



Internship Program Student Handbook



Internship Office
Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-5
PO Box 2000
Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607.753.4715
Fax: 607.753.2937
www.cortland.edu/career

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Introduction to Internships

Welcome to the world of hands-on learning! Your decision to investigate internships is a wise one. Recent studies conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicate that experience is the most valued candidate attribute that employers seek. Internships provide that experience. More than 62 percent of new college hires participated in undergraduate internships. Additionally, employers responding to the association's most recent *Recruiting Benchmarks Survey* reported that they offered full-time jobs to almost two-thirds of their interns!

The Internship Program at SUNY Cortland combines academic study with career-related work/learning experiences. Students are given the opportunity to utilize their talents, skills and ingenuity in meaningful career-related work settings while earning academic credit toward their undergraduate degrees. At the same time, employers gain the services of bright, highly motivated, pre-professional employees. An internship will allow you to:

- Test career options and gain valuable experience
- Apply academic knowledge and theory in real work settings
- Make valuable contacts with potential employers
- More fully develop self-confidence and professionalism
- Earn academic credit toward completion of degree requirements
- Enhance your marketability upon graduation

A wide variety of internship options are available to SUNY Cortland students. Cortland students have interned at ESPN, UNICEF, the Smithsonian Institution, Disney World, the New York Yankees, Lockheed Martin, the National Park Service and MTV (to name just a few!). Students seeking internships must consider a number of variables including housing options, pay, geographic location, timing and impact on completion of your academic program. Opportunities are available throughout the year and many internships offer an hourly wage, a stipend or free housing. Although learning is the primary goal of the experience, you must consider all of these variables and give yourself plenty of time to plan.

This handbook will provide basic information regarding eligibility for academic credit, deadline dates and the internship search process. The staff at Career Services is available to answer questions and assist you throughout the internship search process. Please don't hesitate to contact us – we are here to help you. Good luck!

John Shirley
Director of Career Services and Internship/Volunteer Coordinator

Eligibility Requirements

Majors from all departments of the College may apply to participate in the Internship Program if the following requirements are satisfied at the beginning of the experience:

1. Students must have completed a minimum of 12 semester hours at SUNY Cortland.
2. Students must be in good academic standing (no probation) with no incomplete coursework when the internship begins.
3. Students must complete the "Learning Agreement" (including all interviews and signatures) before the deadlines listed below. The agreement outlines critical elements (learning objectives, academic assignments, dates, times, etc.) and is developed in consultation with the student's faculty sponsor, major department and the Internship Office.

NOTE: The above requirements are the minimum standards for participation. Please check with your academic advisor for additional eligibility requirements.

Academic Credit and the Internship Experience

Students from any major meeting campus eligibility guidelines may apply for internship credit. All appropriate paperwork, including a formal "Learning Agreement," must be completed prior to stated deadlines. Academic credit is based upon:

1. Content of the job - What are the job duties and responsibilities? Does the job relate to your career interests? Will this placement give you the opportunity to apply academic theory in a realistic manner? How will the placement contribute to your overall educational objectives?
2. Training - What types of training will you receive? Is there a formal training program that will allow you to expand your understanding of the career requirements? Is the employer truly committed to helping you learn?
3. Time contributed - How much time will you be contributing? What are the dates and hours to be worked? A **minimum** of 40 hours of working time is needed for each academic credit requested. For example, 120 total hours is the minimum time needed to earn 3 credits hours. Individual departments may require a greater time contribution - please check with your faculty sponsor or department chair for additional information.
4. Supervision - how will you be supervised? Who will you report to and how often? In addition to faculty sponsors/internship staff contact throughout the placement, it is expected that the on-site supervisor will be accessible.
5. Academic assignments - What books or readings will be required? What type of major project or paper will you submit? Will a reflective journal be required?

Academic credit will NOT be granted for prior experience - you may not apply for credit for past work experiences. Internship experiences are tied to Learning Agreement objectives, stated academic assignments and are supervised by a faculty sponsor throughout the experience.

Credit is approved and granted by your major academic department. Decisions are guided by individual department policy. Credit approved for internship experience will count as non-liberal arts free elective credit unless otherwise determined by the sponsoring department. The maximum (in aggregate) amount of credit that may be earned for all internship placements listed as "CPV 400" is 16 credit hours.

The Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement details all critical information about the internship. Student information, employer information, the internship job description and academic assignments are among the important pieces of information contained in the Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement must be reviewed and discussed with your internship employer, your faculty sponsor, your department chair, the associate dean and the internship coordinator. Strict review and approval ensures that you are involved with a quality learning experience and that academic credit will be properly applied toward graduation requirements.

Grading

Review of academic assignments and submission of your grade will be done by your faculty sponsor. All grades for internships are given on a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” basis. Grades are based upon completion of required academic assignments, completion of required hours and the “Employer’s Student Intern Appraisal Form.” No letter grades are assigned.

Campus Deadlines for Completing Learning Agreement

Internship Term	Learning Agreement must be completed on or before:
Summer Session I	May 1 st
Summer Session II	June 1 st
Fall (full semester or 1 st quarter)	July 1 st
Fall (2 nd quarter)	October 1 st
Winter Term	December 1 st
Spring (full semester or 3 rd quarter)	December 1 st
Spring (4 th quarter)	March 1 st

The deadlines above are strictly enforced. Any student requesting an extension will be required to secure permission from the Associate Dean’s Office. The Associate Dean will weigh extenuating circumstances and approve or deny extension requests on an individual basis. Please note that students not adhering to the established registration calendar are subject to late fee penalties.

Getting Started – Things to Think About

Plan ahead and start early...

Many agencies have early deadlines - some up to one year before the placement term. Other organizations restrict applications to only sophomores or juniors...seniors may not apply. In addition to employer deadlines and restrictions, you need to be aware of departmental requirements and college deadlines. The bottom line is: get started early. At a minimum, you should start planning 6 month before your anticipated start date. Contact your academic advisor or the Internship Office for more information.

Consider career options, geographic constraints, financial implications...

There might be a great internship in Boston, but what about housing? How will you handle living expenses if you are considering an internship away from home or campus? Are you willing to travel to participate in your “dream internship?” Can you give up your summer job (that may pay you a nice wage) for an unpaid internship at MTV? Be realistic in your expectations and give yourself plenty of time to weigh options. With planning, you are more likely to land a paid internship that provides a high quality learning experience.

Reality check – what will you be doing at the internship site?

Internship may vary greatly in what they offer and what you can expect. As an intern, you should expect to complete routine administrative work as part of your experience; paperwork and routine tasks are part of every job. Most of your experience however, should focus on the duties and responsibilities as outlined in the “Learning Agreement.” Plan to be proactive and seek out additional assignments that match your skills and abilities. Speak with other employees and ask questions in a professional manner.

Looking for a job offer?

You will get out of the internship what you put into it. Many organizations use internships as a recruiting tool and your supervisor may actually be screening you as a potential hire. In fact, 69.6 percent of interns received full-time job offers as a result of their internship! (NACE 2008 Experiential Education Survey) Select your internship sites carefully, work hard and your experience will be invaluable.

Timeline for a Successful Internship Search

The time required to land an internship varies a great deal. Cortland students have secured excellent internships within two or three weeks. This, however, is far from the norm. Some employers have application deadlines far earlier than those deadlines imposed by the College. For example, the Dow Jones Newspaper internship program has an application deadline of November 1st for students looking to intern the *following* summer! With this in mind...



Two semesters prior to start of internship:

1. Meet with Internship Coordinator or faculty advisor to discuss internship requirements.
2. Explore interests and possible career options at Career Services.
3. Review academic program requirements with your academic advisor. How will the internship impact my program completion and graduation date?
4. Review financial considerations (e.g. financial aid? relocation costs? have I signed a lease?). Check with Financial Advisement about impact on loans/aid; discuss insurance implications with your family.
5. Develop/refine resume and cover letter; have documents reviewed at Career Services.
6. Begin networking with friends, family, alumni and others to explore options.
7. Identify and confirm a “faculty sponsor” who will assist you throughout the internship process.
8. Review internship postings (online, Career Services, departmental).
9. Note all employer application deadline dates as well as campus paperwork deadlines.

