

ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP GUIDE

The Academic Internship Guide is designed to guide students through the academic internship experience from requesting approval and initiating the course registration forms to doing the internship to closing out the internship at the end of the term. Students should download and save a copy of this guide to refer back to at any point during their internship experience.

Students participating in the academic internship program are required to read this guide prior to starting the internship registration process.

Center for Career & Professional Development

internships@whitworth.edu

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on accepting an internship offer! If you are reading this guide, you have most likely accepted an internship offer and decided that you want to turn your internship into an academic experience. This guide is designed to help you, the student, through each step of the internship process from start to finish.

Internships are a student-driven process at Whitworth, and you are responsible for initiating and completing all program requirements by the posted deadlines. There are important processes that you must complete throughout the duration of the internship that cannot be completed until you are registered for the internship course.

The academic internship is a three-way partnership with the student, you, who is interning; the employer who is providing the internship opportunity; and the University, which is formalized with the completion of the Internship Contract. Most academic disciplines have internship options for eligible students. With guidance from an academic advisor, each student is encouraged to plan how and when an internship best fits into their overall course of study. Eligibility and participation criteria vary by academic discipline, so students are advised to plan ahead as far as possible.

So, what is an internship, and what are the benefits of doing one?

DEFINITION & BENEFITS OF AN INTERNSHIP

Whitworth uses the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition of an internship. According to NACE, an internship is defined as: “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”

A meaningful internship can allow you to:

- Explore an industry, a career path or an organization
- Gain practical, hands-on professional work experience
- Build and hone skills employers look for when hiring college graduates
- Network with professionals and make valuable connections for references, future opportunities and mentorship
- Apply knowledge acquired in the classroom to the world of work
- Earn academic credit, either as a program requirement or elective credit

By providing a meaningful internship, employers have the opportunity to:

- Discover potential employees and reduce recruitment costs
- Increase visibility on campus
- Support the professional development and growth of students

FINDING AN INTERNSHIP

Searching for an internship will take time and careful planning, so starting your internship search as early as possible will better position you for a successful search. While not all industries have defined recruiting cycles, many industries do have recruiting cycles that dictate when you apply. It is important to research and know your industry standards as you develop and implement your internship search plan.

When conducting an internship search, it is important to diversify how you go about searching for an internship. A successful internship search uses a combination of tools and resources throughout the search process. While it is the responsibility of the student, you, to find an internship, a career center staff member can guide you through your internship search and assist with:

- Developing a plan and identifying areas of interest
- Search strategies and conducting research
- Identifying internship leads and contacts
- Résumé, cover letter and interview preparation

Scheduling an in-person or virtual advising appointment with a career advisor or career peer coach is always a great option. Advising appointments can be scheduled through Handshake's appointment feature or by sending an email to internships@whitworth.edu with at least three dates/times that you're available to meet.

Okay, so, what are other tools and resources that I can use to find an internship? While the following list may not include all options available to you, we have identified and listed several that have worked for other students.

- Handshake, Whitworth's online career management platform
- LinkedIn
- Attend a job or career fair
- Washington Workforce Portal: <https://www.washingtonworkforceportal.org>
- Employers' careers/jobs webpages
- Engage employers through their social media channels
- Connect with your personal network and let them know you are looking for an internship
- Connect with Whitworth faculty

ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS & FIELD STUDIES

An academic internship or a field study is slightly different from an internship that you pursue on your own without any connection to or oversight from Whitworth. **Academic internships and field studies** are planned and approved credit-bearing work-based learning experiences, usually off campus, which integrate into your academic program, whether as a requirement or an elective. Academic internships or field studies are limited in duration with defined start and end dates. They have a faculty instructor to guide the learning of and evaluate the experience and a worksite supervisor to oversee and guide the work you will do during the internship. Academic internships or field studies have structured learning goals developed with guidance from your faculty instructor and are set up prior to the start of the internship.

Academic Internships Numbered 290, 290H, 390, 390H, 490, 490H	Academic Field Study Numbered 280, 380, 480
An academic internship is an approved credit-bearing work-based learning experience that integrates students' academic coursework with career-related work experience in the major field. Academic internships are planned and structured with clear learning goals and objectives developed under the instruction of a faculty internship advisor within the major field prior to starting the internship experience.	A field study provides students with the opportunity to explore a career in any field of interest through an observational, exploratory, hands-on experience.

