Externship Guide

A guide for planning, implementation, and assessment of externships
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Introduction

Externships at Ex’pression are offered as a 90 hour elective course for which credit is awarded. The credit earned reflects the learning value of the experience and not just the time spent working, therefore, it is important to note that while externships occur in a supervised work place setting they do require an academic component to assure that the student is learning skills related to their field of study.

Students enrolled in the externship elective may work full-time or part-time, and the work can be paid or unpaid. Students enrolled in the externship elective will also be taking a second course either on campus or, in the case of GE, online.

Faculty, Industry and Career Services (ICS), a Site Supervisor, and the student all play a role in the externship process.

Externships provide students with valuable opportunities for learning outside of the traditional classroom setting, as well as a possible foot in the door with potential future employers.

Additionally, faculty, ICS, and the organization that serves as the setting for the externship are afforded valuable opportunities. Both faculty and ICS may interact with professionals in their field which can provide meaningful insight into current industry trends.

The organization that serves as the setting for the externship is offered the opportunity to directly contribute to the growth of the student by teaching those skills necessary to their field of study, while at the same time learning about the knowledge base of a potential future employee.

Externship Course Description

CC432 Externship
Externship Hours (90) Semester Credit Units (2)
Prerequisites: The externship elective must be initiated at the beginning of a student’s first or second semester of his or her senior year. A student must have a 3.0 GPA* or higher to apply and must not be on conduct probation or academic probation.

This is a Pass/Fail course.

*In extenuating circumstances the 3.0 GPA requirement may be waived by the Program Director.

The goals of an externship are to provide students with opportunities to understand the skills needed to work in the industry for which they are being trained; apply acquired knowledge and skills; improve their abilities to perform these skills; develop productive working relationships, and a work ethic; and reflects on their experience through weekly meetings with a faculty advisor. The externship is conducted in a professional job-related setting.
Students will work with their faculty advisor to create learning objectives, goals, and evaluation methods. Students must be prepared to meet regularly with the faculty advisor. Externships require a written contract between the student and the faculty advisor, which specifies the goals and the means by which it will be evaluated, and must be approved by the Program Director.

Students will be required to secure an externship site and apply for the externship elective. Students may work with ICS for help obtaining an externship, but externships are not guaranteed.

**Planning for Externship**

Ex’pression has a responsibility to assure proper and adequate supervision of students participating in externships. The faculty advisor will be selected by the Program Director and should have appropriate knowledge of the respective subject area of the externship.

**Student Role**

1. **Student Eligibility**
   Students must have the following:
   - A GPA of 3.0 or higher at the time the student applies for the externship*
   - Must be starting the first or second semester of the student’s senior year
   - Must be enrolled in another class at Ex’pression either on campus or, in the case of GE, online
   - Must not be on conduct or academic probation
   - Must have secured an externship site

   *The 3.0 GPA requirement may be waived with Program Director approval.

2. **Student Preparation**
   Students must begin preparing for their externship at least one term prior to the expected start date of the externship. This means that those taking an externship at the beginning of the first semester of their senior year must begin preparing for their externship during the last term of their junior year. Those taking an externship at the beginning of the second semester of their senior year must begin preparing for their externship during the last term of their first semester of their senior year.

   The student should:
   - Become familiar with the externship requirements
   - Create an updated resume
   - Research externships and become familiar with each company
   - Complete the Externship Application, which will include learning and career goals
   - Submit the completed Externship Application to the Program Director and obtain Program Director approval to participate in an externship
3. Obtaining an Externship
It is the student’s responsibility to actively search for, and obtain the externship; a student’s willingness to actively engage in the process is imperative to the success of obtaining an externship. Externships are not guaranteed.

Once an externship is secured the student must:

- Obtain a written description of the site requirements and expectations of the student. This should detail the expected hours the student will work; the nature of the work; the required competencies for the position; the expected learning outcomes, and the rationale, methodology, and criteria for evaluation of the experience.
- Meet with ICS to discuss the externship and provide the ICS advisor with externship site supervisor’s information.
- Meet with the Program Director who will assign a faculty member as the student’s faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will assist the student in developing the Learning Contract.

Please note that while the student’s application to participate in an externship may be approved by the Program Director this does not guarantee that the student will be scheduled to take the externship.

