

# Mount St. Mary's University

## Graduate Internships / Experiential Education Policies and Guidelines

Credit-based internship programs allow students to earn academic credit for work experiences performed on or off-campus. These experiences are designed to provide opportunities to explore career plans, to apply knowledge learned in the classroom and to experience a working environment within the field of the students interest. Mount St. Mary's University offers the ability for students to receive academic credit for an internship experience through this program.

### **Internships**

Internships are experiences that relate to a specific major or career interest and usually involve training and responsibilities for which the student has already completed appropriate coursework. An internship may be full-time or part-time for the duration of a semester (8-week or 16-week time periods). Students may register both paid and unpaid internships for credit.

### **Student Eligibility**

Students who wish to register an internship for academic credit must complete a Learning Agreement Form and meet the following criteria:

1. Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
2. Meet the program's internship prerequisites.
3. In addition to the above criteria, students must have successfully completed at least six credits at the Mount prior to the start of the internship experience.
4. International students must check with their Department Chair or Program Director for eligibility.

### **Credits**

The chairperson of the department for which the credit is being earned has final approval of the number of credits for each internship experience. A student may earn up to a total of six (6) credits for internship experiences; however, each department reserves the right to further limit the number of credits allowed. In all instances, a Learning Agreement must be completed for each experience for which the credit is being earned. Once registered for a credit-based internship, credits earned for an experience may not be applied to a subsequent semester.

Submitting the Learning Agreement Form for a credit-based internship does not guarantee approval, though every effort will be made to assist students in securing an appropriate internship.

Guidelines for determining the number of credits that can be earned for an internship experience have been established to ensure that a standard college policy may prevail. All programs should meet the following criteria:

1. While a minimum of forty (40) hours of work at the job site is required for each credit hour, additional work hours do not automatically constitute additional

- credits. If the minimum hour requirement is not met, there cannot be a reduction in credit. Often a student will receive an “Incomplete” until the minimum amount of hours are completed, or the student’s grade will be reduced in relation to the incomplete requirements.
2. The quality and quantity of work to be completed for each credit must be clearly specified in the Learning Agreement. To the extent possible, this should be comparable to the work demand of a regular college course of equal credit value.
  3. The range and complexity of the internship work should be consistent with the academic standards expected at the college level.
  4. For the purpose of evaluation and progress reports, the student will complete and return a Mid-term Student Report in the middle of their internship and then a Final Student Report at the close of the experience. The Site Supervisor will also complete a Mid-term Performance Evaluation and a Final Performance Evaluation. Both the Internship Report and the Performance Evaluations will be returned to the Career Center by the set deadline date. These evaluations will then be sent to the Faculty Advisor to contribute to the overall grading process.
  5. Faculty Sponsors are asked to be in contact with the interns they are supervising. The Career Center suggests a weekly or bi-monthly meeting take place either in person or via email or phone. This is to ensure that the student is completing the academic work required as well as to ensure that there is academically based learning going on during the course of the internship.
  6. No credit will be granted retroactively for internship experiences. All arrangements for credit must be completed two weeks prior to the start of the semester.

### **Grading System**

Each department will develop its own criteria for assigning grades for internship programs, subject to approval by the Associate Provost.

These criteria should include the following:

1. Internships will be processed on a Letter Grade basis
2. The methods of evaluation to be used, which may include oral and written reports, journals, seminar presentations, employer evaluations, special projects, final exams, or other appropriate methods.

### **Credit Approval Process**

In order for a student to submit a Learning Agreement Form and apply to receive academic credit for an internship experience, the student must follow the following process.

1. The student must search, apply for, and obtain an internship experience (it may be called a part-time position, seasonal work, or specified as an internship).
2. Once the position is obtained (the student has received confirmation and is hired for the position) they should then go online to the Career Center’s website, [www.msmary.edu/career](http://www.msmary.edu/career) and begin gathering the information for the Learning Agreement.
3. The student should first fill out their “Student Information”, then proceed to fill out the “Placement Information” by being in conversation with their internship site. Upon the completion of the section and obtaining the signature of the Site Supervisor, the student should then proceed to the “Faculty Sponsor and Course Information” section. Discussing with their chosen faculty sponsor the number of

- credits, how the internship will fit within their academic schedule as well as any “Grading Criteria” which the professor may assign.
4. Once all areas of the form and signatures are collected, the student must communicate with the Internship Coordinator in the Career Center to review the Learning Agreement Form. The credit-based internship is not finalized until the Internship Coordinator in the Career Center approves and sends the information to the Registrar’s Office for processing.
  5. Student’s must also register online in the same manner as their other course work.

Ordinarily, it is expected that internship programs will involve work related to the student’s major or minor. However, in cases where it is clear that the student will benefit from work experience in some other field, the student may apply for such a program. In this case, the student should obtain written permission to apply for the program from the department chair of his or her major. Approval of the actual project and associated responsibilities will then be referred to the department chair in which credit is to be awarded, and to the Associate Provost.

The completed Learning Agreement, signed by all parties, must then be submitted to the Career Center before the start of the semester in which earning credit. Students register online, and this registration is confirmed when the Career Center forwards paperwork to the Registrar’s Office.

