

Hiring a Harvard Kennedy School Summer Intern

Every office has a program that needs a critical review, a new initiative that needs a jumpstart, or a project that needs fresh eyes. With just a little planning, you can get these tasks done while providing valuable experience to a graduate student from Harvard Kennedy School (HKS).

Each summer over 300 students complete internships with over 200 different organizations, including IGOs (both headquarters and regional offices); national, regional, and local government departments in both the U.S. and abroad; policy institutes; nonprofit organizations; community-based organizations; and consulting firms and other private companies. HKS students complete coursework in economic and institutional analysis, strategic management, political advocacy and leadership, and in various policy areas, and they are trained to lead change in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. HKS students are problem solvers who can look at an issue from many angles.

Designing a Great Internship

Choose a project that is meaningful — to both the organization and the intern. Our students can be most helpful to an organization that has specific projects to be done or one that can employ our students like regular staff members for eight to twelve weeks. Most HKS students join the school with several years of work experience, so they are looking for an internship that will advance their core knowledge and analytical skills. A quality internship should include a specific project for which the intern has some independent responsibility and some input into the implementation process. The internship should be valuable to the organization, and the intern should be able to see how the work contributes to the organization's success.

Write a good job description. Make sure your job description is clear and accurate, so applicants can determine their own interest in the project you are offering. Some of the best intern projects include both computer time and fieldwork with clients or people affected by the organization. When writing your job description, be sure to include the following information:

- **Organization:** Describe your organization — its mission, whether it is for profit or nonprofit, the types of projects in which it engages, its geographic focus, if any, and whether it leans in a particular political direction or if it is nonpartisan. Provide your website address.
- **Detailed project description, including a list of all duties and responsibilities:** Please be specific, and as detailed as possible.
- **Logistics:** Starting/ending dates, hours per week, office environment.
- **Qualifications:** Describe the qualifications you want in an intern, for example: fluency in Spanish, skills in STATA, security clearance, etc.
- **Compensation:** Many graduate students are funding their own education, so adequate compensation will make your internship more attractive. If you cannot pay your intern, think of other compensation you might offer — free or inexpensive housing, for example. If you simply cannot offer any compensation, there still may be students who are interested in your organization, so do not give up the idea of getting an intern. HKS students who have secured unpaid public or NGO internships may apply for Harvard summer grants. Since demand for grants exceeds supply, students will have the best chance of receiving funding if they apply as early as possible. **If a student has an internship confirmed,** they can apply for a summer grant.

- **Application requirements:** Give clear application instructions including all required documents. Be clear whether you accept applications by mail, email, or fax, and whether you have any preference. Applications can be emailed directly to you, collected on your website, or collected on our career management system and accessed together once the deadline has passed. Be sure to include all exact contact information.
- **Deadline and timeline:** Give a specific deadline for applying. Equally important, specify your timeline for responding to the applications. When will the students hear from you? When will you make your final decision?
- **Have an organized process.** We encourage you to interview candidates for an internship, even if the interviews are by telephone or virtual. A conversation will help you learn a little more about the applicant than you can get from a resume and a writing sample, and will provide an opportunity for you to sell your organization and project to them. Interviews also give students an opportunity to learn more about your organization and project. (Our students may have several offers from which to choose.)

Recruiting an HKS Intern

Advertising your opportunity. Job descriptions may be emailed to: career_advancement@hks.harvard.edu. We welcome employers for campus visits to hold briefing sessions, participate in our various career fairs, and schedule on-campus interviews. Briefing sessions for summer opportunities are best conducted in November, early December, or February. Please [contact the Office of Career Advancement](#) to discuss how our staff may best facilitate the process.

Timeline. Students are most active in their summer internship search in January and February. Summer internships usually begin between June 1 and July 1, end toward the end of July or mid-August, and last 8-12 weeks. **We recommend that you announce internships by early February or sooner, with a deadline before the end of February.** If you cannot get your internship information to us until the later part of the spring semester, you still may find a great intern, but s/he may no longer be able to secure an HKS stipend to support an unpaid internship.

Contact an HKS Representative

The HKS Office of Career Advancement is delighted to be your partner in finding an intern for your organization! Should you have any questions, please contact us by phone at 617-495-1161, or by email at: HKS_career@hks.harvard.edu.

Sample Organizations Hosting Interns

All levels of government departments, ministries and agencies in the U.S. and around the world · Albright Stonebridge Group · Amazon · Booz Allen · Boston Consulting Group · Boston Women's Workforce Council · Brookings Institution · Ceres · Citi · Climate Policy Initiative · Dalberg · Deloitte · EDF Climate Corps · Education Pioneers · Eli Lilly · Facebook · Free the Slaves · Green Climate Fund · Human Rights Watch · IDinsight · IADB · Last Mile Health · Lien Centre for Social Innovation · MasterCard Foundation · McKinsey · Mercy Corps · National Parks Business Plan Internship · NBC News · New Profit · Numida Technologies · OECD · Omidyar Network · REI Systems, Inc. · Robin Hood Foundation · Sanergy · Kresge Foundation · Third Sector Capital Partners · United Nations (various entities) · Value for Good · World Bank · World Economic Forum · World Food Programme

Sample Internship Projects

- Prepared a comprehensive fact sheet for a nonprofit organization in Washington DC on sexual and reproductive health and rights during the Zika outbreak.
- Served as integral member of a team researching water sustainability in multinational food/beverage/meat companies for a nonprofit coalition of environmental groups.
- Collected qualitative data in six refugee camps as a member of a protection team for an intergovernmental organization assessing the food and non-food needs of refugees.
- Developed financial metrics to monitor and evaluate a ~\$5B technology services business undergoing restructuring.
- Led a U.S. state's design of a comprehensive strategy to address the opioid crisis engaging leaders across government and private industry to analyze, build and implement a broad array of programs targeting all points of addiction, from prevention to recovery.
- Worked as a member of a team building a Diversity Projection Model for a large U.S. urban public school system to help estimate the diversity of the teaching workforce in future years using historical data as a benchmark.
- Researched and wrote memos to senior economists in U.S. federal government on economic impact of immigration, the school-to-prison pipeline, and trade.
- Interacting with political and social leaders, collaborated on the development of an economic recovery plan for a national government, including social, financial and legal aspects.
- Conducted research on social impact bonds and interviewed policy advocacy groups to identify strategic areas of education policy engagement for the nonprofit arm of a private sector platform for business leaders addressing development challenges.

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL 2019-2020 Key Dates

Sep 13, Sep 27	Employer Connection Event: Consulting, Operations, Research and Economics (CORE)
Feb 7	Employer Connection Event: International Development and Human Rights
Feb 21	Employer Connections Event: Urban Innovations
Mar 25	Deadline: Summer Internship Fund Round I grant applications (<i>possible second application round should funding be available</i>)
Apr 22 (tent)	Deadline: Summer Internship Fund Round II grant applications
May 1	Last day of spring classes
May 15	Final exams complete