GENERAL OPERATING GUIDELINES

- Students are responsible for initiating and completing the internship course registration requirements by the posted deadlines. *Failure to complete all registration requirements by the deadline will result in not being registered and not earning academic credit for the internship.*
- Academic internships are courses that follow the same policies and guidelines as any other course offered by Whitworth University.
- Approval of all academic internships is up to the discretion of the student's academic department and designated faculty internship advisor. If the academic department doesn't have a designated faculty internship advisor, the student must identify a faculty member and ask if they would be willing to instruct the academic internship experience.
- Internships registered for course credit under the Whitworth Internship Program are facilitated by the Center for Career & Professional Development in collaboration with academic departments.
- Students are allowed to take a total of up to 12 academic internship credits during the span of their university careers. In general, no more than 6 credits should be taken per semester. It is recommended that students sign up for no more than 3 credits during Jan Term, though a maximum of 5 credits may be approved in certain situations.

Academic Internship

*Numbered: 290, 290H, 390,
390H, 490, 490H*

WORKSITE CRITERIA

Organizations must be approved **before** they can host a Whitworth student who is pursuing course credit through the Whitworth Academic Internship Program. In collaboration with the academic department and faculty internship advisor, the internship program coordinator in the career center is available to screen a potential internship organization to verify that the following criteria are met prior to granting the student permission to register for an internship course:

- The organization must have and maintain customary business insurance during the internship experience.
- The organization must meet the criteria outlined in the Whitworth University Center for Career & Professional Development Policies & Guidelines for Employers.
- The organization must be in a business-zoned area, which means the internship is in a public setting and **not** in a private home.
- The student must have a schedule that allows them to work 40 hours x the number of registered credits (40 hours x 1 credit = 40 hours, 40 hours x 2 credits = 80 hours) during the term in which they are registered. *Hours completed outside the constraints of the term, following the registrar's [Academic Calendars & Schedules](#), are not eligible to be counted toward the credit-hour requirement.*
- No more than 25 percent of the internship duties may be clerical in nature.

TUITION & FEES FOR ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS & FIELD STUDIES

Students pursuing academic credit for an internship or field study should review student financial services' [Schedule of Charges & Fees](#) *before* submitting their Internship Contract. Any questions related to tuition and fees must be directed to your student account specialist.

- Jan Term fee is applied to credit-bearing internships and field studies during Jan Term.
- Summer tuition (per credit) is applied to credit-bearing internships and field studies during Summer Term.
- Overload fee is applied to credit-bearing internships and field studies. Overload is defined as in excess of 16.0 credits.

ACADEMIC CREDITS & CREDIT-HOUR REQUIREMENTS

Your faculty internship advisor will advise you on and approve the number of credits for your academic internship experience. Generally, students can earn 1-6 academic credits for an internship during most terms (1-5 credits during Jan Term) and can earn up to 12 internship credits during their time at Whitworth; however, the approval of academic credits per term and overall for an internship may vary by academic department.

For every 1 credit registered, a minimum of 40 hours must be worked and recorded on the internship time log. Hours counted toward the credit-hour requirement must be completed within the constraints of the term for which you are registered. Hours completed outside of the constraints of the term are not eligible to be counted toward the credit-hour requirement.

INCREASING OR DECREASING CREDITS

Academic internships adhere to the same process as other courses. Increasing or decreasing internship credits can be requested through the 10th day of the academic term. *All requests for changes to credit after the 10th day of the term will not be accepted.*

To increase or decrease the number of internship credits *before* the 10th day of the academic term and after the application has been processed, you must obtain approval from your faculty internship advisor, and your faculty internship advisor must also email their approval to internships@whitworth.edu.

Dropping an academic internship follows the same process as other courses. If you need to drop your internship course, you must obtain approval from your academic advisor and faculty advisor. Both your academic advisor and faculty advisor should email their approval for you to drop the internship course to internships@whitworth.edu. *After the 10th day of the academic term, a grade of "W" will be given for any internship courses that are dropped. A grade of "WF" will be given for internship courses dropped after the ninth week of the academic term.* There is not an option to change the number of credits for an internship after the 10th day of the term.

IMPORTANT DATES & TIMELINE

Academic internships follow the [Academic Calendars & Schedules](#). The dates and timelines are subject to change. The dates and timelines are included in this guide as a courtesy and should not be considered official. Students should always refer to and check the Academic Calendars & Schedules for accurate dates.