### **Administration of Internship Program**

#### **The Internship Coordinator will:**

1. Maintain a list of potential sites and resources to help students with their search.
2. Work with department chairpersons to expand the current list.
3. Assist and advise departments and faculty sponsors as necessary.
4. Develop and maintain the Learning Agreement and evaluations.
5. Instruct and inform students about application procedures.
6. Assist students in finding appropriate positions.
7. Follow through on the signing of the agreement between the college and the employer.
8. Submit all credit information to the Registrar’s Office on a timely basis.
9. Submit a finalized payroll list (for the Faculty Advisors) at the end of each semester to the Human Resources Office.
10. Maintain all student internship records.

#### **The Employer/Site Supervisor will:**

1. Agree to participate in the experiential education/internship program (signified by the signing of the Learning Agreement).
2. Provide the student with a challenging and meaningful learning experience to complement the program of study, expand the student’s understanding of the field and work environment.
3. Assist the student in developing learning objectives as well as goals set within the internship experience time frame.
4. Provide the student with the necessary training and supervision to see that objectives are met.
5. Communicate as appropriate during the course of the internship with the Internship Coordinator.
6. Complete the required evaluations of the student’s performance.

7. Reserve the right after consultation with the Internship Coordinator and ultimately the University to discharge the student for just cause.
8. Abide by the Department of Labor Standards for Internships, which includes [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#).

**The Department Chairperson will:**

1. Develop criteria for determining which students are eligible to register for internship credits in their particular department.  
These criteria will include:
  - The required minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA
  - Letter Grade grading system
  - Any other criteria that are deemed necessary in order to maintain the academic quality and standards appropriate to the discipline, such as prerequisite courses, program objectives, and guidelines for the types of programs that are acceptable for credit in that department
2. Be responsible for maintaining the academic standards of the programs for which credit is awarded in the department. This will include:
  - Ensuring that the appropriate faculty sponsor has been chosen by the student for each program and will help the student reach his/her Learning Objectives
  - Approving the Learning Agreement prepared by the student, employer, and faculty sponsor
  - Communicating with the Internship Coordinator when there is an issue, question of appropriateness, or updates to department requirements

**The Faculty Sponsor:**

The role of the faculty in maintaining academic excellence is a critical one. All academic courses at the Mount are developed with the expectation that certain goals and objectives will be attained; internship programs are no exception. Although they are conducted in the field and not in a classroom setting, they are, nevertheless, learning activities, and are a specific part of a student's total academic experience. In fact, it is not the job that receives credit, but the learning that results for working on the job.

**The Faculty Sponsor will:**

1. Serve as a liaison between the student, the department chair, and the Internship Coordinator
2. Meet with the student to prepare the Learning Agreement. This will include, at the minimum:
  - Establishing the learning objectives
  - Scheduling the required progress report meetings. Faculty are also encouraged to schedule a site visit
  - Specifying, in writing, the criteria by which the student's grade will be determined
3. Meet with the student at scheduled times while the experience is in progress. The purpose of these meetings is to see that the student's progress toward completing the requirements stated in the Learning Agreement contract is satisfactory.
4. Review the students Initial and Final Evaluation forms from the Internship Coordinator

5. At the end of the experience, perform the evaluation procedures specified in the Learning Agreement and submit a final grade to the Registrar according to standard procedures.

**The Student:**

The student who enters the internship program to receive credit is responsible for meeting all requirements. These requirements include the following items:

1. Meet with the Internship Coordinator as often as needed to discuss interests, possible placements, develop a resume if needed, etc.
2. Select a Faculty Sponsor upon securing an internship position and develop a Learning Agreement by:
  - Meeting with the employer to discuss internship schedule, projects, and other expectations of the student during their time as intern
  - Meeting with the chosen Faculty Advisor to specify credit, learning objectives, and grading criteria
  - Planning meetings or possible site visits with the faculty sponsor during the course of the experience
  - Obtaining all signatures on the Learning Agreement i.e. student, employer, faculty sponsor, and department chair
3. Return the completed Learning Agreement to the Career Center by the stated deadline for submission. Credit approval is not final until the Career Center notifies the Registrar.
4. Students must confirm receipt and review of the Confirmation Packet sent over email by the Internship Coordinator.

The Confirmation Packet shall include:

  - Sexual Harassment Training Information
  - Student Confirmation Checklist – contains a checklist of due dates for each individual student
  - Mid-term Student Report – used to aid the student in evaluating the experience
  - Mid-term Performance Evaluation – a form the site supervisor will use in evaluating the student intern during the internship.
  - Final Student Report – used to aid the student in evaluating the experience
  - Final Performance Evaluation – a form the site supervisor will use in evaluating the student intern at the end of the internship.
  - Work Hours Log
5. Complete the work assignments and all other matters agreed to in the Learning Agreement.

**If requirements are not met, the student will receive a grade of *Incomplete or F.***

**Criteria for Approving a Placement**

Employment possibilities are evaluated by the faculty sponsor and the department chair, in consultation with the Internship Coordinator, on the basis of job descriptions, knowledge of the work environments, and evidence of educational commitment on the

part of the employer. In order to approve a particular job for credit, the Internship Coordinator and Faculty Advisor must be reasonably confident that:

1. The work will provide a substantial learning experience related to the student's major or career interests
2. The student is given meaningful and challenging duties and responsibilities.
3. Supervision on-the-job will be consistent and on-going.
4. The student will not be supervised by a relative.

**Tuition**

Internships for credit are considered a course, and as such, credits earned through an internship must be paid.

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