

# Undergraduate Internship Handbook



School of Sustainability  
800 S. Cady Mall  
Tempe, AZ 85287-5402  
Fax: (480) 727-9902  
Phone: (480) 965-5487  
Email: [sada.gilbert@asu.edu](mailto:sada.gilbert@asu.edu)

## **Internship Program Overview**

### **What is an internship?**

An internship is a planned learning experience that allows students to take the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom and apply them in a work setting. Internships offer students the opportunity to learn from professionals and explore potential career options. At the School of Sustainability, internships for credit are combined with academic coursework that encourages critical reflection on the internship experience.

### **Does the School of Sustainability require internships?**

No. A capstone experience is required and many students choose to do an internship for their capstone experience, but an internship is not the only option. Your advisor or the internship coordinator can assist you in determining if an internship is the best option for you. You can also do an internship for elective credit.

### **How does an internship differ from a job?**

An internship differs from a job in that a job has no obligation to provide learning opportunities. As an employee of a company, you are expected to perform tasks for monetary compensation, often within a limited scope of the company's mission. An employer has no obligation to expose employees to other departments, key leaders within the company, or any other tasks that go beyond the written job description. Job tasks are completed for the benefit of the company. Internships tasks are completed for the benefit of the intern.

Employers that partner with the School of Sustainability Internship Program agree to follow clear guidelines that will permit students to be exposed to a variety of learning opportunities that will benefit the student's academic career. Employers in the Internship Program understand that this is intended to be a learning experience for the School of Sustainability students and internships are designed accordingly.

### **Are internships paid?**

While a stipend is not specifically required, the School of Sustainability encourages employers to offer paid internships. Care is taken to ensure that if an internship is unpaid, it falls clearly within the legal guidelines that make it a learning experience and not a job. Employers disclose the amount of compensation to the School of Sustainability, but the amount is at the employer's discretion and the school does not have a minimum pay scale.

## **How to find an internship**

There is more than one way to find an internship. The School of Sustainability does partner with local companies and organizations, but you are not limited to those. If you do find an internship on your own, it is important to inform the internship coordinator.

- Internship list on the School of Sustainability Internships page on LinkedIn (or email internship coordinator)
- Company web sites
- ASU Sun Devil Career Link
- Networking

Often, the first step is contact the internship coordinator to schedule an appointment. At that time, you can discuss what your options are, get some advice on putting your best foot forward in the interview process, and learn more about the internship course.

## **What to do when you find an internship**

It is important to contact the School of Sustainability internship coordinator as soon as you begin searching for an internship for credit. Often there are important guidelines or deadlines that must be followed in order to approve your internship for credit. The internship coordinator will only grant permission to enroll in an internship course, which is required for credit, if all guidelines have been met.

## **SOS 484 – Internship course**

Even though an internship is a real world learning experience, it is also an academic course. You cannot receive credit without enrolling in SOS 484. Assignments and classroom attendance requirements vary, depending on the semester and the section. The internship coordinator can answer any questions you have about SOS 484.

## **Objectives of the Internship Program**

As a student in the School of Sustainability Internship Program, it is expected that you will:

- Enhance academic learning in a professional environment
- Build communication, teamwork, and leadership skills necessary for a successful career in sustainability
- Network with industry professionals
- Gain information to assist you in determining a post-graduation career path

## Internship Participants

**Student:** Responsible for locating the internship opportunity, with or without university resources, ensures that all necessary forms are completed and turned in prior to the internship's start date, and completes SOS 484.

**Internship Coordinator:** Develops partnerships with employers, advises students on internship opportunities, serves as a liaison between the employer, the student, and the university, teaches the internship, and awards the grade for the internship class.

**Site Supervisor:** Plans projects and learning outcomes with the student, serves as point of contact for the student and internship coordinator, and completes mid-term and final evaluations of the intern's performance.

## Internship Guidelines: Non-Capstone

SOS students are permitted to request approval for internships for academic credit outside of the capstone experience. A capstone experience is still required.

- **Academic Standing**: Students must be in good academic standing with a major GPA of 2.5 or better. (*Students following the 2011 major map will be required to have a 3.0*).
- **Approval**: All internships must be approved **before** the student begins the internship. To ensure that the internship benefits the student's academic growth, the suitability of the proposed internship activities must be approved by the internship coordinator.
- **Credit Hours**: Students will receive academic credit for internships according to the following contact hour schedule:

Academic Credit	Required Contact Hours
1 credit	45 hours
2 credits	90 hours
3 credits	135 hours

- **Grades:** All internship courses are graded on the A – E scale. The elective internship is an online course.
- **Compensation:** Students may agree to internships either with or without compensation, although the internship coordinator will only approve unpaid internships that are clearly learning experiences that will benefit the intern.

## Internship Guidelines: Capstone

SOS students are required to complete a capstone experience prior to graduation, ideally in their senior year. An internship is one of the acceptable capstone options. Students choosing an internship for their capstone option are required to enroll in the SOS 484 capstone course.

- **Academic Standing:** Students must be in good academic standing with a major GPA of 2.5 or better (3.0 for students following the 2011 major map), and have completed at least 9 hours of 300-level SOS Challenge/Track area coursework.
- **Approval:** All capstone internships must be approved **before** the student begins the internship. To ensure that the internship benefits the student's academic growth, the suitability of the proposed internship activities must be approved by the internship coordinator and/or faculty.
- **Credit Hours:** Students are required to work at least 135 hours over the course of the semester. *Note: the requirements are the same for the 8-week summer session.*
- **Grades:** All internship courses are graded on the A – E scale. Classroom attendance is required, along with reflective journaling, a final project, and other coursework that may be assigned by the instructor. The work performance of interns will also be evaluated by the site supervisor, although it not factored into the final grade. *Note: the summer course is on-line.*
- **Compensation:** Students may agree to internships either with or without compensation, although the internship coordinator will only approve unpaid internships that are clearly learning experiences that will benefit the intern.

## Internship Process

<b>Step 1</b>	Meet with internship coordinator to review the internship program requirements and to answer any questions you have regarding internships. Internships must be approved and all forms completed prior to beginning the internship, so it is recommended that you meet with the internship coordinator the semester <u>before</u> you plan to complete an internship.
<b>Step 2</b>	Identify internship opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Company web sites</li><li>• Internship list available from the School of Sustainability Internships page on LinkedIn (or email internship coordinator).</li><li>• ASU Sun Devil Career Link</li><li>• Networking</li></ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	Complete the internship employer's process for obtaining the internship.
<b>Step 4</b>	Inform the SOS internship coordinator that you have accepted an internship, who will then give you the necessary enrollment documents.
<b>Step 5</b>	Ensure that all enrollment documents provided to you are completed and signed, and then return them to the internship coordinator.
<b>Step 6</b>	Enroll in the appropriate internship course (capstone or non-capstone) and fulfill all requirements that are outlined in the class syllabus.