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**Part I: Overview of Internship Program**

This handbook serves as a guide for School of Sustainability (SOS) undergraduate students who are participating in the School of Sustainability Internship Program. The handbook outlines the requirements, processes, and expectations of the Internship Program. This handbook should be an initial resource for questions about the program, but students are also encouraged to consult with the internship coordinator on a regular basis.

**School of Sustainability Internship Definition**

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 professional work setting. Internships offer students the opportunity to learn from professionals in the field 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. The School of Sustainability screens each internship carefully to monitor for a rich experience that directly focuses on an area of sustainability.

Learning Objectives for the School of Sustainability Internship Program:

- 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 in determining a post-graduation career path.

**Does the School of Sustainability Require Internships?**

Students in catalog year 2012 and after are required to complete an internship as part of their Capstone requirements.

Students with catalog year of 2011 and earlier have the choice to complete an internship, workshop, or research for their Capstone requirement.

All School of Sustainability students are encouraged to complete at least one internship; many choose to do more.
Resources for finding an Internship

There are many ways to find an outstanding sustainability internship. The School of Sustainability partners with local companies and organizations, but students are not limited to those. Students may find their own internship, providing they inform the internship coordinator well in advance in order to have the experience evaluated for SOS academic credit.

All School of Sustainability-approved internships are posted on SustainabilityConnect.

Students may also find an internship through the following resources:

- ASU Sun Devil Career Link
- ASU Career Services Internship Resources
- Other Sustainability job boards and online resources
- Company websites
- Networking

Guidelines for Successful Internships

The School of Sustainability has identified certain baseline criteria to use when evaluating internships as SOS-approved experiences. These include:

- Relevant experience and direct connection to sustainability issues.
- Regular access to a supervisor or a mentor who can give the intern feedback and who can dedicate time and resources to the intern.
- A balanced, structured experience allowing students to engage in larger, meaningful projects, and day-to-day workplace activities with minimal, if any, routine clerical work.
- Minimal – at most less than 5% – of overall internship responsibilities related to sales, cold-calling, or generating business for the internship organization.
- Exposure to opportunities that build on their academic learning, enhance communication and interpersonal skills, and meet key people.
- The opportunity to learn skills that can be applied in a variety of work environments (transferrable skills).
• Interns should have a chance to get to know other professionals in related fields, either in the organization or through other structured opportunities.

• A minimum length of at least a semester (15 weeks) long so students are exposed to more than just a single project and become more embedded in the organization. During the summer, internships must be at least 8 weeks in length; the recommended summer length is 10 weeks.

• Interns need to complete a minimum of 135 hours. This is about 9 hours a week for a 15 week internship.

What We Will Not Approve

With rare exceptions, we do not approve experiences as internships if they are:

• Sales-focused experiences.
  o The School does not permit positions which involve door to door solicitation. This policy is intended to promote safety and security.

• Experiences with organizations that have existed for fewer than five years.

• Experiences supervised by family members, recent graduates or current students at any academic level.

• Experiences focused on manual labor (for example: working on a farm doing the work of weeding, planting, etc.).

• Unpaid internships at for-profit companies.

• 100% virtual internships (the “in-person” component to the internship is critical).

Compensation Policy

While payment is not specifically required, the School of Sustainability encourages employers to offer paid internships whenever possible.

The expectation is that for-profit or private companies will provide financial compensation for an intern, based on the criteria outlined by the Department of Labor’s Fair Labor Standards Act pertaining to internships. Please note that most competitive internships pay between $12 – 15 an hour.
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, aside from following federal minimum wage standards.

Government and non-profit agencies are not necessarily held to FLSA requirements, but are still expected by the School of Sustainability to provide a learning experience that benefits the intern. Care must be 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.

In summary:

- Students may choose to accept paid or unpaid internships
- Unpaid opportunities at for-profit companies will not be approved for credit

**Internship Program Participant Roles:**

**Student**

The School of Sustainability student is responsible for locating and securing the internship opportunity with or without university resources, ensuring that all necessary forms are completed and turned in to the internship coordinator and/or site supervisor prior to the internship’s start date, representing ASU and SOS in a professional manner, and completing the academic coursework.

**Internship Coordinator**

The School of Sustainability internship coordinator develops partnerships with organizations and reviews proposals for rightness of fit in the internship program. The internship coordinator advises students on internship opportunities, capstone options, other real-world experiences and works with students to ensure that they are working the appropriate option into their academic plan of study. The internship coordinator serves as a liaison between the employer, student, the School of Sustainability and Arizona State University. The internship coordinator teaches/facilitates the academic/course components of internship and awards grades for the internship classes.

