

The University of Southern Maine *Lewiston-Auburn College*

Internship Handbook for Students

Procedures and Guidelines for the LAC 447 Internship Program



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Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to help you maximize your learning experience in the internship. It serves as a guide to policies and expectations. 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, Internship Professor, and Internship Coordinator.

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.

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 there are guidelines to requesting a waiver that must be followed. **Any request for a waiver must be submitted prior to taking the course as waivers are not automatically granted.**

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!

We have broken this manual down in sections as you move step-by-step through the internship process. You might look at one section, put it down for a while as you complete one step, and then return to it for the next steps.

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 him/her as frequently as they wish in order to ensure that they have a successful internship experience.

Let's get started!

The Benefits of an Internship

A credit-bearing internship is one of the most significant professional moments of a student's college career. An internship provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply classroom knowledge and to strengthen your professional work habits. As job competition rises, participation in an internship provides you with a competitive advantage over other graduates with limited practical work experience. An internship will also confirm your interest or re-direct your career decision through on-the-job experience in a chosen field. Additionally, internships are an outstanding source of networking contacts and professional references for you, while providing the potential for regular employment after the internship ends.

By the end of your internship, it is our hope that you will have demonstrated your ability to integrate knowledge and theory learned in the classroom and applied it to the professional setting. Also, you should have developed and enhanced some of the career ready skills that are transferable to any professional setting.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has developed a definition for career readiness and identified seven competencies associated with career readiness. In accordance with its mission to lead the community focused on the employment of the new college graduate, the NACE, through a task force comprised of representatives from higher education and HR/staffing professionals, have listed these areas of career readiness for new the new college graduate:

Definition: Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.

Competencies:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communications
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Information Technology Application
- Leadership
- Professionalism/Work Ethics
- Career Management

Visit naceweb.org for more information regarding the above listed competencies.

Participation

LAC 269 and LAC 413 work in tandem with the LAC 447- Internship and should be completed prior to beginning this course.

You must register for your internship and can do this course in the fall, spring or summer. All LAC students are required to do a minimum of a 3-credit internship, which consists of 120 hours of work at the work site (about 10-12 hours a week) and completion of several online assignments.

With approval of your faculty advisor, you may elect to do 1-3 additional credit hours for up to a total of 6. Each additional credit requires an additional 40 hours in the field. Example: 3 credit = 120 hours of field work, 4 credits = 160 hours of field work, etc. You have many options so it is wise to consult with your faculty advisor before you register for this course.

Example: You might need 5 credits to complete your degree. You may register and complete a 5 credit internship in one or two semesters. This will require 200 hours of field work at one site.

Example: You might be unsure of your career path. You may opt to register and complete a 3 credit internship requiring 120 hours of field work at one site, then register and complete another 3 credit internship requiring another 120 hours of field work at another site.

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. Doing an internship entails making a time commitment so give careful thought to your workload before you decide to register.

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.

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 the instructions will be returned for revision.

Roles and Responsibilities

Internship experiences at LAC are considered to be an academic course. Therefore, there are specific requirements for all parties involved. As the internship is a reciprocal experience, it is important that all parties understand their responsibilities.

Student:

It is highly recommended that you attend an Internship Informational Meeting. These are held monthly. Times are always 11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. allowing you time to attend between classes, and are held at LAC.

You should start preparing for your internship two (2) months before the desired start of your internship. This allows the best chance of success in securing an internship site.

Refer to your Internship Start-up Checklist. This is your go-to sheet with step-by-step instructions to get you started.

It is your responsibility to secure an internship site.

Present yourself professionally at all times. Adhere to all dress codes and other policies and practices while on site. Keep in mind that you are a representative of USM LAC. Conducting yourself in a professional manner also creates a positive impression of you.

Be punctual and complete the contracted work hours.

Complete written assignments including a presentation.

