



VIRGINIA
TALENT +
OPPORTUNITY
PARTNERSHIP

CREATING PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONS

Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership

V-TOP Statutory Purpose



Grants to institutions to expand paid and credit-bearing student internships and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers.



Statewide Initiative to facilitate the readiness of students, employers and institutions of higher education to participate in internship and work-based learning.

Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership



VIRGINIA
**TALENT +
OPPORTUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

CREATING PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONS

MAKING VIRGINIA THE **TOP** STATE FOR
BUSINESS, EDUCATION AND TALENT

Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership

TOP State for Talent

- ✓ Distinguish the Commonwealth of Virginia as the leading state for higher education and talent pathways
- ✓ Most internship-ready students, employers and institutions of higher education
- ✓ Every student enrolled at a Virginia institution of higher education has the opportunity to graduate with a paid, employment-based, authentic, applied learning experience

Work-Based Learning: Benefits to Employers

At both the **one-year** and **five-year marks**, hires who have interned with the employer (**internal interns**) are **more likely to be retained** than hires who interned with other organizations (external interns) and hires with no internship experience.

At one year:

- **16% more likely to be retained than external interns**
- **32% more likely to be retained than new hires who lack internship experience**

Source: NACE, Internship & Co-op Survey Report, 2021

Work-Based Learning: Benefits to Students

- **\$3,096:** Increase in annual wages one year after graduation for students who took a **paid internship**, even when accounting for differences in pay based on field of study, gender, and race/ethnicity

Other work-based learning experiences – unpaid internships, practicums, and cooperative learning – are not associated with an earnings benefit one year after graduation

- Among current students, **paid internships** are linked with **greater confidence they will be successful** in the job market and confidence in the value of their education

Work-Based Learning: Benefits to Students (cont'd)

- Work-based learning defined more generally is tied to **noneconomic post-graduation success**

Bachelor's degree holders who had a work-based learning experience report greater career satisfaction and are more likely to say their education helped them to achieve their goals and was worth the cost

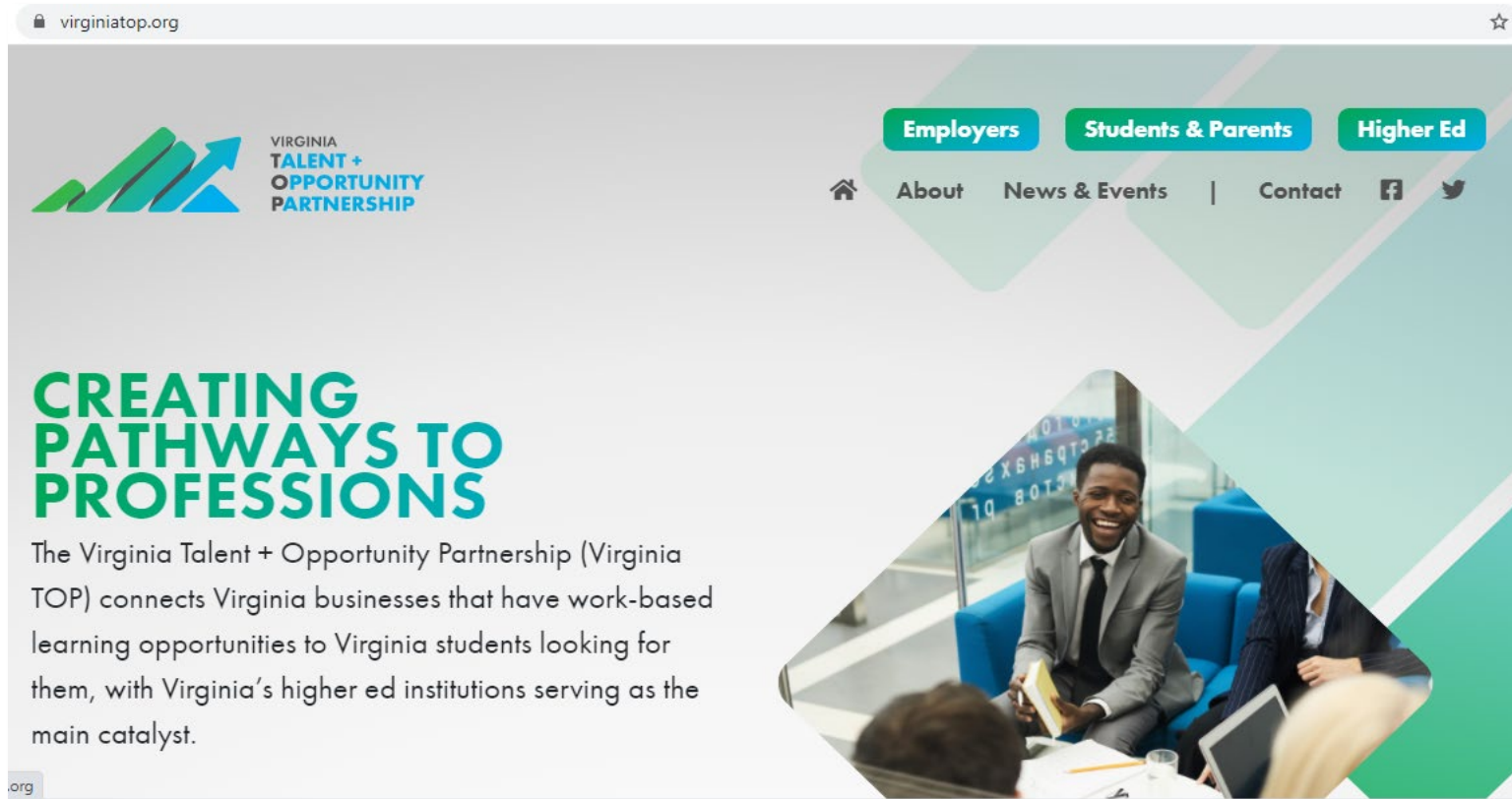
- **Access to paid internships is uneven**

