

Illinois Wesleyan University

Guidelines for Internships Completed for Academic Credit

Adopted by IWU Faculty, April 21, 2014

- I. **"Internship" definition:** According to the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), an internship is *"Any type of carefully planned and monitored work or service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he/she is learning through the experience."* NSEE notes that internships can be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid, for academic credit or non-credit program. While credit and not-for-credit internships completed by IWU students may share many qualities, the following guidelines refer specifically to internships completed for academic credit at IWU.

- II. **Areas for Student Development:** Participation in an academic internship has the potential to enhance academic discipline-related knowledge by enabling a student to acquire further experience, knowledge, and skills while testing or applying theories learned in the classroom. Internships also enable students to develop self-motivation, self-direction, and self-reliance, and to use textbook knowledge, methods of inquiry, and critical thinking to solve real problems in a more expansive environment consistent with a liberal arts education.

- III. **General Expectations for Student Work:** Students completing internships for academic credit will be expected to complete the following work:
 - A. Students must meet with the faculty member who will supervise the internship in order to identify the learning goals most relevant for the student's short-term and long-term goals.

 - B. Students are required to spend 160 hours on-site at an internship for 1 full course unit of credit.

 - C. In addition to on-site work, students will
 1. complete an academic project and/or on-site projects that have been approved by the faculty supervisor. For example:
 - a. literature review
 - b. analysis paper of public policy controversy
 - c. organizational analysis (in writing or oral)
 - d. portfolio of work (art, graphics, articles, results of projects, etc.)
 - e. other projects that help students meet learning goals
 2. complete a self-reflective assignment. For example:
 - a. journal or diary
 - b. written evaluation
 - c. other
 3. maintain ongoing contact with their IWU faculty supervisor
 4. complete a follow-up internship evaluation form for the Career Center and/or faculty supervisor.

IV. Guidelines for Faculty Supervision of Student Interns: Responsibilities of faculty supervising academic internships include the following:

- A. Holding pre-internship conferences with students interested in pursuing internships. During the pre-internship conferences, faculty will
 - 1. determine if the student is prepared to take on an academic internship by
 - a. discussing the student's objective
 - b. advising students on the process for obtaining academic credit
 - 2. determine if the potential experience warrants academic credit by
 - a. discussing internship duties and responsibilities
 - b. contacting the internship provider
 - 3. help the student complete the "Internship Learning Contract"

- B. Monitoring and providing appropriate feedback on student assignments, including
 - 1. the academic project and/or projects completed for provider (see examples under "General Expectations for Student Work")
 - 2. self-reflective assignments (see examples under "General Expectations for Student Work")

- C. Maintaining contact with on-site supervisors and students
 - 1. Rationale for maintaining contact includes
 - a. monitoring and evaluating student's progress
 - b. serving as an ambassador for the university in the community
 - 2. The faculty supervisor ideally will have the following contacts with on-site supervisors:
 - a. at least two contacts, as well as one on-site visit when circumstances permit
 - b. other contacts as needed
 - 3. The faculty supervisor ideally will have the following contacts with students:
 - a. ongoing/periodic contact (*seminars, personal* conferences, etc.) when circumstances permit
 - b. at least midterm and final evaluation contacts
 - c. other contacts as necessary

- D. Conducting final evaluations of the student's internship experience. This includes
 - 1. communicating with the on-site supervisor regarding student work
 - 2. evaluating student performance on the basis of academic assignments, supervisor feedback, and other contacts
 - 3. forwarding final evaluation to the registrar
 - 4. communicating any concerns or special issues to the Career Center Internship Coordinator

(Original version of document adopted by IWU Faculty, February 1, 1999)