

Table of Contents

Preliminary Information:

Definition	3
Why Complete an Internship?	3
Advance Planning	4
Types of Internships	4
Are You Ready?	5
When?	5

For students:

Preparation:

Identifying Alternatives	
Phase 1: Know what you want	6
Phase 2: Process of elimination	6
Phase 3: Read the fine print	7
Receiving MSU credit for an Internship	9
Receiving MSU credit for Research	10
Grading	11
How These Credits Count Toward Your Degree	12
Set up the Internship	13
Internship Timeline	15

On the Job:

Expectations	
The host institution expects....	17
The Department of Zoology expects...	17
Get the Most out of Your Internship Experience	17

Afterward:

How to Include this Experience in Your Credentials	18
--	----

Table of Contents (continued)

For institutions:

Frequently Asked Questions	19
Fair Labor Standards Act	21

Find the latest version of this manual at
<http://www.zoology.msu.edu/undergraduates.html>

Definition

An internship is a work-related opportunity offered by an institution or business only to students who are in the process of earning a college degree. These programs usually last for a specified period of time. Interns are supervised by an experienced professional and perform the job duties of a professional. Students are expected to bring a high degree of responsibility to the workplace. Many host institutions also expect students to contribute the latest concepts.

An internship is *not* the run-of-the-mill summer job. Some institutions and programs do offer a stipend. Some institutions offer housing or a stipend for housing. Most, however, are volunteer positions.

While you may not receive a paycheck for an internship, you will be performing the duties of a professional. Internship experience, therefore, should always be included in your resume. In addition, you may choose to receive credit on your MSU transcript for this work. Unless internship experience is a specific requirement for your degree (and for most degrees, it is not), you do not have to include the internship in the college transcript. Information about adding your internship experience to your transcript may be found later in this document.

Why complete an internship?

First, an internship is a way to explore a possible career: you will find out if you hate it or love it. From the hands-on, practical experience of long days and hard work in field research, for example, one can get a taste of a research scientist's job. Many unique opportunities are available to you only while you are a college student, so it is important to take advantage of these programs. Doing more than one volunteer job or internship will give you the chance to check out several potential jobs.

Locating an internship develops valuable job search and career exploration techniques.

While on the internship, you will make useful contacts with people in that industry. You will develop job-related skills, as well as discover how to work with others and adjust to their needs. From this, your interpersonal and communication skills should improve. You will experience how employees and departments work together to achieve success for the large institution. Finally, this experience will give you the chance to apply the knowledge gained in completed college courses to real-world situations.

These contacts and job-related skills will be essential post-graduation when you are searching for a professional position. A college diploma in your hand is not enough anymore to secure the job you desire. Employers also want applicants to be able to demonstrate how well they will fit into the workplace: the relevant experience from an internship may be the element that sets your resume above the rest of the pile of applications.

Advance planning

It is a good idea to begin to research internship options at least a year or two in advance. Application deadlines for internships can be up to six, or even nine, months in advance of the start date! Identifying your target programs well in advance will give you the time to accumulate any additional skills (e.g. specific computer programs or an ability to talk to the public) that you may need to be successful. “Dramatic romantic” (for example, working with dolphins in Hawaii) internships in particular will necessitate planning way in advance. Competition will be rigorous, and the selection process time consuming.

In addition, if you choose to receive credit for your internship, remember **Credit is not granted automatically. Credit is never awarded after the fact.** You must follow the established application procedure.

Paperwork for the internship must be signed and filed with the Zoology department **before** the semester begins. This process can take some time, so plans and application should be made early during the **previous** semester. See the appropriate sections below on

Types of internships

There are many ways to gain this work-related experience. The list of ideas below is a starting point.