Internship Professor and Internship Coordinator:

Facilitate the monthly Internship Informational Meetings

Provide time for student's Initial Meeting with Internship Professor

Suggest possible internship sites to student

Complete on-site or conference call site visit

Complete a conference call mid check-in with supervisor and then student

Maintain open communication with student

Schedule and facilitate the end of internship presentation

Site Supervisor:

Complete and sign the Learning Contract - Part 2 with student

Complete and sign the Internship Agreement Form with student

Meet on site or by conference call with student and Internship Professor BEFORE the beginning of the internship

Orient the student to the organization, the culture, work schedule and office routine, etc.

Meet with and provide feedback to the student on a weekly basis

Participate in a mid-semester check-in with Internship Professor

Complete a formal written evaluation at the conclusion of the internship

What do I do First?

Step 1: Complete the Career Development Series (LAC 269 & 413). During these courses, you will 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.

Step 2: Attend an Internship Informational Meeting. These are held at least once a month, from 11:45 to 12:45 at LAC. For dates, visit our website, the campus monitors or the Internship bulletin board located by rooms 105 and 110.

Step 3: Update your Resume. This should have been done in LAC 413. Check it again in preparation to meet with the Internship Professor.

Step 4: Read the syllabus and the Internship Start-up Checklist. The syllabus will be found on Blackboard. The Internship Start-up Checklist will be found on our website under FORMS.

Step 5: Complete your Learning Contract Part 1. 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. Our website has example to help get you started. (FORMS) (example).

Step 6: Meet with the Internship Professor. Once you have completed your Learning Contract Part 1 and the Internship Professor has graded it, you will need to schedule a meeting with him/her. Bring your contract and Resume. You are responsible for setting up this meeting.

Seeking an Internship Site

Once you have met with the Internship Professor and your paperwork has been approved, you are ready to search for a site.

NOTE: You can NOT seek a site until you have met with the Internship Professor and your paperwork has been approved and graded.

Use your networks to help find a site:

- 211 Maine
- Career Connections
- Classmates
- Friends & family
- Informational interviews
- Internship website
- LinkedIn
- Professors
- Internship Professor
- Internship Coordinator
- Academic or Career Advisor

The most important part is to be prepared before you set out to find a site. Be knowledgeable about the organization. Look at this as a job interview. You wouldn't be unprepared for that, would you?

- Visit our website for talking points and call/visit log template
- You may do a phone or face-to-face request to meet in person
- Inform them that it is an academic internship with supervision and assignments
- Explain the benefits of having an intern – this is also on our website
- Bring your Learning Contract Part 1 and your Resume
- Dress and act professionally – you only have one chance to make a first impression

Accepting the Internship

Congratulations! You've found a site and accepted the internship position!

You will need to schedule another meeting with your site supervisor.

Transfer your goals and outcomes to Learning Contract Part 2 and bring it to the meeting.

Complete a list of activities you will be doing with your site supervisor. This should be a collaborative activity shared by both of you as he/she is likely to have excellent ideas about the various activities you can engage in that will support your learning.

Complete the Internship Agreement Form with your supervisor. Think carefully about your hours. You should be as specific as possible. 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 times more predictable for them. Although you may have a very busy schedule, do your best to accommodate their wishes. 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 at least 8 hours per week have a higher level of visibility, and supervisors are more likely to invest time in training and guiding them.

You and your supervisor will sign both forms and you will scan and post them to Blackboard.

Complete the Plan of Action Form with due dates, scan and post on Blackboard.

Provide the Guidelines for Internship Supervisor form to your site supervisor.

Get available dates from your site supervisor and Internship Professor and schedule a site visit. This will be done in person or by phone conference.

E-mail the Internship Professor to let him/her know that you have secured a site visit or phone conference providing the date and time.

NOTE: You can NOT begin working at your Internship site until the Internship Professor has completed the site visit.

In some cases, the site visit may be done by the Internship Coordinator.

The Site Visit

The site visit will include you, your site supervisor, the Internship Professor and any other person highly involved with your internship to discuss the internship procedures.

Provide copies of your Learning Contract Part 2 and your Internship Agreement Form for each person attending the site visit/phone conference for review during the meeting.

