

Career Development Center

Summer Internship/Research Guide

Internships and Research: Academic Credit & Independent Study

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- Nexus: Curriculum to Career
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INTERNSHIP/RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT

Though the educational policies of Mount Holyoke and its peer institutions preclude the award of academic credit for internships/research, the experience gained by student internships/research can relate to credit bearing work through the following ways:

- The [Nexus: Curriculum to Career Program](#)
- The fall 2 credit course COLL 211 “Reflecting Back: Connecting Internship and Research to your Liberal Arts Education”. This course is part of the Nexus Program, but is open to any student returning from an internship or research project. COLL 211 will satisfy the CPT (Curricular Practical Training) credit requirement.
- Pursuit of a 2 credit independent study project (295P or 395P), inspired by and relating to the internship or research project. This is an option only when there is a substantial academic component supervised by a Mount Holyoke faculty member. The bulk of the credit-bearing work will normally take place during the semester following the internship/research experience. This independent study project will satisfy the CPT (Curricular Practical Training) credit requirement.

Some employers require internship applicants to submit a letter verifying that Mount Holyoke College will award you credit for your internship experience. There are two options for submitting such a letter:

- If you are planning on participating in Nexus, COLL 211 or doing an independent study based on your internship experience, email Janice Kane, Student Employment & Internships Coordinator, at jkane@mtholyoke.edu, and request that a letter be sent to the employer explaining the policy and credit options as described above. Include the following information:
 - your full name
 - the organization name, address and contact name
 - which credit bearing option, related to your internship, you are planning on completing or have completed
- If you have already obtained a faculty advisor for an independent study project, your advisor can complete the Verification of Academic Credit for Internship, found at https://www.mtholyoke.edu/cdc/guides_forms_and_how_tos, and send it directly to your internship organization. Please also send a copy of the completed letter to Janice Kane at the Career Development Center.

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NEXUS: CURRICULUM TO CAREER

Mount Holyoke's Nexus: Curriculum to Career program enables students to meaningfully link their liberal arts education with their career goals. Nexus gives students a focused, intentional way to connect their academic work with valuable professional experience beyond the gates, through internships, research projects, and summer employment.

A Nexus minor consists of 16 academic credits. Requirements include:

- three academic courses, chosen from a faculty-approved list
- an internship, research project, or summer job
- one pre-experience course (or a suitable substitute) and one 2 credit post-experience course (COLL211), which includes a public presentation at the annual LEAP (Learning from Application) Symposium

Go to <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/nexus/index.html> for more details on the Nexus Program, including program requirements and a list of approved Nexus tracks.

COLL 211: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The two credit Nexus course, COLL 211 "Reflecting Back: Connecting Internship and Research to your Liberal Arts Education" is for students returning from summer internships and research projects. Using their academic studies, students will develop a critical analysis of their summer experience and its larger organizational setting, identify and discuss transferable skills, develop networks for future opportunities, and reflect on long-term career goals. Each student will present at the fall LEAP Symposium in October. Registration for this course takes place in April and the class is held the following September and October. COLL 211 is required for the Nexus minor but open to all students.

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295P OR 395P: INDEPENDENT STUDY

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. ***You will also find this information in the Mount Holyoke College Bulletin & Course catalogue.***

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Independent Study: 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. Be ready to discuss the components with your faculty sponsor. You can also develop your proposal with your faculty sponsor(s).

(3) Research the internship/research field of your choice to learn what kind of academic or professional endeavor you may be able to pursue after your internship is complete.

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(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 project. Don't be discouraged if not everyone you talk with is supportive of this process. This is an optional activity for faculty, so you may need to be **persistent** and talk with several people in order to find the best faculty sponsor match. When you find her/him, talk to your sponsor about your internship and independent study interests.

Some recommendations for finding a faculty sponsor include:

- Approach someone you have had a class with.
- Ask friends or students in the intern/research network (at CDC) for recommendations of professors they have had in your field of interest. Word of mouth is valuable-ask around. Some faculty sponsors may be willing to point you in the right direction, but not all. They don't have to, so ask nicely!
- Go to faculty 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 as a mentor.

(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 will want to reference in your resume! Also keep notes of the contact information of people you meet or resources during your internship. These contacts may be extremely valuable to support your senior thesis and future job/internship leads.

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CAMPUS RESOURCES

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

Advisors:

Multiple CDC advisors are available. All advisors offer internship and career support.
Jenny Watermill, Associate Director, Internships & Student Employment

Hours

Academic Year: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Summer: Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

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.

Advisors:

Kirk Lange, Director of International Experiential Learning
Jenny Medina, Immigration Specialist

Hours:

Academic Year: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Summer: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

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**

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FAQS

Q. If my internship is not noted on my transcript, 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. Articulating your internship or research project experience on your resume is very important and this, not your transcript, is the primary resource employers, organizations, and mentors use to learn about your experience. 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 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 particular hours/duration required for an internship project?

A. *No, there are no particular hours or weeks required by MHC for an internship or research project. However, we encourage you to pursue an opportunity that is substantial in quality and time commitment. A minimum of 8 hours per day and of 240 hours for a summer experience; 120 hours for a semester experience and 80 hours January (J-Term) experience is ideal. An internship meeting this time commitment fosters a substantial learning opportunity 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 get connected with other interns, research students, and internship resources?

A. *Join the Intern/Research Network. Go to the internship section of the CDC website at <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/cdc/join-intern-network> and fill out the Intern Network Enrollment Form*

Q. If I don't get academic 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, and it's not for everybody. An independent study requires the same attention you would devote to an MHC course.*