The University of Southern Maine
Lewiston-Auburn College

INTERNSHIP MANUAL
LAC 447
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THE INTERNSHIP

Welcome to the Internship!

The purpose of this manual is to help you maximize your learning experience in the internship. In order to ensure that you have a successful internship, it is important that you understand your roles and responsibilities, as well as those of your site supervisor, faculty advisor, and the Internship Professor.

Doing an internship is an integral part of the LAC experience. Its main purpose is to help you transition from being a student to acquiring a professional position in a field of your choice or advancing in your field - whether that includes graduate school, paid work in your chosen field, and/or volunteer work. To that end, completing the internship can be a highly effective way to achieve your personal and professional goals. As an intern, you will have the opportunity to apply key learning concepts acquired in the classroom to real work environments, further enhancing your learning experience. The internship can also help you learn more about your career choice and help you confirm your career decision. Additionally, your internship can give you invaluable opportunities to create powerful professional networks. Many students report that their internship has been one of the most valuable learning experiences they have had at LAC!

Because the internship can give you the opportunity to significantly advance your career goals, it is important that you carefully select your internship site so that you can learn valuable skills and acquire important knowledge related to your field of choice. Some students are even hired by their internship organizations when both student and organization see that there is an excellent fit. To that end, you should view your internship as a unique opportunity to prepare you for your role as a professional after graduation or completion of graduate school. If you are already in a professional role but plan to change fields, the internship can help you gain the skills needed to make that transition.

As one of the goals of the internship is to help you transition to or advance in professional life, you will be expected to learn and implement those behaviors expected of professionals, including adherence to deadlines, conducting yourself in a professional manner with respect to dress and communication, and honoring commitments.

All LAC students are required, as part of their program, to do a 3-credit hour internship. Some elect to do more credit hours (up to 6) after seeking approval from their faculty advisors. Rarely, a student may find the internship unnecessary if he or she is already working as a professional in his or her field of choice. If this applies to you, you should see your faculty advisor to determine if a course waiver is appropriate. To request a waiver, you must submit a formal letter stating your reasons you believe the waiver is justified and a copy of your résumé to your faculty advisor. If you work full time and are unsure as to how you can do an internship, meet with the Internship Coordinator to discuss how you can work out a beneficial arrangement. This is not a reason to waive your internship!

As you read this manual, make note of any questions you may have and contact the Internship Coordinator to discuss these questions. As you plan for and participate in your internship, you may find it helpful to meet with the Internship Coordinator often. Students are encouraged to meet with her as frequently as they wish in order to ensure that they have a successful internship experience.
PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNSHIP

You must register for your internship and can do so in the fall, spring or summer. All students in an LAC Major are required to do a minimum of a 3 credit hour internship, which consists of 120 hours of work at the work site (or approximately 10-12 hours per week throughout the semester) and completion of several online assignments. Read the syllabus carefully to get information on the required assignments, each of which has specific instructions for completion that can be found on the Blackboard site. Assignments that are not completed according to their instructions will be returned for revision. This manual will guide you on how to implement your field time only. Use the syllabus to guide you on the written assignments.

It is highly recommended that you complete your internship in the semester in which you are registered; however, you are permitted two semesters to complete it. You may, with the approval of your faculty advisor, elect to do 1-3 additional credit hours for up to a total of 6. If you are doing 6 credit hours, you can register for these additional credits all in one semester or do two separate internships in different semesters. You may choose to do all 6 credit hours at one site or at two different sites. If you plan to do additional credit hours, please discuss this with the faculty advisor before registering. Each credit hour beyond 3 requires an additional 40 hours in the field. It is wise to consult with your faculty advisor regarding realistic time frames for completion of the internship. Doing an internship entails making a time commitment of at least 8 hours in the field per week. Give careful thought to your workload before you decide to register.

The Career Development Series (LAC 269 and 413) works in tandem with the internship to provide you with a comprehensive learning experience to prepare you to transition from student to graduate student or working professional in your field of choice, or advancement in that field. During these seminars, students conduct self-assessments, learn about careers of interest and the world of work, and learn job search strategies. You must complete both career development courses prior to doing the internship, as these courses are designed to help you maximize your opportunity to obtain an internship that will help you further your career goals and achieve your aspirations. You may wish to wait a semester or two after completing 413 in order to gather more information needed to determine what will be the best internship experience for you.

There are a number of important procedures that must be followed correctly throughout the internship to ensure that students present themselves in the most professional manner. Please refer to the check-list included with this manual, and follow it carefully.

