



INTERNSHIP

# Internship 101

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The secret to a successful internship for your  
company.

[www.isri.org](http://www.isri.org)

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A PROGRAM THAT WORKS

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INTERSHIP MYTHS & TRUTHS

TIPS & TRICKS

RESOURCES

# INTRODUCTION

Discover the intricacies of the Pathways Program, gain a deeper understanding of the hiring process, and access a wealth of resources designed to support you in effectively bringing interns on board. Our aim is to empower you with the knowledge and tools necessary to foster a robust and dynamic workforce within your organization.

As you delve into this guide, we hope that it becomes a valuable companion in your journey towards building a stronger, more resilient workforce for your company. Thank you for entrusting ISRI with workforce and talent pipeline support for your company.



**THE SUSTAINABILITY  
PATHWAYS PROGRAM**

# OVERVIEW

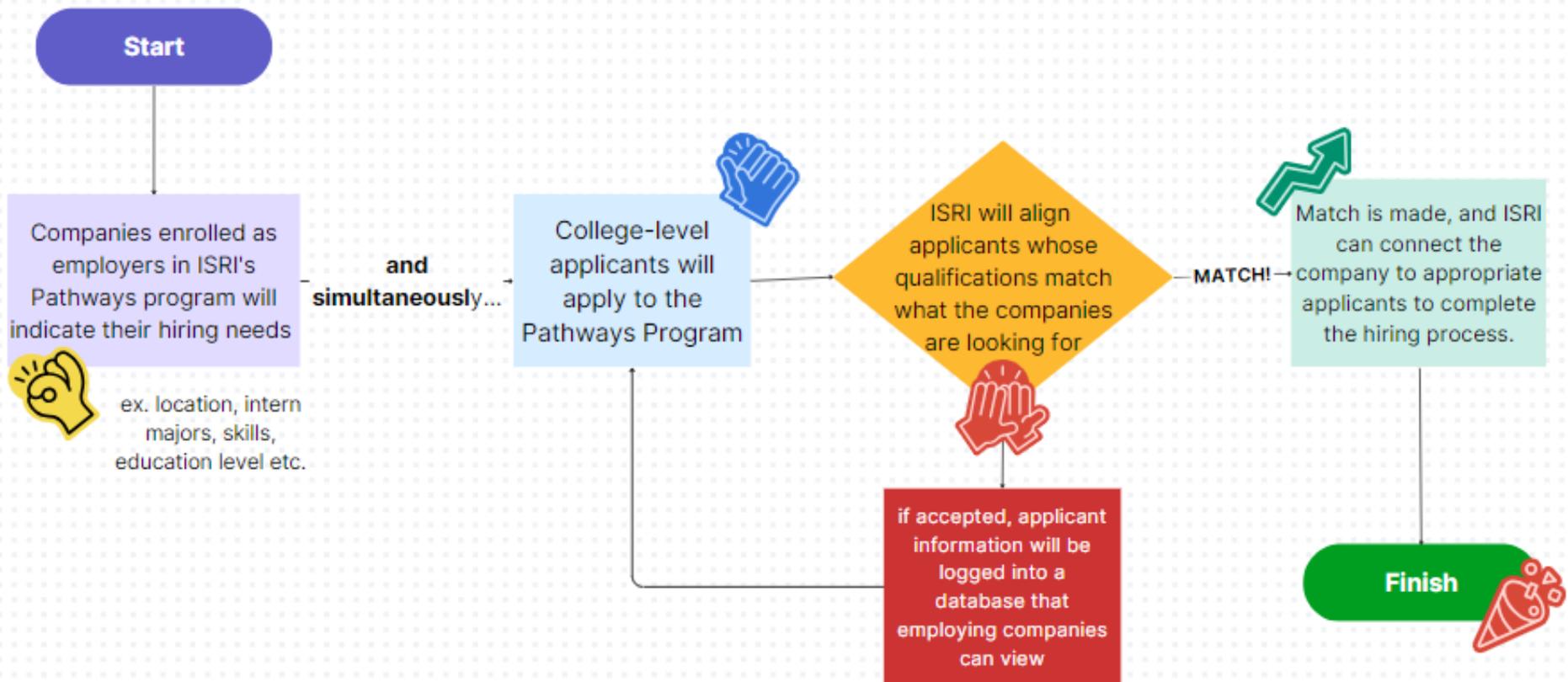
The ISRI Sustainability Pathways Program serves as a valuable resource to **attract talent**, address **workforce needs**, enhance **diversity** initiatives, **bridge critical competency gaps**, and strengthen their **competitive hiring** process.

