

Health Sciences
Undergraduate Internship Manual

Healthcare Professions
College of Health
Clayton State University

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1. **Definition of an Internship**

An internship is an integrated learning experience that provides an opportunity for the intern to gain practical knowledge and skills on-the-job. The internship allows the intern to acquire skills relating to his/her field of study. In addition, the skills gained from the work experience can be useful in applying for future employment.

2. **Definition of an Intern**

Interns are undergraduate students currently enrolled at Clayton State University. The student must have declared a major in Health Sciences. The intern will work for an organization and train in a specific area of interest to the student. Generally, the area of interest is healthcare related.

3. **Purpose of the Internship Program**

The internship is a vital component of the Health Science (HS) curriculum at Clayton State University (CSU). The internship provides students with the opportunity to integrate their didactic into a real-world framework. Students are given the opportunity to apply the principles and theories that they learned in their coursework to actual situational practice in the health science field.

For some students, the Internship represents the only work experience they will acquire in a health-related field before they graduate. As such, the experience is crucial that students use the opportunity to gain knowledge and insights into the field. The internship maybe the only health-care work related experience on their resumes. It will also, in all probability, be a prime source of inquiry by prospective employees.

Frequently, Internships lead to direct job offers, or the opportunity to network into employment. Neither of these will occur if the Internship is not completed in a professional manner.

4. **Duration, Timing and Academic Requirements of the Internship**

The Internship must be, at minimum, of *160 hours for the semester*. The hour total applies regardless of the semester in which the student enrolls in the internship course. The total number of hours is divided by the number of weeks in the semester to arrive at an approximate weekly average (fall & spring semesters $160/15 = 10.6$ hours; summer $160/9 = 18$). However, we realize configuration can be negotiated between the student and the preceptor, depending on flexibility needed by the student, and approved by the preceptor. Please note that this represents the minimum number of hours that must be completed. It is possible that a student may be needed to do more than the minimum to complete a project assigned by a preceptor.

The HSCI 4970 and HSCI 4900 courses must be taken the last semester students are enrolled in the Health Sciences program. Students are required to complete the HCMG 4901 course the semester before their internship/seminar courses.

Students must have a minimum 2.00 institutional grade point average (GPA) and receive departmental approval to register for the Internship course (HSCI 4970). **If a student does not meet the minimum requirements, the student cannot enroll in the course nor can the student acquire hours to be used toward enrollment later.**

5. Selection of Internship Site

The selection of an Internship site begins when students enroll in the course Introduction to the Health Care Environment (HSCI 2111). One of the requirements is the completion of the Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) for a job/position that interests the student. Clearly, the learning objectives would represent responsibilities of a position in an organization that the student perceives would most closely meet their employment choice after graduation. The student would then identify an organization of this type and further discuss options with the Internship Coordinator. The student should be prepared to discuss the intended learning objectives in-depth with the Internship Coordinator.

The Internship Coordinator is available to help the student make decisions about where to apply based on previous work experience, skills, and knowledge. In addition, the Internship Coordinator will make suggestions about learning objectives, and assist to bridge the intended duties with previous knowledge. After consulting with either the Internship Coordinator, the Program Coordinator, or the Department Chair, the intern will contact the administrator from the establishment.

The HSCI program encourages students to take an active role in researching, locating, and contacting the organization. The participatory involvement by the student will help to develop skills in learning how to develop a resume, prepare for an interview, and successfully obtain future employment. In addition, the process will ensure the Internship site will meet the student's academic requirements as well as future career goals.

If a student cannot find a suitable site, the student can visit the University's Career Services website or their office to seek out internships that are suitable for Health Sciences. The Career Services Department provides a listing of previously used internship sites as well as other potential sites that students may possibly employ (www.clayton.edu/career). The student may also make inquiries to the Internship Coordinator, the Program Coordinator, or the Department Chair for assistance and guidance.

6. Internship Salary/Compensation

An internship may be paid, unpaid, or relatively paid. However, there is no assumption on the part of the Health Care Management Department or the Health Sciences program that students will be compensated for their internships. Alternatively, the Department/program does not prohibit any organization from reimbursing interns. The Department/program, however, does caution that if an intern is paid, the expectation of rotation described below is not waived. If an organization has any expectations because of reimbursement that will impede a student from adequate exposure to a variety of departments and/tasks, then compensation should not occur.

