

*Background:* The Provost's office formed a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee to review current practices regarding academic internships across campus. The purpose was to attempt to develop a more standardized approach to academic internships. The subcommittee began this process by analyzing the requirements of academic internships in several different areas from across campus. Its proposal was shared across campus for feedback and discussed in the Undergraduate Academic Leaders and Academic Affairs committees. Additional updates were made to the proposal in response to (1) feedback from across campus, and (2) new accreditation requirements recently released (criteria and assumed practices), resulting in this document, which was approved by the academic affairs committee in March 2014. In order to clarify the policy, and to establish deadlines, the guidelines were revised by the Provost Office in November 2016.

*Effective date of this proposal:* All internships beginning in Fall 2014.

*Committee Members:* Bryan Burks (chair), Amy Adair, Daniel Adams, Debbie Duke, Jennifer Fisher, Jim Miller, Todd Patten, Lisa Ritchie, Jack Shock, Dan Stockstill, and Ken Turley.

**Definition of Internship:** A student or a recent graduate undergoing practical training under the direction of a supervisor. This supervisor is in addition to the faculty member overseeing the academic requirements. This internship can be a formal or informal program designed to provide practical experience in an occupation or profession. This internship can be paid or unpaid.

While some majors require an internship, many do not. If academic credit is required or desired by the student, the following section provides minimum requirements and recommendations for the academic department in managing these academic internships.

### **SECTION 1: Minimum Requirements for Internships for Academic Credit**

The following are minimum requirements for all academic internships offered for credit by Harding University. Any legal or accreditation requirements must also be met.

**Pre-Approval:** All internships for academic credit must receive pre-approval from their respective department. This pre-approval should be documented utilizing a form appropriate to the discipline; a suggested form to use is provided. Upon approval, the student should receive a syllabus for the internship and be given instructions regarding registration. The pre-approval form must contain a description of the work requirements for the student and the supervision and evaluation expectations for the on-site supervisor. It must be signed by (1) the on-site supervisor, (2) the supporting faculty member, (3) the dean/chair, and (4) the student. Pre-approval for an internship should be applied for, and approval granted/denied, before the end of the preceding semester. For internships during

the Summer, the approval process and registration for the course must be completed by June 1.

**Prerequisites:** The department should establish prerequisites for students to be eligible for the internship. This could be completion of a certain class, completion of specific hours (i.e. 12 hours in a specific field), academic standing (i.e. junior or senior), a certain GPA, or anything else deemed appropriate by the department. Prerequisites, as determined by the supervising department, should be noted clearly on the approval form.

**Hours Required:** A minimum of 75 working hours is required per credit hour. Although this exceeds the Harding University definition of a credit hour based on the Higher Learning Commission's requirement, we deem it appropriate for an internship which typically has less structure than an academic class. If a departmental accreditation standard requires more hours than this minimum requirement, then the accreditation requirement should be followed.

**Registration:** Students should follow the university requirements concerning registering for the course. For full transparency, the standard policy is for the student to register for academic credit prior to the internship. Students who need to use Fall Financial Aid funds to pay for Summer internship credit will be able to note that requirement on the approval form, and the appropriate adjustments to the student's account can be made by the Business Office and Financial Aid office. Internships are typically set up with a "zero" cap, thus requiring the students to go through the departments for pre-approval of the internship and overrides for registration.

**Employer Evaluation:** Each student is required to receive at least one employer evaluation. The department will decide if the employer should go over the evaluation with the student, or if the evaluation should be sent directly to the faculty member for them to go over with the student. While this is a valuable assessment tool for the student, some employers prefer that the students not see the evaluation. Many companies have their own evaluation instruments.

**Debriefing Meeting:** Each student is required to schedule and attend a debriefing meeting (face-to-face, telephone, video call, etc.) with the supporting faculty member at the conclusion of the internship experience. The purpose of this meeting is to draw closure to the internship. The supporting faculty member should have read the internship paper (if required) and received the employer evaluation along with any other documentation required by the department. This allows the faculty member to ask additional questions about the internship experience and also allows an opportunity to ask assessment questions about the program since the majority of these students are upper-level students. As such, it could be viewed as a senior exit interview in addition to an internship debriefing meeting.

### **Decisions that should be determined by the department**

- Whether the internships are required or simply encouraged,
- Whether the internships should be paid positions or not, and
- Whether to include additional requirements beyond the minimum requirements of the university as described in this document.

### **SECTION 2: Recommended Requirements for Internships for Academic Credit**

In addition to the minimum requirements for an academic internship, it is recommended that each academic program require a paper, or other assignment(s), that is reflective in nature and appropriate for the discipline.