It is important to start your internship search early as there are steps that must be completed in order to set up and register your internship for academic credit *prior to starting your experience*. Retroactive credit will not be awarded. **Academic internships must be completed during the semester for which the credit is registered.**

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

	Fall 2026	Jan Term 2027	Spring 2027	Summer 2027
Pre-Registration for term opens.	April 3, 2026	Nov. 9, 2026	Nov. 9, 2026	Nov. 9, 2026
Internship hours to be counted toward the credit hour requirement must begin on or after this date.	Sept. 9, 2026	Jan. 6, 2027	Feb. 4, 2027	May 24, 2027
Last day to register for an internship/field study for academic credit. Completed internship contracts and any other required forms must be turned into the career center no later than 3 p.m. Important Note: Must be registered for at least one credit by the first day of the academic term or session for this 'Add/Drop' deadline to apply.	Sept. 22, 2026	Jan. 7, 2027	Feb. 17, 2027	June 7, 2027
Internship hours to be counted toward the credit hour requirement and closing requirements must be completed on or before this date.	Dec. 18, 2026	Jan. 27, 2027	May 21, 2027	Aug. 13, 2027

WHITWORTH ONLINE (FORMERLY CONTINUING STUDIES) ADULT DEGREE PROGRAMS

	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Summer 2027
Pre-Registration opens.	April 13, 2026	Nov. 9, 2026	Nov. 9, 2026
Internship hours to be counted toward the credit hour requirement must begin on or after this date.	Aug. 17, 2026	Jan. 4, 2027	May 24, 2027
Last day to register for an internship/field study for academic credit. Completed internship contracts and any other required forms must be turned into the career center no later than 3 p.m. Important Note: Must be registered for at least one credit by the first day of the academic term or session for this 'Add/Drop' deadline to apply.	Sept. 9, 2026	Jan. 28, 2027	June 7, 2027
Internship hours to be counted toward the credit hour requirement and closing requirements must be completed on or before this date.	Dec. 18, 2026	May 7, 2027	Aug. 13, 2027

GRADING & FINAL GRADE SUBMISSION

Your faculty internship advisor is responsible for evaluating and assigning your final grade. Academic internships are graded as S/NS, but with the approval from your faculty internship advisor can be graded as a letter grade. If you don't see your final grade on Self-Service, then you should speak with your faculty internship advisor.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: STUDENT, FACULTY INTERNSHIP ADVISOR, WORKSITE SUPERVISOR & CAREER CENTER

All credit-bearing academic internships require the involvement of four key parties: the student, faculty internship advisor, internship worksite/worksite supervisor and the career center. Each party has an important role throughout the duration of the internship experience. To help you understand the roles, each party and their respective responsibilities are outlined on the following two pages.

STUDENT INTERNS

- Applies for and accepts the internship offer
- Meets with faculty internship advisor to obtain approval to register the internship for course credit and discusses the following items needed to fill out the internship contract:
 - Registration information
 - Course prefix
 - Course number
 - Number of credits
 - Title of study to appear on your transcript (limited to 19 characters)
 - Goals and responsibilities
 - Student learning goals (five goals are required)
 - Faculty requirements
- Completes and submits the Internship Contract Form found on the internship information web page under "Registering for Academic Credit": www.whitworth.edu/internships/
 - By electronically signing the internship contract, you agree that you have read and understand the Academic Internship Guide, and agree to follow all Whitworth policies related to the academic internship program and the Whitworth Student Code of Conduct along with the worksite direction, policies and procedures. Additionally, you are declaring that the information provided in this form is accurate and true, and you promise to perform in a professional manner to complete all specified requirements outlined in the internship contract by the last date of the term as listed in the registrar's [Academic Calendars & Schedules](#).
- Ensures internship can be registered and has resolved any holds on student account
- Works and logs the required credit hours on the internship time log (40 hours for every 1 credit registered)
- Completes faculty requirements as outlined in the internship contract
- Completes internship office requirements as outlined in the internship contract

FACULTY INTERNSHIP ADVISOR / INTERNSHIP ADVISOR

- Evaluates the internship and decides if the student can register the internship for course credit
- Advises on and approves the five learning outcomes/goals, course number, course title and number of credits
- Assigns academic requirements/assignments such as writing a reflection paper, meeting with professionals at the internship worksite or readings
- Reviews and signs internship contract
- Guides the quality of the learning experience and checks in regularly with the student
- Evaluates the student's work and assigns final grade (typically S/NS)

INTERNSHIP WORKSITE & INTERNSHIP WORKSITE SUPERVISOR

It is important that the internship experience directly benefits the student. The intern will not replace regular employees but will work under the close observation of a regular employee.

