Career Services currently collaborates with academic programs in a student-initiated internship program. Students, with the assistance of the Career Services Center, identify their own internships, create an internship proposal, and are responsible for identifying a sponsoring faculty member. The proposal is then forwarded to the Office of the Dean for final approval and assignment of a course number.

Internships for academic credit are intended to be more than just volunteer hours. Instead, the student works in conjunction with Career Services, site supervisors and their sponsoring faculty member to identify a set of learning objectives and outcomes that directly tie the experience to their academic program.

In some cases, students may pursue not-for-credit internships. In this situation, Career Services serves as the sponsor and assists the student with the identification of both learning objectives and outcomes.

INTERNSHIPS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an internship?
An internship is a structured work experience that combines academic learning and career exploration in a professional work environment.

What are the benefits of participating in an internship?
Internships provide many benefits. They allow students to complement their academic programs with practical experiences. They let students explore a career area or place of work. They can teach new skills, build up contacts for the future, and are a valuable addition to any resume when students look for a job or admission to a professional or graduate school.

How do I find the internship I want?
The Career Services Center is a good place to begin. You should plan for an internship well in advance, ideally early in the preceding semester. Students find information about opportunities by using CATlink and investigating links on the Career Services Center website (http://careerservices.ucmerced.edu), bulletin board postings, and e-mails. They also learn about internships by talking with other students.

How much time do I need for an internship?
In general, an internship takes at least as much time as a regular course. The number of hours required in the field, reading and writing assignments, plus commuting time, add up to a significant time commitment. Blocks of time must be available to accommodate an internship. Final work schedules are arranged between the intern and the internship field supervisor.

What about transportation?
Interns use personal vehicles, public transit or Cat Tracks to reach sites throughout the Merced area.

Can I get paid while receiving academic credit for an internship?
Yes.

Can I be granted credit for an internship I did in the past?
Students receive credit for the combination of on-site work and a concurrent academic component. Because both must occur simultaneously, students cannot be granted retroactive credit for internships completed in a previous semester.

Is there any benefit in taking an internship for credit rather than just for experience?
Yes - internships taken for academic credit give students access to the support of a professor ("faculty sponsor") who can help them get the most out of an internship experience. Students are required to identify what they want to learn, and the site has to agree to offer them these opportunities.

How do I find a faculty sponsor?

- Approach someone you have had a class with.
- Ask friends for recommendations of professors they have had. Word of mouth is valuable-ask around. Some advisors may be willing to point you in the right direction but not all. They don't have to, so ask nicely!
- Go to office hours and try your luck.

What is a quality internship?

Quality internships involve work on specific projects or programs that provides an opportunity for professional growth and enhances your skill development. They also provide an opportunity to work closely with a professional who will take an interest in what you do, as well as, provide insight about yourself and the nature of the work/industry.

Learning Agreement

Overview

An internship's learning agreement is like a map of an internship. It consists of three parts:

1. A summary of what the intern hopes to learn from the internship (the "learning goals")
2. The activities, tasks and projects by which the goals will be met
3. The means of evaluating and assessing the intern's progress towards the goals

Written learning agreements are required for all academic credit internships and are highly recommended even for students considering non-credit internships. They add structure to the experience, and are valuable in that students are more likely to achieve learning goals when they know what they are. They can also be used in supervision sessions to check on progress.

Learning Goals

Articulating what you want to learn from an internship requires some thought. It's a good idea to:

- Begin with a general idea of what you want to learn, then,
- Refine and develop this idea through discussions with your internship supervisor and faculty sponsor, then
- Write down the results of this process as a number of discrete learning goals

Questions that might help you get started on the process of identifying learning goals are "Why do I want this internship?" "What do I want to learn from it?" More specific questions that might help you identify your learning goals are:

- Do I want to develop new knowledge for myself, such as how to use a new computer program, or how a marketing plan is created?
- Am I keen to enhance my skills, such as teamwork or advertising layout, or proficiency with a computer program I've used a few times?
- Do I want to see what it is like to work in a specific sort of setting, such as a multi-national corporation, or a suburban branch office?
- Do I want the opportunity to see how what I've learned in class is used in the world of work?

When you have answers to some of these questions, try writing three or four sentences beginning with "From this internship I want to learn ..." These are your learning goals.

Activities, tasks and projects

After you have identified your learning goals, the next step is to work out how these can be reached. This involves identifying the sorts of experiences and tasks that are available at the internship site, and seeing how they connect with your goals, through discussions with your site supervisor. The following suggestions should help you identify how you will meet your goals:

- Discuss with the site supervisor what you hope to learn, and find out what tasks and projects you will have during the internship.
- Find out how you will be expected to learn - will you work beside staff members, or shadow a worker, or be responsible for a specific project?
- Keep asking about the tasks and daily activities so that both you and your site supervisor have a shared understanding of what is to be done, and how, and include these activities in your learning proposal.

Evaluation of the internship

Your faculty sponsor will make the final assessment of your performance, based on the outcomes of the internship and the site supervisor's evaluation of the intern's performance. You should discuss assessment requirements and processes with your faculty sponsor before the internship begins so that you know what is expected of you.

Requirements vary from sponsor to sponsor, and differ according to the number of credits for which the internship has been registered. Many students are required to keep a journal in which they record both their activities and their reflections on these activities, and on the whole internship process; journal entries may be required regularly by the faculty sponsor, who will probably return comment and feedback to you. Increasingly journal entries are submitted and responded to via email.

