



Funding Generations of Progress
Through Research and Scholarships

Vic and Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program

Program Objective and Frequently Asked Questions

This document will assist with answering general questions about the American Floral Endowment's Vic and Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program.

About The Vic and Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program

This program allows students studying horticulture/floriculture the opportunity to intern at a commercial production greenhouse or facility for a period of three, four or six months. Upon completion of their paid internship, the student will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 (three-month), \$4,000 (four-month), or \$6,000 (six month).

History and Objective:

Vic Ball was a well-respected and widely-admired leader in horticulture and floriculture for over sixty years. His unflinching support of the industry took many forms, including his prolific writing about virtually all aspects of horticulture and floriculture worldwide; his role as editor of *Grower Talk* and the *Ball Redbook*; his committed service to industry associations in general and the American Floral Endowment, in particular; and his lifelong interest in education.

In 1992, Vic and Margaret Ball established this internship fund in furtherance of their desire to encourage more students to enter the floriculture industry and in particular, commercial production, to enhance the educational experience of those students by providing the opportunity for a meaningful work internship in the production phase of the floriculture industry.

General Questions:

Why do an internship?

Internships are an important part of gaining the hands-on experience students need to pursue a career in commercial production. While courses taken during college are essential, it's being able to apply this classroom knowledge into real practical situations that is so beneficial. In addition, students who perform an internship while still in college are able to understand more fully the classroom lessons taught. Many of AFE Ball interns have made valuable contacts during their internships and have even been offered employment opportunities after graduation.

Do I get academic credit?

This depends on each institution's policy. Some institutions grant academic credit for performing an internship. Check with the faculty advisor or college administrator.

Do I receive a salary as well as a stipend if I am awarded a Ball Internship?

Yes. Ball Internships are paid internships. Host employers are required to pay an intern at least minimum wage while performing their internship. Upon successful completion of the student's internship (which includes submitting a written report and evaluation to AFE), the student will receive their scholarship payment from AFE.

Application Process:

Who is eligible?

Any students in good standing at a two or four year institution studying horticulture or a related field interested in a career in greenhouse and/or floriculture production are eligible to apply for this internship.

When are applications due?

Applications are reviewed twice yearly by a selection committee. The deadlines for receiving completed applications and supporting materials are March 1 and October 1 each year. Internships can begin at any time throughout the year that works for both the employer and student.

Is the program competitive?

Yes. While we would like to award internships to all qualified students who apply, this is not possible. Therefore, it is important that the application be as complete as possible and that all supporting materials be submitted on time. Students should take their time when completing their application and communicate clearly their future career goals.

How many students apply, and what percent of applicants are accepted?

The size and strength of the applicant pool vary greatly from year to year. In any one review period, an average of 2-5 students will be selected for an internship.

How important are grades to the selection committee?

While the selection committee reviews grades as part of the overall process, it is more important that the student communicate their interest on the application by showing that they are active in the industry through other programs. Review of student grades are only a part of the overall evaluation.

Do I need previous production experience in order to be considered for a Ball Internship?

No. The key goal of this program is to provide students with an opportunity to have hands on experience. The committee looks with particular favor on applicants who have not yet had the opportunity to work in a production greenhouse. With that said, if a student has had prior production experience, this should not deter them from applying – the more hands-on experience a student can gain the better.

What type of classes do I need to take before applying?

Students should have completed several courses related to horticulture before applying for this internship. Classroom experience is needed before performing the internship to apply what they've learned to the actual production experience.

What other factors does the selection committee consider in deciding who will receive a Ball Internship?

The selection committee looks at a variety of things when reviewing applications. First and foremost, the passion and dedication the student has for pursuing a career in commercial production. Students should clearly explain their interest and their career goals on the application. Because not all students who apply are selected, the committee's goal is to award these internships to the students they see as being highly interested in production horticulture, and who will remain in the industry. Preference is given to students who have not had significant work experience in the industry, and to students wishing to perform a six-month internship.

I have a green card, but am not a U.S. citizen. May I apply for a Ball Internship?

No. Only U.S. citizens are eligible for this award.

Can I do the internship for this program after I graduate?

As a program requirement, students must perform their internship prior to graduation, unless the student is moving on to graduate school.

How do I apply?

Students must submit a completed application, signed by their faculty advisor, and submit it to AFE by the March 1 or October 1 deadline, along with one letter of recommendation, and their college transcript. The transcript must be an official transcript.

