



ACADEMIC POLICY

Internships for Academic Credit (AA 7)

POLICY STATEMENT

Mentored experiential learning opportunities such as Internships benefit student motivation, retention, and graduation rates. In addition, Internships can bolster college relationships with the community and directly benefit local organizations. This policy provides guidelines for Internships performed in exchange for academic credit such that they:

- Meet a minimum set of standardized curricular criteria to ensure a legitimate learning experience that benefits students;
- Are created thoughtfully with appropriate faculty and student workloads; and
- Are established and completed in accordance with federal law and recognized best practices.

Internships for which no academic credit is received are handled through the Career Services Center and do not require involvement of faculty and degree programs.

DEFINITIONS

Intern: A student participating in experiential learning activities at a placement site.

Internship: "A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent" (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011).

Learning Plan: An outline of the expected learning outcomes, skills or value added, and general work that will be completed by the Intern at the Placement Site.

Placement Site: The person, institution, organization, or office at which the Internship will take place.

Site Supervisor: A designated individual at the Placement Site who will be the Intern's main point of contact and will oversee the majority of student Intern activities.

PROCEDURES

I. Course Designation and Number of Credits

Internship for Credit courses may be run as:

- Specific courses already established in the Nevada System of Higher Education Common Course Numbering system;
- Special Topics Courses;

- Independent Study Courses.

As with all courses, Departments or Schools may make the decision to run a course as an independent study if the minimum number of enrollees to financially sustain the course is not met. Permission of the Provost is required to run a course that is not self-supporting. Courses may be run with students obtaining unique numbers of credits. This requires special set-up with the Registrar's Office prior to the start of the semester.

An Internship is not necessarily a capstone, but could be used by a program as a capstone at the discretion of the faculty and appropriate Dean.

- A. *Number of Credits*: The number of credits a student receives for an Internship should follow these guidelines for a standard sixteen (16)-week semester:

Hours required per week (academic work <i>plus</i> time at placement site)	Approximate total hours at Placement Site per semester	Number of Credits
10-15	110-170	3
16-20	171-240	4
21-25	241-310	5
26-30	311-380	6

For courses that take place over a reduced timeframe, such as a 6-, 8-, 12-, or 14-week session, these guidelines above should be used to determine the appropriate number of hours per week that should be completed at the Placement Site.

1. The following examples provide hypothetical weekly schedules to help visualize how Internship and academic time accumulate to reach totals in the above table:
 - i. 3-credit Internship: Intern spends one eight (8)-hour or two four (4)-hour sessions at a Placement Site (for eight [8] hours total) per week, attends a weekly ninety (90)-minute class session with the supervising academic faculty member, and completes roughly three (3) hours of additional academic work assigned by the faculty member. This totals to an average of 12.5 hours of work per week.
 - ii. 4-credit Internship: Intern spends twelve (12) hours at a Placement Site per week, attends a three (3)-hour session with the supervising academic faculty member every other week (for an average of ninety [90] minutes per week), and completes four (4) hours of work assigned by the faculty member per week. This totals to 17.5 hours of work per week, on average.
 - iii. 5-credit Internship: Intern spends twenty (20) hours per week at the Placement Site, attends weekly one (1)-hour sessions with the academic faculty member, and completes three (3) hours of academic work per week. This totals to twenty-four (24) hours of work per week, on average.
 - iv. 6-credit Internship: Intern spends twenty (20) hours at the Placement Site, attends a weekly three (3)-hour session with an academic faculty member, and completes six (6) hours of academic work each week. This totals to twenty-nine (29) hours of work per week on average.

These guidelines are flexible and may change based on student availability, instructor needs, and the goals of each program. Students may complete more internship hours than they receive credit for due to programmatic limitations.

II. Eligibility of Faculty to Teach Internship for Credit Courses

All academic faculty, full- or part-time, are eligible to teach Internship for Credit courses with approval from their Department Chair, Dean, or Library Director.