- ◆ an internship program
 - ◇ Foundations (examples: Heart; Lung; Cancer)
 - ◇ Businesses (examples: Eli Lilly; Parke-Davis)
 - ◇ Institutions: zoos, aquaria, nature parks, hospital laboratories, etc.
 - ◇ State government:
 - ◇ Agencies (examples: DNR; DEQ; Transportation)
 - ◇ State Health laboratories
 - ◇ DNR / DEQ research laboratories
 - ◇ Federal government
 - ◇ National Marine Fisheries
 - ◇ Agencies (examples: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Soil Conservation Service)
 - ◇ Federal institutes (example: NIH)

◆ an intensive field or laboratory program. Students pay “tuition” for these programs, which last from 8 to 15 weeks. These programs offer immersion in an on-going research project. They are offered by another university or at a research institution.

◆ part-time work experience (for example, in a laboratory or collecting samples in the field) may be completed at university, a business, or an institution (such as a hospital).

For ideas on how to locate these opportunities, see below, “Identifying alternatives.”

Are you ready?

To get the most out of your internship, be prepared to enter the workforce. It may help to have typing or filing skills or familiarity with a variety of computer applications. It is likely that job tasks will require you to apply what you have learned from courses to hands-on situations, so you may be expected to have completed some higher level Zoology courses. Interpersonal skills are essential. Interns work hard, think, exchange ideas and, in general, contribute. A student should complete their internship duties with initiative, motivation, and enthusiasm and display reliability, professionalism and a true eagerness to learn from experience. Host institution staff may serve as role models, helping students to learn the ins-and-outs of both job responsibilities and professional behavior more quickly.

The process of acquiring these skills takes time, so it is possible that you will not be ready to engage in this exercise until you are a junior or senior. For this reason, many facilities require that their interns be upper-level undergraduates.

Many institutions require that interns be pursuing a degree in biology. Some require specific course work. Again, this may mean that you are at least a junior.

When?

When in your academic career (for example, sophomore or junior year), you complete an internship may be determined by your level of preparation to enter the program. See the “Are you ready?” section above for more information.

As far as when in the academic year to participate in an internship, some programs may only be offered at certain times of the year, such as Summer semester. Other programs may be available year round: students may choose to take time off from Fall or Spring semester classes to complete the internship or lab/field program.

Internship programs sponsored by institutions, businesses or facilities are a full-time activity. So are intensive field / laboratory programs. As a result, these are not completed while a student is also taking classes. Students must be willing to commit to a minimum of 40 hours per week for at least 15 weeks. Work in a part-time Zoology-related job may be done in a semester when you are not taking classes (such as Summer) or it may take place alongside your classes during the semester.

Identifying specific alternatives

Phase 1: Know what you want

Before you can begin the process of filling out paperwork and applications, you need to spend some time identifying programs which will serve your needs best. First, see a Zoology advisor to help to “brainstorm” what types of experiences might be right for you: do you want to work with people, in a lab, etc.

Then, spend some time clarifying your goals. The most important step is to know yourself and know what you want to gain from the internship. Look back over your life so far. How have you arrived at your current career interests? Consider, for example, family background; awards; classes which captured your attention; or events which have changed your goals. Writing this down may help you organize your observations better. This information will help you determine which location will be the most suitable when match what you identify about yourself here with the factors you identify in Phase 2.

These Career Services Network webpages may give you some additional ways to assess yourself and your goals.

Exploring Career Options

<http://careernetwork.msu.edu/students/exploringoptions>

Finding a Job or Internship

<http://careernetwork.msu.edu/students/findingajob>

Phase 2: Process of elimination

Talk to your professors and graduate assistants to find out about programs which match your interests. A web search also may help you locate these programs. Through the MSU web page

www.myspartancareer.com

you can access part and full time job postings as well as some internship postings. Library research also will help you to discover possible sites.

Then get down to identifying which specific programs you wish to pursue. Recognize that there are many alternatives to consider when you evaluate internship locations. Here of some of the issues to consider:

- ◆ hands-on or more removed: Do you want to work in a lab; the field; an office; “the street” (more interaction with the general public)?

