

# A Guide to Internships

for IPFW Students  
in the Department of English & Linguistics



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## Introduction

Although classroom experiences can teach you many things about writing, they cannot teach you everything. You can enrich your education through an internship in which you apply what you have learned about writing to situations you may encounter after graduation. An internship offers you the opportunity to work with a faculty supervisor and a workplace mentor to gain a richer learning experience than you would normally obtain during your first months in a new job.

Overall, you fulfill the internship requirement by completing three activities:

- working as an apprentice in a position that requires significant amounts of written communication
- maintaining a journal in which you reflect regularly on your experiences
- writing a formal report on your work

In these activities, you will work under the direction of a mentor at your internship and a faculty supervisor in IPFW's Department of English & Linguistics. You will also earn credit for English W398, Internship in Writing.

## Purpose of this Document

This document describes most everything you need to know about an internship experience through IPFW's Department of English & Linguistics. You should refer to this document to learn whether you are eligible for an internship, how to apply for one, and how to complete the experience.

## Eligibility Requirements

To perform an internship, you must have at least junior status and should have completed at least three of the following courses:

- English W232 – Introduction to Business Writing
- English W234 – Technical Report Writing

- English W331 – Business and Administrative Writing
- English W350 – Expository Writing
- English W365 – Theories and Practices of Editing
- English W420 – Argumentative Writing
- Selected special topics courses (English W462) in writing

If you lack such coursework but believe that you have other experiences that prepare you for an internship, consult with the Director of Internships for English & Linguistics.

## Internship Criteria & Credit

To count as an internship experience, the work you undertake must meet the following two requirements:

**1. Type of work.** In your internship, you should perform duties similar to those you plan to perform after graduation. You might work as a writer or editor, or even as a project manager if you have had previous experience and if you can work under the guidance of an appropriate mentor. You may arrange your internship with a business, government, or non-profit organization anywhere in the world. (See “Finding an Internship” below.)

**2. Duration.** You must work for at least one semester (14 weeks of internship experience plus time to write the report) in a professional capacity with the guidance of a mentor in that particular workplace. (See “Faculty Supervisor and Internship Mentor.”)

The internship can be taken for one to three credit hours, depending on the number of hours you work. In order to earn three credit hours, you must work at least ten hours per week. To earn two credit hours, you must work at least six hours per week. To earn one credit hour, you must work at least 4 hours per week. In each case, you must work for at least 14 weeks (during a regular semester).

Under certain special circumstances, such as during summer semesters, you may consult with the director to determine if you may fulfill your

internship requirement by completing a specified number of hours as opposed to weeks.

## Faculty Supervisor and Internship Mentor

You need the support of two people during an internship. First, you need the support of a faculty member who can supervise your internship on behalf of the university. This person should be a full-time member of the faculty of the Department of English & Linguistics at IPFW. Second, you need the support of a mentor at the place where you plan to complete an internship. This mentor should be a person experienced with written communication at that workplace.

Although you are responsible for assuring the support of both these people (see Figure 1), you should feel free to solicit the aid of the departmental Director of Internships as you do this.

## Finding an Internship

As Figure 1 illustrates, securing an internship requires three phases. During Phase 1, the initial responsibility for finding an internship is yours, although you should consult faculty for guidance. You should begin your internship search at least four months ahead of time.