The Internship Learning Contract
In order to have the best possible learning experience in your internship, it is important to start out with a plan for what you want to learn. Therefore, before you begin your internship, you must complete the Internship Learning Contract, which is done in two stages. The first includes your overall goal and supporting outcomes (Learning Contract Part One). The second includes the overall goal, outcomes, and adds the specific activities you will engage in (Learning Contract Part Two). The Internship Professor must approve and grade Learning Contract Part One – overall goal and outcomes – before you choose and contact a site or supervisor. You will complete the specific activities with your site supervisor after you have established and confirmed a site. This should be a collaborative activity shared by you and your supervisor, as he/she is likely to have excellent ideas about the various activities you can engage in that will support your learning.
When considering goals and outcomes, determine what is the most important thing you would like to learn from your internship. Some students find it helpful to ask themselves the question, “What do I need to know or be able to do in order to transition to/advance in my next step after college?” The answer to this becomes your overall goal. You may wish to confirm your interest in becoming a substance abuse counselor and acquire basic skills needed for that field, or confirm your interest in becoming an occupational therapist.

**Examples of goals could be:**
- Confirm my interest in becoming a social worker and possess skills for an entry level position
- Know the functions of a human resources professional and possess basic skills to enter the field
- Know and be able to use skills used by journalists

After you have written your overall goal, you will then create supporting outcomes. These outcomes are those things you want to have done at the completion of your internship and must be accomplished in order to meet your goal. They fall into two categories: knowledge-based and skill-based. For example if your overall goal is to know the functions of a human resources professional and possess basic skills to enter the field, one important outcome might be to be able to describe how the various functions of a human resources department serve employee needs. Another outcome might be to be able to describe the basic skills and values needed to be an effective human resources generalist. Since this goal also includes possessing basic skills, other outcomes might be to be able to co-conduct an employee orientation, interview and evaluate job applicants and assist employees in filling out benefits forms.

**Examples of learning outcomes could be:**

Knowledge-based or “knowing about” something
- Be able to describe the various functions of a human resources generalist
- Be able to describe the process for conducting IEP’s
- Be able to list documentation required for treating substance abuse clients

Skill-based or “knowing how to do something”
- Be able to create and teach a lesson plan
- Be able to perform the administrative duties of a day care center owner, including hiring teachers, scheduling, and billing
- Be able to complete an intake interview
- Be able to conduct a survey
- Be able to design a brochure

*It is very important in creating your goals and outcomes to think about whether you want your internship to help you acquire knowledge and/or develop skills.* Most internships should focus on both, but a strong focus on skill development will help you bolster your resume and convince future employers that you have the capabilities to enter your chosen professional career.

Should you have difficulty writing your Learning Contract, arrange a meeting with the Internship Coordinator. She can help you identify your overall learning goal and the desirable outcomes for your internship. If you are having difficulty writing your Learning Contract because you lack sufficient knowledge about the field of possible interest, she may recommend you do some additional informational interviews or research the field (tasks performed, skills used) on O*Net. They can be very helpful in helping students clarify their desired
learning. If you are having difficulty choosing a career, you should seek career counseling from a faculty advisor in Student Success before registering for Internship.

Please note: Although you may speak generally with potential internship site supervisors about doing an internship, please do not approach them about doing your internship at their sites until after your Learning Contract has been approved and graded by the Internship Professor. This guideline will ensure you are clear about your learning needs and communicate them in a highly professional manner that will also help the potential supervisor know specifically what you want to learn.

You can start the process of writing your Learning Contract any time; you do not need to wait until the start of the semester in which you are enrolled. In fact, starting early will allow you the best chance of completing your internship within one semester. Many students, therefore, find it helpful to do all of the required preliminary work (meeting with the Internship Coordinator writing a Learning Contract and getting approval, securing an internship site, finalizing the Learning Contract, and conducting the site visit) before the beginning of the semester so that they can start their field time week one of the semester. If the Blackboard site for the semester in which you enrolled is not yet up, send your Learning Contract and the other pre-site visit documents to the Internship Coordinator via e-mail. Be sure, however, that you post them to Blackboard once the site is up, so that you get the appropriate points.

The Initial Meeting with the Internship Professor
After you have finalized and posted your initial Learning Contract to Blackboard and no later than two weeks after the start of the semester, you will have a face-to-face meeting or phone/Skype conference with the Internship Professor, who will do a brief interview to get to know you. You are responsible for setting this meeting up. During this meeting, she will also review your Learning Contract Part 1 and discuss possible internship sites with you. It’s helpful to come to this meeting with some ideas about where you want to do your internship. Use your network, LinkedIn, or conduct a search to identify possible sites. If you are unsure as to where you want to do your internship, she will provide you with ideas and contacts, if available.