**Paper Requirement:** A paper should be required according to the guidelines established by the department. The length of the paper will vary based on the requirements, but a minimum of five pages should be required. This paper provides an excellent documentation for the student to reflect on their experience and the university to obtain assessment information. The paper guidelines could include:

- Description of company
- Job responsibilities
- Goals expected/achieved
- Challenges encountered
- Connection to courses taken previously
- Marketplace Christianity issues
- Future plans on the student

Note: An alternative assignment that is appropriate for the discipline can substitute for the paper, but it should still require the student to reflect on the internship experience.

In either case, such requirements should be specified on the pre-approval form.

### **SECTION 3: Optional Internship Requirements**

In addition to the minimum requirements for an academic internship, any college, department or academic program can set additional requirements. This section includes a list of such additional requirements that are used by various departments. These are not university requirements, but might be legal or accreditation requirements for some programs. Each academic unit has the authority to set additional requirements like these for academic internships to enhance the academic experience. Such requirements should be clearly specified on the pre-approval form.

- **Journals:** The concept is for the student to keep a written journal of their internship experiences. This journal should help the student write the final paper for the class. It may also be used to assist in communicating with the faculty member and/or other individuals. The entries could be daily, weekly, or at other appropriate intervals. The format of the journal should be considered as appropriate to the discipline (i.e., written or typed, emails to faculty, public blogs).

- **Self-Evaluations:** A self-evaluation allows the student to evaluate their personal growth during the internship experience. This document could be similar to the employer evaluation listed in Exhibit B but geared toward the student's perspective. It may allow for a good discussion in the debriefing meeting as the supporting faculty and student focus on areas where the employer and the student differed in their evaluations of the internship.
- **Faculty on-site visits:** Financial constraints often make this difficult; however, the supporting faculty member should be in contact with the employer at least during the preapproval process and possibly at the conclusion of the internship. (We realize the employer's time is valuable and we do not recommend extensive communication as it might be disruptive to his or her schedule.)
- **Required textbooks or reading materials:** Some departments and/or employers require readings for the internships (i.e., a youth minister reading materials for teaching classes). Current articles or periodicals may be more appropriate than traditional textbooks for some internship experiences.
- **Presentation:** Some departments require a presentation to other students/groups at the conclusion of the internship. This may be most appropriate when presented to groups of students who are pursuing similar internships in the future.
- **Specific training:** If the internship demands certain skills that may not be taught in a traditional classroom, then the program should seek ways to ensure the students are prepared. An example could be an internship that requires CPR. The college or department may make such training an internship prerequisite.
- **Background Checks:** Some internship experiences require a background check. This should be specified in the syllabus if it is required.
- **Insurance/Medical Shots:** Some internships require insurance above the university policy, which typically just protects the university. The department may need to work with the university Office of Human Resources for this coverage. Many times the cost of this policy is covered with a course fee attached to the internship. Some internships require students to have specific shots (i.e., TB), a fact which should be included in the syllabus.

#### **SECTION 4: Administrative Issues for Internships**

The following issues highlight the administrative aspect of providing internship for academic credit. These comments are directed to the departments and supporting faculty, not the students.

**Syllabus for the Course:** A syllabus is required for all internships. As with any course syllabus, it should contain the course objectives, course requirements, grading outline, outline for assignments, and standardized university statements. The syllabus should include (1) all the departmental prerequisites, (2) the minimum requirements as described in this document, and (3) any additional requirements mandated by the department.

**Internship Location:** The shift over the last several years has been for the internship course to be housed in the specific academic college and/or department (i.e. ACCT 3670 for an accounting internship). However, when this is not feasible, there is currently a “COOP 3670” course that falls under the direction of the chair of the University Studies Department. This course can be assigned to a faculty member in the department to oversee the internship and assign the grade for the course.

**Course Numbering:** The registrar recommends the “3670” numbering for internships. However, many departments across campus use different numbers for various reasons (i.e. junior internship, senior internship). If there is no preference by the department, then the “3670” should be considered as the course number. Otherwise, the department should use a course number appropriate to its needs and approved by the Registrar.

**Repeatable:** It is becoming more common for students to obtain multiple internship experiences during their college experience, so the department should determine whether an internship can be taken more than one time. This approval to repeat may be more appropriate if the internship is for a different company or a different position within the same company. Two summers working the same internship position with the same company are probably not appropriate for a repeatable internship.

**Grading:** Each department should develop the method of grading internships. No university rubric has been approved for this process. However, grading should include review of the reflective exercise, the employer evaluation, the debriefing session, and any other documentation required by the department.

**Load Credit:** There is currently no university policy regarding academic load for internships. There is a policy regarding independent studies, but an independent study is not the same as an internship. Due the varying degree of involvement in the internship experience by the supporting faculty member (based on the requirements established by the college/department), the academic load should be established by the specific college and approved by the Provost.

**Drop/Add of Internships:** During the Fall or Spring semesters, normal full-term drop/add policies apply (full tuition refund only available during the first week of classes). For Summer Internships, June 1 is the last day to add an internship and the last day to drop an internship. No full-tuition refunds for internships will be granted after June 1.