSD.

B. This section applies to undergraduate / graduate student interns:

- Undergraduate and graduate students obtain valuable work experience in ***professional occupations*** related to their field of study.
- Students must be enrolled full-time in a four year undergraduate program (Bachelor’s) or a graduate program (Master’s) that is in a field of study related to the internship for which they are applying.
- Students must submit a “student verification” or verification of enrollment from the registrar’s office to establish a pay rate based on academic level and as proof of enrollment. Verifications are required each semester.
- Students enrolled in an undergraduate program must be at junior level status or above, which is the timeframe when students undertake upper-division core courses.
- Students are eligible to remain in the internship program throughout the year (including during school breaks) if they are enrolled as a full-time student in fall and spring semester, or during the four quarters of the year, and as long as OCSD’s workload dictates a need.

C. This section applies to vocational students:

- Vocational students gain valuable work experience in ***trade occupations*** by rotating through different areas of the plant, including: Wastewater Treatment, Mechanical Maintenance, Collections & Rebuild, and Instrumentation & Electrical Maintenance.
- Students must be enrolled at a community college or vocational school completing coursework that is in a field of study related to the internship for which they are applying.

VII. APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Recruiting

- Recruiting for internship positions differs in several respects from OCSD’s traditional recruitment process. After a personnel requisition has been approved, the internship may be announced on multiple job websites, including: OCSD, local colleges, universities, technical and vocational schools (as applicable).
- OCSD will work with local colleges’ career centers and faculty to reach out to potentially interested students at appropriate schools. Intern opportunities also may be posted to one or more intern-specific job posting websites if it is determined that there is a need to expand the reach of advertising.
- As appropriate, OCSD also may take advantage of campus events, job fairs, bulletin boards, etc., to contribute to greater student and community

awareness, and help educate students on potential career paths during their course of study.

B. Selecting

- HR will pre-screen student applications to ensure that each candidate meets the requirements for the internship. The HR representative and hiring manager then will select the best candidates, based on academic level and area of study, from the group of qualified individuals. HR may enlist the assistance of career centers at the local colleges and universities to identify and pre-screen students for available OCSD internships.
- The interview panel will generally include an HR representative, and the person that will be supervising the work of the intern. The student that appears to be the best overall fit will be the person considered for the internship. The division manager (or designee) will make the final selection.

C. Hiring

- Upon receiving an official verification of enrollment from the educational institution, indicating academic level and status, the selected student will be made an offer, and will be compensated in accordance with the current intern pay scale. This pay scale is detailed later in this document. After the verbal offer has been made and accepted, the student will be scheduled for the pre-employment screening process.

VIII. WORK ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

The nature of the work assignments given the student is one of the most important internship components, and it should include diverse responsibilities. The internship experience should provide the opportunity for the intern to learn new skills and perform work in a real-world setting, integrating the student as a contributing member of OCSD. The work assigned should benefit the student and be a good investment of OCSD time and resources. Providing meaningful work experiences is the focus of the program.

Evaluation of the intern's progress is ongoing and documented by the division manager (or designee). A performance evaluation is prepared and conducted by the division manager (or designee), with a copy given to the intern and the school's internship coordinator. It should include statements from OCSD management and the internship coordinator during and at the conclusion of the internship.

IX. COMPENSATION

Student internships with OCSD are on a paid basis and are offered as "at-will" employment. Treatment as a temporary employee creates a more valuable experience for both the intern and OCSD. The rate of pay is based on the type of student and the intern's academic level in school, as listed below.

Vocational student	=	\$15 per hour
Undergraduate student	=	\$17 per hour
Graduate student	=	\$20 per hour

X. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Human Resources Department

The HR Department will administer and manage the Student Internship Program. This includes assisting with personnel requisitions, postings, advertising, and applicant screening, as well as working with division management on scheduling student interviews. HR will maintain contacts at local schools' career centers.

An informal performance feedback system will be developed by HR and administered by the division manager (or designee) to ensure they are providing students the guidance, support and development they seek from this type of program. Interns will also participate in New Employee Orientation, which is provided by HR staff.

B. Finance Department

The Finance Department is responsible for tracking and reporting on the hours worked by interns based on timecard records. By running bi-weekly reports on the total hours an intern has worked to date, Finance identifies and notifies the appropriate division manager (or designee) of intern(s) who may be reaching the maximum total hours for the internship.

C. Divisional Management

Divisions needing an intern are responsible for preparing and submitting a decision package to the Financial Management Division for consideration during the annual budget cycle. Justification of the need, a description of the specific work that the intern will perform, and the total number of hours requested must be provided.

The division manager (or designee) is also responsible for scheduling, overseeing, mentoring and evaluating the student intern during the time period assigned. Interns should be supervised closely with regular, frequent contact occurring between the division manager (or designee) and the intern. Note that both, the division manager (and designee) and the school's internship coordinator, are responsible for supervising the intern to encourage student participation and shared accountability.

Additionally, the division manager (or designee) will: 1) provide meaningful tasks and responsibilities in order for the student to gain knowledge and skills to further their development; 2) conduct informal performance evaluations and feedback sessions for the intern; and 3) track the hours worked and adhere to the established maximums in accordance with section V of these guidelines.

D. Internship Coordinator

The internship coordinator is a representative of the educational institution who oversees the intern's job assignment. Note that either the division manager (or designee) at OCSD and the school's internship coordinator are responsible for supervising the intern to encourage student participation and shared accountability. The internship coordinator's responsibilities include serving as the day-to-day contact with OCSD's HR Department regarding the intern's performance and conducting ongoing discussions with the student over the course of the internship, at a minimum at the beginning and end of the program and at least every two months for its duration.

If the internship is for course credit, the internship coordinator would be the person designated as such by the college or university. In cases where the internship is not for course credit, the internship coordinator may be the educational institution's career center staff or a member of the faculty in the student's school of study.

E. Intern

The intern will work with the educational institution to identify an internship coordinator for their internship. The intern will meet with the internship coordinator at the beginning and the end of the program, as well as every two months at a minimum to discuss progress and learning. The intern will be asked to complete evaluation paperwork at the conclusion of the internship.

XI. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Participation in OCSD's Student Internship Program does not imply and is not a guarantee of future employment. OCSD is committed to hiring the best qualified individuals for its jobs through a competitive recruitment and selection process, in a manner that is fair, equitable and merit-based.



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