An externship may be denied after approval of the Externship Application if:

- The student has not secured an externship site within 5 weeks preceding the semester in which the externship elective is requested (if on a 5 week term schedule) or within 8 weeks preceding the semester in which the externship elective is requested (if the student is on an 8 week term schedule), the student will be scheduled to take Business of Media instead of the externship elective.
- The externship fails to fulfill academic criteria, including the requisite hours.

4. Developing a Learning Contract
The student and the faculty advisor will work together to develop a learning contract.

The learning contract must include at a minimum:

- The name and contact information of the externship site supervisor
- The expected schedule for the externship (obtained from the site supervisor)
- A clear description of the site requirements and expectations (obtained from the site supervisor)
- A clear description of the expected course competencies and learning outcomes
- A clear description of the required academic components (i.e. assignments)
- Signatures of the student and the faculty advisor

Students should review the sample Learning Contract and the sample assignments and course competencies, which will help them in the development of their Learning Contract.

5. Meeting with the Faculty Advisor and Submitting Paperwork and Assignments
As part of the Learning Contract students will be required to meet regularly with their faculty advisor and to complete various assignments related to the externship. It is the student’s responsibility to
assure that all required assignments and paperwork are submitted to the faculty advisor in the specified timeframe. Failure to submit the required assignments and paperwork by the designated deadlines may result in a failing grade.

**Program Director Role**

1. **Approval of Externship Application**

Program Directors play an integral role in the first steps of the externship process. It is the responsibility of the Program Director (or Associate Program Director if assigned by the Program Director) to review the student’s application and assure that the student meets all requirements to be eligible to participate in an externship.

When determining if a student is eligible to participate in an externship the Program Director should review the following:

- That the student’s GPA is 3.0 or higher*
- That the student is not on conduct or academic probation
- That the student will be at the beginning of a semester of their senior year when the externship takes place
- That the student is applying for externship within the required timeframe
  - For students on a 5 week schedule, at least 5 weeks in advance of the beginning of term in which the externship will begin
  - For students on an 8 week schedule, at least 8 weeks in advance of the beginning of the term in which the externship will begin
- That the student will be scheduled to take another class at the time of the externship

The Program Director may make an exception to the GPA requirement.

If the student is determined to be eligible the Program Director should then review the student’s learning objectives as indicated on the application to ascertain the student’s readiness for an externship.

If the Program Director approves the student’s application for externship the Program Director will sign the application and return a copy to the student.

Once the student has secured an externship site the Program Director will assign a faculty advisor to the student for the duration of the externship.

**Industry and Career Services Role**

1. **Assistance with Securing Externship Sites**

ICS may support students in their search for an externship; however, it is the student’s responsibility to actively search for, and obtain the externship; a student’s willingness to actively engage in the process is imperative to the success of obtaining an externship. Externships are not guaranteed.
2. Liaising with the Externship Site
ICS will act as the liaison between the externship site supervisor, the student, and the faculty advisor. ICS will:

- Provide the site supervisor with an Externship Orientation Packet to help the site supervisor in fulfilling the educational requirements of the externship
- Support the student in obtaining any required documentation from the externship site supervisor
- Act as the point of contact for the externship site supervisor

Faculty Role

1. Assistance with Developing the Learning Contract
The faculty advisor is responsible for helping the student develop the learning contract, as well as overseeing and evaluating the student’s performance. The faculty advisor will review the student’s learning objectives (as indicated on the Externship Application) and the externship site requirements (obtained from ICS) and help the student craft an effective learning contract, which will be signed by the faculty advisor and the student and become part of the student’s academic record.

2. Faculty-Student Communication
The faculty advisor will:

- Have reciprocal communication with the student at least once a week. Contact can be made through e-mail or other electronic communication, telephone, or in person faculty-student meetings.
- Be responsible for evaluating the performance of the student, for providing feedback to the student, and for assigning the final grade. Students’ grades should be based on satisfactory completion of requirements and assignments and the degree to which the learning objectives, as stated in the learning contract, have been achieved.

3. Communication with ICS
The faculty advisor will communicate with ICS regarding policies and procedures, the value of the experience, and the appropriateness of the externship site.