III. Eligibility of Students to Participate in Internship for Credit Courses

Prerequisite requirements for students to take an Internship for Credit course are defined in the NSC academic catalog (in cases of previously established courses) or may be decided by the course instructor in collaboration with the Department Chair, Dean, or Library Director (in cases of Special Topics or Independent Study courses). Some Placement Sites require additional screening such as background checks, drug screening, or interviews. The cost of these expenses may be the responsibility of the student Intern. Interns must sign a Liability Waiver to participate in an Internship for Credit.

IV. Eligibility and Selection of Placement Sites

Placement Sites may be for-profit or non-profit organizations or businesses that exist in brick-and-mortar facilities or in an online virtual space (such as an online news organization, political blog, or digital repository).

Placement Sites may not be organizations or businesses where a student Intern is already employed unless the Internship is in a separate division, the Intern will develop unique skills, and the Internship takes place at alternative times to the hours for which the Intern is already employed and compensated.

The course instructor or an appointed designee from the Office of the Provost must assess and approve each Placement Site at the time the first Internship at the Site is established. This includes ensuring that the Placement Site will provide appropriate supervision from a qualified professional and that the business or organization has been registered and licensed at the state, city, or county level. Placement Sites that are used repeatedly across multiple semesters do not require additional site visits or approval, but may be visited at the instructor's discretion. New supervisors at a Placement Site should be met by the instructor.

A representative from the Placement Site must sign a Site Agreement Form and be willing to develop a Learning Plan (see Section VI: Academic Requirements) in collaboration with the course instructor.

Course instructors serve as the primary liaison to the supervisor at the Placement Site regarding student Interns. However, a representative from the Office of the Provost will be responsible for the collection and storage of Liability Waiver and Site Agreement Forms and may facilitate back-end communications regarding the establishment of an Internship.

V. Mandatory Training for Student Interns

Interview and resume assistance is available through the Career Service Center; these services are optional, but encouraged, for students interested in enrolling in an Internship.

The Career Service Center at Nevada State College will provide mandatory training to Interns. Training will take place in the weeks prior to and at the start of the semester and will include workshops on professionalism, boundaries, and workplace ethics. Students must participate in the

Career Services Center training unless they receive a waiver stating that the instructor will lead such training as a part of their course.

Training provided by the Placement Site is determined by the Placement Site. Hours spent in Placement Site training should be counted as Internship hours.

VI. Academic Requirements for an Internship for Credit Course

Many factors can impact the value of Internships and proactive steps should be taken by the overseeing educational institution and the Placement Site to maximize the quality of an Internship experience. Legitimate Internship experiences must result in significant learning gains to the Intern, and may not simply be general labor conducted by a student. Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division provides guidelines for Internships that must be considered under the Fair Labor Standards Act (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

Internships for Credit are a mechanism for students to apply theory and knowledge gained in their coursework and enhance their education. For optimal learning to take place, there must be an understanding on the part of the Placement Site to mentor the student as well as an established academic process occurring in parallel to the student's on-site Internship.

- A. *Required Curricular Components from the Placement Site:* An individualized Learning Plan will be generated collaboratively by the faculty member and Placement Site and signed by the Intern. This Learning Plan should be completed no later than the third week of the semester in which the student is completing the internship for credit.
- B. *Required Curricular Components from the NSC Course Instructor:* While academic programs are responsible for supporting the infrastructure of Internships, each course instructor is primarily responsible for developing the curriculum for students engaging in Internships for Credit. To fulfill the academic requirements for an Internship for Credit, students need to engage in significant reflection on their Internship experiences throughout the semester. Thus, course instructors will meet with Interns on a regular basis and require assignments for which Interns receive feedback throughout the semester (e.g., research, written analysis, or oral presentations).
- C. *Assessment of Student Performance:* Whether an Internship for Credit receives a letter grade or a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade is at the discretion of the academic program that developed the course (in cases where a course exists or special topics course is run) or the instructor (in cases where an Internship for Credit is completed as an independent study).

