



## Internship Program Guidelines

### Grand Valley State University, Department of History

#### **Description:**

Internships provide opportunities for students to enhance their degrees by engaging history-related fields. They allow interns to sample career options, gain valuable hands-on experiences, and develop employment and professional networking opportunities. Internships take place in a range of sites in and outside the university in museums, historical societies, libraries and archives, heritage tourism sites, historic preservation organizations, historical consulting firms, national and regional parks, and urban revitalization organizations, as well as in oral history and documentary film projects. Internship options are not limited to these sites excepting that they must involve a historical topic or skills.

Each intern must have a clearly designed project that they are capable of completing by the end of the internship. The nature of the project and the student's responsibilities are worked out between the internship candidate and the host institution and approved by the department internship coordinator before the internship commences and is defined in an internship contract. In some cases, the organization will recommend a project that meets its immediate needs, and in others the intern and the organization may develop a project that is mutually beneficial. In all cases the internship must produce work of value to the organization while also providing the student a meaningful learning experience, preferably one that is indicative of the day-to-day functions in that organization.

As well as completing the work on the project, maintaining a weekly journal, and arranging for the submission of the institution's assessment of his/her work, the student will prepare a reflective exit report of between 1500 and 2400 words that assesses the student's internship experience.

**Note:** Internships can be taken for 1-3 credits as an HST-490 as a degree elective, or simply for experience either option provides valuable opportunities.

#### **Eligibility requirements:**

1. Students should be preferably second-year and above.
2. Students must be a History/SST major or minor
3. Students should have a 2.25 overall grade point average and a 3.0 in their History/SST course work.

**Procedures to receive HST-490 credit:**

Internships are arranged for 3 credit hours on a Credit/No Credit basis and require an average 10-20 hours (120 hours total) of service over the course of 12 weeks during a semester. This allows the student to complete a substantial project and to finish that work prior to entering the last phase of the semester and final examinations.

**Identifying and Obtaining a History-Related Internship:**

In most cases it is best to begin looking for internship possibilities at least one semester prior to the semester in which the internship would begin.

Identify possible internship opportunities of interest to you. This process involves identifying possible host institutions or organizations and the historical periods and material in which they specialize as well as thinking about the kind of projects that interest you. The department website has a partial listing of internships and contact information for these positions. You must also meet with the history department internship coordinator as part of the process.

Working with the host institution and the faculty advisor, the student completes the GVSU History Internship Contract. This process includes identifying the supervising person at the host institution, describing the project and the intern's responsibilities, and outlining the proposed timetable.

Contact the appropriate person at the institution or organization you have selected. A formal letter in which you state your interests and objectives is required the inquiry letter should also include a resume. It is advisable to do some background research before writing the letter so that you can appear knowledgeable about the institutions mission—for example, if you are hoping to intern at a museum, visit before writing your letter.

The GVSU Career Center has an excellent guide to help:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/resume-guide-178.htm>

And the internship coordinator is also here to assist you with the specifics.

If the institution is interested in you as a possible intern, there will almost certainly be a meeting between you and the project supervisor. Come to the meeting prepared to listen to ideas the project supervisor has for your internship project and to offer ideas of your own about what you would like to get from the experience. Make sure you discuss details such as hours of work, supervision, how to get help, travel, expectations for the quality and format of your work, and potential deadlines for project(s).



Practical issues such as parking, access to equipment and grounds, and the like are usually left until after the internship is offered.

The GVSU Career Center has some recommendations for this process:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/interviewing-162.htm>

And, again, the internship coordinator is here to assist you along with your advisor.

If you have agreed with the institution on an internship project, you should also complete the project description section of the GVSU History Internship Contract and have the project supervisor sign it (electronically is fine as well). That form is then presented to the internship coordinator or faculty advisor for their signature and then keeps it on file with the department.

Upon submission of the completed GVSU Internship Contract, enter Banner to request the permit to register for HST-490 at the appropriate credit level. Upon receiving the permit, please register as soon as possible.

#### Checklist:

1. Identify sites – meet with internship coordinator
2. Develop resume, cover letter, and apply to positions
3. Complete GVSU Internship Contract
4. Register for HST-490 – request permit through Banner

#### **Evaluation and Grading Policies:**

Assessment of the internship comes

1. Successful completion of the internship with affirmative evaluation by organization supervisor.
2. Regular entries in the Weekly Experience Journal through Blackboard.
3. Submission of the Exit Report to the internship coordinator / faculty advisor.

#### **Supervisor Evaluation Letter**

The organization supervisor must provide the internship coordinator with a letter evaluating the student's performance in the internship upon completion of the semester, which will facilitate the submission final assignment of a Credit / No Credit grade. This letter is due no later than the final day of classes for the internship semester.



### **Weekly Experience Journal**

The intern will keep a weekly journal of activities and questions and thoughts that arise during the course of the internship on the HST-490 page using a shared Google Doc through an embedded link. The objective is to have students reflect upon their experiences, to offer their perspective on them, and to assist in crafting the Exit Report at the completion of the internship. The journal also encourages the intern to make connections between the work they are doing and their future goals. The length of these entries can range from a couple of paragraphs to roughly a page. Variations are expected given the range of activities in an internship.