7. **Goals and Outcomes of the Internship**

Once a student has identified an Internship site, established contact, and has been approved, the student and the site preceptor will jointly complete the Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) and submit the ILA to the Internship Coordinator. The ILA can be found on the Health Sciences website [Health Sciences Internship](#) and on the Career Services website [Career Services](#)

The Learning Agreement allows the student and preceptor to discuss and develop objectives for the Internship experience. The student and preceptor shall develop a *minimum of three (3) learning objectives*. These objectives should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Exposure to several areas of interest.
- b. Be assigned a special project or task that will allow the intern to develop and understand effective communication, team building, and problem-solving skills. Ideally, a project can be designed that allows the student to interact with a variety of departments, communicate with various individuals to gather information and prepare a report for presentation. The project should be a meaningful charge that will provide useful information to the student as well as the organization.
- c. The intern should participate in meetings, when possible.
- d. The intern should interact with external constituencies, when applicable.
- e. The intern should meet with the preceptor(s) to acquire insights into their knowledge, as well as how they arrive at making decisions.

8. **Faculty Responsibilities**

- a. To counsel, assist, and guide the student with locating an Internship site. The Internship Coordinator will conduct information sessions frequently to provide an overview of the process, requirements, and expectations. The Internship Coordinator will also meet with students on an individual basis to provide more in-depth information, evaluation, and guidance.

- b. To be available to both student and preceptor to address questions and concerns.
- c. To provide students with information and guidance in the completion of their objectives, projects and assignments that they have been given by their preceptors.

9. **Student Intern Responsibilities**

- a. To contact an appropriate site (as determined by the Internship Coordinator) and schedule an appointment to discuss the requirements for completing an internship. The Department Chair and the Program Coordinator will have authorization privileges if the Internship Coordinator is unavailable.
- b. To complete the required Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) and any other paperwork, if required by the preceptor, internship coordinator, or director of Career Services.
- c. The **ILA form must be typed**, and proper signatures obtained prior to sending to the Internship Coordinator for approval. An ILA that is handwritten will need to be resubmitted before the Internship Coordinator will approve the internship site.
- d. To attend **mandatory orientation** during the first weekday of classes at the beginning of the semester. The student is responsible for contacting the Internship Coordinator to determine when and where the orientation session will be conducted. This may be held in conjunction with the HSCI 4900 Health Sciences Seminar course.
- e. To obtain and complete any required documents, paperwork, or immunization forms. This may also include liability insurance, pre-employment physicals, background checks, etc.
- f. To adhere to policies, procedures, and working hours agreed upon with the preceptor. The student must exhibit professional work ethics, which include being punctual, dressing in a professional manner, and presenting self in a manner befitting a health care professional. In the event of an unexpected work absence (e.g. sickness), the intern must notify the site preceptor and Internship Coordinator. Any absence must be made up by arrangement with the site preceptor. The Internship Coordinator must be notified of this arrangement.
- g. To establish a productive and respectful working relationship with supervisors, co-workers, clients, volunteers, and other members internal and external the organization.
- h. To maintain absolute confidentiality with respect to all information that the intern reviews while at the organization or in the presence of employees of the organization.

- i. To submit to the Internship Coordinator a summary of the activities (only if part of the grading criteria) that the intern engaged in at the institution at the end of the semester.
- j. To be proactive in seeking opportunities in assisting with and developing projects. The intern must also be willing to accept assignments and projects as determined by the preceptor.
- k. To use the internship as an active learning experience. The intern should ask frequent questions, take notes, and explore the rationale behind decisions as part of the daily activities.
- l. To be sure that the site preceptor has received, completed, approved, and returned the **evaluation form** directly to Clayton State University's Office of Career Services. If the preceptor has not received an evaluation form at the end of the term, then the intern has the responsibility of contacting both the Director of Career Services and the Internship Coordinator.

10. **Preceptor Responsibilities**

- a. To provide the overall supervision of the Internship experience.
- b. To ensure that the Internship experience will be meaningful by assigning the intern projects and assignments that will enable them to gain insights into the organization.
- c. To serve as a mentor to the intern and meet with them on a regular basis to discuss progress and problems and to provide information and answer questions that arise.
- d. To allow the intern to attend meetings and seminars that the preceptor is attending, when possible and feasible.
- e. To communicate with the Internship Coordinator any problems or concerns that the preceptor may have with respect to the intern.
- f. To complete and return the **Internship Evaluation Form** to the Director of Career Services. Preceptors will receive the evaluation form from CSU's Director of Career Services towards the end of the semester.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Whom do I speak with about my internship?

A: Dr. M. McAlister, Clayton Hall, T-113B. MargaretMcAlister@clayton.edu

Q: How many hours do I need to accumulate for the internship?

A: The internship is **160 hours**. Additionally, your attendance and punctuality are counted towards those hours. You may be dismissed from your internship site if you are consistently late or fail to show up for your internship.

Q: When is the Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) due?

A: The semester BEFORE you are registered for the Internship course.

Q: When should I register for the internship course?

A: To be eligible to enroll in HSCI 4970 Health Sciences Internship course you must be in your second to last semester and completed all the required courses. Upon completion and submission of your **TYPED** approved Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) by the Internship Coordinator, you will go online to the Health Sciences internship webpage and fill out the Course Override form [Health Sciences Internship](#)

Q: How will I know if I will be registered for the course?