- ◆ part of country: stay near home; neighboring states; West or East Coast; Caribbean; Gulf; etc.

- ◆ environment: desert; mountain; Great Plains; fresh or salt water; etc.

- ◆ interaction with others: in lab and field work, you may only be interacting with people of similar education and background as yourself; office and “street” jobs may require you to deal with the general public more. In all of these locations you will need interpersonal and communication skills, but in the office and “street” locations you will really use your “people” skills in addition to the knowledge you gain from your classes.

- ◆ curriculum / working background: some places may request specific courses, skills and abilities.

- ◆ choice in area of study. This is dependent on the institution. In some programs, interns rotate around different areas of the facility to maximize overall experience, while others work more in-depth in one area for the duration of the internship. Many institutions are willing to work with students for a placement in the student’s best interest.

Still not sure? Try approaching the problem from a precise perspective. Use the MOST important factor

that you identified above as the starting point. Then rank the other factors in order of importance.

Say, for example, that you know you want to work on a marine research vessel. You can approach this from a variety of angles, depending upon which is the most important factor for you:

A. Location:

- ✧ For example, you want to be in the Chesapeake region. One possibility is Solomons, MD, where there are many possible places to find an internship: universities, government, private industry, etc.
- ✧ Or you wish to be in Florida. One place might be Ft Pierce where the private Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution operates the Johnson vessels.

B. Work environment:

- ✧ You could work for the government, e.g. the NMF operates in coastal areas and harbors. Other possibilities include a marine museum or a university. Each of these environments has a different atmosphere, often determined by the goals of the research. The government may have long term projects whereas universities or museums may have smaller research projects funded by grants which may cover only one or two seasons. Each type of project will draw certain types of people and provide a unique work environment.

C. Type of research

- ✧ The food industry may have investigations into population movement, captive populations or finding new species to eat.
- ✧ Perhaps you know you want to work in genetics. Do you want to deal with people directly or lab procedures for analyzing DNA? Do you want to do this as part of training for MD or for going on in research?

You may find an interesting research project at an institution which does not have an internship program. In this case, the Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department may contact the host institution on your behalf and try to secure a working agreement between that facility and the zoology internship program.

Be sure there is not a discrepancy between your stated goals (identified in Phases 1 and 2) and the internships in your final group. Once you have located a several programs which you wish to apply to, you can move to the next phase.

Phase 3: Read the fine print

Some programs require tests of knowledge and very detailed application forms. How do you apply? Application to specific programs may be made via a form on line or a contact on the phone. There may be a waiting list for applicants: how long might you be expected to be on that? What is the interview schedule? Will there be an over-the-phone interview followed by one face-to-face? How far in advance do you need to apply?

Pay attention to the details of that program. For example, Disney requires a signed 6-month commitment from its interns. Pay and housing are not the norm.

Read the fine print to find out:

- ◆ will you need your own transportation?
- ◆ will the institution work with you on housing or must you find your own accommodations?

Occasionally, a fellow employee will have a room for rent. Check out the local newspaper for apartments for rent in the area.

- ◆ what is the insurance coverage for injuries?
- ◆ do you need medical preparation (tuberculosis (TB) test; vaccination for rabies, Hepatitis B; herpes; tetanus; etc.)
- ◆ is there any physical ability required? Many internship positions require light manual labor, such as cleaning and sterilizing, lifting, reaching and loading/unloading of shipments. The ability to lift 50 lbs. is often recommended.
- ◆ will you work with hazardous or dangerous chemicals or in unsafe or variable environmental conditions?
- ◆ any specific clothing required? (uniforms, safety clothing, boots, masks, gloves, helmets, etc.) Do you provide this or does the institution?
- ◆ will there be additional costs for food, etc.?

Each work environment carries its own dangers. Physical work (cleaning, exhibit upkeep, lifting, etc.) required of the student can result in injury. What are that institution's guidelines and training procedures to help minimize these threats?

