Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Wayne State University

Internships in Urban Studies

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning encourages undergraduate majors in Urban Studies to pursue internships. Internships provide valuable professional experience to students. They provide opportunities for students to test-drive career options, observe and practice what they have learned in the classroom, and signal valuable experience to future employers.

The main difference between a job and an internship is that internships are fundamentally learning experiences. A good employer will provide supervision, monitoring, and a structured educational experience for the intern. In return for the learning opportunity, interns are expected to contribute to the objectives of the organization. Internships may be paid or unpaid, but the conditions (including other considerations such as reimbursement for travel, etc.) must be discussed and agreed upon before the internship begins.

Internships may be taken for credit only after the student has completed 60 credit hours toward his/her degree. Credit is obtained by registering for US 6000. US 6000 qualifies as elective credits toward the Urban Studies major. Students may register for 1 to 4 credit hours in any semester during the year. Grades are assigned as pass-fail only. Students may register for internship credits in more than one semester, but the total number of credit hours that will count toward satisfying the Urban Studies major shall not exceed 4 credits. Three hours of activities per week on the internship are required for each registered credit hour of US 6000.

Students must obtain permission by email from the Urban Studies Program Director to register for US 6000. In seeking permission, the student’s email should contain information on the employer, the number of credit hours the student would like to register for, a brief discussion of activities the student expects to perform, what the student expects to learn, and how the student expects the experience to contribute to his/her career goals. At the end of the internship, students must submit a self-assessment of their experience to the advisor that discusses whether the objectives outlined in the email seeking permission were achieved, and how the experience further shapes the student’s career goals.

Note to employers: At about mid-semester, employers are required to write a short note to the advisor indicating whether the intern is performing activities required under the internship. A brief email would suffice. At the end of the semester, employers are required to write an evaluation of the student and email it to the Urban Studies Program Director. The evaluation should briefly discuss the activities the student performed, provide an assessment of whether the student performed these activities satisfactorily, and provide an assessment of what the student learned.

Note to student: Please share this document with employers that are interested in recruiting you as an intern.