What role does my advisor play in the application process?

Faculty advisors must sign off on a student's application and usually provide the recommendation letter needed to accompany the application. If the student's application and advisor recommendation are submitted separately, the advisor must sign the application. The faculty advisor's recommendation is a considerable factor in the committee's evaluation of each application.

How and when will I be notified if I have been awarded a Ball Internship?

Shortly after the March 1 and October 1 deadlines, the selection committee reviews and selects the candidates. Students will be contacted by the AFE office within a few weeks to inform them if they have been selected. Those selected will work with the AFE Executive Director on a placement location, which must be outside of the student's home or school location.

The Internship Experience:

What happens after I am notified that I have been awarded a Ball Internship?

AFE will work with each student and faculty advisor to find a location suitable for his or her internship. A location that is beneficial to both the student and the employer is imperative in making this internship a valuable experience.

Are there any guidelines about the kind of establishment where I may do an internship under this program?

The main guideline in selecting a suitable host employer is that the employer be a commercial production location within the United States. The internship also requires that the student perform the internship away

from their home or school location. The selection committee feels that in order to gain the proper experience, the student needs to be on their own and focused on the internship.

Do I have a choice of location and company?

Absolutely. If there is an employer that the student is particularly interested in working with, AFE will do it's best to get the student placed there as long as the host employer is accepting interns at that time. With that said, not all host employers accept interns at during certain times of the year, but AFE will work hard to be sure that the student is placed with an employer that fits their career goals.

Who is responsible for arranging the location of my internship?

AFE's Executive Director will make the arrangements for each internship. This may also involve the student's faculty advisor, to ascertain the location is a good fit for the student's career goals. Once a location is agreed upon by both the student and host employer, a meeting or conference call will be set up between the student and employer to make sure the goals of both the student and employer will be met.

Will I meet my potential employer before beginning an internship?

This depends. If a student wishes to personally meet a host employer prior to them beginning their internship, they are encouraged to do so, but at their own expense. Otherwise a conference call will be set conducted to talk to the host employer about career goals, expectations, start date, etc.

Who pays for my housing during the internship?

The student is responsible for paying for their own housing during the internship. However, host employers will assist a student with finding housing, and in some cases, the host may have housing available for interns.

How long are Ball internships?

Ball interns are for a period of three, four or six month periods. Upon completion of their paid internship, and AFE report requirements, the student will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 (three-month), \$4,000 (four-month), or \$6,000 (six month). Preference is given to students performing a six-month internship.

Can I do a Ball Internship abroad?

No, this program is only for internships within the United States.

Can I get an advance for travel expenses?

Yes. Students can request a travel advance in the amount of \$500 to help cover the expense of getting to their host location. This request must be made in writing to the AFE Executive Director not more than 30 days prior to the start of their internship.

Does my advisor play any role in the actual internship experience?

Absolutely. Students should keep in touch with their faculty advisor during their internship experience. In addition, advisors are encouraged to visit the student at their host location half way through the internship to meet with the student and employer. Advisors will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for their site visit and should submit a written report about their visit with their expense report.

Can I find out the experiences of other students who have done Ball Internships?

As part of the internship requirement, students must complete a written report of their experience prior to receiving their scholarship. AFE posts student reports on the web site that can be viewed – www.endowment.org. Click on the Students at Work Tab.

Requirements after Completing the Internship:

What obligations do I have after successful completion on my internship?

Upon completion of the internship, AFE will be in contact each student and employer. Students are required to submit a written report, and complete a program evaluation prior to receiving their scholarship. In addition, the student's host supervisor will need to submit a completed questionnaire regarding the student, which must also be returned to AFE prior to the scholarship payment being released.

When do I receive my scholarship check?

Once the above mentioned information is received by AFE, the scholarship check will be released within 10 days.

How can I share my internship experience with future interns?

Communication! In addition to the written reports being posted on the AFE website for other students to read, students are encouraged to spread the word at their own institution about this experience, and encourage other students to apply. And follow AFE on Facebook and Twitter – you can share comments or photos during your internship or following your internship.

Other Questions?

There is a wealth of information about the Vic and Margaret Ball Internship Program on the AFE Web site: www.endowment.org.

In addition, please feel free to contact Debi Aker, Executive Director at (703) 838-5211.