Due to liability concerns, lack of training and risk of injury, interns may not be allowed to handle chemicals or animals classified as hazardous or dangerous. This exclusion of duties is provided for the safety of both the students and the facility. Highly technical procedures may also be off-limits to students, as these procedures take years of experience, training and practice. Once you learn which procedures or activities are "off-limits" to interns, are you still interested in that program?

Find out about the day-to-day workplace concerns: work days; hours; union or non-union; expected conduct in the workplace.

Finally, identify skills which you will need to develop in order to be a successful employee

Receiving MSU credit for an internship

When interning, or volunteering, you *may* apply for MSU credit. This means:

- ◆ you will be paying MSU for a precise number of credits in a specific course, and
- ◆ that course will appear on your MSU transcript.

The number of credits that you receive will depend upon the specifics of your experience.

Some institutions offering internships require that students who participate in their internship program be receiving academic credit at the same time. Many do not. Since internships are generally only available to students, however, many institutions will require documentation that you are a student in good standing who intends to return to complete the college degree after the experience. Thus, it is your choice as to whether to apply to receive credit (have it in the college transcript) while you are participating in an internship. The exception to this, of course, is if internship experience is a specific requirement for your degree. In this case, you will have to include the internship in the college transcript.

NOTE: If you choose to receive credit, remember that **credit is never awarded after the fact**. You must follow the established application procedure **before** that semester begins.

In order to receive Zoology credit, the Zoology Department requires students to be willing to commit to a **minimum** of 40 hours per week for at least 15 weeks. Sometimes, it may be necessary for you to work more than the scheduled 40 hours in order to complete your assigned tasks. Also, some internship programs may last longer than the 15 weeks the Zoology Department requires. Disney, for example, demands that students commit to a 6-month internship program. If you choose to complete one of these internships, obviously, you will be away from MSU for a longer time.

Field experience for credit is *required* only for BS Zoology majors in the Zoo & Aquarium Science or Marine Biology concentrations

Students in the BS Zoology, Zoo & Aquarium Science concentration, must use the internship experience to complete ZOL 498, Internship in Zoo and Aquarium Science, for 4 credits. For this program, you will be in a working situation a *minimum* of 40 hours a week for 15 weeks. At the minimum, your grade will be based upon both a daily journal and written results from a project conducted at the host institution or facility. You may be asked to submit other materials for evaluation.

Students in the BS Zoology, Marine Biology concentration have specific MSU courses designated in their academic program which fulfill the field work experience requirement. It is also possible to satisfy the marine experience requirement by completing an intensive field or laboratory program offered by another university or at a research institution. Courses from programs offered by an academically accredited institution, such as Boston University, may transfer directly into your MSU record. Programs run by research institutions which are not either academically accredited or associated with an accredited academic institution will not transfer to MSU. In this case, you will need to work with the Undergraduate Program

Director for MSU's Zoology Department to get this experience into your MSU record. In any of the instances where the marine experience requirement is met with courses not specifically identified in the requirements (whether at MSU or off-campus), you and will also have to work with your Zoology advisor. Your advisor will document this experience in the appropriate places to ensure that your degree requirement is met.

Zoology students who are in any of the other concentrations may earn 4 credits in ZOL 496, Internship in Zoology, with the approval of the Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department. These students must commit to 15 weeks of a 40-hour work week in an internship program offered by an institution / business. ZOL 496 credits can count as Zoology elective credit for graduation.

Remember, the best place to "showcase" your internship experience is in your resume.

Receiving MSU credit for research

Opportunities exist in many laboratories both on- and off-campus for students to gain research experience while completing course work. If this experience is with a professor in the Zoology Department, you may also apply to earn credits in ZOL 494, Independent Study in Zoology, for this experience. Once you have found a Zoology professor in whose research you are interested, and who agrees to supervise and work with you, you and that professor will determine the specific number of credits and work product expectations. Then you and the professor will fill out an Application for Independent Study form to add ZOL 494, Independent Study in Zoology, to your schedule. ZOL 494 credits will be used as elective credit for graduation. Note: Either ZOL 494 or a thesis are required for the BS Zoology, Genetics concentration.