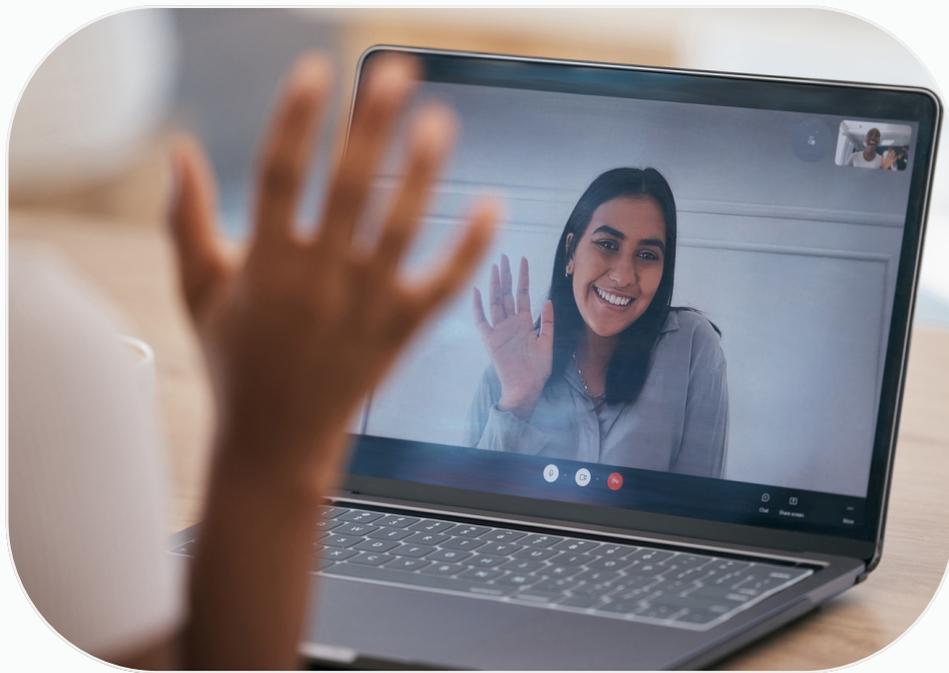
This initiative provides a structured framework for students to engage in meaningful training, receive monetary compensation, and benefit from mentoring opportunities, ultimately paving the way for successful career paths.

Internships within the Pathways Program cater to students who are eager to learn and develop their skills while pursuing their college education, while fellowships are tailored for students within three years of graduation, aiming to immerse them in real-world business experiences. By participating in the ISRI Sustainability Pathways program, companies can invest in their future by discovering and nurturing new talent and potential future leaders.

# Sustainability Pathways

An introduction to the ISRI program





## **STEP 1: INITIAL INTEREST AND CONSULTATION**

Member companies complete a brief initial form, followed by a virtual 30 minute consultation with the Program Coordinator. During this consultation, company representatives can ask questions and articulate their specific workforce requirements. This ensures that the chosen talent seamlessly aligns with their business needs.



## STEP 2: DETAILED APPLICATION AND MATCHING PROCESS

Before welcoming your intern, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with key labor regulations specific to your region, covering things like minimum wage and work hours and clearly communicate these details to your potential interns. If you are feeling lost in the legalese, the Department of Labor's Fair Standards Act's section on Internships is a fantastic go-to reference for all things intern-related compliance. **Resource: [Internship Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)**



## **STEP 3: CANDIDATE SELECTION**

Companies interview pre-vetted candidates, selecting the perfect fit or requesting further recruitment assistance. We will try our best to help seamlessly, identifying additional talent from our database to ensure your needs are met.



