

Faculty Quick Tips for Internships

The University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) is committed to facilitating student growth, especially by implementing High Impact Practices (HIP). Internships are an especially valuable HIP that allow students to gain real-world experience while applying learned theoretical knowledge.

What is an internship?

An internship is an experiential learning opportunity for a student to integrate theoretical classroom knowledge with practical experience in a professional work setting. Internships benefit both students and employers; students receive real world experience in positions related to their academic major and career goals, while employers benefit from the students' skills and assistance. Internships typically last one semester, in which students can either earn academic credit by enrolling in a for-credit internship course or participate in a not-for-credit internship. **Internships can be paid or unpaid, as students who have an approved learning agreement with the ELC are covered under CU Denver's Worker's Compensation Insurance. ***

Internships are typically offered on a semester cycle, typically commencing in mid- August, January, and June. In addition to the work on-site, students receiving academic credit are required to enroll in the internship course by **census date** and complete assignments related to the internship as assigned by a Faculty Sponsor.

Steps for Students: Students often seek out faculty members to answer questions about University resources. Typical steps in the internship process include:

1. **Attend the Internship Workshop:** This 30-minute workshop gives students a brief overview of the internship process, including how to search and apply for internships, as well as procedures to follow once they have found an internship. Students can register for this workshop by visiting the ELC, calling the front desk at 303-315-4000, or online via Handshake (see next).
2. **Search for Internships in Handshake:** CU Denver's online career services platform. Current students are automatically registered on this platform; to access, they must simply visit www.ucdenver.joinhandshake.com and log in with their SSO.
3. **Meet with an Internship Advisor:** Once a student has attended the Internship Workshop, they will then be able to meet with their Internship Advisor. Internship Advisors assist with answering questions about internships, helping students find major-related internships, resume/cover letter reviews, and helping students with their learning agreement and enrolling in the internship course. Students can schedule appointments by visiting the ELC in LynxConnect, calling the front desk at 303-315-4000, or online via Handshake.
4. **If a student has found an internship:** Students who have already found an internship should be encouraged to make an appointment with their Internship Advisor at their earliest convenience. **Students must meet minimum requirements, regarding both their internship experience and academic prerequisites. Internship Advisors will review these requirements with students and proceed based upon eligibility.**

How to Help Students During the Internship Process

Finding and securing an internship can be a stressful process for students. As a faculty member, there are many ways that you can help alleviate this stress:

- If an employer reaches out to you showing an interest in hosting interns, refer them to the ELC so that we can get the position posted in Handshake.
- Reach out to the Internship Advisor who works with your major, minor, or certificate if you ever have any questions about internships or students - we are here as a resource to you!



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- Invite a representative from the ELC to speak to one or more of your classes. Typically, core required, major-specific courses work best, but we can visit any classroom!
- Encourage students to attend the Internship Workshop as soon as possible. The earlier they start planning, the more likely it will be that they can find an opportunity that best fits their needs.

How to Sponsor an Intern: Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

If you are an approved Faculty Sponsor, students may approach you and ask you to be their Faculty Sponsor. *Approved sponsors vary by department; see Department Chair.* If you agree to sponsor an intern, you are agreeing to facilitate the academic component of an academic credit internship.

- **Requesting an Experience:** For a student to enroll in an internship course, they will need to first complete a *Learning Agreement* (called an **Experience**) via Handshake. This form acts as a contractual agreement through which all parties agree to participate in facilitating the student's internship experience. On this form, the student will report details regarding their internship, including the intended work duties, learning objectives, and structure of the internship.
- **Approving an Experience:** Once a student has filled out their Experience, it must then be electronically approved by their Faculty Sponsor and Site Supervisor (the person on-site who will be overseeing the intern). As a Faculty Sponsor, you will receive an email (either via Handshake or the assigned Internship Advisor) that will request your approval of the internship Experience. **Pay close attention to the description and learning objectives.** If you wish to make any modifications or have questions about any of the information provided, **contact the Internship Advisor directly.**
- Once an Experience has been approved by all parties, the Internship Advisor will send the student enrollment instructions for the internship course. This course will display the Faculty Sponsor as the associated faculty member for the internship course.
- As a Faculty Sponsor, you should predetermine established meeting dates for the semester, academic assignments, grading rubrics, and due dates. The ELC has a 1-page form that you can use to document the academic component of your internship course, or you can create your own syllabus. Send the completed document to the Internship Advisor and they will attach it to the student's internship experience in Handshake.
- Collect the student's time log (provided by the ELC) at the end of the semester and check to make sure that they have met the minimum number of weeks and hours for the number of credit hours they are enrolled in. For a 3-credit course, the student must complete a minimum number of hours (135, 150, or 270 depending on the program) and a minimum of 10 weeks on-site (6 weeks for summer).
- Review the performance evaluation from the Site Supervisor, provided by the Internship Advisor at the end of the semester.
- Determine and submit the final grade.
- For a copy of the full Faculty Guide to Internships, download our PDF on the website or contact the ELC.

For more information and assistance, please contact:

Experiential Learning Center

303-315-4000

experiential.learning@ucdenver.edu

www.ucdenver.edu/elc

Located inside LynxConnect in Tivoli Student Union, Suite 449