One semester prior to start of internship:

1. Apply for internships online.
2. Mail/email cover letters and resumes to internships that interest you.
3. Continue to network and follow-up with organizations where you have applied.
4. Weigh offers carefully and honor your acceptance once a decision has been made.
5. Once an offer is confirmed, meet with the internship coordinator or your faculty sponsor to complete the “Learning Agreement.” You must:
 - a. Secure internship description from the internship employer (page 1 of Learning Agreement).
 - b. Attach a copy of your resume to Learning Agreement.
 - c. Meet with faculty sponsor to discuss learning objectives, academic assignments and supervision schedule (page 2 of Learning Agreement).
 - d. Secure signature from your department chair.
 - e. Contact your Associate Dean to set up an appointment to discuss internship.
 - f. Meet with Associate Dean to review Agreement; a copy of resume must be attached.
 - g. Meet with Internship Coordinator for final approval and registration information.

Registration

Upon completion of the Learning Agreement, including required signatures, the Internship Office will provide registration materials. Students should be aware that they are NOT registered simply because they have a signed agreement form. It is the student's responsibility to register and pay for the credit hours according to established procedures (including late registration fees). The Internship Office will provide specific registration instructions to all interns. Late fees will be charged, if necessary, according to registration guidelines as outlined by the Registrar's Office. Copies of the completed Learning Agreement will be provided for the student and the faculty sponsor.

Internship Search Materials/Links/Suggestions

Students are encouraged to utilize a wide variety of methods to identify internship employers. Typically, students use:

- Internship directories and resources, Career Services, Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-5
- Family, friends and personal contacts – networking is still very effective in locating sites
- Internship and career fairs; a variety of fairs are held across the state and region
- Alumni contacts – SUNY Cortland alum have been very helpful in providing internship leads, relocation information, etc.
- Faculty members and other campus advisors may have useful contact information and ideas
- Sample web based resources:
 - Career Services <http://www.cortland.edu/career/internlinks.html>
(this site has dozens of internship links including many listed below)
 - Internships-usa www.internships-usa.com
(password protected – contact Career Services for password)
 - InternJobs.com www.internjobs.com
 - InternAbroad.com www.internabroad.com
 - Indeed.com www.indeed.com
 - Idealist www.idealists.org
 - USA Jobs www.usajobs.com
 - Essential NY <http://www.essentialnyjobs.com/>
 - InternshipPrograms.com <http://www.internshipprograms.com/>



Career Services offers assistance in all phases of the internship search including cover letter and resume writing, interviewing, identification of internship sites, follow-up with employers and preparation of the Learning Agreement.

More Information?

The Internship Handbook, the Learning Agreement, the Employer's Student Intern Appraisal form and additional information may be downloaded at: <http://www.cortland.edu/career/intern.html>. For additional information:

John Shirley, Director of Career Services and Internship Coordinator
Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-5, SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY 13045
Ph: 607.753.4715
Fax: 607.753.2937
John.Shirley@cortland.edu

Good luck and have a great learning experience!

Internship Checklist

- Meet with Internship Coordinator in Career Services to get started
- Check eligibility to receive academic credit for the internship
- Determine when you want to complete the internship and discuss impact on completion of course requirements with your academic advisor
- Develop resume and cover letter (visit Career Services for assistance)
- Allow sufficient time explore options and apply
- Identify a faculty sponsor
- Apply to multiple organizations; be sure to follow-up with organizations to ensure receipt of application materials
- Once accepted, secure the internship job description from the organization
- Meet with your faculty sponsor to discuss academic assignments and complete the Learning Agreement; attach a copy of your resume
- Secure signatures of faculty sponsor and department chair
- Call to set up an appointment with your Associate Dean
- Meet with Associate Dean to review Learning Agreement and secure signature
- Deliver completed Learning Agreement to Internship Office, B-5 Van Hoesen Hall to secure registration information and total tuition costs (if applicable)
- Register for courses assigned by Internship Coordinator
- Begin internship – stay in touch with faculty sponsor throughout internship
- Hand in all assignments at end of internship; be sure that your site supervisor completes the “Employer’s Student Internship Appraisal Form”

NOTES: