

## **Experiential Learning (EL) Academic Internship Best Practices**

### **Purpose and Overview**

**The academic internship best practices below are mandatory for all EL-approved courses and highly recommended for all other academic internships.**

**(For students who select non-academic internships that do not include a course or academic credit, it is highly recommended that their internship positions adhere to the standards on page 4.)**

The purpose of establishing EL internship best practices is to standardize excellence among the various types of academic internships being offered throughout the University for EL credit. Whether a student is taking a EL-approved internship course from one of our colleges, the University Internship Program, Study Abroad, or Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning, that student's experience should be of the highest quality, both intellectually and pragmatically.

Best practices for academic internships are crucial because internships are a 3-way partnership that offers a variety of rewards to students, employers and DePaul:

- Students, through the integration of academic inquiry with workplace experiences, develop intellectual and ethical growth, civic and social responsibility, work-related skills, and knowledge of career possibilities;
- Employers gain well-educated and highly motivated interns who will introduce fresh ideas and make significant contributions to their organizations;
- DePaul will strengthen its partnerships with the Chicago community, helping to “deepen the university’s distinctive connection to the global city of Chicago.”

### **Course Qualifications for EL Credit**

**To qualify for the designation of a EL-approved internship course, a course must offer at least 4 academic credits. Additional options include two 2-credit courses or other course combinations that total at least 4 academic credits. The course(s) must meet EL Learning Outcomes, Writing Expectations and Standards, which are outlined below.**

**To propose a EL-approved course, click here:**

<https://lascollege.depaul.edu/LSPcourseProposal/Default.aspx> and select Experiential Learning. You'll find the learning outcomes and writing expectations as well as the proposal system link. If you have questions or concerns about the system, please write to [liberalstudies@depaul.edu](mailto:liberalstudies@depaul.edu).

- **Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes below were adopted by the EL committee and were previously approved by the Liberal Studies Council. The learning outcomes should be clearly connected to the course topic and incorporated in the course syllabus.

Students in EL internship courses will:

1. apply particular concepts from readings, lectures, etc. to an analysis of lived experiences in the settings provided by the course;
2. use the experiences provided by the course to construct and articulate the impact of their experiences on their understanding of course content;
3. demonstrate an understanding of ethics appropriate to their experiential placement;
4. use their new understanding to make decisions and solve problems related to the course, whether at the setting provided by the course, or in other assignments.

- **Writing Outcomes:**

Writing outcomes should include multiple written reflections. These reflections should not merely recount a student's experience but should be rooted in and draw from material in readings, videos, film clips and lectures, relating the work experience to the course's academic content.

For example, an internship course may include readings on diversity, ethics and environmental sustainability. The student should be required to support and connect thoughts on those readings to how each of those issues is dealt with at his or her internship site, as well as provide personal reflections.

- **Standards**

1. EL-approved internship courses are directly linked to students' current internship experiences and current work assignments. Credit is awarded for the attainment of learning outcomes, not for work activity alone. An internship must be taken concurrent with the course. Credit will not be given for prior learning or "life experience."
2. For EL-approved internship courses, a student must work a minimum of 80 hours during the quarter.
3. A minimum of 15 hours of instructional time must be organized and facilitated by the faculty of record. Types of "instructional time" may include classroom sessions, online class sessions using D2L engagement, office conferences, telephone or e-mail contact.
4. Reflection activities, pertinent assignments, and assessment of a student's progress must occur regularly throughout the course, not just at the end.
5. The faculty member is responsible for facilitating reflection and providing academic content that relates to the student's experience.

6. The faculty member is responsible for providing support and feedback to the student. The faculty member provides evaluation and assessment of the student's development process and is responsible for the assignment of a final course grade. The internship supervisor must provide an evaluation of the student's performance at the internship site.
7. For employers who require that a student receives academic credit for the work he or she will be doing at the internship site, send the employer a letter saying, "Students will earn academic credit upon successful completion of a 4-credit internship course."
8. Regular oversight contact should also be maintained to:
  - Intervene early, if a student is having academic or other difficulties
  - Ensure learning goals are being accomplished
  - Monitor and supervise
  - Keep students motivated and engaged
9. Recommended class size for academic internship courses should be within a range of 15 to no more than 22 students per course.
10. Experiential Learning Assignments and Grading  
See pages 5, 6, and 7 for samples of EL assignments and grading rubrics.
11. Orientation to Internship Experience  
All students should be given an orientation, which prepares them for the internship and the internship course. The orientation may be done one-to-one or in a group setting. See page 8 for an outline of the UIP Webinar Internship Orientation.
12. Ethical Standards and Behavior  
All internships students should be aware of behavioral and academic rules to follow and their rights as students. Please see Academic Handbook for Code of Student Responsibility on DePaul's website.  
  
