

Armacost Library Internship Guidelines

Definition

Internships are structured professional learning experiences supervised by a librarian. They are filled by library school students who take the internship as part of a credit bearing course in library school.

Internships help students apply what they've learned in the classroom to a practical, focused project in an area of need for our library. They also introduce students to the norms and responsibilities of librarianship in a small university library setting, and develop their professional identity as reflective practitioners with sufficient knowledge and skills to contribute to another organization after graduation.

Structure and Supervision

The structure of internships will vary according to our changing needs, but in general our internships must support some elements in common to most LIS internships:

- A site description sufficient to communicate basic information about our library setting (vis a vis other possible internship sites), descriptions of projects intended for the intern, desired skill sets, and other information to help prospective interns decide whether/how to apply. The description will be posted in advance of an internship in order to attract a broad talent pool.
- Established criteria for selecting interns (application process? Phone/in person interviews?). Interns should be chosen promptly at the start of the academic term to allow them to fulfill the required number of hours to receive credit.
- A formal interview or introductory conversation with the intern to agree on the structure and expectations for the internship, including drawing up preliminary learning outcomes.
- Introducing the intern to other librarians, staff and the physical work environment of the library. Interns will have a designated work space and appropriate equipment and systems permissions to complete their projects.
- Librarians overseeing the intern on projects are in the role of teacher as well as supervisor, providing context in values and best practices relating to the task at hand, and eliciting connections with the intern's prior course work and internship course assignments.
- Participation in staff/librarians' meetings, webinars, reference/instruction shadowing, informal informational interviews, and other professional development opportunities outside of regularly assigned duties are an important part of the internship. Interns will have 30-60 minute conversations with all the librarians to discuss the various perspectives on academic librarianship. Resume reviewing and mock interviewing opportunities should be available.
- At the end of the internship, interns will share responsibility with the site supervisor for evaluating their learning outcomes and projects. Interns will deliver a presentation and a

research paper reviewing relevant literature and presenting their findings. Informal mentoring and support for the intern should continue after they have concluded their internship.

Responsibilities of the Site Supervisor

The site supervisor contributes to the effectiveness of our internship experience in many ways:

- The supervisor identifies projects that will introduce the intern to practices and challenges in some aspect of librarianship, and contribute materially to our library.
- The supervisor sets up necessary resources prior to the start of the internship, leads the application and selection process, and is responsible for the final evaluation in coordination with the library director.
- As the intern's primary contact, the supervisor helps welcome the intern to Armacost Library and integrates him/her into our organization and culture.
- The supervisor works with the intern to structure his or her learning and encourages the intern to keep accountable and meet the agreed learning outcomes.
- The supervisor communicates with other library staff and the LIS department internship coordinator as needed during the internship.
- The supervisor (along with other library staff) is available to the intern as a mentor, someone who can help him/her adjust to professional responsibilities and develop her or his potential.

Supervising interns benefits us by giving us the opportunity to explore fundamental challenges in our areas of specialization, and the fulfillment of helping develop a future librarian. It also counts as service to the profession for promotion and review purposes.

Documentation

Each time we support an intern, we should maintain, at minimum, the following documentation:

- Internship site description
- Applicant CVs, letters of interest and other material
- Statement of the intern's learning outcomes
- A copy of assignments submitted by the intern for internship course credit
- A copy of the evaluation form completed by the site supervisor
- Copies of any reports or presentation slides created for the intern's final presentation