Internship Program
Student Handbook

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What is an Internship?
The Random House Dictionary defines an internship as: “Any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession.” Internships can be paid or unpaid, and are subject to labor guidelines. Students participating in internships offered by a company or organization may or may not decide to enroll in a Department of Economics internship course. Further, internships do not necessarily have to be labeled as such by the employer in order to qualify as the basis for a Department of Economics’ internship course.

The Department of Economics strives for internship experiences that are broad-based and focus on learning activities. Interns are expected to engage in intellectual activities, such as involvement in on-the-job decision-making processes, and conducting research to enhance decision-making. Companies or other organizations with “Internship” positions most likely have already defined these learning activities for the position. Students wishing to convert a summer or part-time job to an internship experience must work with their employer to identify these activities for inclusion in an internship plan.

How to find an Internship
Students can find internship opportunities in several different ways. The SDSU Office of Career Development located in the Student Union, maintains the Jacks Career Link which allows employers to post both internship and permanent job openings. The Office of Career Development can also assist students with developing their résumés and interview skills.

The Department of Economics also provides internship information. The Department’s Professional Advisor seeks to include internship announcements in the weekly “Economics Department Weekly Update” email sent to all students enrolled in Department majors, as well as on the Department’s Facebook page. Internship Internet sites, professional publications, trade magazines, newspapers, bulletin boards and other sources may also list internship opportunities. While advertised positions may not always be labeled as “internships,” some such opportunities may be turned into formal internship experiences. Also, depending on expected responsibilities and timing, it may be possible to convert a previously lined-up summer or part-time job into an internship.

Students should start looking for internships early. Organizations with established internship programs often begin interviewing in the fall for internship positions for the following summer.

Matching the Internship course with the Internship experience
The Department of Economics offers five different Internship courses, each described below. The decision on which specific course to register for is determined by the responsibilities inherent to the specific internship experience.

• Acct 494 – Accounting – for students employed in a position with primarily accounting responsibilities.
• AgEc 494 – Agricultural Business – for students employed in a management or sales-type position with an agriculture-related company or organization.
• BAdm 494 – Business – for students employed in a management or sales-type position with any organization.
• Econ 494 – Economics – for students employed in a position involving economics research or analysis.
• Entr 494 – Entrepreneurship – for students employed in certain sales or management positions, and also for those starting or operating their own business. This experience must be approved by the Entrepreneurship Director, as well as by the Internship Coordinator.

An internship may be taken for one to three credits per semester. An internship may be repeated for a combined maximum of six credits. Internship credit is awarded at the rate of one credit for approximately
every 100 hours of employment. Students must be enrolled in the course during the same period they are employed. For example, if a student is employed in an internship experience during the summer term, then he/she must be enrolled in the internship course during the same summer term. The student may not use the summer employment experience for internship credit during the fall semester, and may not register for internship credits after completing the internship. Students concerned about how registering for internship credit affects their enrollment status should visit with the internship coordinator.

**Enrolling in an Internship Course**

Students cannot self-enroll in the internship course through Web Advisor. Enrollment in internship classes requires instructor approval. To gain instructor approval and be enrolled in the internship class, students must complete and submit an Internship Course Application to the Internship Coordinator. The application is online at the [Internships](#) page on the Department of Economics’ [Website](#). A key part of this application is the internship plan, briefly described below and more in-depth in a separate document.

**Course Requirements**

Students’ enrolled in the internship class must complete four requirements to earn credit for the course. These include the internship plan, the midterm paper, the final paper, and the supervisor’s evaluation of the intern, each is described below in more detail.

**Internship Plan**

A critically important component of the internship course application is the internship plan, which provides a template for the internship experience. The internship plan details how the employment experience will develop into an educational experience. The internship plan also forms the basis for the midterm and final papers, in that it enables interns to report on the degree to which each goal and objective was achieved during the internship, what was needed to achieve the objective, why some objectives may not have been fully achieved, and any suggestions for ways to improve the internship. A well thought-out and well-written internship plan will facilitate writing a high-quality final paper. The internship coordinator approves enrollment in the internship course based on the internship plan. No grade is assigned to the internship plan. (See also the separate document describing the internship plan, and examples of internship plans.)

**Mid-term and Final Papers**

Major differences between the midterm and final papers are the due date, paper length, and depth of analysis. The midterm paper should be used as a starting point for the final paper. The final paper is expected to be an expansion of the midterm paper, and should consist of a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the overall internship experience than the midterm paper.

Both papers should include a title page and table of contents. The paper should further consist of an introduction section, the main body of the paper, and a final section with a brief section of summarizing and concluding comments.

The introduction should state the purpose of the paper, and also include the mission statement of the internship organization. If the organization does not have a missions statement, then provide and explanation of the overall goal of the organization. Any changes in the position or internship plan should also be briefly explained in this section of the paper.

The main body of the paper should describe each objective, and how or the extent to which each objective of the internship plan was met. If an objective was not (completely) met or was changed, then the paper should include a description of why this occurred. This section should also include any unexpected benefits and costs. The main body must be divided into logical sections with proper headings associated with the specific objectives and other aspects.
The summary and concluding comments section should include a reflection of what you learned from the experience. Did the internship help you grow – both personally and professionally, and if so how? How did the internship experience influence your future career plans? If you were to do an internship in the future, what would you do different next time?

Additional notes on writing the papers can be found in the appendix to this document.

