

Frequently Asked Questions about Internships

Animal Science Department University of Nebraska

The mission of the Animal Science undergraduate program at the University of Nebraska is to educate qualified and motivated students in the animal sciences so they are equipped to gain entrance into and succeed in areas related to animal agriculture. We strive to prepare our graduates for continued personal and professional growth through life-long learning. We also strive to give our undergraduates experiences and training to develop interpersonal skills so they may become leaders in their various communities.

Internships are one mechanism faculty working jointly with industry use to prepare young people for a successful career. To ensure internships serve their intended purpose, this paper was prepared to address issues that commonly arise about internships.

- A. **What is an internship?**
- B. **What should an internship accomplish for students?**
- C. **What are some activities to involve students in to enhance their leadership skills?**
- D. **What do internships do for businesses?**
- E. **What are the primary roles of the internship supervisor?**
- F. **What does the student need to do to ensure the internship is successful?**
- G. **What needs to be accomplished in order for the student to earn college credit for an internship?**
- H. **What is the duration of an internship and how many college credits may be earned?**
- I. **How do I decide which semester to enroll for credit?**
- J. **Who is responsible for identifying or locating an internship?**
- K. **Can students obtain assistance to identify or locate an internship?**
- L. **What is the overall process and suggested timelines leading up to the start of the internship?**
- M. **What if I want to conduct my internship in a foreign country?**
- N. **What are some guidelines on preparing an internship announcement that the Animal Science Department can use to inform students about internship positions?**
- O. **Who is available to address further questions that I have about internships? Also, to whom should internship announcements be sent for posting and distribution?**

- A. **What is an internship?**

Webster defines an *intern* as “an advanced student or recent graduate in a professional field who is getting practical experience under the supervision of an experienced professional.” Internships are experiential learning experiences conducted on site and involve the student applying and/or learning skills and techniques within the normal daily activities of the production unit, allied industry organization or research laboratory.

The internship should enable students to put into practice the skills, techniques and

knowledge that is important for success in the industry or organization. The internship may be a paid or volunteer work experience supervised by an industry, academic or institutional person and coordinated by the student and internship instructor.

B. What should an internship accomplish for students?

The primary purposes of an internship are to:

- √ add value to the educational experience of students
- √ provide a link between theory and practice
- √ provide an experiential learning opportunity for students to apply the concepts, knowledge and skills gained to real world situations
- √ evaluate the acceptability of a future career area
- √ increase the marketability of students for future employment
- √ develop an awareness of community, economic and social issues in a global society
- √ acquire experiences gained through actual business/customer and employer/employee relationships
- √ develop communication and critical thinking skills
- √ enhance leadership skills

C. What are some activities to involve students in to enhance their leadership skills?

We strongly encourage that all internships provide students some leadership experience. That experience can be gained in a variety of ways. The student could complete a special project that generates specific information for use by management to make business decisions. In these instances it would be valuable for the student to present the results directly to management. Or the student can be offered classes in conflict resolution and assertiveness skills. Moreover, the student could shadow the owner, CEO or manager of the business at specific times during the internship. Some situations could allow students to manage people.

D. What do internships do for businesses?

Internships can benefit businesses in the following ways:

- √ provide a chance to “try out” someone for possible future employment
- √ facilitate completion of special projects deemed critical to the business
- √ bring a fresh perspective into the business
- √ motivate and excite current employees
- √ recruit new talent into the industry

E. What are the primary roles of the internship supervisor?

The supervisor is responsible for:

- √ providing the intern with a variety of career-building work experiences. Those experiences may include giving each student the opportunity to manage a special project

from start to finish. Before the internship concludes the student would present the project to the supervisor for evaluation.

- √ communicating with the intern to discuss current performance, progress and future work assignments. *It is extremely important that both the supervisor and the intern understand assignments, expectations and concerns.*

F. What does the student need to do to ensure the internship is successful?

In order to ensure the internship is successful, the student must:

- √ establish specific goals and objectives for the internship, including the skills and knowledge expected to gain, and submit those in writing to the internship supervisor and instructor *before the internship commences*. Students should consult with the internship supervisor and instructor as these are being constructed.
- √ maintain open communication with the supervisor
- √ always show interest
- √ be humble
- √ work at least the minimum number of hours required by the particular position decided upon by the supervisor, the student, and the student's internship instructor
- √ meet the work quality standards of the supervisor
- √ respect confidential information pertaining to the place of employment
- √ process the internship after it is completed-how did the experience impact career goals and what new personal strengths and areas for improvement surfaced?

G. What needs to be accomplished in order for the student to earn college credit for an internship?

In order to receive credit for an internship, the student must perform all the following tasks *in addition to* those listed in the previous section.