Journal entries should address four major topics as relevant:

1. Specific experience
2. Reflection/Observation
3. Academic concept
4. Future Application

An excellent recommendation of how to write the journal entries can be found at:

<https://willamette.edu/offices/careers/pdf/journal-guidelines.pdf>

It is not expected that each week would have a relevant experience for each category, and variations are expected.

### **Exit Report**

The intern will submit a reflective Exit Report that provides an in-depth evaluation of the internship and reflections on your experiences. Your final report on your internship should contain the following sections:

- A discussion of the institution at which the project was conducted. This should include details about its size, activities, and mission.
- A detailed description of the internship project which is to include an overview, a discussion of the material on which you were working, the day-to-day activities you carried out, the project's relationship to the institution's mission.
- A discussion of the benefits you gained from the internship project: skills, inside look at an institution in operation, contacts, historical knowledge, etc. It may be helpful to compare your expectations of the internship with the reality of your experience.
- An assessment of the internship experience overall: what were the most valuable skills or experiences? What were unexpected challenges, and how did you adapt to them? What would you do differently if you could do this over again? What advice would you



give to another student interested in interning with this organization? What advice would give the organization on working with future interns?

Only the GVSU internship coordinator (and faculty advisor if different) will read the report, so the student should feel free to be as candid as possible about what worked and what did not.

#### Exit Report Format:

5-8 pages in length, double-space, with a cover page and your name. This will be a digital file, submitted through Blackboard. Please also include either samples of the kinds of work you created or, if appropriate, the project itself.

#### Grade Submission

The student will receive a Credit / No Credit grade depending on the quality of the report and supporting materials and the evaluation provided by the organization supervisor upon completion of the internship.

In no case will a Credit grade be assigned if the organization supervisor is dissatisfied with the quality of the intern's work. In the event that the quality of the intern's work is not reflected in the organizations supervisor's evaluation letter, the GVSU internship coordinator and/or faculty advisor will discuss the matter with the supervisor until some understanding is reached.

In the event that extenuating circumstances arise after an internship commences, the intern must act in accordance with official University policies regarding dropping a course. If the organization or project head and the intern agree that a project may be postponed, the student may request Incomplete status from the internship faculty advisor.

#### **Supervision and Responsibilities:**

##### 1. Organization Internship Supervisor Responsibilities

The supervisor must be in a position to oversee the project the student is pursuing. They must be in a position to know the organization's operation sufficiently to show the student how the organization operates. If possible, the supervisor should acquaint the student with the organization's functions beyond the individual project because such knowledge will help to situate the student within the organization.



The organization should in all cases provide the student with the resources, supplies, workspace, and direction necessary to complete the project(s). The organization must be responsible for funding any travel relating to the internship, if applicable.

The organization supervisor is expected and should feel free to contact the GVSU internship faculty advisor at any time if problems arise.

The organization supervisor must provide the internship coordinator with a letter evaluating the student's performance in the internship upon completion of the semester, which will facilitate the submission final assignment of a Credit / No Credit grade. This letter is due no later than the final day of classes for the internship semester.

## 2. GVSU Internship Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

The internship faculty advisor will be familiar with the organization during the course of the internship if possible. Meetings with the organization supervisor, intern, and faculty advisor may be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

The internship faculty advisor will consult the organization or project head during the semester to ascertain the student's progress.

The internship faculty advisor will be available to the intern during regular business hours, or by appointment.

The internship coordinator (or faculty advisor if different) will retain the GVSU Internship Contract and the Exit Report within the department files.

## 3. Intern Responsibilities

The intern is responsible for seeing that the internship is approved for GVSU credit and that the Internship Contract and description are submitted to the internship coordinator.

The intern must provide their own transportation to/from the site of the internship.

The intern is responsible for arranging any visits by the GVSU internship faculty advisor.

Interns become, in effect, employees during the internship. As such, they are subject to any organization policies regarding the conduct of their work.



If the organization or project head makes unreasonable or excessive demands beyond the ordinary variations in work time that often accompany public history-related organizations and projects, it is the intern's responsibility to bring the matter to the attention of the GVSU internship coordinator.

#### GVSU Title IX Statement

Grand Valley State University is committed to providing a safe and enriching internship experience. If, however, you experience any type of sexual misconduct, sexual or gender-based harassment, or discrimination in your internship, you are strongly encouraged to take action and seek support. Please report the incident to your internship coordinator and/or directly to the Title IX Coordinator, Theresa Rowland ([rowlanth@gvsu.edu](mailto:rowlanth@gvsu.edu)), who can be reached at 616-331-9530. You may also submit an on-line complaint by clicking on this link:

[https://gvsutix-gme-advocate.symplicity.com/titleix\\_report/index.php/pid551032?](https://gvsutix-gme-advocate.symplicity.com/titleix_report/index.php/pid551032?)