If appropriate, internship programs may consider establishing eligibility requirements: class standing, curriculum, GPA, etc.
13. Forms and Documents  
All forms that will be sent to an employer should be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel. Also recommended is the inclusion of the Department of Labor Guidelines to employers who offer unpaid internships. Please see page 9 for Department of Labor Guidelines.

14. In order to qualify as an academic internship, a student's internship position should:

- serve as a laboratory to apply academic learning;
- be a significant position in which the student spends the majority of his or her time on tasks that will enhance the student's analytical, technical and interpersonal skills;
- entail no more than 25% clerical work;
- involve substantial interaction with professional staff and/or supervisory personnel, who can discuss the organization's vision, goals and objectives with the student;
- be an opportunity to explore career options that are relevant to the student's career interests;
- require a minimum of 80 hours of total work experience, during the academic quarter in which the student is enrolled in an internship course.
- rarely take place in a private home, without being carefully vetted for professional standards.

**RESOURCE #1:****EXAMPLES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING  
INTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENTS****Internship Course: “Corporate Social Responsibility”**

**1. Social Responsibility SWOT Critique:** A SWOT is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to an organization. First, read "Strategy & Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility" and read "The Virtue Matrix: Calculating the Return of Corporate Responsibility." (Both readings are on Ares.) Then, after discussing CSR trends with your supervisor, develop a paper in which you: (1) complete a SWOT analysis of your current organization--specifically focused on your organization's commitment and effort towards corporate social responsibility. (2) within your analysis, include trends from your discussion with your supervisor and personal observations. Also refer to the principles and concepts in the two readings. For instance, you might analyze your current organization using elements of the value chain method outline (or the Virtue Matrix) to chart both the strengths and weaknesses of your organization's activities. (3) offer suggestions for improving your organization's goals towards social responsibility. Your analysis should be four to five pages, double-spaced.

Note well: Utilize additional theories from class readings, online discussions, and your own reflections and observations. Focus on corporate social responsibility elements of your organization.

Note well: Your SWOT analysis should be suitable to include in your career e-portfolio.

**2. Informational Interview & Reflection:** Interview a leader in your organization, who is knowledgeable about corporate social responsibility and possible career pathways that may interest you. (If not from your workplace, you may choose to interview a DePaul ASK volunteer in your area of interest.) Using a structured interview document that you have developed in relation to course readings and our course objectives, conduct an interview about corporate social responsibility, and career pathways in socially responsible organizations. The questions during your interview should be scripted prior to the actual interview. The goal of your interview is to:

1. learn more about career pathways and career choices in organizations that strive to be socially responsible;
2. learn more about the basic premises of corporate social responsibility;
3. analyze the way corporate social responsibility is built into decision-making processes and the systemic effect of socially responsible corporate choices.

Within your paper:

1. summarize the background information about the organization and what you learned about the organization's involvement with social responsibility;
2. describe the career options within your field of interest related to social responsibility;
3. provide your own reflections on the topics discussed during the interview, the ideas expressed by the leader you interviewed, and the movement towards socially responsible decision-making;
4. refer to how our course readings support your thinking and the discussion you had with the leader you interviewed.

Your reflection should be four to five pages, double-spaced.

Note well: This paper must be e-mailed to the individual you interviewed with a thank you note expressing your gratitude for his or her time. Be sure to copy (CC) the instructor when sending this email. Then, upload a copy of your paper to our digital drop box.