If the laboratory experience is with a MSU professor in any department other than Zoology, you cannot apply for credit in ZOL 494. You may see if that professor and department will be willing to authorize independent study credit offered by that department (for example, if you are working for a professor in the Department of Plant Biology, it might be possible for you to earn credit in PLB independent study.)

Under certain circumstances, the Undergraduate Program Director may also award Independent Study credit for part-time work in a Zoology related setting. Independent Study credit also may be awarded for an intensive field or laboratory program by the Undergraduate Program Director. You will work with the Director to determine the specific number of credits and work product expectations and to fill out the Application for Independent Study form to add ZOL 494. ZOL 494 credits may count as Zoology elective credit for graduation.

NOTE: If you choose to receive credit, remember that **credit is never awarded after the fact**. You must follow the established application procedure **before** that semester begins.

Remember that, in many instances, you do not have to receive credit - have it in the college transcript - in order to participate in research. The best place to "showcase" your research experience is in your resume.

Grading

If you decide to add ZOL 494, 496 or 498 to your transcript, you will be graded. The grade is determined by the person with whom you filled out the Application form (the Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department or the Zoology professor with whom you conduct research activities). The criteria for your grade will be specified on this form. Here are some examples of material to be submitted for your grade:

- ◆ Evaluation by your supervisor or mentor(s) at the host institution. The same criteria used for evaluation of employees may be used for student interns. The evaluation should be impartial. MSU provides an evaluation sheet for this to the host institution.
- ◆ A diary or daily journal of duties and services performed, as well as new experiences.
- ◆ Brief discussion of knowledge gained (for example, by attending a seminar or lecture from a visiting researcher) which helps you in your duties.
- ◆ An annotated bibliography of books, articles or other material you read to obtain more background.
- ◆ Photographs of you performing your duties or of others involved in tasks related to your job.
- ◆ Your supervisor may ask you to complete a research paper or a report on a project completed at the institution.
- ◆ Presentation of the results of your research or a synopsis of your experiences to a group.
- ◆ A critique summarizing the overall experience and opinion (positive and negative) of the internship.

It is likely that you will be expected to turn in more than one of these items.

How these credits count toward your degree

Some internship courses may be specified as meeting a particular requirement. ZOL 498, for example, is specifically identified as a requirement for the BS Zoology, Zoo & Aquarium Science concentration.

If your course is not specifically identified as a requirement, it can be counted as either a Zoology elective course or a general elective course.

What is a **Zoology elective course**?

All MSU degrees require that students complete a certain minimum number of credits at the 300-level or above in that subject. To complete the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Zoology degree, for example, students must complete a minimum of 33 credits in upper level (300 or above) Zoology courses.

For each of the MSU Zoology degrees (Bachelor of Science; Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology; Bachelor of Arts), the majority of these 300-level or above Zoology credits are accumulated by completing the courses listed in the applicable set of requirements. If the courses for the requirements do not add up to 33 crs., additional credits in upper level (300 or above) Zoology courses will be needed. These additional credits are called Zoology elective courses.

What is a **general elective course**?

If the courses for the Zoology requirements for your degree DO add up to 33 crs., additional credits in Zoology elective courses are not needed. In this case, the credits for your internship / independent study will still count toward your degree. They will count as general elective credits. A general elective credit is not the same as a Zoology elective course (see above paragraph). To receive a MSU Bachelor's degree, you must complete a total of 120 (or 123) credits. Most of these credits come from the required University, College and department courses. Additional credits, however, may be needed to reach the total 120 (123) credits. These credits are called general elective credits.

Please schedule an appointment with a Zoology advisor BEFORE you enroll in ZOL 494 or 496 to discuss how these credits will count toward your degree.

