

MOUNT HOLYOKE.
CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Phone 413-538-2080 / Fax 413-538-2081 / Email CDC@mtholyoke.edu
www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/careers

Guide to Developing an Internship into an Independent Study

- I. Meaning of Internship for Academic Credit;
- II. Items a student should consider when pursuing her internship and developing an independent study
- III. Campus Resources to consult
- IV. FAQs

I. Internship for Academic Credit

Though the educational policies of Mount Holyoke and its peer institutions preclude the award of academic credit for internships, the experience gained by student internships can ultimately relate to credit bearing work through independent study projects.

An independent study allows a student to pursue independent and original work on a special project with the assistance of a faculty sponsor. In most departments, this may be undertaken as course number 295 or 395, depending on the level of work undertaken and the previous preparation of the student. Undertaking an independent study project involves making plans with an instructor and obtaining her or his signature on the course registration card, as well as the signature of the department chair and the academic adviser. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors are eligible for independent study. A maximum of 8 credits of independent study may be taken in the sophomore and junior years. Seniors meeting certain standards may submit their projects for consideration for a degree with honors. A maximum of 16 credits of independent study or honors work may be counted toward the 128 credits required for graduation.

Independent work with a practicum component in a professional or volunteer setting, and a substantive academic component supervised by a Mount Holyoke faculty sponsor, may be designated 295 Practicum or 395 Practicum. When the practicum takes place during a summer or January, the bulk of the credit-bearing work will normally take place during the following semester. Practicum designation ordinarily requires consultation with a faculty sponsor prior to commencement of the practicum. Independent work with a practicum component is governed by the same policies as all other independent work.

Courses with practicum components bearing the word Practicum in their title may qualify *international* students with an *F-1 visa* for *Curricular Practical Training (CPT)*. Students seeking CPT should contact the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives, formerly known as CGI. ***You will also find this information in the Mount Holyoke College Bulletin & Course catalogue.***

II. Things to consider

Here are some things to consider when thinking about developing your internship experience into an independent study. Feel free to write down ideas that come to mind from thinking this through with a Career Counselor, Peer Career Advisor, or Faculty Sponsor. **Good Luck!**

(1) Why are you pursuing this internship experience? (e.g. what do you hope to learn about yourself, choosing a major, possible career field, etc?)

(2) What kind of independent study do you want to develop: one that is research based, project based, or both. Write an independent study proposal. Your proposal should include requirements for written work (e.g. How many papers you will write, what type of papers you will write, etc.), when meetings will take place with your faculty sponsor(s), seminars you may attend, or other requirements included in your proposal **and** ready to discuss with your faculty sponsor. You can also develop your proposal with your faculty sponsor(s).

(3) Research the field in which you are interested in doing an internship to learn what kind of academic endeavor you may be able to pursue after your internship is complete.

(4) Find a faculty sponsor for your independent study. Once again, some faculty are more responsive than others and you may need to approach a few to find one who will sponsor your activity. Don't let it discourage you if not everyone you talk to is supportive of this process. This is an optional activity for faculty so you may need to be **persistent** in order to find a faculty sponsor. When you find her/him, talk to your sponsor about your internship and independent study interest.

Some recommendations for finding a faculty sponsor include:

- Approach someone you have had a class with. •
- Ask friends for recommendations of professors they have had. Word of mouth is valuable-ask around. Some sponsors may be willing to point you in the right direction, but not all. They don't have to, so ask nicely!
- Go to office hours and try your luck.

(5) Talk to your internship sponsor about your independent study to learn if they are interested in supporting your research and/or project.

(6) Register for an independent study, 295 or 395.

(7) Enjoy your internship! *Remember* to keep a journal of your experiences to keep track of what you have learned, enjoyed, not enjoyed, contributed, advice from colleagues/supervisor, etc. When you share your experiences with your faculty advisor, employers, family and friends, your journal will help you remember your experience. You will also have lots of detailed responsibilities and projects that you may be able to reflect on your resume!