Black and Latino students, women, low-income, and first-generation students are less likely to experience a paid internship. Even when controlling for variation across majors, these disparities remain

Source: Strada, The Power of Work-Based Learning, March 2022

See page 12 of the toolkit for
additional value-added features of internships

Virginia TOP Website Launched in October 2020



www.VirginiaTOP.org

VIRGINIA EMPLOYER READINESS TOOLKIT

A Blueprint to Develop Quality
Internship Opportunities for
Virginia's Talent Pipeline



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Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Definition

An internship is defined as a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.

Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Key Quality Features

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- Learning objectives/goals are clearly defined and related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- Supervision is provided by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- Routine feedback is provided by the experienced supervisor.
- Resources, equipment, and facilities are provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Additional Best Practices

- Hold orientations for managers, mentors and interns
- Provide interns with a handbook, a guide, or a website (answering frequently asked questions and communicating the “rules” in a warm and welcoming way)
- Encourage your whole team to get involved (lead social or professional development events, help orient the interns to your company culture; [see page 16 of the toolkit](#))
- Hold new hire panels (panels of five or six people who were hired as new grads within the last three years)
- Bring in speakers from your company’s executive ranks; arrange for interns to shadow an executive
- Provide interns access to some of the same in-house training available to employees
- Showcase interns’ work through presentations
- Conduct exit interviews, focus groups, surveys for interns to evaluate your program

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

And finally . . .

- Provide interns with real work assignments
- As you develop the job description, consider activities that will allow interns to hone their critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, technology, and equity and inclusion

National Association of Colleges and Employers, Career Ready Competencies and sample behaviors expected by employers

<https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

See information about partnerships on page 13 of the toolkit

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Roles

- **Intern:** Clearly define the intern's responsibilities, consider including primary and secondary duties, include tangible goals; ensure intern understands dress code, social media policies, etc.
- **Supervisor:** Oversee ongoing assignments, provide feedback on performance
- **Mentor:** Orient intern to company culture, help the intern network and make connections, guide the intern as they think about their career trajectory, etc.

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Access & Equity in Recruitment & Selection (pp. 21 & 22)

- **Expand your applicant pool**
 - 30 of Virginia's public and private institutions of higher education use Handshake to post internship and job opportunities
 - VA Voyager is a new technology platform to reach high school and community college students (rolling out over 2022 & 2023)
 - Revisit the model of the ideal candidate (for example, does a hard-working student balancing multiple extracurricular activities or a part-time job and a full-time course load exhibit desirable qualities not represented in their GPA?)

