

UAF INTERNSHIP Essay Guidelines

INTERNSHIP ESSAY QUESTION:

“Please explain in fewer than 500 words what you hope to be doing and why the internship is germane to your career goals. Include an explanation as to why you are choosing to explore a particular industry or organization and why this exploration is important to you. Describe your preparation for work in this industry or organization and your readiness to make the most of this internship experience. Explain what you are hoping to learn or gain from this opportunity and how it fits with your academic and professional goals. “

HELPFUL TIPS ON HOW TO CONSTRUCT YOUR ESSAY:

Organization

Before you start writing your first draft, think through the organization of your proposal. Organize your statement in thematic sections. (As an exercise, you may wish to title the sections and keep the titles for reference as you write. Remove the section titles in your final draft). The sections may consist of one or more paragraphs. (For a 500 word essay, one paragraph per section may be enough). **The order of the sections is not important, as long as there is a flow in reasoning and style.**

If you are applying to multiple opportunities

If you are applying for more than one kind of internship or research opportunity, focus your essay and application on your first choice, but in order of preference briefly describe your other opportunities (organization, location, position, weeks and hours, application status) and how the other options generally relate to your academic and career goals. Consider one brief paragraph for these details.

Guiding questions

Address the following questions in your essay: **WHAT, HOW, WHY**, as well as **WHEN, WHERE, and WHO**. Follow the essay instructions given in the application, and be sure not to omit any information that is specifically requested.

Title

Name your proposal. Doing so will help you clarify the essence of your project to the committee. A representative title will prepare the evaluator for the subject of the proposal and make it easier for him/her to remember it. Consider key words or phrases that most accurately portray your project and purpose.

Introductory paragraph

This should obviously be the first section of the proposal, although you may want to write it last. You could use this paragraph to briefly introduce and summarize your project. Consider stating the **WHEN** and **WHERE** of your project here. Or, you could begin your essay with a more personal narrative that introduces you, your interests or passions and your broader academic and career learning goals.

Section about the internship(s) you have secured (or have applied for)

Where is this internship located? What is the title of the internship host organization or sponsor? What is your position title? What will you do as a part of this internship? (summarize briefly, don't copy the job description) How many weeks and hours/week do you expect to work? Is the position paid or will partial expenses be covered? Dedicate at least one solid paragraph to this topic.

Section about securing internship

How did you find this internship opportunity? (Don't go into details, just briefly state in a couple of words.) Have you already secured a sponsorship from the internship provider? (Confirmation is not required to compete for funding, but will be needed to receive it.) If not, when will you know about the outcome of your application? This section should be brief, about 1-2 sentences. Consider imbedding these details in your paragraph describing your opportunity or separate as a very brief paragraph.

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Section(s) about your learning goals --this is the “meat” of your proposal!

Learning goals may (or may not) pertain to your:

- 1. Academic Study:** (ideas, concepts, theories related to your academic major, minor, area of concentration, or to the liberal arts experience, short and long terms goals) If you plan on using ideas, research or data gained as part of your summer endeavor in your coursework (independent or otherwise), explain how you will do so.
- 2. Skills:** (oral or written communication, critical thinking, problem solving, research, decision making, leadership, interpersonal relationships, project management, technical, computer, language, particular skills relating to your profession or academic pursuits, etc.)
- 3. Career/Professional Awareness:** (exploration of an industry or field, specific career positions and paths to get there, skills/training required or organizational structure) Conversations –through informal or formal channels such as interviewing or job shadowing with a professional in the field, a professor, or senior manager, is a good way to find out more about a profession that interests you and learn how to gain entry into the field.
- 4. Personal Development:** (clarification of work and personal values, self-confidence, self-awareness, time management, familiarity with a location, cultural experience or appreciation for diversity)
- 5. Professional Aspirations:** What are your short and long term professional aspirations at present? How may this summer endeavor bring you closer to accomplishing your specific professional objectives?
- 6. Other:** feel free to discuss any other advantages of this opportunity, as you see them!

Use your learning goals to support the application essay question. You may have a section or combined sections on the questions raised. Respond in a way that makes sense to you.

Be true to yourself

Reflect on your current values and questions as you consider your future pathway. There is no ‘right’ answer to the essay questions or to your learning goals. The committee wants to hear about the skills, experiences, or questions that need to be explored in order to clarify your future direction. For example, if you are interested in multiple career paths, but are unsure which one to pursue – be specific and include the questions that you would like to have answered from your summer opportunity. Or, if you have skills in a certain area, but lack other experience pertinent to your field, state how your summer opportunity would help you achieve this.

REMEMBER:

The first draft is rarely the best draft. Even the most experienced grant writers and researchers rewrite their proposals. Be sure to get feedback on your proposal, preferably both from a faculty mentor and peers. CDC advisors and SAW mentors are also available to help you.

Writing Style and Structure:

Your writing need not be fancy, beautiful or elegant. This is not an exercise in creative writing. You should also stay away from jargon. Do not try to be funny or folksy. Your goal is not to entertain. Do make sure that your writing is grammatically correct and your spelling is flawless. Aim for **clarity** and **good organization** – the marks of every great proposal!

Your Faculty Recommender:

Your recommender should see a draft of your proposal before writing a letter of support on your behalf. Make sure you give them adequate notice.

GOOD LUCK!