



Iconic Future Leaders Internship Program

COMPLETE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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01 | Program Overview & Why It Exists

The Iconic Future Leaders Internship is Iconic Restaurant Group's paid college internship program — a 12-week experience that puts students inside a real restaurant operation. Interns work in a chosen department, train within the IRG Legacy Leadership Institute™ Level 1 certification framework, participate in leadership development curriculum and complete a Leadership Impact Capstone project.

What This Program Is

- A 12-week paid placement in one of three department tracks
- Built on the IRG Legacy Leadership Institute™ Level 1 curriculum — the same foundational framework every new IRG restaurant manager completes with addition leadership development curriculum
- Interns develop department fundamentals alongside the certification framework — real skills, real standards
- Academic credit support available — IRG provides all required documentation
- A direct path to the IRG NextGen Leaders Program (Level 2 track) for strong performers

Why IRG Runs This Program

FOR THE INTERN	FOR IRG
• Real hospitality experience before graduation • Access to the IRG Legacy Leadership Institute™ Level 1 curriculum • Skills developed in an actual operating restaurant — not a classroom • A professional reference from a growing national restaurant group • Academic credit support if needed • A clear path to full-time leadership through the NextGen Leaders Program	• A pipeline to identify future NextGen Leaders • Students motivated to make an impression — fresh energy and perspective • University relationships that build IRG's employer brand • A year-round talent development channel across all four states • The best interns become the best full-time leaders

02 | Who This Program Is For & Career Paths

Prerequisites

- Currently enrolled in an accredited college or university — sophomore standing or above preferred
- Any major welcome — Culinary Arts, Hospitality Management, Business, Marketing, Communications, and beyond
- Available for a minimum of 24 hours per week
- Authorized to work in the United States
- Genuinely interested in the hospitality industry — not just fulfilling a credit requirement

Where This Internship Leads

The Iconic Future Leaders Internship is designed with a clear next step. Three outcomes are available at program completion:

OUTCOME	WHAT IT MEANS
NextGen Leaders Conversion	After completing the 12-week internship, strong performers are eligible to enter the IRG NextGen Leaders Program on the Level 2 certification track. No re-application required. Interns eligible for conversion are identified at the mid-term check-in and confirmed at the final evaluation.
Return Offer	An invitation to return for a future cohort. Best for students earlier in their academic career who would benefit from more experience before the NextGen conversation.
Job Offer	An offer to continue at an assigned IRG restaurant in a seasonal, part-time or full-time capacity while finishing school.

NextGen Leaders Entry

Interns who convert to the NextGen Leaders Program enter on the Level 2 track — IRG Certified Business Leader™. Level 1 fundamentals are behind them. Level 2 is where they grow into department ownership, financial management, and team leadership.

03 | The Three Internship Tracks

Interns select one track at the time of application. This is where they spend the majority of their 12 weeks — building real skills and working toward real roles in that area of the IRG business.

Hospitality & Front of House

Shift Leader · Lead Bartender

What you do	Work real FOH shifts alongside the team · Learn service standards, table management, and hospitality touchpoints · Experience pre-shift meetings, opening, peak service, and close · Assist with guest interactions and recovery situations · Develop bar fundamentals and menu knowledge · Shift Management: applied through pre-shifts, service flow, and closing discipline
Roles this prepares for	Shift Leader · Lead Bartender · First step toward Bar Manager, AGM, or GM in the NextGen Level 2 track
Department fundamentals	Steps of service for the assigned IRG concept · Menu knowledge — food and beverage · Hospitality touchpoints at each stage of the guest journey · Bar basics — product knowledge and execution standards · Opening and closing procedures for the FOH team Pillar 2 (Hospitality & Guest Experience) experienced in real time on every shift · Pillar 3 (Shift Management) applied through pre-shifts, service flow, and closing discipline

