

# **Guidelines for Undergraduate Academic Internships**

(current as of 2/14/1017)

<http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/teaching/guidelines-arts-and-sciences-undergraduate-academic-internships>

## **The Academic Internship**

An academic internship is an approved and monitored work experience of a pre-professional nature that meets specific learning goals and is related to an academic field of study. The work at the internship site under the direction of a site supervisor is only part of the experience. The student is to have a faculty sponsor for the internship who will make the academic assignment for the student to complete.

## **Requirements for Dietrich School Internships**

Students are responsible for locating internships, which are of a pre-professional nature, and are located in academic departments and programs.

## **Learning Agreement**

A Learning Agreement must be completed by Internship Site Supervisors and an appropriate faculty sponsor.

## **Internship Supervisor**

The Internship Site Supervisor is responsible for overseeing the work of the student intern. The site supervisor also provides a description of the learning goals of the internship and the intern's responsibilities to achieve these goals. The Site Supervisor will provide an evaluation of the student's internship performance.

## **Faculty Sponsor**

The student is responsible for locating a full-time A&S faculty member to be his or her faculty sponsor. The academic component of the internship will be defined by the faculty sponsor and will include analytical activities such as reflective journaling, compiling a portfolio, and writing integrative papers. The student and faculty sponsor should meet periodically to discuss the progress of the internship and the academic assignments. The grade for the internship will be determined by the faculty sponsor and will be based on the academic assignment/s completed by the student and the evaluation provided by the internship site supervisor.

## **Earning Credit for Academic Internship**

The credits earned for an academic internship are not tied solely to hours "on the job," but to the amount and type of academic work the student completes during the internship. The academic assignments are due at the end of the term in which the internship is undertaken and will be evaluated by the faculty sponsor.

In these assignments, the student is to reflect on his or her learning at the internship site and integrate this learning with topics or issues from an academic subject area. The academic assignments should also indicate the student's accomplishments while working in the internship as well as areas for his or her future inquiry and study that lead from the experience.

As its name implies, experiential learning is based on activity that is then to be reflected upon. An internship assumes a certain amount of work and time spent at the internship site. The academic assignment must also be commensurate with the number of credits to be earned. The following examples indicate the relationship between the number of hours at an internship site, the academic assignment/s and credits to be earned.

No. of credits to be earned	No. of hours at the internship site	Academic assignment
1 credit	40 hours over the course of the term	Topical paper (5 pages in length) that integrates the intern's experience with selected topics from within an academic discipline, as assigned by the faculty sponsor
2 credits	80 hours over the course of the term	Topical paper (10 pages in length) that integrates the intern's experience with selected topics from within an academic discipline, assigned by the faculty sponsor AND Portfolio containing samples of students work at the internship site OR Reflective journal
3 credits	120 hours over the course of the term	Topical paper (15–20 pages in length) that integrates the intern's experience with selected topics from within an academic discipline, as assigned by the faculty sponsor AND Portfolio containing samples of work at the internship site, includes integrative paper OR Reflective journal

### **To register for Departmental Internship**

It is also possible to register with one's major department using the departmental internship course number. Students should speak with their departmental advisor.

The student must sign a Learning Agreement.

The internship can be for one to three credits, depending on the number of hours per week and on the type and amount of academic work assigned by the faculty sponsor.

Internships are graded as Satisfactory (S) or No Credit (NC).

No more than 12 internship credits can count toward graduation.

Departmental Internships are for credit only. Students should not receive income for the internship while they are earning credit.

### **Integrating Learning from an Internship Experience with Academic Subjects**

**Reflective Journaling**—Students record daily or weekly impressions of the setting, activities, and areas of growth they are experiencing. Journal entries should relate back to the learning

goals and responsibilities that were agreed upon with the site supervisor and recorded in the Learning Agreement. Additionally, the act of creating a written journal of what has been learned assists students in consciously reflecting on their work as interns and integrating their experiences with other learning. Rather than vaguely assimilating skills knowledge, students create an articulated record of their experiences.

**Portfolio**—Students create a portfolio to keep samples of written work, photographs, videos, reports, interview transcripts, summaries, certificates of training, reference letters and other documentation of the internship experience and their contribution to the work of the organization in which they were interns. The portfolio is to illustrate what the student has learned and how his/her skills or knowledge base has expanded through the internship.

**Topical Paper**—A paper to be written at the conclusion of the internship is to integrate the internship experience with one or more topics related to specific courses or other academic interests. Researched references should be cited to support conclusions drawn. The paper is to indicate how the student has integrated the experience with his or her academic knowledge base as well as to identify areas or questions for further exploration. The topics should be selected by the student and faculty sponsor as part of the academic component and listed on the Learning Agreement.