Museum Studies Program
University of Delaware
77 E. Main Street

Museum Studies Internship
MSST-464
Guidelines for Interns

Purpose of Internships

MSST 464: Internship/Service Project is required to complete the undergraduate minor in museum studies. The internship consists of a minimum of 105 hours on site (7.5 hours per week for 14 weeks) of supervised work providing real-world experience in a museum, historic site, public garden, archive, or other related organization. Students may also choose to apply to participate in the Museum Studies Collections SWAT Team project each January as part of their internship hours, or other service projects that are approved by the undergraduate internship director. MSST 464 can be taken up to two times for credit towards the minor.

The internship is an opportunity for a student to develop patterns of professional behavior and skills, and to apply his/her academic knowledge in a museum or other work situation. The internship may provide experience appropriate to a position that the student may ultimately seek in the museum field (i.e., curator, conservator, educator, collections manager, exhibit designer/fabricator, development officer, museum director, or other allied fields). In the ideal scenario, student interns and sponsoring museums benefit equally from the internship relationship.

For the student, the purpose of the internship is:

1) To learn to function as a professional within his/her institution and to understand museum issues.

2) To learn to function within the organizational structure of a museum or preservation organization and to develop a knowledge of governance and administrative operations.

3) To develop knowledge and skills related to specific areas of museum and preservation work.

In order to accomplish these goals, the intern should be integrated into the on-going work of the institution. The intern should assume professional level responsibilities and complete a single project or discrete portion of a major project during the period of the internship.
Placement of Interns

All undergraduate internships undertaken for academic credit must be approved by the undergraduate internship supervisor. Students who wish to arrange their own internships should furnish the prospective museum sponsor with a copy of these guidelines, develop a written statement of content and objectives (see below) to be signed by the student and the proposed internship supervisor, and then submit the proposal for approval.

Reports Required by the Intern

Each intern is required to submit a 1,500 word report. This should be double spaced, 12 pt type with 1” margins. This report is due the semester that you are registered for your internship, and should include the following:

1) Describe the mission of the museum, and identify and characterize the museum’s role in the community. Describe the governance/administrative /operational structure of the museum, identify the division or department with which you have been working, and briefly describe its purpose.

2) Tell us about any special skills you learned and how your knowledge base expanded.

3) Discuss how this internship has contributed to your professional development. What professional insights did you gain regarding museums as institutions, and on being a museum professional?

5) Identify and briefly discuss both the positive and negative features of your internship experience.

6) Attach as appendices copies of any materials produced that you feel are significant to the project.

Academic Credit

The MSST internship course results in three credit-hours. The internship grade will be based upon the final written report and the evaluation submitted by the internship site supervisor. Be sure to register for the internship course (MSST-464) in the appropriate semester.
Procedure for the Participating Institution

Sponsoring institutions should treat interns as they would any trained and qualified professional staff members. Interns should observe the same work rules as other staff members, attend staff meetings as appropriate to a beginning professional, carry out work assignments productively and on time, and accept supervision. We hope that interns will be given an opportunity to learn about the entire institution and undertake a project (or projects) requiring the exercise of independent professional judgement. We do not ask that interns be exempted from the routine parts of museum work, but we do ask that their training be well used and their enthusiasm challenged.

Report from the Participating Institution

As soon as possible (preferably within two weeks) after the conclusion of the internship, we ask that the internship supervisor at the sponsoring institution complete the Student Evaluation that will be sent to him/her, describing and evaluating the intern’s work. We will also welcome any suggestions for improving the internship program at the University of Delaware.

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