## **STEP 4: ONGOING SUPPORT**

Following a successful hire, our Program Coordinator remains by your side. They'll orchestrate quarterly check-in calls between supervisors and interns/fellows, ensuring smooth integration and ongoing support. And if you make the exciting decision to offer a permanent position, don't hesitate to let us know! We celebrate these successes and the lasting impact of Pathways on our member companies.



## **WHY YOU NEED IT:**

**NO MORE** resume swamps or endless candidate searches! Pathways delivers pre-vetted, interview-ready talent right to your inbox, complete with resumes. Say goodbye to time-consuming searches and hello to a streamlined process that saves you precious resources. Plus, you gain access to a diverse pool of talent and help inspire the next generation to join the recycled materials workforce!

Enroll with this short form:

**[ISRI Sustainability Pathways Program](#)**



# HIRING INTERNS STEP BY STEP

# STEP 1: DEFINE THE ROLE:

Creating a structured and interesting role description is crucial to attract ideal candidates! To define the role, ensure detailed responsibilities, highlight desired skills, and state the duration of the role. Clarity ensures applicants align with your needs, setting the stage for a successful experience.

Think about a **concrete long-term project** or two that the intern can start and finish within the duration of the internship and mix that in with **short-term or daily tasks** that support ongoing workflows. This combination allows the intern to receive training from full-time team members and integrate into the overall workforce, while avoiding idle time or overburdening your existing staff, since they will be able to self-direct with their independent project.

Resource: [Guidelines On How To Write a Job Description](#)

# STEP 2: LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

Before welcoming your intern, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with key labor regulations, covering things like minimum wage and work hours and clearly communicate these details to your potential interns.

The Department of Labor's Fair Standards Act's section on Internships is a helpful go-to reference for all things intern-related compliance.

**Resource: [Internship Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)**

# STEP 3: RECRUITMENT PROCESS:

ISRI's Sustainability Pathways Program accelerates your recruitment process, by delivering pre-screened candidates with polished resumes to your inbox. It provides your company the opportunity build a stronger workforce efficiently while streamlining your hiring process.

# STEP 4: CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A STRUCTURED ONBOARDING PLAN

Ensure seamless integration with a thorough onboarding that clarifies policies, immerses the intern in your company's culture, and sets expectations. An internship isn't just about filling a short-term need; it's about cultivating future talent and building strong relationships for your company and the industry's future. A well-organized onboarding process not only accelerates the intern's understanding of their role and your company, but also establishes a positive foundation for their overall internship experience.

In your orientation session introduce them to the company's values, policies, and to their teams, this helps your intern understand the company they are working for. Easy access to essential tools, resources, and training allows them to confidently tackle their responsibilities, but don't just throw them in the deep end! It is important to assign them a mentor who can help provide support, answers to their questions and guidance, this can help to accelerate their integration into your company.

Resource: **[30-60-90 Day Onboarding Plan](#)**

# STEP 5: ENSURE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT WITH REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Clear communication is your best friend. Learn your intern's communication style, ensure that you can communicate with them in a way they can comprehend. Regular scheduled check-ins, at least weekly, are essential to ensure alignment, address challenges, and foster growth. Create a welcoming atmosphere where interns feel valued and part of the team. Ask your intern if there is any accommodation they may need while working at your company, your goal is to allow prevent barriers so your intern can do their best work. Expose interns to diverse departments and professionals, allowing them to learn, connect, and explore future career paths.

# STEP 6: EVALUATE AND RECOGNIZE

When your intern's time at your company concludes, consider ending with a comprehensive final evaluation. Reflect on the intern's achievement, growth, and contributions, their failures, areas to improve and their successes. Show appreciation with a letter of recommendation for their future endeavors. By investing in the intern's future, you demonstrate your commitment to their development and foster a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship. Ask for their candid feedback on the internship, to support your company's growth and continuous improvement as you welcome future interns. Provide your intern with a send-off gathering, celebration or other recognition that is part of your company culture for your permanent employees.

# STEP 7: POST-INTERNSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Staying connected with your interns can create a pool of familiar and valuable talent for future roles. It also benefits them as staying connected opens doors for future collaborations and employment opportunities. By nurturing these relationships and incorporating feedback, you foster a positive reputation as an employee invested in internal growth and satisfaction. This not only strengthens your talent pipeline but also sets your internship program up for long-term success.