**Internship Site Supervisor**

The supervisor serves as the point of contact for the internship host organization, and provides supervision and mentorship in the workplace. The site supervisor plans projects and learning outcomes in conjunction with the internship coordinator and intern. The supervisor verifies hours worked and completes mid-term and final evaluations of the intern’s performance for the SOS internship course.
Part Two: Getting Started

Step by step instructions for obtaining an internship and registering for credit

1. Review internships on SustainabilityConnect and other resources. Think about what kinds of internships you are most interested in (at least 3 months prior to start of semester).

2. Update your resume. Make sure it is in a professional format and content is both current and relevant for each internship you are applying for. For resume review, contact Internship Coordinator and/or utilize ASU Career Services Resume Dropbox resource.

3. Start applying for internships. If internship is not already approved via SustainabilityConnect, send job description to Internship Coordinator for review and approval.

4. Work directly with internship provider on application and interview process. Make sure to adequately prepare for interview (thoroughly research organization, be prepared to talk about your experience and why you are a good fit for the position).

5. Accept desired internship and notify Internship Coordinator.

6. Complete required registration paperwork with internship supervisor. Submit paperwork to Internship Coordinator (at least 2 weeks prior to start of semester).

7. Register for SOS 484 course upon clearance from Internship Coordinator.

8. Begin internship and start SOS 484 coursework (first week of ASU semester).
Part Three: School of Sustainability Internship Credit

Even though an internship is a real world learning experience, it is also an academic course.

Students cannot receive credit for an internship without enrolling in SOS 484. Students must be enrolled in the class at the same time the internship is taking place. The School of Sustainability does not award retroactive internship credit.

There are two internship course sections: SOS 484: Elective (3 credits) and SOS 484: Capstone (4 credits). See below for further details on each section.

Undergraduate Elective Internship (SOS 484 Elective, 3 credits)

SOS 484 Elective credit is an excellent opportunity for sophomores and juniors to receive internship credit.

Many students need an upper division SOS elective course, this credit can fulfill that requirement (review DARS or check with an advisor for specifics).

SOS 484 Elective credit does not fulfill the capstone internship requirement, a capstone internship is still required for students in 2012 and later catalog years.

Academic Standing

Students must be in good academic standing – a minimum 2.0 ASU GPA – with a major GPA of 2.5 or better.

Prerequisites

SOS internship providers expect interns to possess a certain level of sustainability knowledge prior to their internship experience. Typically, internship providers are looking for junior or senior students, though this is not always the case. At minimum, students must have completed SOS 110, SOS 111 and at least 12 credit hours at ASU successfully to be eligible for the internship program.
Registration

All internships must be approved before the student begins the internship.

Students must contact the internship coordinator for an override in order to register for SOS 484. Registration is only permitted after a student has secured an approved internship and has submitted required documentation (Undergraduate Internship Agreement form, Internship position description).

In order to ensure timely registration, students should have internships secured at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester.

Due to the nature of the coursework and the minimum hours required to complete SOS 484, registration after the add/drop deadline is not permitted.

Credit Hours

SOS 484 Elective is a 3-credit online course.

To successfully complete this course, students must work at least 135 hours at the internship site and complete all associated coursework via Blackboard.

Internship hours must be completed within a regular, Session C semester (15 weeks in fall/spring, 8 weeks in summer).

Grades

SOS 484 courses are graded on the A – E scale. Plus/minus grades are not given. SOS 484 grades are based entirely upon the student’s performance on the course assignments. It is possible to perform well in an internship and fail SOS 484. Each student is responsible for monitoring his/her own progress in the course and discussing concerns with the internship coordinator. It is important to also note that students who perform well in the course but do not meet the minimum 135 worked hours will also fail the course. Students are required to monitor their weekly schedule carefully throughout the semester in order to insure meeting the 135 hours.

Undergraduate Capstone Internship (SOS 484, 4 credits)

SOS students are required to complete a capstone experience prior to graduation, ideally in their last two semesters. All students are required to complete a capstone internship in catalog years 2012 and beyond. Students completing capstone internship are required to enroll in the SOS 484 Capstone Internship course.
Academic Standing

Students must be in good academic standing and meet the minimum major GPA outlined by their catalog year. Students should consult their major map and/or DARS to confirm minimum major GPA requirements.

Prerequisites

To be eligible for capstone internship, students must:

- Be at junior or senior status
- Meet minimum GPA requirements
- Have completed at least three (9 credit hours) of 300-level SOS Challenge Area/Track coursework (SOS courses number 320 – 328)

Students are able to complete their capstone internship as soon as they meet the minimum requirements above. However, SOS students have found that they have more fully benefitted from their capstone internships when they:

- Are in their last two semesters of the undergraduate career,
- Have completed most of their other SOS major coursework,
- Have completed or nearly completed their related discipline,
- And have completed or nearly completed their general studies requirements.

This allows the student to focus on the capstone experience as the culminating SOS experience instead of fitting it into an otherwise regular semester.

Registration

All internships must be approved before the student begins the internship.

Students must contact the internship coordinator for an override in order to register for SOS 484. Registration is only permitted after a student has secured an approved internship and has submitted required documentation (Undergraduate Internship Agreement form, Internship position description).

In order to ensure timely registration, students should have internships secured at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester.
Due to the nature of the coursework and the minimum hours required to complete SOS 484, registration after the add/drop deadline is not permitted.

**Capstone Internship Credit Hours**

SOS 484 Capstone Internship is a 4-credit course.

Class meets once a week as a group, with the majority of the coursework completed via Blackboard.

To successfully fulfill the Capstone Internship, students must:

1. Work at least 135 hours at the internship site. Internship hours must be completed within a regular, Session C semester (15 weeks in fall/spring, 8 weeks in summer)
2. Attend weekly in-person class meetings
3. Complete academic course assignments via Blackboard
4. Earn a “B” or better grade

**Capstone Internship Grades**

SOS 484 courses are graded on the A – E scale. Plus/minus grades are not given.

*Students must earn a “B” or better grade in SOS 484 for it to fulfill the capstone requirement.*

SOS 484 grades are based entirely upon the student’s performance on the course assignments. It is possible to perform well in an internship and fail SOS 484. Each student is responsible for monitoring his/her own progress in the course and discussing concerns with the internship coordinator. *Note: the summer capstone internship course is online.*

It is important to also note that students who perform well in the course but do not meet the minimum 135 worked hours will also fail the course. Students are required to monitor their weekly schedule carefully throughout the semester in order to insure meeting the 135 hours.
Part Four: Getting the Most Out of the Internship Experience

The internship experience is just like any other educational opportunity: students will get out what they choose to put in. Here are a few thoughts on how to prepare and work towards a more fulfilling internship experience.

Prepare ahead of time

Internships can be great experiences, and can be counted as successful even when realizing that a job function or industry is not the best fit. Take the opportunity to explore an area of interest and be thoughtful about which internships to apply for. Students can do this by:

- Meeting with the internship coordinator early in the internship search.
- Exploring sustainability job descriptions, careers, and organizations in advance. What is interesting? What kind of experience is needed to get there?
- Doing informational interviews and job shadowing experiences to learn more from professionals working in sustainability fields.

Learning takes time

As the saying goes, you can’t expect to run before you learn to walk. Sustainability students are often excited to tackle large projects and get embedded in a professional environment very quickly. Businesses do not work this way: internship supervisors will need to get to know the intern, and the intern will need to get to know the ins and outs of the organization before being trusted with responsibility. Students may find that by taking the time to learn about and get oriented to the organization that they have the opportunity to take on larger projects and more responsibility as the internship progresses.

Ask questions

The internship supervisor is hiring a sustainability intern because he/she wants the benefits of their sustainability knowledge. Rather than assuming that no one wants to hear from the “lowly intern,” ask questions of the supervisor and other mentors to learn and possibly provide a new sustainability perspective.

Generate opportunities

Students report that sometimes it seems like there is not enough work for them to do. Successful internships often arise when sustainability students look around and recognize a need. **Be proactive: instead of waiting for direction, ask your supervisor for work or even better, propose a project.**

While students sometimes complain that their internships do not provide enough work; those same internships may be complaining that their intern doesn’t look around for work to do. Remember that internships are not always glamorous: demonstrate your
professionalism by taking on tasks that need to be done and do them with a positive attitude. You can’t just sit there and wait for tasks to be handed to you. This is one of the biggest learning outcomes that students report.

Take advantage of opportunities to participate in organizational meetings or events even if they are not directly related to your internship duties. You will be seen as proactive, interested, and you can meet new people and learn something.

**Ask for and provide feedback**

The internship experience is the opportunity to learn how to be a professional in a new area. Solicit feedback from your site supervisor on ways to improve performance, how to build a career in the industry, and ways to further connect.

Similarly, if the internship is not going as planned, let the School of Sustainability internship coordinator know as soon as possible. The internship coordinator may be able to step in and work with the intern and the site supervisor to adjust the experience; in a worst case scenario, the internship coordinator may help find an alternate placement.

**Reflect**

Take time during the experience to reflect. Think about your own performance and experience, look at the work culture that you’re embedded in, and the future of the work/organization/industry. Perhaps most importantly, make sure to keep track of the work done, the skills gained, and the contacts made during the internship. These details are often the “little things” that help secure a job in the future.

**Say “Thank You”**

Make sure to follow up. If you conduct an informational interview with a staff member at your organization, thank him/her for the time spent. Writing a thank you note to your supervisor when you conclude your internship experience sets you apart and may help you with a letter of recommendation, job referral/reference, or even a position in the organization if one is available.

**Contact Information**

For more information please contact the School of Sustainability internship coordinator by calling 480-727-6963 or emailing caroline.savalle@asu.edu

School of Sustainability majors can schedule advising appointments through the online appointment scheduling system.