

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Computer Science Internship

Question: *What is an internship?*

Answer: When an employer offers a working opportunity to you and you have a lot of learning to do before you can perform productively, you can be hired as an intern.

Question: *Who qualified to sign up for the internship credits?*

Answer: You have to have a senior standing with a major in Computer Science, Computer Information Systems, or Software Engineering, and at least a GPA of 3.0 or above.

Question: *Do I have to look for the internship opportunity or does the department offer the internship opportunities to the students?*

Answer: You will have to find those opportunities. Every once in a while, potential employers looking for the interns contact the department and the CS Administrative Coordinator will pass them along to students by e-mails. You can also go to the Career Center to look for the opportunities.

Question: *Can interns be paid?*

Answer: Yes. Most of internships in computer science are paid interns. Some interns only get pay but not credits.

Question: *Can paid interns also get academic credits?*

Answer: Paid interns can get academic credits as long as there is learning involved. When the learning experience can be separated from the production experience, the part of learning can get credits while the part of the production gets pay.

Question: *Why is an internship worth academic credits?*

Answer: Not every internship job is worth academic credits. No credits will be given just because some employer is calling you an intern. Credits are awarded because there is a learning experience about to happen as in every academic course.

Question: *How do we decide if any future employment experience is worth for internship credits?*

Answer: A field supervisor at your future employment can help you determine how much time and efforts you will have to spend in learning before you become productive in the working environment. Then you will have to justify to the internship coordinator who will also be your faculty sponsor for the internship that the amount of learning is about equivalent to a 3-credit semester course.

Question: *If I have been on some job and learn quite a bit about the knowledge needed to perform the job, can I get some internship credits for it?*

Answer: No. Academic credits are awarded for the learning to be happening, not for the past learning experience.

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Question: *Do I have to set up the internship and complete all the paperwork before starting my internship?*

Answer: Yes. Once you started the learning experience, you cannot get credits for it. Therefore, it is very important to complete all the paperwork before you start to work as an intern.

Question: *When is the best time to get some internship experience?*

Answer: Summer usually is the best time for internship because your working as an intern and your studying as a student will not interfere with each other. It is not recommended to have internship during regular semesters unless you have an extremely light workload of study at the time.

Question: *When should I start looking for the internship opportunities?*

Answer: In general, you should start looking in spring for summer internships. You should get the internship form from the Administrative Coordinator of Computer Science Department in Science 2 239A to get some ideas on the timeline and the documents to be completed before starting any internship.

Question: *What happens if I am offered the opportunity to continue working after the internship is over?*

Answer: If you have a light workload of study during your senior year, you certainly can continue your employment. If not, you may reduce your study workload in order to continue working; however, it might delay your graduation. You will have to make the decision.

Question: *Who will be the faculty sponsor for my internship?*

Answer: Currently, the department designates the Computer Science Internship Coordinator, Dr. Shaun-inn Wu, to be the faculty sponsor for all Computer Science internships.

Question: *What do I have to do when I am offered an internship?*

Answer: If you do not plan to get credits for it, you don't have to do anything. However, if you do plan to get credits, you must complete the following steps before you can sign up for the internship course for academic credits:

1. construct the learning contract with the help from your field supervisor,
2. after the faculty sponsor approves the learning contract, complete the departmental internship form, sign it and get the signature of your field supervisor,
3. complete the individual course form obtained from the college office,
4. obtain the signature of the faculty sponsor on both forms,
5. leave a copy of all the documents with the department,
6. turn in the individual course form to the dean's office,
7. sign up for the course and pay the fees.

Question: *Why do I have to complete the paperwork for the internship?*

Answer: The internship form and learning contract are to clarify what constitutes of your internship. It serves as your protection in case that the employers would change their minds about your assignments for the internship. When that happens, the faculty sponsor will help you negotiate another meaningful learning contract to

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protect your benefits. The individual course form is for creating a separate internship course for you.

Question: *What grade do I get if the internship doesn't end before the end of summer or the semester I sign up for the internship?*

Answer: Most of summer or semester internship doesn't finish by the end of the summer or semester. In that case, an I grade will be assigned temporarily and a formal grade will be assigned in the fall semester when everything is completed. Most of the time, it is due to the fact that summer or semester interns rarely finished their report before the end of their internships and hence were not able to make their presentations, and most of their field supervisors did not send in their evaluation letters on time.