### **Internship Course: “ Creativity as a Change Agent in the Workplace”**

**PowerPoint and Presentation:** Referring to Beyond Bullet Points, prepare a creative PowerPoint presentation that focuses on a future creative change within your organization. The content of your PowerPoint should be directed to a specific audience and, based on what you have learned in this class and your own reflections; it should introduce a new idea in a persuasive, engaging way. (1) Identify a specific problem you have observed at your work site that needs to be addressed and develop an idea for a solution; (2) specifically analyze how the idea will be implemented and what effect these changes will have on your organization; (3) identify how these changes will be monitored and how your organization will realize the success of the change OR when the change could lead to failure.

Note well: Your purpose is to envision a creative change and consider how this change will affect practice.

## **RESOURCE #2**

## **GRADING**

### **General Grading Descriptions:**

*Grades may include a "+" or "-" as the work merits them, especially as they fit some or all of the characteristics in a given category or as categories overlap.*

**A** Reflects writing and thinking which demonstrates unusual originality, organization and style, as well as conceptual complexity. The writing is free of spelling and grammatical errors.

**B** Demonstrates a solid grasp of course material, a clear, well-organized presentation and thesis that is consistently developed throughout the writing. The work differs from an A paper in that it does not move ideas into any new or original terrain.

**C** Reflects work that shows a familiarity with course material but perhaps lacks a clear thesis or focus, does not engage the ideas in any sustained way, or has multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and facts.

**D** Reflects generally scattered and unfocussed writing and thinking that includes course materials only minimally, has no discernible focus, tends to drift from one idea to another and is severely flawed in writing, format, and style.

**F** Reflects the defects found in D work, but in addition is obviously the product of carelessness, speed, and a lack of any deep reflection--evidenced most prominently by a lack of proofreading, extreme brevity, and failure to develop a thought with overall coherence.

### **Grading Online Discussions:**

All readings will be tied to weekly online discussion forum topics. During these discussions, it is important to support and connect your personal reflections to these academic course readings.

Note well: Be sure to quote course readings within your discussion forum responses. Please cite these quotations with the corresponding page number.

Note well: Discussion forums are graded based on the following criteria:

1. depth and sophistication of response;
2. standards of professional writing;
3. ability to support and connect thoughts to academic readings;
4. consistent dialogue with other students;
5. timeliness: each forum has a two week dialogue period.

## **RESOURCE #3**

### **OUTLINE: UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (UIP) WEBINAR ORIENTATION**

#### Welcome to the UIP Orientation

#### Orientation Goals:

1. Learn about the University Internship Program
2. Understand options for earning academic credit with your internship
3. Identify best practices for having a successful internship
4. Learn internship search strategies

#### Why are Internships Important?

1. A better understanding of your major
2. A stronger grad school application
3. A possible full-time job offer after graduation
4. A reference letter of recommendation
5. A robust professional network
6. A competitive resume

#### UIP Standards

No more than 25% clerical work

Supervisor or mentor

8 hours per week/80 hours per quarter

UIP class and internship at the same time

#### How can I earn credit for an Internship?

1. Take an academic internship course at DePaul while working at your internship
  - You will fulfill the Experiential Learning Requirement or General Elective Credit
2. Methods of earning Experiential Learning credit:
  - University Internship Program
  - Academic internship course at your college
  - Study Abroad courses
  - Community-based Service Learning courses

#### How to be a “SuperIntern”

#### Networking

#### DePaul ASK Mentors

Finding an Internship: Career Center, DePaul Experience, Campus Job Board; Going Global

Recaps of UIP courses: UIP250, UIP251, UIP252, UIP253, UIP254, UIP350, UIP367, UIP240

#### Steps to Enrolling in an internship course

#### Thank you for attending our UIP Orientation!

Please complete the survey to earn credit for your attendance at today's orientation.

Questions? Email DePaul’s University Internship Program: uip@depaul.edu

## **RESOURCE #4**

### **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR CRITERIA FOR UNPAID INTERNSHIPS**

#### **UNPAID INTERNSHIPS**

The DePaul University Career Center strongly recommends that interns be compensated for their work. If an employer is offering an unpaid internship, however, it is important that the position meet all of the following Department of Labor standards under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These standards were created to help determine whether workers are to be considered "trainees" or "employees" under the FLSA.

- 1.) The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
- 2.) The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
- 3.) The intern does not displace regular employees but works under close supervision of existing staff;
- 4.) The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
- 5.) The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
- 6.) The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

For more information, please visit the Department of Labor website:

<http://www.dol.gov/whdregs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>.