

MOUNT HOLYOKE.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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www.mtholyoke.edu/go/cdc

*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

Transcript notation has been phased out as of Summer 2006. Beginning the academic year 2006-2007, the Career Development Center encourages all students to consider developing an independent study relevant to her internship experience.

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 8:30-5:00pm and Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-8:00pm

Contact us:

Email: cdc@mtholyoke.edu

Phone: (413) 538.2080 on-campus: ext 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: What if I have received transcript notation for past internships, how do I explain this to my future employer?

A: Share with your future employer the shift in the internship program. If you are looking for Mount Holyoke College to officially recognize your internship experience, register your internship with the Career Development Center (CDC).

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. If 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. For domestic internships, visit the CDC website. Go to the Internships section, then select "search." You will find a wealth of resources to browse. You will also find additional information by visiting the CDC website, and then select "summer opportunities." These resources are organized by major. For international internships, visit the CGI website. Go to the Internships section, then select "search." Also visit the CDC or CGI in person to use 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. The CDC recommends that a summer internship is a minimum of 6 weeks and 240 hours. 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. You can download the forms you need by going to the CDC webpage, select Internships from the left hand navigation menu, then "register."

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 Kathy Kirby at the Career Development Center for a copy of this letter.