Set up the internship

Once you have wish list of locations, you are ready to meet with Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department. Present yourself in a business-like fashion. Proceed with the interview as would with a full-time job: dress and act accordingly. Bring your wish list of possible sites with you along with the followings:

- ◆ resumé.
- ◆ any credentials (e.g. Red Cross or SCUBA certification cards).
- ◆ academic file from 203 Natural Science.
- ◆ statement of personal history or goals. In Phase 1 of this process, you started to think about this. But providing a written copy of this history to the Director will help to find a program tailored to your individual skills and abilities.
- ◆ list of emergency contact and procedures given to both the host institution and the Zoology Department (for your departmental file in 203 Natural Science).

These materials will help the Director find the sites that best match your interests. They will also help the Director to complete any necessary paperwork.

The Undergraduate Program Director will go over your list with you and help you identify which programs might suit you best. In addition to the factors which you considered in Phases 2 and 3, the Director will also take into account the following:

- ◆ your academic level and related experience
- ◆ type of host institution, whether institution, government or commercial venture
- ◆ work opportunities offered by the host institution
- ◆ accessibility of host staff for mentoring, supervision and/or on-site training
- ◆ host representative willing to serve as an on-site supervisor

For some of the very competitive internship programs, the Zoology Department may have specific arrangements with the institution. In these cases, there may be only a few internship spaces available each year to MSU students, and the Zoology Department will choose which students will represent MSU at that institution. The number of internships is agreed upon mutually by the host institution and the department. Both parties must understand each others' goals and missions. Welfare and professional experience of the student is a primary consideration.

The Director may know of other programs like the ones you have identified which may also meet your needs. Then you and the Director will work together to apply for the position and fill out the necessary paperwork to get the internship on your transcript.

(continued)

(continued from previous page)

If the Zoology Department has not worked with this institution before, the Undergraduate Program Director will have to work with you and the facility staff to reach an agreement satisfactory to all parties. There are certain responsibilities the Director expects the facility to meet for MSU students. The host institution should:

1. be willing to accommodate the intern in an area of specialty that coincides with the student's experience, academic level and major concentration.

NOTE: recognize that because of legal constraints, dangerous situations, possibility of contamination, or highly technical procedures, not all student requests for a particular given activity can be granted.

2. insure participation of the intern along with the staff in day-to-day assignments, including involvement in a range of activities and responsibilities.

3. develop an agreement with the MSU Undergraduate Program Director and the student on expected outputs and timelines.

4. place the student intern under the supervision of a staff member(s) willing to act as a mentor. This allows great flexibility for supervision, as any staff employee can act as a mentor if the internship objectives are met.

5. be willing to provide constructive criticism, correct the intern's work, and form a liaison with the MSU Undergraduate Program Director.

6. be willing to complete an evaluation of the intern's work evolution and suggest a grade.

Internship Timeline

during the 1 - 2 years before you leave campus

Identify your alternatives:

what you want to gain from the internship?

find programs which match your interests

identify skills to develop in order to be a successful employee

How and when do you apply? What materials will you submit? What is the application process?

(See above in for more detailed discussion of these)

9 - 12 months before you leave campus

Decide whether or not you wish to receive MSU credit for your internship

Schedule a meeting with the Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department to set up the internship. Take your "wish list" of locations. See above, "Identifying alternatives," Phases 1, 2 and 3 , for more details.

the semester before you leave campus

Complete the *Application for Internship* (or *Application for Independent Study*) form.

This is a brief description of the project, your qualifications, your responsibilities, and how you will be evaluated. You will work out these details with the Undergraduate Program Director for MSU's Zoology Department (or the MSU Zoology professor who will supervise your research). If you will be working at another institution, the supervisor or mentor from that institution will also be involved in determining these details. Both you and your MSU supervisor will sign the form. It also needs an academic advisor's signature.

Once the form has been completed, return it to the Zoology Department main office, 203 Natural Science. The Department will send it to the College. When the College approves the form, you can register for ZOL 494, 496 or 498.