Culinary & Kitchen Operations

Lead Line Cook · Lead Prep Cook

What you do	Work alongside the culinary team during prep and service · Learn kitchen hierarchy, communication, and workflow · Practice food safety and hygiene standards · Assist with plating and production · Build speed, consistency, and composure under pressure · Shift Management experienced through BOH execution, timing, and service coordination
Roles this prepares for	Lead Line Cook · Lead Prep Cook · First step toward Sous Chef or Kitchen Manager in the NextGen Level 2 Culinary track
Department fundamentals	IRG menu knowledge — recipes, preparation methods, plating standards · Kitchen mise en place and organization · Food safety and temperature compliance · BOH communication and station management · Receiving and storage procedures

Catering & Events

Catering Lead — BOH or FOH

What you do	Assist in planning and executing catering orders and private events · Help with event-day setup, service, and breakdown · Understand how client relationships are managed from inquiry to follow-up · Work in BOH or FOH capacity based on placement · Learn the logistics that make a catering event run smoothly · Shift Management applied to event production, timeline management, and team coordination
Roles this prepares for	Catering Lead (BOH or FOH) · First step toward Catering Manager or AGM in the NextGen Level 2 track
Department fundamentals	Catering order management — from booking to execution · Event-day production and staffing standards · Off-site service standards for IRG catering events · Client communication and follow-up protocols · BOH and FOH coordination for catered events

04 | Training Framework

IRG Certified Shift Leader™

CURRICULUM AREA	APPLIED TO THE INTERNSHIP
Leadership & Culture Excellence	IRG's leadership identity · Coaching and accountability fundamentals · Culture building basics · What it means to lead a shift versus work one
Hospitality & Guest Experience Excellence	IRG hospitality philosophy · Guest journey standards · Service recovery · What a guest-first mindset looks like in practice across all three tracks
Shift Management Excellence	The 18-Step Shift Leadership System · How a shift is structured and executed · Opening and closing discipline · F.L.A.W.L.E.S.S. execution principles
Brand Identity & Standards	What makes each IRG concept iconic · Brand voice and hospitality standards · How every team member contributes to and protects the brand

05 | Leadership Development Within the Program

The Iconic Future Leaders Internship includes three dedicated leadership development sessions.

1	Month 1: The Power of Mindset	Foundation	· How mindset impacts leadership · Hospitable mindsets · Reframing limiting beliefs that hold leaders back in high-pressure environments
2	Month 2: Building Self-Awareness	Functional Mastery	· The role of self-reflection in leadership · Growing self-awareness · How to reflect-in-action during the chaos of a restaurant shift
3	Month 3: Self-Management	Foundation	· Navigating burnout in hospitality · Investing in continued leadership development · Sustaining professional growth over the long term

06 | Program Structure & Cohort Schedule

The Iconic Future Leaders Internship runs 12 weeks across three cohorts per year. All cohorts follow the same structure. The program has four phases — orientation, home track development, leadership sessions, and the Leadership Impact Capstone — but the specific schedule within each phase is managed by the Manager Coach based on business needs and the participant's progression.

Three Cohorts Per Year

COHORT	APPLICATIONS OPEN	DEADLINE	PROGRAM STARTS
Summer	January 15	March 1	May or June
Fall	June 1	July 15	August
Spring	October 1	November 15	January

Four Program Phases

PHASE	WHAT HAPPENS
Orientation	· IRG brand immersion · Company story, mission, and values · Restaurant concept deep-dive · Systems introduction · HR paperwork and safety training · Manager Coach 1:1 · Internship goals set · Leadership Impact Capstone brief received
Home Track Development	· Work in the chosen track with increasing responsibility · Level 1 curriculum applied through shifts and Coach conversations · Department fundamentals training runs throughout · Mid-term check-in at approximately Week 5 · Capstone topic confirmed
Leadership Sessions	Three dedicated sessions — one per month: The Power of Mindset (Weeks 3–4), Building Self-Awareness (Weeks 6–7), and Self-Management (Weeks 9–10) — each facilitated by the Manager Coach and applied directly to what the intern is experiencing in their track
Leadership Impact Capstone	· Capstone research and development runs through the second half of the program · Presentation delivered in the final two weeks to the Manager Coach and at least one additional IRG leader

07 | Mentorship & Coaching

Every Iconic Future Leaders intern is assigned a Manager Coach on their first day — the person who gives feedback, facilitates leadership sessions, runs evaluations, and makes the return offer or NextGen conversion recommendation.

