

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

The National Society for Experiential Education defines an internship as “a carefully monitored work or volunteer experience in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience.”

An internship at New England College is an academic, for-credit experience involving an agreement between an employer, a faculty sponsor, and a student. The three parties involved will create a structured experience at an employment site where the student will provide the employer with their work, talent and energy, while gaining knowledge and experience in a particular field.

Internships may be paid or unpaid (usually the latter), and may be in private, non-profit or government organizations.

NEC ACADEMIC GUIDELINES FOR INTERNSHIPS

Academic Guidelines

[Internship Form](#) (downloadable Word format)

As stated in the New England College Academic Catalog, NEC recognizes the importance of integrating academics with learning experiences outside of the classroom. As well as participating in community service and volunteer work, students may elect internships within their major or minor disciplines. Specific guidelines for internships may be established by individual disciplines, but all internships are governed by the following regulations:

- * Internships are available to mature students of junior or senior status (60 credits or more), emotional maturity and a strong sense of responsibility, with good academic standing (meeting both College-wide and major-specific standards). Students must have at least half of the major requirements completed. Students are accepted into the internship program by an approval of a majority of the faculty within the sponsoring disciplines.
- * Internships may take place only at sites approved by the discipline.
- * Internships are conducted according to a contract jointly developed by the student, faculty sponsor, and internship site supervisor (employer). Ordinarily, completed internship contracts must be submitted to the head of the Collegium or Division and the Registrar no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which the internship will take place.
- * Internships may be awarded from 1 to 16 credits. The amount of credit awarded for an individual internship is determined by the discipline and dependent on the complexity of the internship experience, the amount of conventional academic work assigned, and the amount of time spent on-site by the student intern.
- * No more than 16 internship credits may be applied towards the total credits required for graduation. Some disciplines allow fewer than 16 credits to be applied to major requirements.
- * Tuition for internships is the same as for other College courses, and is subject to the same charges for overloads (18 or more credits).

For Students: Steps to Take

1. Discuss your learning goals with your faculty advisor, and/or the professor in your major who will sponsor the internship. Describe your goals for an internship, and ask what kind of internship they think might be personally and academically appropriate for you.
2. Develop a resume of your current and prior experience. Career and Life Planning (CLP) can help you compose a resume, and it is strongly suggested that you meet with a career advisor at CLP for this purpose.
3. Make a list of possible internship sites. Faculty will often be able to provide information on interesting sites, as well as contact information. CLP also offers a wealth of information on internship sites. CLP will also locate new internship sites according to student need, subject to the approval of the sponsoring faculty.
4. Once you have a list of possible sites, contact the appropriate person at the site to discuss the possibility of an internship.

5. **IMPORTANT:** Your faculty sponsor or CLP may wish to contact the internship site sponsor first. In this case, ask your faculty sponsor or CLP when they will be able to do this, and when you can approach them for the contact and follow-up information. This will help keep you on schedule. In the case of new internship sites, CLP will make the initial call for you. Finally, CLP will help you with any letter, email or phone call you yourself will make.
6. Visit the site. After your initial contact with the site, make arrangements for an interview with the internship site sponsor. CLP will help you prepare for this conversation. At the interview, find out as much as you can about the prospective internship, and find out who your actual supervisor will be.
7. Fill out the NEC internship contract with your faculty sponsor, determine how much credit you will be awarded for the internship, obtain all necessary signatures, and bring the completed contract to the Registrar. Keep a copy for your own records. Please make sure the contract gets to the Registrar prior to beginning the internship. You will not be awarded credit that is not recorded!

Professional Expectations

It is true that, as a student, your first motive for participating in an internship is your own professional development. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that an internship obtained for credit at New England College is built on a network of relationships between yourself, your professors, and an employer. If you do well at the internship site, this will reflect positively on the whole NEC community. Conversely, if you fail to conform to simple professional standards, this will likewise reflect on our community. Unprofessional conduct on your part will make it harder to assist other NEC students who in the future may want to obtain an internship.

The stronger we all are, and the better we perform in the workplace, the greater the chances that NEC students and graduates will obtain meaningful work experiences. We want employers to take an interest in NEC, and look to us for assistance when they have work to do. Help us build our professional network! Make up your mind to commit your time, energy and thought for the employer's benefit, when you obtain an internship.

Prior to the Internship

- Examine your goals honestly. Why do you want an internship? In order to obtain career-related work experience? Or simply to obtain additional credit for graduation? Either motive is fine, but it is important to be clear. Don't promise an employer more than you plan to give.
- Show up on time for your first interview! Make sure you have directions to the site well beforehand, and keep these directions handy, along with the phone number of the site supervisor. Employers have a very low tolerance for tardiness.
- Be prepared to converse professionally during the first interview. Think beforehand of what you want to say to the employer and how you want to introduce yourself. Think also of some questions to ask about the internship and the company/organization. Career and Life Planning (CLP) can help you plan such a conversation.
- Make sure you and the site supervisor both have a clear understanding of what your work schedule will be.
- Find out what the "dress code" at the site will be, and plan accordingly.

During the Internship

- On your first day — and every day following — again, show up on time! No excuses!
- If, due to illness or any other serious circumstance, you are unable to go to work at the internship, let your employer/site supervisor know as much in advance as possible. Notify your faculty sponsor as well.
- Maintain a demeanor of professionalism at all times. This includes paying close attention to the written and unwritten standards of the workplace. In general, demonstrate initiative, eagerness to help, willingness to ask for guidance when necessary, and respect for the opinions of others. Remember that you work not only for your own benefit, but to support your site supervisor and the company/organization. For a good introduction to the experience of a new work environment, see the article "The Critical First Year on the Job," found in the *Job Choices* magazine (free to students) at CLP.
- Notify your faculty sponsor *immediately* of any changes in your work schedule.
- If a situation at work becomes difficult (unreasonable expectations, internship misrepresentation, unethical behavior, or sexual harassment), contact your faculty sponsor immediately.

After the Internship

- Thank your site supervisor for the experience you gained while an intern, and for their support and guidance. You can do this in person at the end of your internship, but a thank-you note is always appropriate and appreciated. If you need assistance in writing this, see a CLP advisor.
- Thank your faculty sponsor as well, and *turn in all materials required by your faculty sponsor for grading* (e.g., final paper, charts and graphs, journal, etc.).
- Think of how the contact made at the internship site might help you in your future career development and/or job search. Meet with a CLP advisor to develop your own strategy.

Any other questions?

- If you have any other questions regarding internships, please contact the Office of Career and Life Planning
603.428.2358
clp@nec.edu