



University Policy Statement

UPS 411.601

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic internships are processes of education which formally integrate the students' academic study with practical experience in cooperating organizations. Through this interaction of study and practical experience students enhance their academic knowledge while gaining skills, abilities, and experience relevant for careers in their field. The teaching faculty and the on-site supervisors share in the educational process during an academic internship. The Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel (i.e. Faculty Internship Coordinators) is responsible for oversight of academic internship policies.

Departments/programs may allow students to earn academic credit for internship and cooperative education experience under supervised conditions. It is essential that internships and cooperative education experiences that qualify for academic credit provide learning experiences for students that:

1. Take place outside the traditional classroom;
2. Provide for integration of academic and experiential learning;
3. Are undertaken only by students with sufficient academic background to benefit from the experiences and include accommodation plans for students with special needs;
4. Are planned in advance through consultation between students, supervisors, and faculty members;
5. Include evaluation by the students and on-site supervisors;
6. Include appropriate oversight of the field experiences by the faculty member responsible for awarding credit.

It is recommended that any course that meets the above definition should be numbered "395" or "495" at the upper-division undergraduate level and "595" at the graduate level whenever possible.

II. SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. The grade for academic internships shall be assigned on the basis of the students' ability to integrate academic and field experience, not merely because of faithful performance on a job and completion of the requisite number of internship hours. Students will demonstrate that they have integrated their academic and field experiences in accordance with evaluative assignments set by the faculty supervisor. The supervising faculty member should communicate periodically with the student interns throughout the semester. Evaluations from on-site supervisors may be considered in assigning final grades.
2. The Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel shall ensure that each internship opportunity offered to students is reviewed in consideration of educational appropriateness, potential risks, appropriate supervision, evaluation of the educational environment, relationship of internship activities to course goals, placement criteria, compensation, and prevailing state and federal labor law prior to students participating in an academic internship. Academic internships offered by learning sites to students will be reviewed, at minimum, annually. Where an academic intern is not an employee, a fully executed Learning Activity Placement Agreement or similarly negotiated agreement between the University and the learning site will be issued and signed by Contracts and Procurement.
3. Faculty Internship Coordinators shall evaluate the academic background of prospective internship students prior to allowing students to choose an internship site. A student's academic background must be suitable to the anticipated field experience. A student will not be allowed to participate in a field experience if their academic background has not adequately prepared them to benefit from the experience as well as to contribute to the organization.
4. Before participating in internship activities, students must be provided with conduct expectations, health and safety instructions, emergency contact information, emergency response plans, and informed of any potential risks that participation in the internship may pose to them.
5. Before participating in internship activities, students must provide information for two emergency contacts and signed acknowledgements concerning their conduct, health and safety to the Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel. Students must sign a Waiver of Liability, Promise not to Sue, Assumption of Risk, and Agreement to Pay Claims form and submit to the Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel.
6. Students should submit to their instructor a learning plan signed by themselves, their site supervisor, and course instructor detailing at minimum the activities of which the internship consists, the proposed learning objectives for the experience, and the period over which the internship will take place. The supervising faculty member shall give approval of any academic internship for credit to be granted, preferably in advance. Input from students, faculty members, and on-site supervisors should be taken into consideration in the development of learning plans.
7. No more than six units of internship credit shall be among the units applied toward the Bachelor's Degree. Departments may request exceptions to this policy, which shall be granted on a program basis rather than an individual student basis. Exceptions shall require the approval of both the University Curriculum Committee and the Internships and Service-Learning Committee; the decision may be appealed to the Academic Senate.

8. The field component of an internship assignment shall total not less than 40 hours per student semester unit of credit.
9. The Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel shall keep adequate records of the scope, objectives, and criteria for evaluation of all academic internships.
10. Learning Plans shall be maintained by the Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel for a minimum of five years after student completion of internship activities, and Learning Activity Placement Agreements shall be maintained by the Center for Internships and Community Engagement or designated unit personnel for a minimum of four years from the end of the fiscal year in which the contract is completed or terminated.

These policies apply to all academic internship courses irrespective of whether they are state-funded or not state-funded; and whether they are campus-based, online, or offered at a distant location.

These policies apply to all out-of-classroom experiential learning activities that are not otherwise governed by UPS Service-Learning policies, state law, accreditation requirements, or professional licensure requirements. They do not apply to experiential learning that involves only student-teacher interactions, such as laboratory or field trip experiences.

Source: Internships and Service Learning Committee

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