

University of South Carolina
School of Library and Information Science
SLIS 496
Internship Guidelines

TO: All Interns and Site and Faculty Supervisors
FROM: Andy Thomas, SLIS Undergraduate Advisor
SUBJ: SLIS 496 Internship Guidelines

As we head into the coming semester I wanted to spell out for all of you what the responsibilities are for both interns and their sponsors in order to comply with our national accreditation standards and our own curriculum requirements.

Preface: It is our intent to provide sponsoring organizations with interns who have completed the majority of their course work in Information Science (IS). Students will be expected to have at least completed SLIS 201, SLIS 202, SLIS 301, and SLIS 402. A complementary goal of the program is to provide our upper-division majors with on-the-job experience in their professional field prior to graduation. For these reasons, it is important that both interns and sponsors read and observe the following terms of the internship agreement:

Obligations of Interns: Under the terms of the contract you have signed, you are obligated to complete 135 hours of on-the-job work during the term you are registered for the internship. As a student working for a professional organization, you are expected to adhere to the policies of that organization. When in doubt about what you are or are not permitted to do, always ask. If you've completed a task and find yourself without work, see your site supervisor about another project. Work only through your assigned site supervisor. Do not accept work from others in the organization unless such work has been approved by your site supervisor. In the summer, an intern must work for a minimum of 8-10 weeks. And, you may work more than 135 hours if your employer allows it.

You are required to turn in the following to your faculty supervisor: your official agreement and goal statement (co-signed by your site supervisor and faculty supervisor), the written report of your interview with your site supervisor, your progress reports (maintaining a daily journal or portfolio along the way), and your final evaluation of the internship. Finally, you are required to have a final evaluation interview with your site supervisor. You should at all times dress and act professionally when representing the organization for which you are interning. If the sponsoring organization has just cause for terminating your internship (failure to show up as scheduled, unauthorized use of office equipment, inability or failure to complete assigned work, etc.), it may choose to do so, provided the reasons are fully explained to the faculty supervisor. Should this happen, the intern will not receive academic credit.

Once you complete the internship requirements you will receive three hours of academic credit with a grade of "S" (Satisfactory). Failure to satisfactorily complete the internship will result in a grade of "U" (Unsatisfactory), which is equivalent to an "F."

Obligations of Intern Sponsors:

The University of South Carolina provides equal opportunity and affirmative action in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status. The University of South Carolina has designated as the ADA, Title II, Section 504, and Title IX coordinator the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs. The Office of the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs is located at 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC; telephone 803-777-3854.

Under the terms of our agreement, you are expected to provide a student intern with work that merits the awarding of three hours of upper-division academic credit in information science. You also are to designate a single individual to be that student's site supervisor and only that site supervisor should assign work to the intern, whether directly or through another employee. If a site supervisor is absent from the office on the day an intern is scheduled to work, arrangements should be made to provide work for the intern on that day. Students are expected to learn on the job by discussing work procedures with employees, by performing professional tasks with appropriate supervision, by attending organization meetings, by working with clients or suppliers, and so forth. Any work that is considered "gopher" in nature is not acceptable. We realize, however, that occasionally such work may be necessary in order to meet a stringent deadline. However, we cannot accept work of this nature when it constitutes the bulk of what is assigned to the intern and will ask interns to report such situations as they happen. If the matter cannot be resolved, the internship will be terminated. There's one other work-related issue that University attorneys have cautioned us about: student interns must not be running errands in their personal cars. If you must send them on errands, they should be driving a company car and must be covered by your organization's insurance policy.

Your organization may pay the student for the 135 hours of internship work that is required. We suggest paying them an amount based on the in-state tuition for a three hour credit course. The student may also be paid more than the minimum amount if the sponsoring host decides to do so. Also, we recommend an honorarium in lieu of an hourly wage for the student for two reasons: (1) the honorarium may be tax deductible; and (2) chances are, your intern will not be classified as a permanent employee by state and federal governments.

Finally, site supervisors will be required to co-sign the intern's goal statement, co-sign and provide written comments on progress reports, fill out a final evaluation form, and conduct an "exit" (final evaluation) interview with the intern.

Thanks for reviewing these guidelines. If you have any questions, please contact me either by phone at 803-777-4028 or by e-mail at AThomas@sc.edu. Our fax number is 803-777-0457.