Faculty Guide for Credit-Bearing Internships

Guide Content:

The purpose of this guide is to help you, the faculty member, to establish and manage for-credit internships. The guide includes suggestions of best practices and sample agreements to use to put the for-credit internship in place.

Before beginning a for-credit internship, faculty and students should take time to consider both the academic and legal aspects of internships. Most internships take place off campus, in organizations which may be public, private, for-profit, or not-for-profit, which creates some additional liability considerations. Ordinarily, the student, university, and the internship site enter into an agreement that sets out the parameters of the internship. In CAL use the Affiliation Agreement form. This must be signed by the employer (Facility) and turned into the CAL Dean’s Office for processing. This is only needed when performing a for-credit internship.

When planning a for-credit internship, keep the following in mind:

- Duties and responsibilities of the student, the internship site, and the university should be very clearly defined and described in the agreement. Setting out clear expectations for the student and for the site, in advance of the internship, will lead to better results. When in doubt, err on the side of including more detail.
- It’s not a good idea to rely on an oral agreement for an internship. Writing out the agreement, and setting expectations in advance, will lead to fewer headaches if things don’t work out.
- The agreement must include a requirement for the site to carry general and professional liability insurance, in order to help protect the student from liability to which he or she may be exposed as part of the internship.
- At all times students are subject to university rules and regulations, including the Honor Code, when working in an internship.
- Because a for-credit internship is a program of the university, it will be subject to Civil Rights laws.

Background

Experiential Learning is an umbrella concept that includes many different methods that enable students to earn academic credit for learning beyond the classroom. Methods include service-learning and other volunteer activities, study abroad, field studies, and internships. This document addresses credit-bearing internships. Internships enhance student learning in a variety of ways. Internships give students the chance to develop an understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. Internships introduce students to the work environment and provide them with opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities. Internships also serve as a catalyst for personal growth. Completing an internship can help students clarify career and educational goals.
Internship Guidelines and Agreements
Internships are more successful when combined with scheduled meetings with an internship advisor or faculty sponsor. Structured, written reflections submitted on a regular basis help to synthesize what students learn from the experience and how it relates to their academic field of study. Evaluation should be based on what students learn, not just what they do at the internship site. Some majors require them, but most students can benefit from completing an internship at some point during their college years.
Internships are a wonderful way for students to make connections between their course work and the world where their knowledge, skills and abilities will be applied after graduation. Any internship that is part of a course of study must include at minimum the following:

A signed academic agreement between the student and the supervising faculty member, incorporating an academic syllabus for the internship is required.

A signed Credit Bearing Internship Agreement between the student, the internship site, and the supervising faculty member or departmental designee, to be retained with the student’s departmental file.

Forty-five internship hours is the minimum standard for one credit set by ABOR. Department requirements for hours and other course responsibilities should be noted in the written student agreement.