**Supervisor Evaluation**

The Supervisor is expected to evaluate the Intern. This evaluation includes a confirmation that the Intern has achieved the stated objectives of the internship plan. A blank supervisor evaluation form is included in the appendix to this document.
Appendix: Midterm and Final Papers
The purpose of the midterm paper is to provide a preliminary report on activities performed in the first period of the internship, to provide initial feedback to the internship coordinator about the degree to which the internship is meeting the intern’s expectations, and to inform the internship coordinator about potential concerns related to the internship and that may be addressed prior to the end of the internship period. Of particular concern are issues related to the health and safety of the intern.

The purpose of the final paper is the report on activities performed during the internship, in line with the goals and objectives outlined in the internship plan. Students are also expected to include in the final paper an overall assessment of the degree to which the internship met the intern’s expectations, any concerns associated with the internship, and self-reflection on the role of the internship experience in the students’ career plans.

Key differences between the midterm and final papers are the expected paper length and their due dates. Both papers should include a title page, table of contents, introduction, body, and a summary and conclusions section, as explained below. Also, the internship plan should be included in an Appendix of the final paper only.

Title Page – Include the student’s name, “Intern for ‘company or organization name’”, South Dakota State University, the specific internship course and school term (example: Fall 2014), and date of the paper submission.

Table of Contents – List the main headings of the paper, and associate them with the specific page numbers on which the headings are located. A convenient way to divide the paper into sections is to use headings that are abbreviated version of the specific objectives stated in the internship plan. Do not use the term “Body” as a heading, but instead use substantive headings that logically reflect what is discussed in the specific paper section.

Introduction – State the purpose (i.e., goal) of the paper. Any changes in the position or internship plan (subsequent to its approval) should also be included here.

Body – For each objective listed in the original internship plan plus any additional objectives identified during the internship period, the main body of the paper should include a restatement of the specific objectives, with a description of how or the extent to which each objective was met. If an objective was not (completely) met or was changed, then the paper should describe why this occurred. These descriptions should not be a diary account of what you did each day or other time period, but instead consist of an analysis of what you learned while working on the objective. What insights did you gain regarding the business in general or your employer’s business in particular? Which applications of information from previous course work did you observe or use? How did you grow professionally and/or personally as a result of working on this objective? Include any unexpected benefits and costs resulting from your work on the objective.

Summary/Conclusion – Reflect on the overall internship experience. Describe any benefits you feel you derived from the internship experience, both professionally and personally. Describe how the internship experience either solidified or changed your future career plans. Explain what, if anything, you would change in your internship experience.

Internship Plan – Include the internship plan as it was submitted with the internship application at the time of your enrollment in the course.
General comments on paper format, content and structure

- Both papers must be typed, using an 11-point Calibri font, be double-spaced, and have one-inch margins.
- Both papers must conform to professional business and academic writing standards. The Chicago Style and A.P.A. style of writing are both acceptable forms to use for the papers.
- Use page numbers.
- Keep the papers brief. There is no defined page length requirement for the papers, but a 10-page (including the title page, table of contents and internship plan) final paper for a 3-credit internship is likely too brief. A 5-page midterm paper is sufficient.
- As explained above, do not write the papers like a diary with a mere listing of activities. Avoid being chatty, and use proper spelling and grammar.
Appendix: Supervisor Evaluation of Student Performance

Student name: ____________________________________________________________
Organization name: ______________________________________________________
Name and Title of Supervisor: ______________________________________________

Mailing Address of Firm: __________________________________________________
Supervisor’s Address (if different): __________________________________________

E-Mail: __________________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________________________________________________
Fax: ___________________________________________________________________
E-Mail: __________________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________________________________________________
Fax: ___________________________________________________________________

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This form is designed to evaluate the intern’s on-the-job performance. Use the rating scale criteria provided to answer the quantitative questions and answer the qualitative questions on the reverse side. (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Performance Rating Scale:
5. Outstanding: performance greatly exceeded expectations
4. Very Good: performance generally exceeded expectations
3. Good: performance generally met expectations
2. Poor: performance generally did NOT meet expectations
1. Very Poor: performance fell far below expectations
NA Not Applicable or Insufficient Information to evaluate

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<th>Professional Performance – The Student:</th>
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<td>1. Was enthusiastic and positive toward job</td>
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<td>2. Understood and followed instructions</td>
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<td>3. Completed tasks promptly and accurately</td>
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<td>4. Learned systems and procedures quickly and accurately</td>
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<td>5. Responded positively to criticism or suggestions</td>
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<td>6. Conformed to company policy: dress code; working hrs; professionalism.</td>
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<td>7. Was able to recognize problems</td>
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<td>8. Effectively evaluated alternatives and made sound decisions</td>
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<td>9. Was flexible and able to adapt</td>
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<td>10. Was innovative and resourceful in meeting objectives</td>
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<td>11. Showed initiative and sought additional responsibilities</td>
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<td>12. Was able to prioritize tasks and effectively manage time</td>
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<td>13. Followed up and monitored own performance</td>
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<td>14. Developed effective relationships with co-workers</td>
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<td>15. Developed effective relationships with customers</td>
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<td>16. Effectively communicated orally and in written form</td>
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<td>17. Was an effective listener</td>
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<td>18. Was patient when situations warranted</td>
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<td>19. Was assertive when situations warranted</td>
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<td>20. OVERALL RATING OF STUDENT’S PERFORMANCE</td>
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Qualitative Comments.

1. Were the objectives outlined in the Internship Plan met to your satisfaction? Why or why not?

2. Considering the student’s performance during the internship period, describe her/his
   (a) strengths  regarding a career in your field, and
   (b) weaknesses.

3. List ways in which the intern exhibited professional growth and development during the internship period.

4. What are your suggestions for improving the internship process?

_____________________________  _________________________
Signature of the Supervisor          Date