

# **SITE SUPERVISOR'S GUIDEBOOK FOR SUPERVISING INTERNSHIPS**



**Internship Office  
700 Terrace Heights #6  
Winona MN 55987-1399  
Phone: (507) 457-6695  
Fax: (507) 457-6990**

## SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you for your interest in the Saint Mary's University Internship Program. By agreeing to supervise one of our interns, you join the faculty and staff at Saint Mary's in providing a learning experience for an undergraduate college student. We hope you will become familiar with what we wish to accomplish, and we welcome your suggestions toward making our internship program productive for both our students and your organization.

Past experience and comments of former interns and their supervisors indicate that some basic questions might occur to you about the nature of our partnership. We trust that the questions and answers below will help you to understand the nature of our internships and what we are asking from you.

### *1. What is an internship?*

#### **INTERNSHIP Course 496/497**

An *Internship* is a planned work experience for academic credit supervised by a qualified professional in a real work atmosphere. An internship provides eligible students an opportunity to participate in experiences that enhance academic, professional, and personal development. This experience integrates a student's academic and career interests with "hands-on" work experience. An internship may be either part-time or full-time, and paid or unpaid.

Students must complete a minimum of 56 or more semester credit hours (**at least junior status**) and meet various eligibility requirements before participating in an internship.

### *2. How can I/this organization benefit?*

Many supervisors simply enjoy sharing their expertise and savvy in their role of professional mentor. In addition, some tangible benefits include:

- Year-round source of highly motivated pre-professionals
- Quality candidates for temporary or seasonal positions and projects
- Freedom for professional staff to pursue creative projects
- Flexible cost-effective work force not requiring a long-term employer commitment
- Proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential employees

### *3. Who participates in Saint Mary's University Internship Program?*

Juniors and seniors who have met a minimum grade point average and have the recommendation of their academic department can undertake an internship for academic credit. These prospective interns represent a variety of academic majors.

### *4. What other responsibilities and activities are required of interns for academic credit?*

Students are expected to initiate and negotiate the "Learning Plan" (see "8" below) with both the site supervisor and the faculty supervisor.

Interns are subsequently required to submit their approved learning contract, four short papers reflecting on their "learning", self-evaluations, examples of work projects, and oftentimes, a lengthy paper on a topic related to their internship, and/or an oral presentation to their peers about their internship experience.

Throughout the internship, students are encouraged to seek out assistance from you, their faculty supervisor, and the Director of Internships in order to realize their learning/working expectations.

Moreover, an intern is expected to behave in a professional manner and in accordance with the policies, procedures, and calendar of the sponsoring organization.

**5. *How many hours a week can students work during their internship?***

At minimum, students must work 45 contact hours for each credit earned. A student opting for 6 credits must work at least 270 hours before the internship is completed. The hours worked each week will depend on the number of weeks the student is eligible to work (a semester consists of 15 weeks). Generally, however, a part-time intern will work approximately 20 hours per week for at least 15 weeks. A full-time intern will work about 40 hours each work for 13-15 weeks. In other words, the number of hours a student works weekly is somewhat negotiable and based on your organization's needs as well as a student's academic needs.

**6. *Can a student's work schedule be changed?***

Again, you and the intern can decide this. Students who are interning part-time, however, may have academic commitments that hinder schedule changes.

**7. *What do the students hope to accomplish during the duration of their internship?***

Students who intern do so for a variety of reasons. One of the most common reasons is a desire to explore career possibilities related to an academic field or to become more comfortable and confident in the work world outside of the university community. Another reason often expressed is the desire to develop and apply skills related to their career choice. Moreover, students may receive academic credit applicable towards graduation.

**8. *What is expected of me as a supervisor?***

The **student intern** will be asked to develop a "learning plan", in consultation with you, describing the specific skills or understandings s/he hopes to develop on the job and stating goals for the internship experience. The learning plan can evolve from a job description provided by you or can be used to develop a job description related to the student's learning goals. The particular approach employed is most frequently decided by intern supervisors based on their personal style and the organization's needs and philosophy.

