

University College Internship Instructor Frequently Asked Questions

1. What should I include in my Internship syllabus?
 - In addition to University-required syllabus content, it is suggested that the syllabus for internship credits should include:
 - Required hours for internship credit and how students will report hours (e.g., weekly time sheets, how to round hours, what counts as internship time, etc.).
 - What happens if a student is unable to complete hours?
 - Required assignments associated with internship credit (e.g., portfolio, poster, etc.).
 - Clear expectations about how to handle absence with the work site.
 - Explanation of how potential conflicts or issues with the student's performance at the work site may be handled.
 - Hours required to earn internship credit, please refer to Senate Policy 42-23 <https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-23>

2. What information should I collect about internship sites?
 - Faculty internship instructors should collect information about internship sites including:
 - Name, email, address, and contact number of internship site
 - Name, email, address, and contact number of work site supervisor, including appropriate qualifications of the supervisor (i.e., license, highest degree held, etc.)
 - While it is ultimately up to the student to ensure that an internship is legitimate, faculty internship instructors can help ensure that the internship site is legitimate.
 - Faculty internship instructors could consider collecting an offer letter, an email or letter from an official email address and/or on company letterhead, or a learning agreement. Faculty internship instructors could also consider meeting with the work site supervisor.
 - Faculty internship instructors can consult with their campus' Career Services representative when working with a new or unknown company, and/or if they have any potential concerns about a work site. Career Services can help research and determine that that the company is not fraudulent or problematic. While this responsibility ultimately rests with the student, Career Services can be a helpful resource.
<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/scams>
<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/career-offices>

3. Is there a process for a site to be an approved internship site for the University? If so, what is the process? Do I have to have permission from the University for a student to be at a particular site? If so, what is that process?
 - Students are permitted to find their own internships. But, if students want to obtain credit, they must work with their adviser and/or internship instructor to determine what the process is for obtaining credit within a degree program.
<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/resources/internship-and-job-search>
4. Am I responsible for securing an internship for a student who wants an internship, or do they secure it?
 - The student is ultimately responsible for obtaining an internship. If a student is unable to find an internship (e.g., there are no local opportunities, the student is unable to pass a background check, the student has physical or mental health considerations), the internship coordinator and adviser may work with the University College staff in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses (OSVPCC) to determine what, if any, substitutions are allowed for a given degree program.
5. Can a student's current paid employment count as an internship?
 - The intention of an internship is to acquire new knowledge and skills. If the student is already employed, they cannot use the current position for the internship. They must assume new responsibilities or obtain a new position that will demonstrate expertise in their field of study. Faculty instructors should work with the student to determine whether the internship experience (e.g., a new position or new responsibilities within a current position) is appropriate.
6. How many hours equate to how many credits?
 - At least forty-five (45) hours of work are required per credit (guided by Senate Policy 42-23: <https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-23>). These hours may combine work-site activity and/or academic work such as trainings, journal writing, related research, and/or special projects. Internship instructors should be aware of any department specific guidelines for the awarding of credits for internship hours.
7. Do I have to require assignments or have class sessions in-addition to the hours spent at the site?
 - This is typically determined by the discipline. You should speak with your DAA/CAO or other disciplinary representatives (e.g., an internship coordinator at another campus; the Discipline Coordinator) to discuss what is expected. This should be discussed on the syllabus for the internship credits.

8. If an internship site requires liability insurance, what do I say to that site and the student?
 - If students need assistance in obtaining professional liability insurance, internship instructors are NOT allowed to make specific recommendations. They are permitted to suggest that students look into insurance offerings by discipline-specific professional organizations and/or their own private insurance carriers. Specific recommendations are not to be given.
 - For questions about insurance coverage needs, faculty instructors can contact Risk Management, Office of the Corporate Controller (814-865-6307; <https://controller.psu.edu/risk-management>).
 - Students should work with their work site to ensure coverage is sufficient.

