

**INTERNSHIP POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**Revised August 2007**

**Purpose:**

An internship is a supervised work experience with an employer (private business, government agency or other entity). Six credit hours of AREc 410 Internship are an important educational component of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Business Management (ABM). An internship is important because it provides students with the opportunity to apply classroom learning and gain important entry-level job experience. Ideally, students will be able to identify problems or issues that can be solved or addressed using economics or management techniques they have learned in the course of their university studies. In so doing, students may be able to field test some of those techniques during the time of the internship.

**Arranging an Internship Assignment:**

Responsibility for arranging an internship ultimately rests with the student. Faculty advisors can be, and often are, helpful in identifying opportunities, making contacts and outlining internship opportunities. A number of businesses regularly take interns from our program and others advertise internship opportunities with us. If you have an idea for an internship, you should discuss it with your faculty advisor before making a commitment. The organization must be willing to enter into a contractual agreement to provide a meaningful educational experience and to evaluate the student's performance. For their part, students must be willing to undergo any application and interview process required by the employer and should commit to work a specific number of hours per week for a specified time period. As a general rule of thumb an internship involves 200 or more hours of experience. Any arrangements regarding funding/pay related to the internship are to be negotiated by the student and the organization providing the internship opportunity.

**Appropriate Timing for an Internship:**

Experience suggests that the best time to do an internship is sometime during the final five quarters of coursework. Students tend to be well into their major coursework at that stage, but still have the flexibility to adjust coursework plans should the internship experience provide the incentive. Most students try to arrange internships for the summer because it tends to fit into coursework schedules easily. However, an internship can be set up during any quarter. Internships during the school year may require careful academic planning to insure that coursework is completed in a timely fashion.

**Requirements:**

A standard internship is comprised of 200 hours of "on-the-job" experience followed by preparation of a written report of the internship experience and finally an oral presentation to faculty and fellow students. An oral typically includes about 15 minutes for exhibiting visual materials and about 15 minutes for discussion. Students earn a maximum of six credits of AREC 410 Internship. The course is graded Pass/No-Pass.

While there is great flexibility in developing the structure of an internship experience, a basic requirement is that all signatures on the Internship Agreement Form **be obtained prior to the start of an approved internship**. Furthermore, students will not be permitted to complete the oral exam portion of their internship until their written report has been approved by their faculty internship advisor. To ensure time for needed corrections and additions to a written report, it is strongly recommended that internship papers be submitted no less than one week prior to the scheduled oral date. **Unless there are mitigating circumstances, this policy will be strictly enforced.**

Written reports prepared by students following completion of their internships typically range in length from 10 - 15 double-spaced pages with standard margins and font sizes. The overall structure of the report is usually:

- A. General Description of your Internship (with whom, when done, hours/week, individuals involved, description of responsibilities, etc.)
- B. Learning Objectives (taken from your Agreement Form) — includes discussion of initial versus actual.
- C. General Description of Work Performed (overview of tasks performed and the amount of time spent on each task)
- D. Description of Problems Addressed and Processes Followed (were you given major assignments to complete or problems to solve or analyze? Describe assignments/problems, how they were addressed, any obstacles encountered, etc.)
- E. Summary and Conclusions (how did your employer benefit from your internship? What specific things did you learn from the experience? What educational areas do you need to strengthen to be better prepared for career employment?)

You and your faculty supervisor may choose to alter this outline if the internship merits a different reporting structure. The report is expected to be prepared in a concise and well-written manner. Papers that are deficient will be returned for corrections and/or additional material.

The oral presentation will be scheduled after the internship paper is submitted. The faculty advisor may suggest revisions in the report to be made before or after the presentation. The presentation will be approximately 30 minutes in length which includes about 15 minutes for discussion and questions. Typically, the presentation will follow the basic guidelines for the paper. It is expected that students will augment their presentation with the appropriate use of visual aids.

Credits may be spread over two or more terms as necessary. Please work with Tjodie Richardson to plan enrollment for credit either in the term you are doing your internship or in later terms. Please do not enroll for credit in any term prior to the time that your Internship Agreement Form is approved.

#### **Faculty Advisor Responsibility:**

The department has a committee of faculty advisors who oversee the internship program. A member of this committee will meet with the student prior to beginning the internship to discuss the internship/work experience, the paper, and the oral presentation. In conjunction with this process, the advisor may possibly contact the business or agency employing the intern to ensure that the internship can be done and to clarify educational goals. After the agreement form has been reviewed and signed by the on-site individual supervising the internship, and by the student, the faculty advisor signs the agreement on behalf of the department.

At times, faculty members outside the Internship Committee may agree to supervise an internship. The same guidelines as presented here are the foundation for such an agreement. In essence that faculty member becomes an ad hoc member of the AREc Internship Committee until the internship is completed.

After the internship is completed, the advisor may meet with the student to review the internship experience and discuss the focus and organization of the final report. Once the written report is completed, the faculty supervisor will review the report and approve the scheduling of an oral presentation.

The committee of faculty advisors may jointly determine whether additional work is needed on the written report and whether a Pass or No-Pass grade is warranted for the internship.

#### **On-site Supervisor Responsibility:**

The primary responsibility of your on-site supervisor is to ensure that the intern has a worthwhile educational experience. This responsibility represents an additional time and effort commitment that may not be present in a normal employment situation. The student is joining the employer for learning purposes that may or may not exceed the normal training activities of the employer. If the student's immediate supervisor is willing to make this commitment, the internship has an excellent chance for success.

The employer has the right to accept or reject an intern based on information gathered in the application and interview process. Furthermore, if there is cause during the period of the internship, the employer has the right to terminate the internship relationship. If termination occurs before the end of the agreed upon internship period, the employer may be asked to communicate with the faculty advisor regarding the reasons for the termination.

Early termination by the employer may lead to one of two events:

1. If at least 75 percent of the internship is completed, at the discretion of the faculty advisor, the student may be allowed to submit the written report.
2. If termination is for cause, a No-Pass grade will be awarded and the student will be required to complete another internship.

### **Process:**

The following summary outlines the steps required to complete the internship requirement:

1. Locate a business/agency willing to sponsor you as an intern.
2. Initially contact Larry Burt, Bart Eleveld, or Tjodie Richardson. By mutual agreement, you may select any AREc faculty member as your Faculty Advisor.
3. Prepare a draft of the Internship Agreement Form for review by the on-site employee supervising your internship and your faculty advisor.
4. Visit with your faculty advisor to discuss your internship, your paper, and your oral presentation.
5. After any needed modifications are made, the Agreement Form must be signed by the student, the employer on-site internship supervisor, and your faculty advisor.
6. Complete the internship; contact your faculty advisor if there is a need for major changes in duties or plans for the report during the course of your internship.
7. At the end of the internship, contact your faculty advisor again to review your plans for the paper and oral.
8. Complete the written report and submit it to your faculty advisor.
9. After your paper has been approved by your faculty advisor, contact Tjodie Richardson to confirm your oral. While not required, it is appropriate to invite your on-site supervisor to your oral if you wish to do so.
10. A final grade (Pass/No-pass) is assigned after completion of your oral presentation.

### **Questions about internship procedures and policies can be directed to:**

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