The course instructor should develop an Intern assessment for the Placement Site supervisor to complete both at the mid-term and end of the term. This is an assessment of the student's performance at the Placement Site and should not account for more than 50% of the student's grade in the Internship for Credit course. The remainder of the student's grade should be based on the academic components of the course that were led by the instructor in parallel to the student's on-site Internship activities. A copy of the completed mid-term and end-of-term assessment should be saved in the instructor's records for the course.

VII. Assessment of Placement Site

The Intern will complete an evaluation of the Placement Site. This evaluation will be shared with the course instructor and the Director of the Career Services Center. Poor reviews of Placement Sites may result in efforts to alter subsequent Internship experiences within the Placement Site or may result in termination of use of that Placement Site.

VIII. Terminating an Internship

Withdrawal of the Intern from the Placement Site prior to the scheduled end of the semester may be requested by the Placement Site or by NSC. The Placement Site may dismiss the Intern if the Intern's performance is unsatisfactory or disruptive. NSC may withdraw an Intern from a Placement Site if, in NSC's judgment, the supervision does not meet the needs of the Intern. It is expected that issues related to the Intern's potential dismissal or withdrawal will be placed in writing and discussed by the appropriate supervisors at the Placement Site and NSC, and that appropriate remedial action is considered prior to withdrawal or dismissal.

If a student is removed from an Internship for Credit, placement in an alternative site or acceptance into a future Internship for Credit will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the course instructor(s), Academic Dean or Department Chair, and a representative of the Provost's Office. Standard academic deadlines for course withdrawal and petition processes apply.

IX. Tuition

Students are required to pay all relevant tuition and fees for courses used as an Internship for Credit.

X. Compensation of Interns

Compensation of Interns is at the discretion of the Placement Site. Under federal law, academic credit may not be used as compensation in lieu of payment from the company for student work at an Internship; the academic credit an Intern receives is for supplementary work done under the supervision of an NSC instructor. For-profit sites that use Interns without providing financial compensation must sign a Site Agreement Form that ensures they are aware of the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division guidelines for Internships under the Fair Labor Standards Act (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). These guidelines require that unpaid Internships meet the following six criteria:

- A. 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;
 - B. The Internship experience is for the benefit of the Intern;
 - C. The Intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
 - D. 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;
 - E. The Intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the Internship; and
 - F. The Placement Site and the Intern understand that the Intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the Internship.
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FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

- Liability Waiver to be signed by Intern
- Site Agreement Form to be signed by Placement Site supervisor and NSC course instructor
- Learning Plan to be completed by Placement Site and NSC course instructor and signed by Intern by the third week of the semester in which the Internship takes place
- Evaluation of Intern

CONTACTS

SUBJECT	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL
Vice Provost of Scholarship and Experiential Curriculum	Robin Cresiski	702-992-2651	Robin.Cresiski@nsc.edu
Director of Student Development	Richard Yao	702-992-2632	Richard.Yao@nsc.edu

RELATED INFORMATION

- U.S. Department of Labor. (2010). Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act (Fact Sheet #71). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2011). Position Statement: U.S. Internships—A Definition and Criteria to Assess Opportunities and Determine the Implications for Compensation. Retrieved from: <http://www.naceweb.org/advocacy/position-statements/unitedstates-internships.aspx#sthash.RU6Q2R9u.dpuf>

HISTORY

No previous policies on internships exist.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES PAGE

Joanna Sheehan 04/16/15
Faculty Senate (Chair's Signature) Date

Recommended: (Circle One)
 Approval Denial* Approval
w/condition

C. R. 2/13/15
Office of the Provost (Provost's Signature) Date

Recommended: (Circle One)
 Approval Denial* Approval
w/condition

[Signature] 5/12/15
Office of the President (President's Signature) Date

Recommended: (Circle One)
 Approval Denial* Approval
w/condition

*Attach rationale for denial or conditional approval