



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Agricultural Economics

PROCEDURAL MANUAL
FOR THE
MASTER OF SCIENCE
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Revised 4-1-2024

I. Master of Science Internship

The **MS Internship** is an educational program offered by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and approved employers who furnish facilities and instruction to help students improve the skills and knowledge needed in their prospective vocation. In turn, the internship student helps the employing agency or firm to meet peak demand for their employees and/or complete special projects.

Course Description:

Agricultural Economics (AGEC) 684 - Internship (1 to 3 credits). Pre-professional experience within department guidelines conducted in the area of the student's field of interest.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for off-campus learning experiences relevant to the student's educational program.
2. To provide a forum for which the student may apply concepts learned in the classroom.
3. To permit students' independent exploration of their fields of interest.
4. To assist students in establishing career goals related to their specific interests and professional aspirations.
5. To increase student motivation for their chosen field by integrating prior classroom instruction with planned and supervised practical experience.
6. To prepare students for employment in their chosen occupation through field training and professional experience.
7. To make students aware of additional training/experience/courses necessary to reach their career goals.

Eligibility:

This course can be used as an elective in the Master of Science program. For an MS-thesis student, AGEC 684 Internship credit must replace AGEC 691 Research credit on the degree plan. AGEC 684 is available each regular semester and during each ten-week summer session. The course is limited to students who have graduate classification and a cumulative grade average of 3.00 or higher.

Operational Principles:

The student internship concept has the following operational and philosophical principles:

1. Each student intern shall have well-defined work activities that are regarded as worthwhile by the cooperating agency, the faculty supervisor (committee chair), and the Associate Head for Graduate Programs.

2. Each intern shall develop specific learning objectives that can be readily identified and reviewed periodically throughout the work period.
3. Each intern shall be supported by a faculty supervisor and a cooperating agency representative. The roles of these individuals include assisting with task identification, establishing learning objectives, carrying out the task, counseling the intern and carrying through with ideas and projects initiated.
4. Each intern contracts as an independent agent with the cooperating agency to do the work and pursue the learning objectives.
5. Each intern assesses the work of the internship experience in a non-school setting and produces a final report for the faculty supervisor.

Enrollment Procedures:

1. Prior to the beginning of the semester in which the internship is to be taken, the student must arrange a personal or telephone interview with a representative of the cooperating agency. The student's faculty supervisor and the agency representative must determine whether an available position will provide experience that supports the student's academic and career objectives. Further, they should be assured that the student's interests and academic preparation will satisfy the demands of the cooperating agency.
2. On approval of the agency representative, and with the work description or schedule of anticipated activities, the student will submit the completed "Plan for Internship" (Appendix A) to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs. At that time, the Internship agreement will be completed.
3. A copy of the completed "Plan for Internship" (Appendix A) must be submitted to the Graduate Office to initiate registration procedures. The procedures may vary if the internship is located in a city outside of the Bryan-College Station area.
4. Tuition must be paid as indicated in the class schedule book or the course will automatically be canceled, unless otherwise indicated by the registration instructions/procedures.

II. Internship Advantages

The Student has the opportunity to:

1. Gain an understanding of the relationship between classroom theory and its practical application.
2. Test career objectives to determine if there is a proper fit between career requirements and student objectives.
3. Improve interpersonal skills.
4. Develop professional work habits.
5. Become acquainted with people in professional occupations for potential job opportunities.
6. Earn funds to help support college education.
7. Prepare for a smooth transition into full-time employment.
8. Retain student status while learning on the job.

The Employer has the opportunity to:

1. Establish a pool of potential professional employees who have demonstrated their abilities.
2. Complete a special project or increase service during peak demand periods.
3. Educate highly motivated students about your industry.
4. Develop an efficient training program.
5. Send goodwill ambassadors back to campus to spread the word to other students about your company.
6. Assist the department in evaluating students as to their potential to perform in postgraduate career positions.

