Faculty Frequently Asked Questions

What is an internship*?
An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting, allowing the student to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths. In addition to the syllabus/learning contract, it is defined by a written agreement, called an Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) or other similar name, and involves direct supervision by an employer and oversight (and assignments!) by a faculty member.

For guidelines about what constitutes an internship, please see Hosting Interns- Important Guidelines on the "Information for Employers" page of the Career Development Center's website.

When can students intern, and how long does an internship last?
An internship is typically a one-semester in length with a definite beginning and end. Students are supervised by both a designated Site Supervisor employer off campus and a designated Instructor of Record who teaches in the student's major or minor. Both Site Supervisor and the Instructor of Record are identified in the learning agreement or contract.

Can a student receive internship credit in any major, and who can supervise him/her?
Internship course credit can only be given in the student's major or minor, must be directly related to that major or minor, and must be supervised by a faculty member in that major or minor.

Must the student pay tuition?
Students must pay the normal tuition rate based on the number of hours of credit granted through the internship.

Is the Internship Instructor of Record responsible for helping students find internships?
The requirements of the faculty depends on the faculty's department. Typically, students ultimately are responsible for finding their own internships. However, faculty members are encouraged to assist by sharing ideas, contacts, etc. The Career Development Center is also available to help with the process, and internship postings can be found on Hiresamford.com.

What should I do if I hear about a potential internship in my or another area?
If faculty members have information about potential internship opportunities not listed on Hiresamford.com, this information can be forwarded to the Career Development Center. Someone from the CDC can then help determine if the internship opportunity seems valid and will follow up with the organization to encourage the posting of the opportunity or participation in other recruiting activities.

How will I know about potential internships for my students? Will I be notified of opportunities?
In addition to using professional contacts and referring students to the Career Development Center, faculty members are welcome to access internship postings that may be listed on Hiresamford.com. To access the opportunities that are available to students, simply go to Hiresamford.com and create a student account, using your Samford ID as your username.

In addition, numerous internship-related search engines can be found on the Career Services website on Find a Job or Internship page.

Updated 9.18.25

What are my responsibilities as an Instructor of Record?

Internship Learning Agreement- Once a student finds a place s/he would like to intern, s/he will complete the Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) or other similar document deemed accepted by your department, including outlining the tasks and learning objectives of the internship. This should be done in conjunction with the Site Supervisor, and signed by both the student and Site Supervisor. The ILA on the Career Development Center's website has been vetted by Samford University's legal counsel and provides a level of protection to the student, Internship Instructor of Record, and University.

Determine Credit Worthiness- The Instructor of Record typically then determines if the responsibilities and learning outcomes outlined in the ILA are substantive and pertinent enough to merit academic credit and indicates his/her approval by signing the form. Ideally, copies of the completed ILAs of students s/he is supervising are sent to Career Development Center for tracking purposes by the end of the drop/add period. All parties who sign the agreement are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of the ILA. Individual departments may also require that a copy of the ILA be sent to the Department Head or kept in a central location within the department as well.

Create Syllabus/Academic Contract- The Instructor of Record should customize the syllabus/contract of the internship course as needed.

Monitor Progress- The Instructor of Record should stay in contact and/or interact with the intern and Site Supervisor as appropriate and in accordance with his/her department's expectations. Academic-related assignments should also be monitored.

Evaluate Experience- The Instructor of Record is responsible for evaluating students' performance and progress, including evaluations of the experience (the Career Development Center has evaluation forms available, if needed, for the supervisor to complete on the student, and the student to complete about his/her experience).

Assign Outcome- Depending on the department and based on assigned written work and evaluations, the Instructor of Record will assign a letter grade or a different type of outcome as determined by his/her department (pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory).

Do I need to visit the internship location?

When possible, it is an excellent practice to visit the student and his/her Site Supervisor at the internship location. Not only does this create positive relationships with the supervisor for possible future internship assignments, but it helps the Internship Instructor of Record ensure that the student is "on target" for the tasks and learning outcomes outlined in the Internship Learning Agreement.

Do I have to create a syllabus/learning contract?

Yes. As with any credit-bearing course, there should be a document that outlines course requirements, expectations, assignments, how the student will be evaluated, and other pertinent information. The accommodation statement that goes on all normal syllabi should also be included. The syllabus/learning contract should be completed *in addition to* the Internship Learning Agreement, although learning objectives and outcomes from ILA can be repeated on the syllabus.

How are internships graded?
This will be according to the individual academic department's guidelines. Depending on major, students may be required to have outside reading, reports, journals, portfolios, reflection papers, or other documentation of work, all of which can be used in the assignment of an outcome.

What about virtual/remote internships?
It is up to the department and/or the Instructor of Record to decide whether to allow virtual/remote internships or not. If they are allowed, they should be vetted VERY carefully to ensure they will provide a robust and relevant learning experience that is worthy of academic credit. As with any internships, there should be clear learning objectives and tasks, and it would be helpful to set expectations of training, how often the Site Supervisor will interact (virtually or in person), etc. As with any internship, if it is not relevant, or if there is doubt related its legitimacy, it should not be approved by the Internship Instructor of Record.

Do internships need to be paid?
We encourage employers to pay interns for a variety of reasons; however many non-profits and some for-profits do not. The U.S. Department of Labor has issued guidelines, and the Second Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals has issued a test, to help employers determine if an internship may be unpaid or not. These guidelines are located on the Information for Employers section of the CDC website, specifically at Important Information about Hosting Interns. Regardless of the pay status of the experience, it is critical that faculty members only approve internships that are directly related to the student's major or minor and they there are academic components to the experience.

What are my responsibilities if a student reports a problem while on an internship?
The nature of the issue will determine the response. If the intern is concerned about physical safety, s/he should be removed from the internship site and other plans made to fulfill learning expectations. Reports of any type of harassment should be taken seriously and action taken. If the responsibilities that were listed in the Internship Learning Agreement have changed greatly, the Instructor of Record can coach the student on how to handle the issue or become involved in the discussion with the site supervisor.

If guidance or assistance is needed, please contact the Career Development Center at 205-726-2980 and speak to the Director.

Where can I find out more information?
Visit the Career Development Center's website at www.samford.edu/career and view the Internship section, or call the Career Development Center at 205-726-2980 for more individualized assistance.

**In this document, all references to "internships" are referring to those which are done for academic credit.*