This visit normally takes 30 minutes. It will be conducted on site or by phone conference.

The Internship Professor will review administrative procedures and your schedule. You will then lead this part of the meeting by reviewing your Learning Contract Part 2 with all participants.

The Internship Professor will schedule separate meetings for mid-way through the internship to speak with the supervisors by phone to monitor your work progress and address any concerns. He/she will also arrange to meet with you on campus or by phone conference after the discussion with your supervisor to review your progress. These meetings should only take about 15 minutes.

At the site visit the Internship Professor 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 and a letter on letterhead stationery summarizing your overall performance, addressing important career related performance.

The Actual Internship

Wow! You are actually ready to begin your internship. There are a few things to keep in mind as you begin this exciting learning experience.

Work with Your Site Supervisor

The site supervisor oversees your work at the site and should be meeting with you weekly to give you the supervision and guidance you need. It is important to remember that taking on an intern entails extra responsibility and work for the site supervisor. However, you 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. 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 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. Also, let the Internship Professor know. You are there to learn important skills and acquire knowledge, and our internship site must be in compliance with Department of Labor rules.

Your Schedule and Responsibilities

Your schedule is outlined in your Internship Agreement Form. You are expected to start and complete your internship within the agreed-upon time frame. Deviation from this plan must be approved by the site supervisor and Internship Professor. 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 any professional work environment. Inform your site supervisor if you are sick or have an emergency and cannot work, giving him/her as much notice as possible.

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 hours for a 3 credit hour internship. *Training hours beyond 20 cannot be included as part of your fieldwork.*

Work at Home

Supervisors may allow you to do some of the work from your internship at home if the nature of the work permits this. Or you may be asked to do some reading. Again, since the nature of the internship is to be on site, no more than 20 hours of off-site work for a 3 credit hour internship can count as hours. *Work from home hours beyond 20 cannot be included as part of your fieldwork.*

The Actual Internship – continued

Log your Hours

Log your hours weekly and have your supervisor sign off on them. You will find the form for this on our website under Forms.

Meet Weekly with your Supervisor

Meeting weekly with your supervisor is an important learning tool for you and you should be sure he/she taking the time to meet with you. It gives you a chance to ask questions, receive feedback from your supervisor, review your goals/outcomes and activities, and review your hours logged.

Written Assignments

When becoming absorbed in your internship, it is often easy to overlook that you have assignments to complete. Check the syllabus and Blackboard what needs to be done, do the requirements and post them. These assignments are meant for you to reflect on your learning experience. For a successful internship, don't procrastinate.

Mid Check-in with Internship Professor

This was scheduled during the site visit. The Internship Professor will meet with your supervisor prior to your scheduled meeting. He/she will review that feedback with you, make recommendations if needed, discuss how your internship is going, and review your goals/outcomes, activities and hours. This should take about 15 minutes.

In some cases, the Mid Check-in may be done by the Internship Coordinator.

What if I Have to Leave the Internship?

In rare circumstances, an internship may not work for you (or the organization) and you may wish (or be asked) 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 intent to leave.* He/she 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 is given. Valuable learning takes place in an internship, such as dealing with conflict. It can provide learning beyond your goals/outcomes, often in positive and unpredictable ways.

Your Last Day

This is a day often mixed with emotions: excitement, sadness, fear. Be sure your supervisor provides you with **both** evaluations and post them on Blackboard. One will be the standardized evaluation form that will be found on our website under FORMS. The other will be a letter on letterhead stationary summarizing your overall performance and addressing important career related performance. Your hours log should also be posted on Blackboard.

Making the Most of Your Internship & After

Make a Good First Impression

Show up on time, dress appropriately, be personable. Learn the employer's policies, practices and procedures, both formal and informal, and follow them. Approach your work with a positive attitude. Consider your supervisor's and other staff members' time when seeking help on assignments.