WHAT THE COACH DOES	WHEN AND HOW
Day-to-day guidance and feedback	Ongoing — after shifts, in the moment, whenever the intern needs it
Level 1 curriculum facilitation	Connects Level 1 content through coaching conversations and shift observation throughout the program
Leadership session delivery	Facilitates all three sessions: The Power of Mindset (Weeks 3–4), Building Self-Awareness (Weeks 6–7), and Self-Management (Weeks 9–10)
Mid-term check-in	Week 5 — documented. Goals reviewed, Capstone topic confirmed, any concerns addressed
Capstone support	Reviews Capstone topic at mid-term, is present at the final presentation, files the summary with the evaluation
Final written evaluation	Final week — covers operations, initiative, and professional character
Return offer recommendation	Made at final evaluation based on the full 12-week performance picture

Executive Mentorship

Lunch & Learn with IRG Executive Leadership

During the internship, participants will attend a Lunch & Learn with one or more members of the IRG Executive team. Interns will have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss their experiences, and gain insight into leadership, career development, and the hospitality industry. This is one of the most valued parts of the program — access to the people who built IRG, in a room small enough to have a real conversation.

IRG Intern Cohort Connection

All active interns across TN, TX, NC, and FL are connected via a shared channel. A mid-program virtual check-in is hosted for all cohorts to share experiences across markets.

08 | Leadership Impact Capstone

What It Is

The Leadership Impact Capstone is a short, focused presentation delivered in the final two weeks based on something the intern actually observed, experienced, or noticed during their 12 weeks at IRG. The format is the intern's choice. What matters is that it is specific, honest, and grounded in real experience — not something they could have produced without doing the internship.

Choose One of Five Project Types

Type 1 — The Guest Experience Observation

You noticed something about how guests felt, what they responded to, or where the experience fell short of what IRG works toward. Describe what you observed, why it matters, and one specific change that could make that moment better.

What to include: Describe the observation with specific detail — what happened, where, how often. Explain what the guest likely experienced. Make one concrete recommendation specific enough that a manager could try it next week.

Type 2 — The Process Improvement

You noticed a workflow, system, or daily process in your track that could run more efficiently or consistently. Describe the current state, what the gap costs the team, and a specific idea for how to fix it.

What to include: Walk through the process as you observed it. Point to the exact moment where something slows down or breaks down. Present your proposed improvement with enough specificity that someone could actually implement it.

Type 3 — The Culture or Team Observation

You noticed something about the team dynamic, communication patterns, or morale at your location — positive or constructive. Reflect on what you observed and what it reveals about what makes a hospitality team work well or struggle.

What to include: Describe a pattern across multiple shifts — not one bad day. If sharing something positive, explain how it could be protected. If sharing something constructive, frame it without naming individuals and pair it with a practical suggestion.

Type 4 — The Before and After Reflection

You came in with assumptions about working in this track. Your project is an honest reflection on what you found instead — what surprised you, what you got wrong, and what that shift means for your career.

What to include: Describe three specific assumptions you had coming in and what you found instead. Then connect it to what you want to do next and why.

On the Capstone

The best projects are not the most polished — they are the most honest. An intern who noticed something real, thought about it carefully, and presents it clearly will always impress more than someone who built a deck full of ideas they could have had without doing the internship.

09 | Compensation

All Iconic Future Leaders interns are paid hourly at \$18 to \$20 per hour — above the current national average for hospitality internships. IRG uses a single flat rate across all four states.

STATE	HOURLY RATE
Tennessee	\$18.00 – \$20.00/hr
Texas	\$18.00 – \$20.00/hr
North Carolina	\$18.00 – \$20.00/hr
Florida	\$18.00 – \$20.00/hr

- \$18–\$20 per hour paid on IRG's regular payroll schedule
- Dining benefits at the assigned IRG restaurant during the placement
- Engagement with the IRG Legacy Leadership Institute™ Level 1 curriculum
- Three dedicated leadership sessions
- Lunch & Learn with one or more members of IRG Executive Leadership
- Formal written evaluation and professional reference from Manager Coach at completion
- IRG program completion confirmation and certification for resume and portfolio use
- Priority consideration for the NextGen Leaders Level 2 track — no re-application required for NextGen conversion offers

10 | Academic Credit

IRG fully supports interns who need academic credit. We work with any accredited institution and provide all standard employer documentation without requiring additional steps from the student.

