

Urban and Community Studies Internship Procedures

Internships provide an excellent opportunity for UCS majors to explore the urban community around them, to learn about the inner workings of non-profit or government agencies, and to explore possible careers while performing meaningful community service.

Internship Sites

Students should find a sponsoring agency that best fits their academic and career objectives. UConn's Center for Career Development website offers links that can help locate internships (<http://www.career.uconn.edu/internships.html>). Students are also welcome to find opportunities on their own. This may include contacting sponsoring agencies directly. Finding an internship can take time. Students should begin looking the semester before beginning the internship.

While an internship is not required for UCS majors, those students who are interested in one are strongly encouraged to do internships during their junior or senior years when they have completed a significant amount of coursework within the major. This enables students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to their fieldwork as well as to apply research and writing skills developed within the courses to the internship paper assignments.

Internship Agreement

Once a sponsoring agency has been located and an administrator within the agency has agreed to supervise the student, the student should complete an "Internship Agreement" with the agency supervisor and a UCS faculty supervisor. (See form attached below.) Students should have a commitment from the UCS faculty supervisor before finalizing any agreement with the internship site supervisor.

Internship Requirements

To earn academic credit for the internship, students must register for both URBN 3981 (Internship in Urban Studies: Seminar) and URBN 3991 (Internship in Urban Studies: Field Study). Student can register for a maximum of 3 credit hours per semester in each of the two courses. Up to 3 credit hours of URBN 3981, URBN 3991, or URBN 3981/3991 combined may be used toward completion of the 36 hours in the UCS major.

Students may count credits earned in URBN 3981 and URBN 3991 only once toward their UConn degree. Students wishing to pursue a second internship experience should consider completing an independent study (URBN 4999) with a supervising faculty member.

As per university rules, for every 1 credit hour of URBN 3991, students are expected to complete 42 hours of service. Thus, students enrolled in 2 credit hours of URBN 3991 should expect to complete 84 hours of service (or approximately 6-8 hours of service each week). Students should keep track of their hours to avoid any misunderstandings at the end of the term.

The supervising faculty member will set the requirements for earning credit in URBN 3981. At the minimum, students should expect to write at least three reflection papers (at the beginning, in the mid-term, and at the end of the experience). Students enrolled in URBN 3981 for 2 or more credits should anticipate additional academic work related to the internship. See the descriptions below for details on the URBN 3981 assignments.

Final Note

Students are expected to fulfill the internship in a professional and responsible manner. Interns are ambassadors of the University of Connecticut and the Urban and Community Studies program. Future internship and employment opportunities at the organization may well depend upon the professional conduct of past interns. Interns must be responsible about reporting to the organization and completing assignments as would be expected in any job.

**University of Connecticut
Urban & Community Studies Program
Internship Agreement**

Student Name: _____

Agency: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT:

Describe your goals and learning objectives in working for this agency.

Please outline your responsibilities and activities for the semester.

TO BE COMPLETED BY AGENCY SUPERVISOR:

Please describe supervision:

Please list hours student will be in agency:

Note: If written internship description exists, it may be attached to this sheet.

Student (date)

Internship Supervisor (date)

Instructor of Record (date)

Advisor (date)

URBN 3981 Internship Seminar Requirements

Reflection Papers (required of all students regardless the number of credits)

You will write three short reflection papers. One paper should be written within the first few days of your internship -- if not before it begins -- one mid-way through the semester, and the final at the end of the experience. Length is less important than content, so you should not feel like you need to fill space.

Reflection Paper #1

In this first paper, you should address what you are hoping to accomplish through the internship: personally, academically, and professionally. Write why you selected this particular sponsoring agency for your internship experience. Explain how it corresponds with your career aspirations and how it meshes with your previous coursework, for example.

Reflection Paper #2

The purpose of the second paper is to assess what you are doing day-to-day and overall. Write about your tasks and responsibilities, who you work with and whether you are receiving adequate supervision, whether you have opportunity to try new tasks, and what you are accomplishing in terms of helping the organization. You might describe a particular situation that was insightful to you. Explain the biggest lesson you have learned so far in your internship experience.

This is also your time to report what is not going well with the experience, if anything. For example, if you are not being assigned duties that will allow you to learn or if there are interpersonal issues within the organization that are affecting your ability to participate fully. Only your faculty supervisor will read what you write in your reflection papers; your faculty supervisor will not share the information with your internship agency supervisor. You should be honest in your writing, even with yourself.

Reflection Paper #3

Now that you have finished your internship, reflect on the overall experience. Write about what you learned about yourself. Tell what you learned about the organization and about careers in that field. Has the experience changed your career aspirations? Has it opened a new direction for you in terms of your studies or suggested to you what skills or knowledge areas you would like to improve upon? How has the internship helped define and/or clarify your career path?

Reflect on an experience in the internship in which you pushed yourself out of your comfort zone. Describe a challenge you faced and how you addressed it. Explain how you were able to integrate what you have learned in your coursework into tasks or situations within the internship.

Finally, reflect on how the overall internship experience was worthwhile, if it was. What recommendations can you suggest that would have made the experience better? Would you recommend to internship site to other students? If so, why? If not, why not?

Seminar Research Paper (required of students enrolled for 2 or 3 credits)

There are two options available to fulfill the research paper requirement. Which you select depends on your interests as well as the interests and needs of your internship organization.

Option 1: Write a white paper about a policy or organizational issue you faced in your internship site. A white paper is a short document (generally 10-20 pages) that states a position then provides evidence to substantiate that position. For example, a white paper written by a student working for a city councilmember might address best practices in dealing with public complaints about a rat infestation in the neighborhood (a management issue) or it might address a policy direction to take to deal with the rat infestation. In either case, you should conduct research through the literature and, if appropriate, talk with experts. White papers express positions but from a professional perspective (e.g., "The literature suggests") rather than personal opinion (e.g., "I think ...").

Option 2: If, as part of your internship responsibilities, you are tasked with creating a document, presentation, or other creative work, you may use this to fulfill your research paper requirement. For example, a student working with the public housing authority may be asked by the agency to research site locations for a new development. Alternatively, a student working in a community food bank may be asked to create a brochure about the services offered. When you are tasked to create a document, presentation, or other creative work for your agency, your final internship paper should include information about how you collected data for the work, what tasks went into preparing the final product, as well as the final product itself. The work created for the agency alone is not adequate to fulfill the credits. You must also include your methodology.