- √ find a faculty member willing to serve as your instructor;
- √ complete an Animal Science Contract Form at least four weeks before the internships starts;
- √ be enrolled in ASCI 395A; and
- √ successfully complete all assignments as described in the Animal Science Contract Form.

H. What is the duration of an internship and how many college credits may be earned?

The duration of the internship can vary from 3 to 30 weeks. The amount of credit earned for the internship depends on the amount of time the student spends on site.

Credit	Time on site, weeks
1	3
2	7
3	12
4	18
5	25
6	30

I. How do I decide which semester to enroll for credit?

Animal Science 395A is available during fall and spring semesters and the first and second 5-week summer sessions. Usually students enroll to obtain credit during the semester in which they conduct the internship. For example, if you plan to conduct your internship during fall semester, you would register for ASCI 395A for that semester. If you plan to conduct your internship during the summer, it is recommended that you register for the second 5-week session, because you will not be assessed full University Program and Facilities Fees.

Registering for credit during the summer will result in an “I” or incomplete grade appearing on your record; the “I” will be removed and replaced with a final grade once you complete all responsibilities associated with the internship.

J. Who is responsible for identifying or locating an internship?

Students are ultimately responsible for identifying or locating their internship. Resources to help students in doing this are available (see K for more information).

K. Can students obtain assistance to identify or locate an internship?

Yes. Students are advised to utilize the following resources for internship planning.

- √ UNL Career Services Web site (www.unl.edu/careers)
- √ Academic advisor
- √ Faculty in your area of interest
- √ Networking with family, friends, fellow students and professional contacts
- √ Web site of firm of interest
- √ UNL Animal Science List Serves
- √ UNL Animal Science Department home page

L. What is the overall process and suggested timelines leading up to the start of the internship (a similar process should be followed for learning experiences associated with ASCI 395B, D, and E)?

Activity	Weeks before starting internship
Identify potential internship experiences	24 to 32
Obtain an internship	8 to 12
Complete the <u>Animal Science Contract Form</u>	4 to 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a faculty member willing to serve as your instructor¹ • Determine goals and objectives of the internship by consulting your instructor and internship supervisor² • Discuss with your instructor what you'll do or provide to serve as a basis for assigning your grade³ • Obtain signatures • Distribute copies 	
Obtain class registration call number from Duane Reese	2 to 4
Confirm starting date, etc with your internship supervisor	2 to 4
Start your internship	0

¹ Begin with a faculty member who has expertise in the area of your internship. Consult the list below for examples. Faculty other than those listed can serve as your instructor too.

- Equine – Kathy Anderson, Libby Lugar
- Companion Animals – Lisa Karr-Lilienthal
- Cow-calf – Bryan Reiling, Rick Rasby
- Dairy – Paul Kononoff
- Swine – Duane Reese
- Feedlot – Galen Erickson
- Allied industry – Dennis Brink
- Meat industry – Chris Calkins, Steve Jones
- Veterinary medicine– Clayton Kelling, Doug Rodgers

² Goals are general statements of what you intend to achieve or learn; objectives relate to how you are going to learn or achieve. Here are some examples of well-written goals and objectives.

Goal: Recognize the appropriate time for pasture rotation.

Objective: Have discussions with supervisor about annual animal movement decisions, offering input as appropriate.

Goal: Explore different career opportunities in the livestock industry.

Objective: Research, talk to employees in the field of interest and keep a journal of what I discovered.

Goal: Understand key business management aspects of a livestock operation.

Objective: Assist in record keeping, including analysis.

³ Possible evaluation methods include...

- Daily journal of activities, complete with pictures
- Bi-weekly or monthly email updates of internship activities
- Summer paper of the internship experience
- Mid or post-internship review by the internship supervisor
- Oral presentation of the internship experience (strongly recommended)

M. What if I want to conduct my internship in a foreign country?

Follow the process outlined above, except start much earlier, especially if you do not have a passport. Time to acquire a passport can exceed 90 days. Depending on the country, you may also need a visa. Consult International Affairs <http://www.unl.edu/iaffairs/> for more information on preparing for an international experience.

N. What are some guidelines on preparing an internship announcement that the Animal Science Department can use to inform students about internship positions?

Individuals or businesses desiring to establish an internship should prepare an "internship announcement" that can be posted to inform students. The announcement should be printed on business or organizational letterhead and contain the following:

- √ Name of the internship
- √ Brief description of the business or company offering internship (if necessary)
- √ Key things student would gain or learn from the internship
- √ Duties or responsibilities
- √ Qualifications
- √ Timeframe (period of time internship would be conducted)
- √ Application process including deadline for applying and contact person.

O. Who is available to address further questions that I have about internships? Also, to whom should internship announcements be sent for posting and distribution?

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