**Interns and Externs**

Federal Law provides that interns must be paid minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act unless they meet a six pronged test:

* The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
* The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
* The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
* The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
* The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
* The employee and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

**Internships vs. Externships (excerpt from externships.com)**

Internships and externships are both on-the-job training programs for high school students, college students and sometimes other professionals. They are similar to apprenticeship programs which are designed to teach someone a skill or trade. Unlike apprenticeship programs that teach beginners a skill while they are on the job, internships and externships are temporary jobs that give college students a short-term work experience in their chosen career field. When the internship or externship ends, the student returns to finish college.  
  
Internships and externships are very similar. They both place students in a professional setting where they can gain valuable insight into what they can expect to experience within the field they have chosen.  But there are some clear differences between the two.  
  
**Duration**  
Internships are longer in duration and can last anywhere from 2-3 months, a semester, and in some cases an entire year. Externships, on the other hand, are for a considerably shorter length of time. Externships can be for just one day, or for a week, allowing students to easily complete externships over a winter or spring break. The shorter time span can also be a benefit in providing more externship opportunities and thus more insights into different work environments.  
  
**Experience**  
Students serving as interns will be given meaningful projects, be assigned responsibilities, and work deadlines and expectations, very similar to what they would expect as a full-time employee. Externships, however, are generally considered job shadowing. The shorter duration of externships is not structured towards more long-term job results but is intended for students to observe, explore and ask questions.   It does not provide the same extensive, hands-on work experience as internships.  
  
**Pay**  
Some internships are unpaid but many offer pay or a stipend for students accepted into the program. Some even include reimbursement for housing and transportation costs. Those that are unpaid will usually offer college credit. Externships are generally unpaid and do not offer college credit. They are intended to give students a short, real-life preview into their career.  
  
**Job Expectations**  
Both students who accept an internship as well as those who complete an externship should not underestimate the value of contacts, mentoring and networking during their experience. However, internships are usually held toward the end of a student's college education. Many companies who advertise for interns include a statement that lets students know they are looking for a long-term commitment. They may even state the percentage of interns who are offered full-time jobs after they graduate. Externships are usually held during the beginning or middle of a student's education. The fact that externships do not assign projects and tasks and are for a much shorter duration are not conducive to receiving any promise of a future job. However, externships can lead to internships within the same company, so externship students should approach this job-shadowing opportunity with the same amount of professionalism and commitment they would demonstrate with an internship.  
 **Conclusion**  
Both internships and externships are great opportunities for students to gain valuable exposure into their chosen profession. They both offer benefits that can help students make good career choices. Students who are able to manage their time well can actually pick and choose a mix of internships and externships that are a good fit for them and receive the best of both worlds.