9. Am I required to go to the site to physically see the student during their internship? If so, is there a requirement of how often?
 - This is typically determined by the discipline. You should speak with your DAA/CAO or other disciplinary representatives (e.g., an internship coordinator at another campus; the Discipline Coordinator) to discuss what is expected in regards to on-site visits.

10. If a student gets fired or is asked to quit but has met most/all of their required hours do they pass their internship?
 - The syllabus for the internship credits must be clear about what happens if the student is unable to complete their required hours. The internship supervisor should clearly communicate what happens with issues of academic integrity, conduct issues, etc.

11. What paperwork is necessary for a student to earn internship credit?
 - Students and the internship instructor will determine what forms/paperwork/process are used on their campus for course credit registration before the end of the drop/add deadline.
 - Students should work with their internship instructor and work site supervisor to complete any discipline-specific forms (e.g., learning agreements, evaluations throughout the semester, time sheets) according to the timelines required by the internship instructor and worksite supervisor.
 - Work-Site Supervisors evaluations of individual interns are not required by the University. However, many internship instructors require them as part of their class and many programs require them as part of their assessment process. This is typically determined by the discipline. You should speak with your DAA/CAO or other disciplinary representatives (e.g., an internship coordinator at another campus; the Discipline Coordinator) to discuss what is expected.
 - Faculty, advisers, and DAA/CAO's are NOT permitted to sign official affiliation agreements on behalf of the University. If a site requires an affiliation agreement, the internship instructor, on behalf of the student should submit the agreement to

the Office of General Counsel (814-867-4088; eus18@psu.edu) to obtain the necessary approvals and signature. Please allow 2 to 3 weeks for this review.

- Some programs (e.g., HDFS) have a general affiliation agreement that is already University-approved. These forms should not be altered and internship coordinators should contact OVPCC with any questions.

12. Do I keep the signed forms, or do I give them to someone?

- The internship instructor should maintain copies of documentation as required by the University's Records Retention Policy (AD-35; <https://policies.psu.edu/general-retention-schedule>).

13. The Internship Site has forms that they want me to sign. Do I need to have someone review them before I sign them?

- If the document is an affiliation agreement, you are NOT permitted to sign on behalf of the University (see #10 above).

14. Can a student complete any of their hours for their internship outside of the academic calendar of the semester they are enrolled? (i.e., during breaks or holidays)

- Students are only able to earn credit for internship hours that are taking place during the semester begin and end dates. These dates do not always align with class begin and end dates. Internship hours must be completed during these dates to ensure financial aid and registration compliance. See: <https://www.registrar.psu.edu/faculty-staff/scheduling/class-scheduling/semester-begin-end-dates.cfm>
 - i. Students may start an internship early or work beyond the boundaries of the semester at will, but those hours cannot count as internship hours earned for academic credit.
- Internship courses are treated like regular courses at Penn State and are subject to all course policies (e.g., deferred grades: <https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/47-00-48-00-and-49-00-grades/#48-40>)

15. Are there activities the University specifically prohibits? (i.e., handling bodily fluids, being tasered, activities in violation of laws, working with illegal or restricted substances, handling weapons, etc.,)

- If a student proposes an internship that involves their handling of potentially dangerous contents, being in potentially dangerous situations, or work in violation of laws, a consult with Penn State's Risk Management Office is required. [Risk Management | Office of the Corporate Controller \(psu.edu\)](#)
- Career Services has created Current Recruitment and Employment Guidelines including a special note concerning cannabis when earning credit: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/employers/recruiting/policies>

16. How do students count their hours and activities?

- Policies surrounding how time is reported and rounded should be spelled out on the syllabus.
- Time travel to and from an internship from a private residence should NOT count towards hours. Time spent traveling to complete internship assignments as part of the internship (e.g., driving to clients' houses or between sites) may count but this should be discussed with the internship instructor and work site supervisor.

17. What if the internship site wants to hire the student before the internship is over?

- A student must complete the required internship hours in order to earn academic credit. Those hours may or may be not for payment. The internship instructor and the student should ensure that any time that is being used *to earn academic credit is fulfilling learning objectives* that are appropriate for that discipline.