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Access and Equity in Recruitment and Selection (cont'd)

- **Be flexible regarding where/how the intern will work**
 - Consider remote work
 - Investigate shared-work spaces throughout the Commonwealth that might allow students to have a dedicated workspace and the necessary technology; consider whether an employee working remotely in the area could support a small group of interns
- **Pay for parking even if you don't normally provide that benefit to part-time employees**
- **Pay the tuition for a three-credit course if the student is taking the internship for credit**
- **Partner with a local college to provide summer housing**

Hosting a High-Quality Internship Program

Evaluation and Assessment of Interns (pp. 26 & 27)

- VBA is providing an evaluation tool
- Consider also helping the intern think about:
 - How well the intern is learning
 - Whether the intern is applying what they learned in class on the job
 - Whether the intern is connecting their work to the theories they learned in their courses
 - Whether the intern is reflecting on their career-ready competencies
 - Whether the intern is reflecting on their future career goals and how their internship is changing/shaping those goals

V-TOP Supports Work-Based Learning

Resources Developed at the State Level Available through Regional Grantees

Facilitate the **readiness** of employers, students and institutions of higher education to scale significantly high-quality work-based learning.

SCHEV is partnering with the Virginia Chamber Foundation to develop the employer readiness resources.

V-TOP Supports Work-Based Learning

Resources Developed at the State Level Available through Regional Grantees

For employers:

- Employer Readiness Toolkit, created in partnership with the Chamber (www.VirginiaTOP.org)
- Online modules based on the toolkit, with step-by-step guidance for companies that want to start internship programs; includes info re: Veterans Fellowship through DVS (early fall 2022)
- One-on-one and small group coaching and mentoring for employers as they develop internship programs (rolling out in regions now through spring 2024)

V-TOP Supports Work-Based Learning

Resources Developed at the State Level Available through Regional Grantees

For employers (cont'd):

- New work experience designed for **1st and 2nd year students** will support employers to engage with students earlier and offer flexibility in the type of tasks interns can perform (coming spring 2023)
- Organized menu of options for employer engagement with students by region (rolling out by region now)
- Regional event focused on connecting employers to students for work-based learning (rolling out by region)

V-TOP Supports Work-Based Learning

Resources Developed at the State Level Available through Regional Grantees

For employers (cont'd):

- Support for small employers to develop intern job descriptions, post them to Virginia institutions (and high schools), collect and screen applications, schedule interviews, hire & manage payroll (with pending budget increase)
- Matching funds for some small employers, eligibility criteria to be determined (with pending budget increase)

V-TOP Supports Work-Based Learning

Resources Developed at the State Level Available through Regional Grantees

For students:

- Online modules based on career-ready competencies developed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (coming fall 2022)
- Online modules to assist students to secure an internship (resume advice, interview skills, etc.)
- 1st and 2nd year experience
- Regional event to connect with employers for work-based learning

How Can You Get More Involved?

- Celebrate the first Virginia Intern Day on Thursday, July 28 by recognizing your interns
- Review the toolkit and ensure your internship program follows best practices
- Stay tuned for more information about support for small employers and eligibility for matching funds for intern wages
- Subscribe to the V-TOP monthly newsletter (on the Home page)
- Follow V-TOP on social media

Contact Information by Region

Region 2: Counties of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke, and the cities of Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke and Salem

VT, Quina Weber-Shirk, Regional Internship Project Coordinator

quina@vt.edu

Region 4: Counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, Prince George, Surry, and Sussex, and the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg and Richmond

VCU, Sean Walden, V-TOP Coordinator, swalden2@vcu.edu

Chamber RVA, Andrew Knight, Program Coordinator, RVA NOW

Andrew.knight@chamberrva.com

Contact Information by Region

Region 5: Counties of Accomack, Isle of Wright, James City, Northampton, Southampton, and York, and the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg
ODU, Brian K. Payne, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs

bpayne@odu.edu

Region 9: Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the city of Charlottesville

UVA, David Lapinski, Director of Employer Relations and Experiential Learning

dal8d@virginia.edu

Contact Information

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Lynn Seuffert, lynnseuffert@schev.edu

Virginia Chamber Foundation

Laura Ranthum, Director of Communications and Marketing, l.ramthun@vachamber.com

Kristin Burhop, Director of Legislative Services, k.burhop@vachamber.com