The faculty has the opportunity to:

1. Receive student and industry feedback that can affect curriculum change.
2. Reinforce positive relationships with the business community.

3. Increase rapport with community interests and encourage community support for university programs
4. Demonstrate the faculty's concern and support in maintaining individuality of the student.

III. Responsibilities of the Principal Participants

The Student

Assisted by the student's faculty supervisor (committee chair), the student seeks out potential placement opportunities for the internship program. The student creates a resume, writes a cover letter, develops a job-search strategy, arranges for the job interviews, and procures his or her own employment site. On approval of the employment site by the faculty supervisor, the student and advisor develop a "Plan for Internship" (Appendix A). A signed copy of this plan must be submitted to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs and Graduate Office before the student may register for AGEC 684 and begins his or her internship program.

While participating in the internship program, the student is expected to:

1. Work a minimum of 40 hours per week for 8 to 12 weeks. A total of 400 hours of work time is expected.
2. Complete the tasks and activities outlined in the "Plan for Internship."
3. Conform to the normal work hours of the cooperating firm or volunteer agency including overtime when requested.
4. Support the employer, keep the employer's business confidential, and work for the employer's best interests.
5. Request prior permission from both the employer and the student's faculty supervisor for any leave periods.
6. Submit a final report (Appendix B) at a mutually agreed-upon time.

The Student's Faculty Supervisor

Faculty supervisors (committee chairs) recommend internship placement opportunities for students related to the student's interests. Arrangements for such internships are to be initiated by the student and must be approved by the faculty supervisor following submission of documentation to justify the cooperation of a particular agency in providing the internship supervision.

The faculty supervisor reviews the plan to determine whether the planned internship:

1. Is an academically relevant component of the learning process that is appropriate for university credit.
2. Involves initiative, creative opportunities, meaningful responsibilities, and assignments, in contrast to routine or continuously repetitive activities.
3. Provides the student a learning experience and the exposure needed to understand the opportunities, functions, and responsibilities of various agricultural disciplines.

4. Includes appropriate supervision and direction by qualified and interested people.

The student, the faculty supervisor, and an agency representative collaborate in processing the internship agreement. At the end of the semester or summer term, the faculty supervisor calculates and reports the final grade for AGEC 684 Internship to the Office of Admissions and Records.

The faculty supervisor maintains regular contact with the agency supervisor in determining the nature of the work and evaluating the student's progress. The student's final report (Appendix B) is submitted by the beginning of the next semester. This report must focus on the work experience and its relation to the student's academics objective. The final grade is calculated by the faculty supervisor using the following criteria: 50% Final Report and 50% Employer Evaluation

The Cooperating Agency Supervisor

A representative of the agency, approved to supervise an intern, interviews the potential candidate by telephone or in person where possible, prior to enrollment in the course by the student. The final approval for registration is made by the student's faculty supervisor.

When the agency selects a participant for the internship program, it is expected to provide a variety of educational experiences for the intern a program sufficiently flexible to permit intern involvement in specific projects. The agency assigns responsibility for supervision of the intern to a specific individual and a final review of the intern's performance is expected. Further, the agency supervisor completes an evaluation form (Appendix C) appraising the student's performance. The form is forwarded to the student's faculty supervisor during the final two weeks of the internship semester.

The supervising agency may provide wages, reimbursement for travel, or other remuneration arrangements while the student is on the internship. These arrangements are to be agreed upon by the cooperating agency and the intern.

APPENDIX A
MASTER OF SCIENCE PLAN FOR INTERNSHIP

Student's Name: _____ UIN: _____

Faculty Supervisor/Committee

Chair: _____

Name of Internship _____

Institution: _____

Beginning and Ending Dates of
Internship: _____

Internship Position Title: _____

Internship Goals and
Objectives: _____

Number of Credit
Hours _____

I agree to prepare a formal final report explaining in detail my internship activities and to include any suggestions for improvement of the program. The report is to be submitted to the faculty supervisor.