III. Campus Resources

- **Career Development Center** - located next to the Health Center and Torrey Hall.

Hours during academic year

Monday & Friday 8:30-5:00 p.m. and Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-8:00 p.m.

Contact us:

Email: cdc@mtholyoke.edu
Phone: (413) 538.2080
Fax: (413) 538-2081
Website: www.mtholyoke.edu/go/cdc

- **McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives** - located in Porter Hall on the first floor. Take a left when you enter the building.

Hours:

Sept.- mid-May: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Sept - mid-May)
May - mid-August: 8:30am to 4:00 p.m.

Contact us:

E-mail: global@mtholyoke.edu
Phone: (413) 538-2070 on-campus: ext 2072 Fax: (413) 538-3385
Website: www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/programs/global

- **Your Faculty Advisor**

- **Academic Advising**

IV. FAQs

Q. If I do not have any transcript notation for my internship experience, does this mean that my internship was not substantive or meaningful?

A. *Absolutely not! The skills you gain and learn during your internship are what make your experience substantive, including not enjoying your experience. To articulate your internship experience on your resume is very important. Come to a Resume and Cover Letter workshop at the CDC to learn how.*

Q. I am having difficulty writing my independent study proposal. Who do I talk to?

A. *The CDC, your faculty advisor and the academic advising offices are all great resources to consult.*

Q. How do I find internships of interest to me?

A. *Utilize these MHC resources in your internship search:*

- **Centers and Departments:** *Multiple pre-arranged internship and research opportunities are coordinated by various centers and departments on campus. These opportunities are sponsored by the Center for the Environment, McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives, the Science Department and the Dean's office. For a complete list of opportunities, most of which are funded, visit the Universal Application and search by major or areas of interest: www.mtholyoke.edu/go/internships-research Go to: Funding Resources, Universal Application.*
- **CDC LyonNet** – *The CDC has hundreds of internship opportunities which are listed in LyonNet. LyonNet was created for and is used exclusively by MHC students. Employers and alumnae post opportunities to LyonNet daily to specifically recruit MHC students and some employers interview MHC students on campus for these opportunities.*
- **CDC Student Internship Reports and Opportunities:** *The CDC Library includes a collection a binders of Student Reports on prior internship or research experiences organized by industry and time period (summer or J-term). Consider pursuing an employer with whom a former MHC student has interned before to determine if an opportunity exists or if the employer would be interested in creating an opportunity with you in the future.*
- **McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives:** *For international internships, browse the McCulloch Center website and visit the McCulloch Center in person to use their library resources.*

Q. How do I talk to my potential internship sponsor about my interest to pursue an independent study?

A. *First write your independent study proposal. The language you use to describe your learning/research goals is the same language you may reflect to your potential internship sponsor. If you need further assistance in negotiating this conversation, make a 30-min appointment or a 15-min drop-in appointment with a counselor at the CDC.*

Q. Are there internship requirements?

A. *In order to have a qualified internship experience, students are required to complete a minimum of 8 hours per day and a minimum of 240 hours for a summer experience; a minimum of 120 hours for a semester experience and a minimum of 80 hours January (J-Term) experience. An internship meeting this minimum recommendation fosters a learning environment and allows you to get a good perspective on a particular industry and organization's work/lifestyle culture. For more information, visit the CDC website and click on Internships.*

Q. How do I register my internship?

A. Go to www.mtholyoke.edu/go/internship-research.register and fill out the Internship Network Enrollment Form

Q. If I don't get an independent study credit, is my internship still worthwhile?

A. *Your internship is absolutely worthwhile! The skills you gain and learn during your internship are what make your experience substantive, including not having an enjoyable experience. Developing your internship into an independent study takes commitment, time and planning. An independent study requires the same attention you would devote to an MHC course.*

Q. What if I am doing an internship that requires a letter from Mount Holyoke College stating that I will receive academic credit for my internship?

A. *The Career Development Center can furnish you will a letter that may satisfy the needs of the internship program. Please contact Jenny Watermill at the Career Development Center for a copy of this letter.*