Site Supervisor Role
Profit or not-for-profit businesses and organizations, which support the learning objectives of the externship program, may participate as an externship site by hosting a student. An externship, like any other employment opportunity, should operate on the principle of exchange. The student extern gains experience and skills; the organization completes a project or a set of work tasks. Sites must identify a qualified professional at the site who will agree to work with, advise, and assess the student.

1. Defining tasks
The site supervisor, when establishing an externship position, should clearly define, in writing, the site requirements and expectations of the student. This should detail the expected hours the student will
work; the nature of the work; the required competencies for the position; the expected learning outcomes, and the rationale, methodology, and criteria for evaluation of the experience.

2. Arranging for the Student
The site supervisor should:

- Make any necessary arrangements at the site including alerting appropriate personnel and providing space, equipment, and/or supplies to the student.
- Orient the student to the site’s physical layout as well as the organizational structure. The student should be made aware of the philosophy, goals, functions, and clients of the company.
- Schedule the student for the required 90 hours.
- Clearly discuss requirements of the externship with the student and assign activities to the student, which provides experience and application of skills required for a professional in the field.
- Work with the student to complete on-site goals, duties, and learning objectives.
- Provide ongoing supervision and feedback to the student on his/her performance.
- Ensure a safe working environment by meeting the National Labor Relations Board regulations as well as any state or federal rules regarding externs/interns.

3. Completing the Evaluation Paperwork
The site supervisor will:

- Communicate with the ICS advisor when necessary.
- Complete both a mid-term and final evaluation of the student’s performance and attitude.

Externship Policies

1. Indemnity Agreement
All students wishing to participate in an externship must have a signed indemnity waiver on file with the Office of the Registrar prior to participating in the externship.

2. Costs
Students are responsible for all travel or supplemental expenses incurred as part of the externship.

3. Awarding of Credit
The externship is a pass (P)/fail (F) course; externship credit is only awarded after the student has completed all requirements of the student Learning Contract to the satisfaction of the faculty advisor and a grade of P is submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Students who do not receive a passing grade may not re-take the externship, but will be re-scheduled for the Business of Media course.
Once the evaluation process and all paperwork is submitted to the faculty advisor, the faculty advisor will review the information in conjunction with the goals and objectives as defined in the learning contract and determine the final grade, which will be submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

4. Attendance
Students are required to attend the externship just as they would any course for which they are scheduled. Students must track their hours and submit this to their faculty advisor on a weekly basis. Hours will be confirmed at both the mid-point and final evaluations from the site supervisor.

5. Limitations on Externships
The externship elective may only be taken once. However, if the externship was terminated by the College because the externship proved to be unsuitable or if a student withdraws from an externship, the student will be eligible to reapply for an externship.

6. Externship Requirement Waivers
The Program Director or Associate Program Director may waive the 3.0 GPA requirement under extraordinary circumstances; however they may not waive the GPA requirement for any student on academic probation. Approval for a waiver requires a written explanation from the Program Director or Associate Program Director and the appropriate signatures.

7. Withdrawal from Externship
All students enrolled in the externship elective are subject to the College’s course withdrawal policy. If the student withdraws from the externship the student will be eligible to reapply for an externship.

8. Termination of Externship by Program Director
Under extraordinary circumstances, a Program Director may terminate an externship if the externship conditions prove to be unsuitable to serve the needs of the student. The Program Director must document the termination of the externship and the site supervisor will be notified by the ICS advisor. If the Externship was terminated by the Program Director the student will be eligible to reapply.

9. Termination of Externship by Site Supervisor
Students are expected to adhere to the externship site’s code of conduct throughout their externship. Failure to adhere to the rules of the professional workplace may lead to termination of the externship and a grade of “F”.

The site supervisor may, under extraordinary circumstances, terminate the externship if the student’s performance and/or conduct is unacceptable and all efforts to remedy the situation have been unsuccessful.

The site supervisor must document the reasons for termination of the externship in writing and submit to the ICS advisor who will notify the faculty advisor. It is the faculty advisor’s responsibility to notify the Office of the Registrar of the student’s termination. If the externship was terminated by the site supervisor for poor performance or misconduct, the student will receive a grade of “F”.

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If the externship is terminated by the site supervisor not due to the student’s performance or conduct, but due to unforeseen circumstances on the part of the externship site, the student will be eligible to reapply for an externship.