**MYTH VS. REALITY**

# MYTH VS. REALITY

**Myth: Internships are primarily for larger organizations with more resources.**

**Reality:** Despite the scale of the organization, smaller businesses can create meaningful and impactful internship experiences that not only benefit the interns but also enrich the company by tapping into fresh perspectives and talents.

**Myth: We can't hire an intern because we don't have a program set up or the ability to maintain one.**

**Reality:** Interns can seamlessly become part of a company's workforce, even without a dedicated internship program. Additionally, the Sustainability Pathways Program can fill many of the same functions for a small company as an internship program within an HR department would for a large company: recruiting candidates, creating regular check-ins, and offering dedicated staff support for challenges or questions that crop up.



# MYTH VS. REALITY

**Myth: Interns can only handle mundane or repetitive tasks and are not equipped to handle more complex responsibilities.**

**Reality:** Interns offer a wealth of fresh perspectives and valuable skills to an organization. Given the opportunity, they can actively contribute to meaningful projects, introducing innovative solutions and providing a unique outlook on tasks and can significantly alleviate the workload, offering valuable support to existing teams.

**Myth: Interns are temporary hires who won't have a lasting impact on the organization.**

**Reality:** Interns have the potential to evolve into valuable long-term assets for companies. By strategically investing in their professional development and providing a positive internship experience, many organizations discover future employees within their pool of former interns.



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# MYTH VS. REALITY

**Myth: Interns take too much investment in time and resources.**

**Reality:** A well-structured internship is indeed an investment in the future of the company. But it is an investment that can pay off in a multitude of ways. Interns not only bring fresh ideas and new capacity to the organization but can also become valuable full-time employees if their experience is positive. Even if they do not become full-time employees themselves, they can be ambassadors and advocates for your company within their own networks. Moreover, companies play a larger role in the recycled materials industry when they hire interns: fulfilling a vital role in educating and mentoring the next generation of professionals, thereby perpetuating knowledge and expertise within the industry. Finally, mentoring an intern is a leadership opportunity for your existing employees, and can support their growth into management roles.



# RESOURCES

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## **1. Department of Labor Fact Sheet on Internships**

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>

This resource provides information and guidelines regarding internships according to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). It outlines the criteria that must be met for an internship to be considered legally compliant, including factors such as the educational nature of the experience, the benefit to the intern, and the absence of immediate advantage to the employer.

## **2. ISRI Guidelines on How to Write a Job Description**

[https://www.isri.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/guidelines-on-how-to-write-a-job-description.pdf?sfvrsn=e2167212\\_2](https://www.isri.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/guidelines-on-how-to-write-a-job-description.pdf?sfvrsn=e2167212_2)

These guidelines offer practical advice and best practices for crafting effective job descriptions within the context of the recycling industry. Job descriptions are crucial for attracting qualified candidates and setting clear expectations for roles within an organization.

# RESOURCES

### **3. ISRI Workforce Development – 90 Day Onboarding Plan**

<https://www.isri.org/workforce-management/workforce-development#gBwdNinetyDay>

### **4. NACE Key Factors to Consider When Setting Intern Salaries**

<https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/internships/key-factors-to-consider-when-setting-intern-salaries/>

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) outlines key factors that organizations should consider when determining intern salaries. This resource helps employers understand the various factors influencing intern compensation, such as industry norms, geographic location, level of education, and specific responsibilities of the internship role.

# RESOURCES

## **5. Guide to Hiring Interns by LinkedIn**

<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/intern-recruitment>

LinkedIn's guide to hiring interns offers insights and advice for attracting and hiring top internship candidates. The guide covers strategies for creating compelling internship job postings, leveraging LinkedIn's recruitment tools, and engaging with candidates throughout the hiring process.

## **6. Internship Programs: A Guide for Employers by Internships.com**

<https://www.internships.com/employer/resources/setup/internship-program>

Internships.com offers a comprehensive guide for employers looking to establish successful internship programs. The guide provides step-by-step instructions for planning, implementing, and evaluating internship programs, along with best practices for engaging and retaining interns.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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