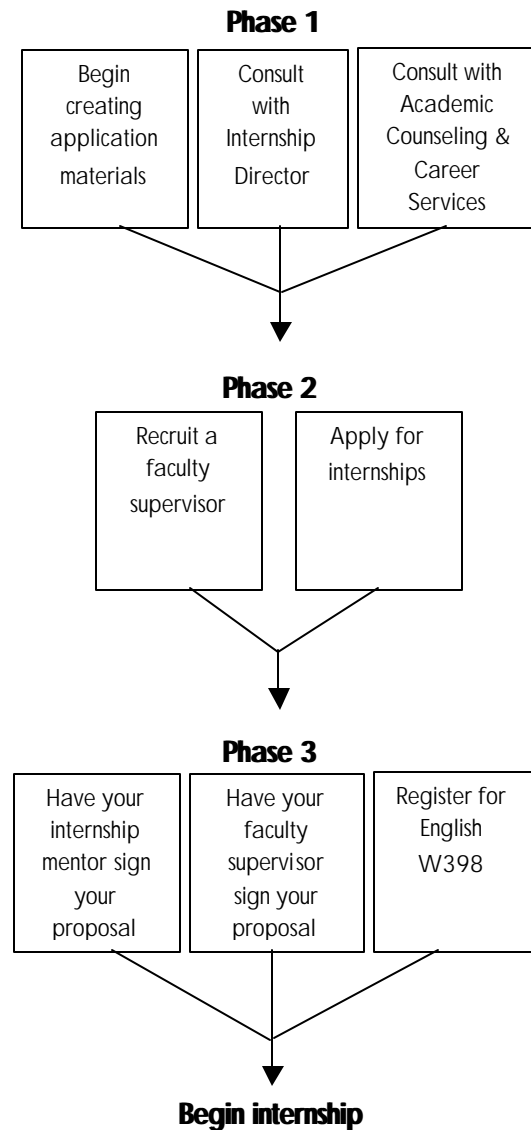
Some organizations may have no provision for hiring “interns” and may, instead, wish to hire you as a permanent employee. In this case, your internship may be a 14-week segment of your permanent job. Also, if you are working in a writing-intensive position while studying in the IPFW program, you may perform your internship with your current employer.

There are several resources available to help you search for internships. Try starting your search with three resources:

- The Department of English & Linguistics maintains a list of area contacts. Visit the Department Office (Classroom -Medical, 145) or the Departmental Web site ([www.ipfw.edu/engl](http://www.ipfw.edu/engl)) for information.

- The Academic Counseling and Career Services Office (Kettler Hall, Room 109) maintains information on employers and advice on searching for internships. Some of their information is also available online.
- The Internet offers various resources, including search engines such as Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and sites for writers (such as [www.freelancing.com](http://www.freelancing.com) and [www.writersweekly.com](http://www.writersweekly.com)).

Figure 1: An Overview of the Process for Securing an Internship



## Internships Involving Classified, Confidential, or Proprietary Information

You may perform your internship in a situation where you will be working with classified, confidential, or proprietary information. In such a situation, an agreement must be worked out in advance between the sponsoring organization and the faculty supervisor concerning the contents of your internship report. (See “The Internship Report: Purpose and Audience.”)

The university recognizes the need of some organizations to protect information and believes that mutually satisfactory arrangements can be worked out in most cases. *However, you must be able to share samples of your work with your faculty supervisor, and you must have completed some significant work during the internship that you can discuss in detail and display in your internship report.*

## Internship Proposal and Contract

Before you begin work for your sponsoring organization, you must obtain permission for the internship from your faculty supervisor and the Department of English & Linguistics. (See “Phase 3” in Figure 1.) You may begin this process by getting an oral approval for your internship from your faculty supervisor. You must follow this oral agreement with a written proposal and contract. (See the Internship Director, the departmental Web site, or the Department office for a copy.) This document should be submitted to your faculty supervisor before you begin your internship.

The internship proposal and contract has two parts. The first requests information and a number of assurances from the sponsoring organization:

1. A description of the organization itself—its mission, products, services, etc.
2. The dates of your internship
3. Your position within the organization.
4. The kind of work you will do.

5. The name of and contact information for the person (or people) who will supervise you and mentor your writing.
6. Assurances that you will receive evaluations of your work by the organization.
7. Assurances that you will be permitted to share samples of your internship work with your committee and to publish representative samples of your work in your internship report.

The second part of the proposal and contract contains assurances you provide to your faculty supervisor by signing the appropriate place in the contract. You agree that you will perform the work required of you to the best of your ability, and that you will submit regular reports during the internship. (You should consult with your faculty supervisor to establish a procedure to submitting regular reports.)