A: To secure a seat in the HSCI 4970 Internship class, you should have your **TYPED** ILA completed, approved, and signed by your preceptor and the course instructor on or before the deadline. Please refer to the Health Sciences website [Health Sciences Internship](#) for the deadline. *An ILA form that is not typed or late will not be accepted!*

ONCE APPROVED for your internship, you will go onto the Health Sciences website and under the Internship tab, there will be a link that you will request an override into the HSCI courses (HSCI 4970 and HSCI 4900). Once completed, you will receive an email to let you know if your request has been approved or denied (if denied you will be told the reason) **Before the semester begins, check your schedule to see if you have been registered for these two courses.**

Q: Am I required to complete the Internship Learning Agreement? (ILA)

A: Yes. The Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) is part of the course requirement, and you are **REQUIRED** to complete this form **BEFORE** being registered for the course. You may download a copy of the form located on the Health Sciences website located under Internship by clicking on Internship Learning Agreement Form or you may download the form that is located on the Career Services website. **You must type this form. Handwritten ILA's will not be accepted and can delay your internship approval.**

Q: What if I fail to provide the requested information?

A: If you fail to provide the required paperwork in a timely manner, you risk **NOT** being registered for this course.

Q: What should my learning objectives involve?

A: Your learning objectives will focus on what you hope to learn from your internship. This may include any projects or assignments suggested by your preceptor. ***You must have a minimum of three (3) learning objectives.***

NOTE: if you already have a potential site, please contact the Internship Coordinator to discuss your intended site, learning objectives, requirements, and expectations.

Q: What should I expect from my internship?

A: If you are unsure about what to expect from your internship and have not chosen a site, please contact the Internship Coordinator first to schedule an appointment to discuss your career goals, a potential site and your learning objectives. To facilitate finding a site, you should think about what job you are seeking upon completion of graduation. Do not be unrealistic!

To further help you define your career goals, ask yourself why you decided to pursue the major Health Sciences originally? Be prepared to discuss where you would like to complete your internship and what you want to learn. You should also be prepared to discuss the hiring criteria, required skills, and other relevant information.

The organization may request you to complete a special task or project to improve a process, research a particular topic for information, or develop a report. The intern may be required to conduct research, shadow the administrator, interact with different units, attend meetings, or other job-related duties. Be open to learn as much as you can.

Q: Can I change my internship site or have more than one internship site?

A: Yes. You can change if you are not learning what you and your preceptor agreed upon or if you want multiple kinds of experiences (maximum of three internship sites).

NOTE: If you are not learning what you expected at your internship site, ***you must*** notify your Internship Coordinator and offer the site a two-week notice (Mandatory).

Q: What are the steps for completing the internship process?

A: See steps below.

1. Locate a health-related site (i.e. HMO, hospital, physician's office, non-profit organization, insurance, pharmacy, medical devices company, physical therapy, dental offices, local health departments, long-term care, hospice, etc.)
2. Meet with the course instructor (i.e. Internship Coordinator) to discuss learning objectives, career goals, and organizations of interest.
3. Meet with your preceptor to discuss learning objectives. Type the learning objectives in the ILA and obtain the preceptor's signature on ILA.
4. **Return Typed ILA form** (error free- check spelling) to course instructor (i.e. Internship Coordinator) for approval/denial. ***This document will not be accepted if it is not typed.***
5. **If ILA is DENIED:** you will have to make the necessary corrections before resubmitting.
6. **If ILA is ACCEPTED:** the form will be forwarded to your Academic Advisor and Career Services for processing.

7. **If ILA is ACCEPTED:** Students will go the Health Sciences Internship webpage and complete the course overload form (this is a Qualtrics form) to get registered for the HSCI 4900 Health Sciences Seminar course. Once this is complete then the student will be added to the HSCI 4900 Health Sciences Seminar course
8. Student will be added to the HSCI 4970 Health Sciences Internship course and will be notified by the Advising Office.

The Internship Coordinator encourages you to schedule an appointment ASAP to start the conversation about *locating* your internship site, *discussing* your learning objectives, and *registering* you for the course. *Do not wait until the last minute to get started. Otherwise, you risk NOT being registered for the course.*

Q: Does my Preceptor's evaluation affect my grade?

A: Yes. Please communicate with your Internship Coordinator or faculty member who teaches the HSCI 4970 Internship course about any issues you might have, both positive and negative.

Q: Does the Internship course and the Health Sciences Seminar course need to be taken in the same semester?

A: Yes. The internship influences your final paper in the HSCI 4900 Health Sciences Seminar Course.

Useful Information/Links

Office of Career Services

Edgewater Hall, Suite 228
2000 Clayton State Blvd
Morrow, GA 30260-0285
Phone: 678-466-5400
Fax: 678-466-5468
Email: career@clayton.edu
Web: <http://www.clayton.edu/career>

Health Sciences

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