Schedule an appointment with your Zoology advisor to ensure you understand how these credits will count toward your degree.

Obtain a blue *Internship Evaluation Form* from the Zoology Department main office, 203 Natural Science. When you get to your job, give this to your on-site mentor or supervisor.

Assemble: notebooks, paper or computer to keep your daily journal;
camera;
relevant background material (books, articles, websites, etc.).

During the internship

Maintain a diary of daily activities, reading and research related to your job. This diary will help you to prepare your final report on your experience. You may also be asked to turn your journal in to the Zoology Department at the end of the internship.

Read as much as you can about the facility, animal specie(s) you work with and procedures you encounter.

Attend any seminars, lectures or other activities remotely relevant to your internship duties or interests.

When your work is completed

At the end of the internship, be sure to have your supervisor send the blue *Internship Evaluation Form* to the Zoology Department office:

Your *Application for Internship* (or *Application for Independent Study*) form will list the material that you must turn for grading. Submit this material to your MSU supervisor within a week of finishing your internship. Each item submitted must include your name, contact information, course (ZOL 494, 496 or 498), MSU supervisor, semester and institution (if you were off-campus). This must be done promptly so the grade is submitted in a timely manner.

Expectations

In an internship, you represent more than yourself: you represent the Zoology Department and MSU in that workplace.

The host institution expects...

Most internship programs sponsored by an institution, business or facility are highly structured and the participants are mentored by the facility's staff.

The host institution expects that the intern to comply with the wishes and instructions of its staff and to follow all employee rules while working on site. Interns must arrive on time on days they are scheduled to work, or use the proper institution procedures if an absence is necessary. Workplaces expect interns to complete tasks in a professional and timely manner and demonstrate initiative and responsibility.

One of the most important things to keep in mind is that your internship is like a 14-week job interview. Recommendations and input from your supervisors can prove to be invaluable when you are looking for a job. Therefore, it is always important to follow directions closely, treat everyone with respect, and ask for help if you feel that you may be in over your head. If you aren't sure how to do something, the best thing to do is to ask for further direction.

The Department of Zoology expects you to...

Complete your agreed work product in a timely manner. This work product may include a daily journal of duties and services performed as well as new experiences and knowledge gained, which may be supplemented with literature and photographs. You may have a research paper to write or a report on a project completed at the institution. You may also be asked to write a critique summarizing the overall experience and opinion of the internship.

Complete the duties of the internship with initiative, motivation, and enthusiasm; to display reliability, professionalism and a true eagerness to learn from experience and host institution staff.

Get the Most out of Your Internship Experience

You should expect and plan to get the most out of your internship experience. In an internship situation, you experience new events almost every day. Therefore, there is quite a bit you can do on your own to gain as much out of your internship as possible. Reading new journal articles, researching a specific animal, looking at new ideas for exhibit design and enrichment are a few of the things you can do to maximize your experience.

How to Include this Experience in your Credentials

One line on a transcript is not the best place to demonstrate to a potential employer all of the experience, skills and knowledge that you have gained. Your work as intern is valuable work-related experience furnishing skills which should definitely be in your resume.

In the resume, include *at least* three bullet points for each work-related experience. Try to match your bulleted points as closely as possible to experience and skills which the prospective employer desires. Interpersonal and communication skills, as well as the contacts made with facility staff, could be included in the resume; these can then be expanded upon in your cover letter.

For host institutions: Frequently Asked Questions

How will the Department of Zoology help the zoo or aquarium line up students?

The Department of Zoology will work with the host institution (a zoo, aquarium or commercial venture) to secure a working agreement between that facility and the Zoology internship program. Each party must understand the other's goals and missions. The number of internships is agreed upon mutually by the host institution and the department. Both parties agree upon a specific job description. Welfare and professional experience of the student is a primary consideration. Student placement with a particular facility takes into account the following:

1. academic level and related experience;
2. type of host institution;
3. work experiences offered by the host;
4. number of internships available;
5. the host's geographic location
6. the cost to student for locating in the area
7. availability of facility's staff for mentoring, supervision and/or on-site training;
8. facility staff member willing to serve as an on-site supervisor.