## Keeping Work Logs and Samples

During your internship, you are strongly encouraged to keep a work log in which you record your internship activities, the approximate amounts of time you have worked on various projects, questions that have occurred to you about writing in the workplace, and things that you have learned during your internship. This information will be especially helpful to you in writing your internship report. (See “The Internship Report: Purpose & Audience.”)

In addition to keeping a work log, you should save samples of the work you do during your internship. Your faculty supervisor may wish to see samples of this work as the internship progresses, and you must display samples of your projects in your internship report. You may also wish to display drafts of a project on which you worked in order to show how the project developed.

## The Internship Report: Purpose & Audience

At the end of your internship, you will be asked to prepare a formal report on the work you completed during the semester. Your internship

report has three main purposes and should be addressed to three audiences.

Your first purpose in writing the report is to present a detailed study of your internship. More specifically, you will be writing to inform students and faculty in the Department of English & Linguistics about the role of written communication where you worked and to help students who have not yet performed their internships to understand what they might expect.

Your second purpose is to demonstrate your proficiency as a writer. You should do your best to turn in a first draft that is worthy of an undergraduate from a writing program. To assist you in this process, you should make every effort to do the following:

- Follow guidelines you have been taught for preparing professional reports
- Use parallel headings and subheadings.
- Use forecasting statements, topic sentences, and specific details to develop your topic sentences.
- Make the language as clear, cohesive, and coherent as possible.

The third purpose of the report is to prompt reflection. Learning takes place when you examine your experiences, drawing knowledge from them. In the report, you should reflect on what you have learned as a writer in a particular workplace. Speculate on what you have learned about writing practices, about the role writing plays in an organization, and about your own career aspirations.

As you write, you can imagine that you have three major audiences for the report:

- Students at IPFW who are interested in the context in which you worked or in your specific experiences.
- Faculty who must evaluate your internship experience and your ability to write effectively about this experience.
- Co-workers at your sponsoring organization who are interested in what you have to say

about them, the organization, the organization's customers, and so forth.

## The Internship Report: Suggested Outline

The length and content of the report will vary somewhat from person to person. However, the reports should be roughly ten single-spaced pages, not counting appendices. Typically, the report should have the four sections described below.

**Section 1, an introduction.** A description which includes the following:

- Where and when you performed your internship
- Your title and position
- The organization with which you worked and its organizational culture and structure
- The nature of the work you were hired to perform
- How this work contributed to the overall work of the organization
- A forecast of the report's remaining contents

### **Section 2, an overview of your internship**

This section should be a summary of the major activities you performed during your internship. It may be organized by projects, by tasks, or any way that makes sense to you. At the end of the chapter, however, readers should be able to discern what you did and how much time you spent on each project or activity.

### **Section 3, a detailed description of a major activity.**

Although you do not have to have started or completed this activity during the internship period, the activity does have to have occupied a significant portion of your time (not necessarily the most time consuming task in your internship), and it does have to have contributed to your development as a writer.

The key to writing this section successfully is to provide enough detail so that readers can easily follow not only what you did but also how you did it. For example, if you say that you conducted an audience analysis, you might add how you did

it—e.g., through interviews of key personnel in your organization. And you should probably develop describe your procedures for carrying out these activities. You might add appendices of your notes and a synopsis of your findings.

**Section 4, a reflection.** Finally, you should reflect on the work you did during the internship. In this section, you should respond to these questions:

- What did you learn about writing during your internship? (This may concern issues of audience, the writing process, new media, etc.
- How does what you learned in the internship compare to what you've been learning in school?
- What, if anything, did the internship teach you that you probably would not have learned in a classroom?
- How might your internship affect your career plans? For example, did the internship convince you to pursue a specific kind of career? Did it introduce you to a career option you hadn't considered before?

Besides the items mentioned above, your report should include your major project in an appendix, along with other representative work you completed during your internship.

## Evaluations

At the end of your internship, your mentor or someone else in the sponsoring organization must write an evaluation of your performance. This evaluation should be shared with you and later copied to your faculty supervisor.

Your faculty supervisor will base an overall internship evaluation on

- your weekly journals
- your Internship Report
- feedback from your employer

## Contact Information

If you have questions regarding internships, please contact the Internship Director:

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