Meeting with the Site Supervisor and Completing Internship Documents
After the Learning Contract Part 1 is approved and a site has been identified, you will then meet with the prospective site supervisor to see if the goal and outcomes on the Learning Contract can be met at his/her organization. If the site supervisor assures you that he/she can provide you with appropriate activities to acquire the skills and knowledge on your Learning Contract and agrees to supervise you in helping you implement your Learning Contract, you can confirm the internship. At this meeting (or a follow up meeting) with the site supervisor, you and the supervisor should identify the specific activities that will help you accomplish your outcomes, and write them on the Learning Contract form (Learning Contract Part 2 above) For example, if one outcome is to be able to describe the various functions of a human resources generalist, one activity could be to interview members of the human resources staff who serve different functions. Another activity could be to make observations of staff activities and keep a journal. If one of your outcomes is to be able to create and teach a lesson plan, specific activities could be to read other teachers’ lessons plans, write a draft lesson plan and get feedback, observe three teachers delivering lesson plans, and finally, deliver a lesson plan. It is important for you and your supervisor to consider and include all the activities you think are necessary to accomplish each outcome.
It is important to be very specific in writing these activities. Think of them as a “to do” list. Examples of activities include such things as:

- Interview the director and other key staff to learn their roles and responsibilities
- Attend training workshop on budgeting
- Write a report on federal-funding sources
- Design a brochure for the fall event
- Co-facilitate the affected others support group
- Design training exercises for employee orientation

Activities need to be clear, specific and measurable. Avoid using words like “learn” and "understand" because they are not measurable. Use verbs for your activities that specify exactly what you will be doing.

Once you and your supervisor have agreed to your activities, both of you should sign your Learning Contract Part 2. The Internship Agreement Form should be filled out by you and signed by the person responsible for authorizing the internship, usually your supervisor. Once both are signed, they should be scanned and posted to Blackboard in the appropriate assignment sections.

Prior to the site visit, you should also complete the Plan of Action (POA), on which you list your due dates for all of your assignments. Instructions for completing this, as well as all pre-site visit documents, can be found in the syllabus and on Blackboard.

Sometimes students find they need to or want to make changes to their Learning Contract during the internship. If you want to make revisions, you should first discuss them with your supervisor. You should then make the revisions and have your supervisor initial the changes. Post the revised version to Blackboard.

The Site Visit
After you have met with the site supervisor, (s)he has agreed to supervise your internship, and you have scanned and posted your signed Learning Contract Part 2 and signed Agreement Form, and completed and posted your Plan Of Action, please inform the Internship Coordinator that you are ready for a site visit or Skype/phone conference call (you will need a speaker phone). It is your responsibility to set up this meeting. Allow 48 hours after your documents are posted for a reply. They need to be reviewed and graded before the site visit can occur. In the meantime, get several possible times from the site supervisor and e-mail them to the Internship Coordinator who will then confirm a definite time.

Note: Although the Learning Contract Part 2 each, Agreement Form, and Plan of Action Form can be found in the Forms and Assignments tabs on Blackboard, use the Assignment tab to access the forms and instructions on how to complete them. Read the assignments carefully to make sure you are completing these forms properly. Post them to Blackboard through the Assignment tab.

The site visit normally takes half an hour. You, your supervisor, the Internship Coordinator and any other person highly involved with your internship will discuss the internship procedures. You and your supervisor must be together at the same location during the site visit. During this meeting, which is conducted on-site, by Skype, or by phone conference, the Internship Coordinator will go over administrative procedures. She will review your schedule and ask your supervisor to meet with you weekly. She will set up separate meetings for mid-way through the internship to speak with the supervisor by phone to monitor your work progress and
address any concerns. She will also arrange to meet with you via Skype after the discussion with the supervisor to review your progress. She will also discuss the evaluation process with the site supervisor, who will be asked to provide a written evaluation of your performance by completing a standardized evaluation form (found under Forms on Blackboard) and a letter on letterhead stationary summarizing your overall performance, addressing important career related performance.

After going over administrative procedures, you will review your Learning Contract Part 2 with everyone participating in the site visit. To that end, you will lead this part of the meeting. Please make sure you have a paper copy of your Learning Contract Part 2 for each person at the meeting. It is important that everyone involved in your internship has read your Learning Contract Part 2 and agrees to support your learning needs.

**Working with Your Site Supervisor**
The site supervisor oversees your work at the site, meeting with you weekly to give you the supervision and guidance you need. It is important to remember that taking on an intern entails some extra responsibility and work for the site supervisor. However, an intern can undertake a special project or provide assistance with a heavy workload, which can significantly benefit the organization. The site supervisor may require you to be flexible, as well as willing to do occasional basic or routine tasks. This is reasonable as long as you meet your learning goals and outcomes. Recent rules established by the Department of Labor require organizations to pay interns for their work unless it can be established that the primary focus of the internship is on student learning. Most of our internship sites are small organizations unable to pay interns, but who willingly provide excellent supervised learning opportunities. If you are being asked to perform a lot of time-consuming and mundane tasks unrelated to your learning needs, such as making copies, making routine phone calls, or assembling materials, you should speak with your supervisor. Please also let the Internship Coordinator know. You are there to learn important skills and acquire knowledge, and your internship site must be in compliance with Department of Labor rules.