- Internship worksite:
 - Develops a strong internship description, which can include:
 - Company name
 - Organizational information/“about us”
 - Position title, description (including goals/outcome) and timeline
 - Unstructured and/or structured hours
 - Required & desired qualifications
 - Entry level and exploratory
 - Compensation details
 - Mentorship, training and professional development
 - Requested documents/application documents
 - Posts internship description, conducts interviews and hires student
 - Verifies and maintains compliance with the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
 - Maintains customary business insurance during the internship experience
 - Provides **the option of** a physical working space for the intern that is in a business-zoned area, which means the internship is in a public setting and not a private home
 - Provides a safe and healthy workplace for the student and the necessary training and information for the student to fulfill their on-the-job responsibilities
 - Provides educational activities such as orientations, training sessions, meetings within the organization (staff, team, department, board), shadowing other staff, position rotations, site visits to other organizations, professional meetings, conferences and workshops.
- Internship worksite supervisor:
 - Works with the student to establish a schedule, learning objectives and evaluation methods
 - Assigns the student responsibilities for a range of interesting and challenging tasks
 - Teaches the student transferrable skills that can be applied in other contexts
 - Provides the student with oversight and consistent feedback oriented toward the learning goals. Worksite Supervisors should check in regularly with their student intern. Depending on the student’s schedule, it is recommended to check in a couple of times a week.
 - Reviews and signs the internship contract and the final internship time log
 - Completes and submits any student evaluation required for academic credit
 - Toward the end of the internship, the internship program will send an email requesting completion of the Internship Employer Evaluation of the Student.

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- Conducts final review of and signs internship contract
- Sends internship contract to the registrar’s office for registration
- Liaison between the student, internship worksite and faculty internship advisor
- Manages the risk and liability of the academic internship program
- Conducts internship exit interview with intern
- Facilitates final internship requirements, including updating intern and faculty internship advisor on the status of the final requirements

REGISTRATION FORMS & REGISTERING FOR THE INTERNSHIP COURSE

After accepting an internship offer and deciding to turn your internship into an academic experience, it is your responsibility to complete the requirements to register your internship as an internship course. Failure to complete the requirements by the registration deadline may result in not being registered and earning academic credit for your internship experience. Retroactive credit will not be awarded.

INTERNSHIP CONTRACT

The internship contract is the formal written agreement between you, the internship worksite and Whitworth, which outlines both the “doing” and “learning” components of the academic internship experience. The internship contract is initiated and completed by the student and is required in order to register you in the internship course. Each internship contract is uniquely numbered and tied to a worksite, course number and title.

After submitting the internship contract, you **must obtain the required signature/e-signatures**.

In order to receive the printable version of the internship contract, you must complete all sections of the Internship Contract Form, click ‘Submit’ and email internships@whitworth.edu requesting a physical copy. If edits are required after submitting your Internship Contract Form, you must email the edits to the internship program at internships@whitworth.edu. **DO NOT** submit a duplicate contract.

Once the internship contract is finalized, a copy of the contract will be available upon request for you, your internship worksite supervisor and faculty internship advisor. Please email internships@whitworth.edu to request a finalized copy of the contract.

INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

If your internship or field study is outside of the United States and is not a part of the pre-approved Whitworth study abroad opportunity, please reference the [Guidance for Students Seeking an Independent International Internship](#) for more information.

RISK ASSESSMENT & LIABILITY WAIVER

As a final step to completing the online Internship Contract Form, you will be prompted to read through and agree to the Risk Assessment & Liability Waiver, which is also included below. The waiver and your electronic signature will be included in the printable version of your internship contract, which you will be directed to upon completion of the online form.

Whitworth Internship Program Risk Assessment and Liability Form

It is our hope that your internship experience will be a rich educational experience for you, as well as a productive time for the people whom you will serve. To that end, as you enter the community in the context of a Whitworth class or program, you will assume a number of responsibilities. The university, the agency for which you are working and the people whom you serve count on you to work to the best of your ability in a professional manner. Thus, it is important for you to know the basics about four essential areas: confidentiality, professional behavior, liability and health insurance.

Confidentiality: As you may already know, professionals in many fields are obligated to maintain confidentiality between themselves and their clients or patients. Do not use specific names in any reflection on your experience without their explicit written permission. If you plan to use photography, please speak to your supervisor for permission.

Observing/Experiencing Unethical, Illegal or Immoral Conduct: It is unlikely, but it is possible you may witness, hear or experience something (e.g., child abuse) that is illegal or immoral. Because of the confidentiality rules mentioned above, decisions about what to do may be complex. The one essential rule is this: Do not try to solve the problem alone or ignore it. Instead, consult with a site supervisor, and notify your college instructor or internship program director to work out an appropriate response together.

Liability: Hopefully, you will not encounter any unreasonable risks as you work off site. In order to protect yourself against the possibility of accident or injury, pay careful attention to the information offered in any orientation session, direction given at the host site, and know your limits. If you have any doubts about the safety of an expectation on site, consult with your site supervisor and/or the internship program director to assess the risks of action.