What do we expect the student to gain?

We want the students to set realistic career goals by gaining actual day-to-day experience in their chosen field of interest. Most college students have little practical experience in assessing day-to-day jobs that make a facility operate smoothly. Like the general public, they see only the end-product: the exhibits. As a result, they may have little appreciation or understanding of the complexity of the components that make the final presentation possible.

An internship has many aspects, and each of these can provide benefits to the student. The benefits include:

1. experience blending the student's academic background with the practical work necessary for the host facility to achieve its goals;
2. fundamental understanding of the myriad zoo and aquarium professions;
3. interpersonal and communication skills;
4. a sense of how subunits within a facility interconnect to achieve common goals.

If our goal is to train students to perform scientific research, curate, husband or direct a zoo or aquarium operation, then experience with its structure is the best teacher.

What are the zoo/aquarium responsibilities?

The host institution should:

1. be willing to accommodate the intern in an area of specialty coinciding with the intern's experience, academic background and interests;

NOTE: We realize that because of legal constraints, dangerous situations, possibility of contamination, or highly technical procedures, not all student requests for a particular given activity can be granted.

2. insure participation of the intern alongside the staff in day-to-day assignments and in a range of zoo/aquarium operation and management activities and responsibilities;
3. develop an agreement (with the MSU Internship Program Director and the student) on expected outputs and timelines;
4. place the student intern under the supervision of a staff member(s) willing to act as a mentor (This allows great flexibility for supervision, as any staff employee can act as a mentor if the internship objectives are met);
5. be willing to provide constructive criticism, correct the intern's work, and liaise with the MSU Internship Program Director about the intern's performance;
6. be willing to complete an evaluation of the intern's work evolution and suggest a grade.

What behavior does the Department of Zoology expect of its interns?

Tasks should be completed in a professional and timely manner. An intern is expected to comply with the wishes and instructions of the facility's staff, as well as to demonstrate a true eagerness to learn from experience and host institution staff. All employee rules are to be followed while working on site. Interns must arrive on time on days they are scheduled to work, or use the proper institution procedures in an absence is necessary.

Who evaluates the intern's work?

The host institution mentor(s) have the primary responsibility for evaluating an intern. The same criteria used for evaluation of employees may be used for student interns. The evaluation should be impartial. The Department of Zoology also provides the host institution with an evaluation sheet. The intern is expected to keep a daily log of work-related experiences (supplemented with literature and photographs) which is submitted to the Department of Zoology. Other materials (such as a final project in collaboration with the facility or a reflective critique) will also be required. The host's evaluation and these materials are reviewed before a final grade is determined.

Are internships paid?

Some are, but most are volunteer positions. During the development of a professional career, not all experiences can have a price placed on them.

What is the relationship between the work assigned to the intern and the work of the facility's staff?

It is not the purpose or the intent of the Zoo and Aquarium Science internship to interfere with the normal work responsibilities of the facility staff and management. It is in no way meant to be construed on the part of the University or the host facility that this is a method for securing a job on behalf of the student. The sole purpose of an internship under the guidelines of our program is student education.

Fair Labor Standards Act

Institutions are not in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act by participating in a service learning or academic internship, as long as the following criteria are met in the sponsor-intern relationship:

1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the employer's facilities, is similar to that which would be given at a vocational school.
2. The training is for the benefit of the trainees [students].
3. The trainees [students] do not displace regular employees, but work under close supervision.
4. The employer [host] that provides the training derives no immediate advantages from the activities of the trainees [students] and, on occasions, his/her operation may be impeded.
5. The trainees [students] are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.
6. The employer [host] and the trainee [student] understand the trainee [student] is not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

paw/zol