Learn Everything You Can

Acclimating to a company or organization and its operations is not always easy. As an intern, you will have access to information from people from whom you can learn. Take advantage of these opportunities; volunteer for projects, develop new relationships, and discover new ways to get work done.

Define Your Position

Ask questions at your weekly supervisor meetings. Know your responsibilities. Keep a journal and conduct informational interviews with employees. Make sure you know how you will be evaluated and that your site supervisor is also clear on all of these things.

Maximize Your Time on the Job

Take initiative and get the most out of your internship by tackling new challenges and learning opportunities. Attend meetings/seminars/conferences that are relevant and ask for help if you are not getting enough guidance.

Know what you want or need because your lack of information, confusion, or boredom is probably not as apparent as you think. Your supervisor is not a mind reader and it is your responsibility to let him/her know how you are feeling.

Be self-sufficient. While you certainly want to ask questions when you are unsure, don't ask questions that you could find out yourself.

Use the experience to get a job by staying in touch with your contacts. Keep a copy of any reports, articles, or presentations you work on to create a portfolio or demonstrate your experience to the next potential employer keeping confidentiality in mind.

Thank your supervisor and any other mentors for hosting you. Make sure you check in periodically with any supervisor with whom you had a positive relationship.

Inventory all your intern duties and job responsibilities and update your resume.

Presentation Assignment

The Internship Professor and Coordinator will be corresponding with you throughout your internship, so there should not be any surprises about where you are in this course. Remember, some students will be ready for their presentation at the end of the registered semester, and, for a variety of reasons some will complete their internship mid-way through the following semester. This event is a celebration and this course is often the last, or one of the last, to complete before earning your degree. With that said, your presentation will be in a group, and not individually. Presentations are scheduled the week before finals each semester. However, we often schedule mid-semester for those students who have completed the internship on a different schedule.

Things to Know

The Internship Coordinator will advise you of the presentation schedule at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled date.

Your hours **MUST** be completed at least 3 days before the scheduled date.

ALL of your written assignments **MUST** be completed and posted on Blackboard at least 3 days before the scheduled date.

Read the Presentation Assignment carefully and follow the structure.

You **MUST** stay for the entire session – support your peers.

You **MUST** invite your faculty advisor via e-mail and copy the Internship Coordinator.

You are encouraged to invite family, friends, site supervisor or staff – this is a celebration!

You should dress professionally.

You should **stand** behind/near the podium. You should not be sitting.

You are limited to 15 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions/answers.

You should not be reading directly from your notes.

You will debrief with the Internship Professor when all presentations have been done that day.

**MOST OF ALL....
ENJOY THIS GREAT INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY!**

Appendix I

Any request for a waiver must be submitted prior to taking the course as waivers are not automatically granted.

There are certain guidelines to request a waiver.

This process must be done prior to registering for the Career Development Courses
This process must be done by your **FACULTY ADVISOR**
Complete the Waiver Form

Waiver Form. The form will be found on the Internship website at usm.maine.edu/lacinternships,
waivers.

Print, complete and give it to your **FACULTY ADVISOR** and a copy to the **DEAN**. Your faculty advisor will notify you as well as your academic advisor and the Dean within one week of his/her receiving the request. Advisor notes will be added to your file.

Please see next page for **How to Request a Waiver**.

Appendix II

Expect Possible Delays & Expenses. Some employers, in particular schools, hospitals and other medical facilities, require their own documentations that must be completed **BEFORE** you can begin your internship. Any delay will depend on how long it takes YOU to provide them with the information they request. These could include Criminal Background Checks, Maine DOE Fingerprinting, Verification from the University that you are a “*student in good standing*”, CPR Certification, Vaccination Records or Proof of Immunity to certain illnesses just to name a few.

These expenses are usually paid by the student so plan ahead. A Criminal Background Check could cost anywhere from \$35 to \$100, depending on the information the employer is looking for. There is also a fee for the Maine DOE Fingerprinting as well as CPR Certification. Vaccinations Records might take time to receive from your PCP. Again, plan ahead.