Health Insurance: Whitworth requires all undergraduate students to have accident insurance and a sickness benefit.

I, [student/intern name], have read and understand the above policies and agree to act according to these expectations. I am at least 18 years old and assume responsibility for risks (including, but not limited to working with people, participating in cleaning and maintenance projects, transportation, injury, illness, standing or sitting for extended periods of time), and waive any and all claims against Whitworth University. I also agree that this waiver shall be governed by Washington substantive law without regard to the principles of conflicts of law, and that any litigation related to the enforceability of this waiver or the [internship worksite/organization name] in [semester and year of internship course] will be brought in the County of Spokane, State of Washington. I am not an employee of Whitworth University for this function, and acknowledge that worker's compensation benefits do not apply to me. Also, in the case of any medical emergency, I hereby give my permission to receive medical treatment.

INTERNSHIP & FIELD STUDY COURSE REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

1 <i>Accept Offer</i>	☐ Develop/update your résumé, tailoring it to the internship description. ☐ Apply. ☐ Interview. ☐ Accept an internship offer.
2 <i>Request Approval</i>	☐ Identify a faculty internship advisor within your academic discipline. ☐ Propose internship to faculty internship advisor and request approval to register for an internship course. ☐ Meet with your faculty internship advisor to discuss and develop the internship contract.
3 <i>Complete Forms</i>	☐ Fill out the Internship Contract Form with the information from your meeting with your faculty internship advisor. The Internship Contract Form is located on the internship information webpage at www.whitworth.edu/internships.
4 <i>Obtain Required Signatures of Approval</i>	In lieu of obtaining signatures via the automated e-signature process, please reference the below steps: ☐ Present the internship contract to the internship worksite supervisor for review and signature of approval. ☐ If you are an international student: Present internship contract to the international student advisor for review and signature of approval. ☐ If this is an honors program internship: Present internship contract to the honors program for review and signature of approval. ☐ Present internship contract to internship faculty advisor for review and signature of approval.
5 <i>Turn In Completed Registration Forms to the Career Center</i>	In lieu of obtaining signatures via the automated e-signature process, please reference the below step: ☐ Present <u>all pages of the internship contract</u> to the internship program director in the career center for final review and signature of approval.

FINAL INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

As a participant of the academic internship program, the items listed below are final requirements that all participants must complete on or before the last day of the term with the career center. The final requirements listed below are separate from the faculty requirements (outlined in your internship contract) that your faculty internship advisor assigned. Your faculty internship advisor will be notified by email of the completion status of each final requirement and will consider each final requirement when assigning your final grade.

☐ STUDENT EVALUATION & REFLECTION OF THE INTERNSHIP

You should allow 20-25 minutes to complete the post-internship reflection. This reflection helps you think about and reflect upon your internship experience. Think about what challenged or pushed you in the experience and how you grew professionally.

☐ INTERNSHIP TIME LOG

A specific internship time log is provided to track your hours and activities. When you have completed the internship, you and your internship worksite supervisor are required to sign this document indicating agreement to the hours and activities worked.

☐ INTERNSHIP EMPLOYER EVALUATION

The internship employer evaluation is to be completed by your internship worksite supervisor, which is emailed to them by the internship program director a few weeks before the end of the term. Your internship worksite supervisor will evaluate you in the areas of teamwork, attitude, judgment, dependability, aptitude, quality of work and written communication skills. You and your faculty internship advisor will receive a copy of the evaluation at the end of the academic term. It is ultimately your responsibility as the student intern to ensure your worksite supervisor completes this form.

☐ INTERNSHIP EXIT INTERVIEW

The internship is an approximately 20-30-minute one-on-one conversation with the internship program director to discuss your internship experience. It is important to plan ahead and schedule your internship exit interview early through Handshake to ensure you have enough time to complete the meeting.

- If you are continuing your internship experience into a consecutive term for academic credit at the same site, then a five-minute check-in meeting will need to be scheduled.
- If you are a **health science** or **communication major**, then you do not complete an internship exit interview with the internship program director, as it is to be completed with your faculty internship advisor.

☐ INTERNSHIP EMPLOYER EVALUATION

The internship employer evaluation is to be completed by your internship worksite supervisor, which is emailed to them by the internship program director a few weeks before the end of the term. Your internship worksite supervisor will evaluate you in the areas of teamwork, attitude, judgment, dependability, aptitude, quality of work and written communication skills. You and your faculty internship advisor will receive a copy of the evaluation after the evaluation has been submitted. It is ultimately your responsibility as the student intern to ensure your worksite supervisor completes this form.

CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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