Some interns are asked to compile a portfolio of work completed; others may complete a report, produce a film clip, or design a poster. Sometimes an academic paper is required to demonstrate the linking of theory to the practices of the internship. Methods of evaluation and assessment, and criteria for success should be included in the learning proposal. You should check with your sponsor throughout the internship to make sure you are meeting her/his expectations.

Intern's Responsibilities for a Successful Internship

You have a crucial part to play in ensuring the success of your internship, and you must be prepared to be proactive and use your initiative to ensure that it runs smoothly. It is your responsibility to:

- Prepare an appropriate Learning Agreement
- Register for the internship
- Be punctual, and work the required number of hours, at times agreed to by you and your supervisor
- Notify the workplace if you are unable to attend as planned
- Behave and dress appropriately to the particular workplace
- Respect the confidentiality of the workplace, its clients and its workers
- Check out responsibilities at the work site with the supervisor, and make sure you know what you are expected to do, and how you should behave
- Be positive and enthusiastic about the internship; if things are slow, take the initiative, and volunteer for different tasks or other work.
- Discuss any problems with your supervisor and, if necessary, with the faculty sponsor and the Career Services Center staff
- Remember that you are both a guest of the organization, and a representative of the University, and behave appropriately

UC Merced School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Academic Internship Learning Work Plan

Student Name: _____ UCM ID#: _____

Student Email: _____ Faculty Sponsor: _____

Student Major/Minor: _____ Class Level: _____

Semester Internship Undertaken: _____ Hours per week: _____

Start date: ___/___/___ End date:___/___/___

Is this position paid? _____

Internship Site: _____

Site Supervisor: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Student and Site Supervisor to Complete

Position Description:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Independent study form submitted _____ by _____

UC Merced School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Academic Internship Learning Work Plan

To be completed by student and faculty member prior to the beginning of the internship experience.

Learning Objective/Outcome (What I intend to learn)	**Strategies** (How objective/outcome will be achieved)	**Evaluation Methods** (How my progress for each objective will be measured)

Faculty to Complete

Means of evaluation for final grade: List below the journal, readings, projects and/or papers which will be required. Include a due date for each assignment. These assignments must be agreed upon between the student and faculty.

Assignment	**Due Date**

Does faculty sponsor plan to do a site visit? _____

Faculty signature: _____ Date: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

SSHA Office of the Dean Designee: _____ Date: _____

Career Services Designee: _____ Date: _____

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Independent study form submitted _____ by _____

UC Merced School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Academic Internship Information and Guidelines

The primary goal of an internship is to assist the student in applying concepts and skills acquired in his or her academic program to the work situation, to acquire job related competencies not available within the university environment and to gain work experiences through the relationships and responsibilities encountered on the job.

Eligibility

1. The student must be in good academic standing and have completed at least one semester at UC Merced. Advanced standing is preferred.
2. The student must be enrolled at the time of the internship. For summer internships, students must enroll in summer session.
3. The student should have sufficient academic background to undertake the internship. In cases of internships taken towards the academic major, students should have completed at least one upper division courses in the area or other work as required by the faculty sponsor.

Guidelines

1. Academic credit is granted as a 196 course with variable units. The value is determined by the number of hours worked during a semester:
   1 unit=48 hours
   2 units=96 hours
   3 units=144 hours
   4 units=192 hours
2. Internship experiences will include a significant written component, to be arranged with the sponsoring faculty member. The nature of the written component will vary by internship, discipline and faculty sponsor.
3. Course is offered as P/NP grading option only.

Policies and Procedures

1. Secure an internship. *Please visit the Career Services Center in the Kolligian Library, Suite 127 for further assistance.*
2. Submit a completed *Academic Internship Learning Work Plan*, *Internship Acceptance Letter* and *Independent Study Form* to the SSHA Office of the Dean by the end of WEEK 1 of instruction. Note: Though your proposal will be reviewed, you will not be permitted to enroll in academic units until your acceptance letter is received. If you will not have this by the end of the first week, submit the remainder of your documentation to SSHA.
3. Upon approval of your proposal, you will be notified via email and asked to:
   a. Submit your independent study form to the Office of the Registrar to enroll in your units (subject to all course enrollment policies and deadlines).
   b. Obtain site supervisor's signature and submit *Learning Work Plan* to Career Services by the end of week 4 of instruction.

Application Timelines

As internship proposals should be given a great deal of thought and consideration, planning should begin well before the registration period for the semester in which the internship will be

performed. A student can only register for an internship with approval of the faculty sponsor and the Office of the Dean.

End of WEEK 1 of instruction	*Learning Work Plan*, *Letter of Acceptance* and *Independent Study Form*, signed by student and faculty sponsor, submitted to SSHA Advising (COB 223)
End of WEEK 4 of instruction	Student notified of decision; submits *Independent Study Form* to the Office of the Registrar. *Learning Work Plan*, with all signatures, submitted to Career Services.
Throughout semester	Students completes hours and maintains contact with faculty sponsor as required.
Last week of instruction	Student submits all materials to the faculty sponsor and completes internship evaluations as required by Career Services. Faculty submits final grade and completes internship evaluations as required by Career Services.