Simmons College
School of Library & Information Science

Internship Capstone Experience
Host Handbook
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Internship Overview

Thank you for your support of the SLIS internship program. Working with interns is a way for you to complete projects, or take on extra tasks, or provide new or specialized services without hiring additional staff. But it is also a way for you to connect with the next generation of LIS graduates and provide valuable experience to students who may later work with you professionally – either in your institution or in other professional contexts and environments.

An internship can be a great way for students to explore an area of the LIS profession and to experience professional work environments before graduation. It can help to build their resume and make them more employable, to build their own professional network, and to build confidence in their professional skills. It is also an opportunity to explore the career choices in which they may be interested, prior to graduation and professional employment. For students, an internship is an opportunity to connect academic experiences to the work setting. It will enable them to learn new skills, meet new people and experience the environment of the Library and Information Science profession.

For students who have not had a full time job prior to entering SLIS, an internship is an opportunity to help bridge the gap between their formal educational opportunities and the working world of an LIS professional. During the course of the internship, students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals in the field. They should follow all the rules of the host organization, including being on time, dressing in a professionally appropriate way, and following through on assignments.

When the intern begins work, the institution needs to provide any necessary training and explanations to ensure they understand the institution’s individual procedures and policies – this helps the intern be successful in achieving the stated goals of the internship. A supervisor should be assigned to each intern. While that person need not be present at all times, the intern should have a designated person to ask questions of and receive instructions from during the semester. Please see the list of best practices towards the end of this handbook.

It is anticipated the interns will receive feedback, ideas and suggestions from supervisors and other staff, on an informal basis, for helping them develop their professional skills and career directions. We hope the internship will be a professionally rewarding experience for the student, and a way to build skills and a professional network. These student interns are future fellow professionals who will be working in LIS organizations; any assistance provided by the host institution in helping them to develop their skills as professionals is greatly appreciated.

Internship Course & Capstone

As of Fall 2013, students entering Simmons SLIS are required to complete a Capstone as part of their program. Students may begin their Capstone experience once they have completed a total of 27 Library Science credits, typically choosing to do so in their final semester.

The Capstone experience is intended as a summation of all that students have learned during their time at SLIS, to help prepare them for graduation and entry into the profession. While students have a choice of capstone projects, each experience is intended to offer students an opportunity to synthesize
and apply the skills and theories they have acquired across their program of study through a practical project. In addition, students maintain a portfolio of work samples and reflections, which allows students to document their experiences throughout the program and articulate how they have made progress toward achieving their educational and professional goals.

Students who select the internship option as their Capstone are required to complete a minimum of 130 hour of work at the institution with which they are placed. Once placement occurs, it is up to the student and the internship supervisor to coordinate a work schedule that will allow the student to meet this requirement. In addition to the internship itself, students will engage in online discussions about a variety of topics related to work in the LIS professions as well as participate in three in-person class sessions, the final of which will consist of a presentation of their internship experience to their instructor and classmates.

At the conclusion of the internship, a signed timesheet documenting the hours worked and an evaluation of the student’s performance must be submitted to the instructor of the internship course. Students are responsible for obtaining their supervisor’s signature and submitting the final document. A blank timesheet is included in this document. The evaluations will be completed by the supervisor online through the Internship Management System database.

**Internship Matching/Selection Process**

Students and potential supervisors will be paired through our Internship Management System database. Through this database, supervisors and institutions are able to create a profile and post internship opportunities, which can be updated by each supervisor every semester as needed. Once all opportunities are posted, students enrolled in the Internship Capstone for the semester are able to view the opportunities and indicate which their top choices are. Once this process is complete, the Capstone Coordinator reviews the students’ selections and works to match the students with their preferred choice as much as possible while taking into consideration the experience and skillset of the student as well as those desired by the host institution.

The Capstone Coordinator will then contact each institution with the name and resume of the student they have determined to be the best fit. Students will be given supervisor contact information so they may plan to visit with the supervisor to begin coordinating the logistics of the internship. If problems arise during this part of the process that cannot be reconciled between the institution and the student, the Capstone Coordinator should be contacted as soon as possible.
Handling Problems

Anyone involved in an internship may experience some difficulties, in even the best placement. Some examples might include a lack of sufficiently challenging work, communication problems and interpersonal issues, or work performance issues. While we anticipate most of the internships will be positive experiences for both the host institution and the intern, we want to be proactive in setting up a strategy for solving problems should they occur.

The first step to resolving any problems would be to address them as soon as possible. Host institutions should address the specific issue, treating the student as any other new professional in the LIS field. Students who experience problems in the workplace are encouraged to address the situation directly with their supervisors. If, for some reason, either party is uncomfortable or unwilling to address the other directly, they should contact the Capstone Coordinator as soon as possible to facilitate a resolution.

SLIS Staff

The SLIS Capstone Coordinator and Internship Course Instructor are available during the entire internship to assist both the institutions and the interns to create a rewarding experience and answer questions, provide professional assistance, or otherwise make the process smoother.

We want this to be a professionally valuable experience for the interns, and to provide some welcome assistance to the host institutions.

Please contact the Capstone Coordinator with any questions or comments:

Kendra Giannini
Capstone Coordinator
(617) 521-2779
SLISintern@simmons.edu
Some General Best Practices for Internships

- Early in Internship
  - Provide interns with a tour, introduce staff, and explain their functions
  - Explain relevant policies and procedures and provide relevant documentation
  - Set up a meeting schedule and be clear about when and where the intern can find you or another staff member for daily supervision

- Internship – Ongoing
  - Monitor the intern’s work frequently and establish benchmarks for progress
  - Communicate frequently
  - Open conversation up to discussion about the profession and professional issues

- Successful Site Supervisors
  - Are prepared to mentor and train
  - Are inclusive
  - Communicate with students, faculty, and program managers
  - Are flexible
  - Offer insights and context of larger organization
  - Treat interns as staff members as much as is possible
  - Celebrate success

- Provide:
  - Appropriate projects or work
  - A safe environment
  - Orientation and training
  - Sufficient workspace
  - Adequate supervision
  - Necessary tools and instruction to perform work
  - Evaluation of performance
  - Opportunity for the students to meet academic requirements
  - Professional experience
  - Support of institution or department
Simmons Graduate School of Library & Information Science
Internship Capstone Experience
Student Timesheet

Student Intern ____________________________________________

Host Institution __________________________________________

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<th>TIME IN</th>
<th>TIME OUT</th>
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TOTAL HOURS __________

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE ___________________________ DATE ________