The "learning plan" also includes a section which identifies the strategies used by the university to evaluate a student's progress towards the attainment of their learning goals. This section may include, as well, evaluative criteria established by you or your organization for assessing the intern's performance and learning.

The purpose of this learning plan is to establish realistic expectations regarding the nature of the internship and may be modified if needed. A sample of this document is attached.

Along with the learning plan is the learning contract, which outlines the terms of the internship and the responsibilities of each of the parties involved in the internship. A sample of this document is also attached.

In addition to consulting with the student about the learning plan, we ask that you provide the intern with an adequate orientation to your organization and to the duties the intern will be asked to undertake. Students also seem to fit in more quickly if they have work space assigned to them, where appropriate.

Twice a semester, we also ask for written feedback regarding the student's progress. Evaluation forms have been included for your use. These forms should be returned directly to the Internship Office. However, we encourage you to share your evaluations with the student. Students may also be asked to complete self-evaluations that you may find useful in the assessment process.

Some supervisors find that the evaluation form provided by Saint Mary's is inappropriate given the nature of the internship or the measures that they are using to evaluate progress. If this is the case, please feel free to use a written format that you deem more suitable. A calendar is enclosed which identifies the dates we hope to receive the written evaluations from you.

We hope that communication channels are open between you and the intern at all times. We suggest you help insure there are times for feedback from each other during the semester, whether formally scheduled or not, in addition to the mid-term and final evaluations. If you feel communication is lacking, we encourage you to act immediately either by meeting with the intern, the student's faculty supervisor, or the Director of Internships.

### ***9. How will my evaluation be used?***

Ultimate responsibility for grading interns rests with Saint Mary's faculty. Your evaluation, however, serves three very important functions:

- It communicates to the faculty and to the student your perception of the intern's strengths, learning needs, progress, and accomplishments;
- It helps the intern to assess his/her skills and to plan for the future;
- It assists in the ongoing process of evaluating and improving Saint Mary's internship program.

A copy of this evaluation form goes to the student and to the intern's faculty supervisor.

### ***10. What happens if this internship doesn't work out?***

We hope the interviewing process has helped you and the intern to make a good decision about working together for the semester. Usually, students have the opportunity to interview with several possible supervisors so they have some basis for making their commitment to a particular placement. However, sometimes things do not work out as anticipated. If there are insurmountable problems with the internship, we hope you and the intern will consult with the Director of Internships and

make the decision to terminate, if necessary, within the first week or so of the internship. A later termination may result in the student losing credit for the program, which can delay graduation.

***11. Does the internship cost me anything?***

There is no requirement that interns must be paid. We only ask that if students have duties that involve expenses, that you consider reimbursing them through your organization just as a regular staff member would be.

Organizations that do provide paid internships disperse payment for work in various ways. Some pay an hourly wage directly to the students. Others make a scholarship donation to the university, which is then disseminated by the school to a specified student as financial aid. Yet others award a pre-set stipend to an intern (or indirectly through the school) which is not necessarily related to the number of hours a student works.

***12. Who can I talk to if I have other questions?***

Internship Office Information

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (academic year)  
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (summer)

Jackie Laumb, Director of Internships  
Phone: 507-457-6695  
Email: [jlaumb@smumn.edu](mailto:jlaumb@smumn.edu)  
Fax: 507-457-6990

Mailing Address: Saint Mary's University of Minnesota  
Internship Office  
700 Terrace Heights #6  
Winona MN 55987

\*\*\*\*\*

We don't promise that wonderful things will always happen when a person or organization agrees to take a Saint Mary's intern, but our students are bright, committed young people and the potential exists for an exciting and rewarding semester, both for you and for the intern. Your time spent as a partner in our program will be greatly appreciated and, we hope, well repaid!