I will submit the report by: _____
Date

Student's Signature **Date**

I have reviewed this Plan for Internship and find it consistent with the student's educational objectives.

Faculty Supervisor **Date**

The cooperating agency agrees to provide the student an opportunity to obtain actual experience in the areas outlined above and also agrees to evaluate the efforts of the student and forward an evaluation to the faculty supervisor on termination of employment.

The student's immediate agency supervisor will be:

Name Title

Street Address City State Zip

Business Phone Number

Email Address

Signature of Associate Head for Graduate Programs

Date

SUBMIT COMPLETED FORM TO AGECO GRAD OFFICE BEFORE REGISTERING FOR INTERNSHIP

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDENT'S FINAL REPORT

An internship experience is much more than a job. It is a valuable portion of your educational program in preparation for a professional career. For us to evaluate your progress and the outcome of your internship program, a report is needed from you describing what you have gained from the internship experience. The preparation of this report will also help you evaluate your professional development leading to your career goals. Your faculty supervisor must receive your report prior to the last class day of the semester. Upon faculty supervisor approval, a copy of the final report is to be sent to the David Leatham, Associate Head for Graduate Programs, david.leatham@ag.tamu.edu.

Final Report

At the completion of the internship, a detailed typewritten report is required. It should reflect an evaluation of the complete internship program. The final report should include:

1. A record of significant activities (not a daily log, but an executive summary of major activities).
2. A description of the organizational structure and function of the cooperating agency or firm sponsoring your internship. Describe your responsibilities and indicate your assignment within the overall organizational structure.
3. A discussion of how your preplanned objectives (from your Plan for Internship) were implemented and the outcome of each.
4. A detailed description of the activities associated with your area of responsibility is evaluated in relation to your educational background.
5. An appraisal of the internship program relative to your interests and career goals.
6. Your suggestions and recommendations to other students who might wish to pursue an internship with your cooperating agency.
7. Changes you plan to make due to the internship experience (i.e. courses to take, career plan changes, etc.).

In addition to the specific points to be addressed in the final report, you may describe any other observations or experiences not specified above. Your agency supervisor should be given the opportunity to review your report before it is submitted to the faculty supervisor. This procedure will help to avoid the release of any confidential or restricted information from your employer's point of view.

APPENDIX C
AGENCY SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF
STUDENT PERFORMANCE DURING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Student's Name _____

Name of Supervisor Title Phone Number

We would appreciate your cooperation in rating this student in terms of his or her performance on internship placement in your agency. Your response will help the faculty supervisor in assigning a letter grade and identifying areas requiring attention in the student's continuing professional development. Thank you for your cooperation.

Criteria	Rating (check one)			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
Cooperates with management				
Cooperates with other workers				
Willingness to work				
Dependable				
Honest				
Ethical behavior				
Shows initiative				
Appearance				
Personality				
Motivation				
Accepts supervision				
Accepts constructive criticism				
Punctuality and attendance				
Professional attitude				
Shows leadership ability				
Communication - speaking				
Communication - writing				
Shows ability to think				
Learns new operations easily				
Adaptable to variety of jobs				
Potential for career in this industry				

1. Was the student adequately prepared to work in your program?
 Yes No Somewhat
2. In your opinion, what are the student's areas of greatest strength and areas that need improvement?
3. Did you get your money's worth from this student? (i.e. Was their contribution to your firm worth at least as much as you paid them?)
 Yes No Maybe
4. What recommendations do you have to include in this student's academic program to more adequately prepare the student for future professional roles?
5. Would you be willing to have a similar person for another internship at your agency?
 Yes No

If yes, we will add your name and address to our list of approved internship sites.

If no, please indicate the reason why you would choose not to have another intern from our program. This information may assist us in future planning.

Supervisor's Signature

Company or Agency Name

PLEASE RETURN TO:

MS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

David Leatham, Associate Head for Graduate Programs

Department of Agricultural Economics

Texas A&M University

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