To help your site supervisor understand and carry out his/her role, give him/her a copy of the Guidelines for Internship Supervisors (found under Forms on our web site as well as the Blackboard site).

**Your Schedule and Responsibilities**

Schedule of Hours:
Before the site visit, you should discuss and confirm the schedule of hours you intend to be on-site, and your start and end dates with your site supervisor. You should be as specific as possible. These should be included on the Internship Agreement Form. Some supervisors will suggest a flexible schedule to enable you to gain the broad-based experience that comes from participating in different things that occur at different times. Others will suggest and prefer a standard schedule to make your time there more predictable for them. Although you may have a very busy schedule, do your best to accommodate their wishes. You will benefit more from your internship if you can be on site when they feel it is best. Although we have set the minimum number of on-site hours per week at 8 to accommodate the busy schedules of our students, research suggests that students obtain the most benefit from their internships when they spend a minimum of 10 hours per week on site. Interns who are present for at least 8 hours per week have higher levels of visibility, and supervisors are more likely to invest time in training and guiding them.
Training Programs/Conferences:
Occasionally you may be asked to participate in a training program or conference prior to, or as part of, your internship. This may be necessary to gain the knowledge and skills needed to do the work. As the goal of the internship is to gain field vs. classroom, experience, we limit the number of training hours you can count towards fulfilling your internship requirements to 20 for a 3 credit hour internship. *Training hours beyond 20 cannot be included as part of your field time.*

Work at Home:
Supervisors may allow you to do some of the work for your internship at home if the nature of the work permits this. However, since the goal of the internship is to be on site, learning about the workplace, *no more than 20 hours can be completed at home towards fulfilling the requirements of the internship* for a 3 credit hour internship.

*No more than a total of 20 hours of off-site training, work at home, conferences or other off site activities may be included as part of the 120 required field hours* for a 3 credit hour internship.

Punctuality:
*You are expected to start and complete your internship within the agreed time frames. Deviations from this plan must be approved by the site supervisor and Internship Coordinator.* You should approach your responsibilities in the internship as though you were in a paid position. Therefore, you are expected to arrive at the site on time and remain until the agreed time of departure on the days you are on site. It is important to remember that you have made a commitment to be part of the organization’s work team, and you should honor that commitment as you would in any professional work environment. Inform your supervisor if you are sick or have an emergency and cannot work, giving him/her as much notice as possible.

Changes in Internship Plans:
In rare circumstances, an internship may not work out and you may wish to leave. This can occur for a number of reasons. *You must discuss your desire to leave with the Internship Professor before telling your supervisor you intend to leave.* The Internship Professor will discuss options and help you prepare a strategy to cope with the problem. If the problem focuses on conflict, it should be understood that conflict is a natural part of working relationships; every effort must be made to resolve the conflict before approval to terminate the internship will be granted. Much of the valuable learning that takes place in an internship, such as dealing with conflict, can provide learning beyond your personal goals and outcomes, often in positive and unpredictable ways.

Organization’s Policies:
It is important that you present yourself professionally at all times. Adhere to all dress codes and other policies and practices while on site. Please keep in mind that you are a representative of LAC. Conducting yourself in a professional manner creates a positive impression of you and the college you represent.

**The Internship Seminar and Written Assignments**
As a student enrolled in the internship, you will complete written assignments that will help you reflect on your learning experience and deepen your understanding of organizational life. Please see the syllabus for more information.
Meeting and Skype/Phone Conference with the Internship Professor and Internship Coordinator
You will meet face to face with the Internship Professor, via Skype or via phone (only if a face-to-face or Skype meeting is impossible) for two meetings, each taking 15 – 30 minutes. They include the initial meeting and the final debrief meeting (conducted at the end of the internship, after you have turned in all of your assignments and conducted your final presentation). During the debrief meeting, you will discuss your internship experience and your future plans. Please bring a copy of your Transition Plan to that meeting. Prior to that meeting, please be sure that all of your assignments are posted and graded, including the revised Plan of Action with actual dates. See the assignment for instructions. After the final debrief, please also complete the web based Internship Evaluation form. The link can be found in the Forms section on Blackboard.

You will meet with the Internship Coordinator via face-to-face, via Skype or via phone (only if face-to-face or Skype meeting is impossible) for two meetings, each taking 15 – 30 minutes. They include the site visit and the mid-internship meeting (conducted after completing approximately 60 hours, or half of your total field hours).

The student is responsible for setting up these meetings.