Standards for an Experience to Be Defined as an Internship
(National Association of Colleges and Employers Position Statement, July 2011)

To ensure that an experience - whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually - is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the NACE definition, all the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in 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.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship.

While academic credit legitimizes an unpaid experience, in order to be identified as an internship, that experience must fit the criteria above. For experiences that employers make available only if academic credit is awarded, the college or university's requirements in combination with the criteria laid out above should be used to determine if the experience is a legitimate internship.