- A formal Letter of Offer including program description, expected weekly hours, supervisor contact, and learning objectives
- Completion of any university-required learning agreement, site supervisor form, or employer verification documents
- Written confirmation of hours worked and a summary of the intern's responsibilities at program end
- All documentation provided at no cost to the student or university

11 | Return Offer & NextGen Conversion Path

The Iconic Future Leaders Internship is designed with a clear next step. Three outcomes are available at program completion, communicated directly and honestly during the final evaluation.

OUTCOME	WHAT IT MEANS
NextGen Leaders Conversion	A direct offer to enter the IRG NextGen Leaders Program on the Level 2 track following the internship. No re-application required. Available to interns who demonstrate exceptional performance, strong cultural alignment, and genuine leadership potential.
Return Offer	An invitation to return for a future cohort. Best for students earlier in their academic career who want to deepen their experience at IRG before the NextGen conversation.
Part-Time or Seasonal	An offer to continue at the assigned IRG restaurant in a part-time or seasonal capacity while finishing school.

12 | University Partners

IRG distributes internship postings directly to career centers and department contacts at the following schools, selected based on proximity to IRG's restaurant locations and alignment with our three tracks.

MARKET	FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES	COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGES
Nashville /Murfreesboro, TN	• Middle Tennessee State University • Belmont University • Lipscomb University • Vanderbilt University • Tennessee State University	• Nashville State Community College — Randy Rayburn School of Culinary Arts (ACF accredited · built-in internship requirement · PRIORITY) • Volunteer State Community College (Gallatin)
Austin, TX	• University of Texas at Austin • Texas State University (San Marcos — 30 min) • UT San Antonio — Hospitality & Events Management • Texas A&M University	• Austin Community College — Hospitality Management & Meeting/Event Planning (ACBSP accredited) • Central Texas College — Culinary Arts, F&B, Restaurant Management
Outer Banks, NC	• East Carolina University — Greenville (top-ranked NC hospitality · ~126 miles) • Cape Fear Community College — Wilmington	• College of the Albemarle — Elizabeth City (~47 miles · closest local pipeline)
Leesburg, FL	• University of Central Florida — Rosen College of Hospitality Management (~60 mi) • University of Florida — Gainesville (~80 mi)	• Lake-Sumter State College — Leesburg (local · direct pipeline) • Daytona State College — Mori Hosseini College (~90 mi) • Valencia College — Orlando (~60 mi)

13 | Application Process

The Iconic Future Leaders application is designed to be completed in under 30 minutes. It lives on irghospitality.com/careers and is distributed through Handshake, Indeed, LinkedIn, and directly to university career centers.

STEP 1 — ONLINE APPLICATION | irghospitality.com/careers

- Full name, contact information, university, major, and expected graduation date
- Resume — required · Unofficial transcript — optional but encouraged
- Desired cohort (Summer, Fall, or Spring) and preferred state or location
- Track preference — Hospitality & FOH, Culinary & Kitchen Operations, or Catering & Events
- Whether academic credit is being sought — yes or no
- How they heard about the program

STEP 2 — ESSAY (Required · 200–350 words)

"An internship is more than a line on a resume—it is an opportunity to learn, contribute, and grow. Tell us what you hope to learn during your time at IRG, what strengths you will bring to the team, and why the track you selected interests you."

STEP 3 — PHONE SCREEN (15 minutes)

An informal call with an IRG recruiter to confirm availability, answer questions, and make sure the logistics work.

STEP 4 — OFFER & PLACEMENT

Accepted interns receive a formal offer letter with track assignment, restaurant location, start date, and hourly rate. A Letter of Offer for academic credit is provided upon request.