

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY SOC 488 INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

What classifies as an internship?

“An internship is 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.” – [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#)

To qualify as an internship for SOC 488 credit, the experience must meet a series of work requirements and academic requirements as described below. Please schedule a meeting with the Internship Director before completing the **Internship Contract** to discuss the specifics of your internship and verify that it meets the necessary requirements.

UAB Sociology uses the criteria developed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) to assess whether the planned arrangement qualifies as an internship.

Sociology 488 Internships must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

Students should work closely with both their on-site internship coordinator and the sociology internship director to ensure that their experience adheres to the requirements of the internship program. To qualify as an internship, the student must be the primary beneficiary of the intern-employee relationship.

What is the “primary beneficiary test”?

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, to classify as an intern rather than an employee, the primary beneficiary of the experience must be the student rather than the employer. Please consider the following criteria to assess whether the planned arrangement qualifies as an internship.

1. Do both the intern and employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation?
 - a. *Note: For the purposes of SOC 488, paid internships are allowable given that the student was not employed by the agency prior to the internship and all other work and academic requirements of the internship program are met.*
2. Does the internship provide training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, such as clinical or other hands-on training?
3. Is the internship tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework and the receipt of academic credit?
 - a. *Note: See section on academic requirements below.*
4. Does the internship accommodate the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar?
5. Is the internship’s duration limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning?
6. Does the intern’s work complement, rather than displace, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern?
7. Do both the intern and employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship?

For more information, please refer to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Fact Sheet:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>.

What are the work requirements for completion of the SOC 488 Internship?

- ❖ You must work a minimum of 40 hours per credit hour earned (120 hours for 3 credits).
- ❖ Work must be performed on-site at the internship agency or organization.
 - *Note: Virtual work may be allowable under certain circumstances, but must be pre-approved by both the on-site coordinator and the internship director. It must be demonstrated that the learning benefit of any virtual work would be comparable to that obtained through an in-person work experience.*
- ❖ Work duties must center on a legitimate learning experience *benefitting the student* and must include responsibilities beyond routine clerical work.
- ❖ Work duties should be project- or outcome-oriented. While students may be assigned to some routine work, the primary contribution of the internship should center around one or more specific projects or outcomes that relate to the student’s academic coursework.

How do I track my work hours?

Students should submit **Internship Work Hours Logs** to the internship director at least once per month. Each log must be signed by the on-site internship coordinator verifying attendance.

How will my on-site work be evaluated?

The on-site academic coordinator will evaluate the student's work. Work must meet the standards of the agency or organization in order to earn credit. The on-site coordinator must submit at least two (2) **Progress Reports** and one (1) **Final Evaluation** to the internship director. In conjunction with each progress report, the on-site coordinator should meet directly with the student to offer feedback on their work and guidance for any requested adjustments or improvements to their work (if applicable).

Evaluations should be submitted by the following deadlines. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the on-site coordinator to ensure that these reports are submitted on-time.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Progress Report 1	September 15	February 1	June 1
Progress Report 2	October 30	March 15	July 15
Final Evaluation	December 5	April 25	August 10

What are the academic requirements for completion of the SOC 488 Internship?

The academic component of the SOC 488 internship course requires reflection and analysis of the internship experience in relation to academic concepts learned through previous coursework in sociology. Requirements include the following:

- ❖ **Course Sessions:** You will be required to attend a minimum of two course sessions led by the Internship Director: 1) an orientation session (during the second week of classes) and 2) a progress session (about one month prior to the end of the semester). Additional meetings may be required depending upon your academic progress and the feedback provided in the evaluations conducted by the on-site coordinator.
- ❖ **Reflection Papers:** You must submit a reflection paper at least monthly (minimum: 3 total). It is strongly encouraged that students keep an internship journal to document their experience and inform their monthly reflection papers. The reflection papers should assess your progress toward the learning objectives detailed in your **Internship Contract** and preliminary reflections and analyses with regard to the topic of your final paper or project.
- ❖ **Final Analysis Paper and/or Project:** You must submit a final analysis paper or project that analyzes their internship experience in the context of sociological concepts, theories, or ideas. The topic and format of the final paper or project should be developed in consultation with the internship director prior to or no later than the end of the third week of the semester of enrollment. The final paper or project is due on the date of the last day of classes according to the academic calendar for the semester of enrollment.

- ❖ **Internship Newsletter Submission:** You must submit a contribution to the internship newsletter that details a typical day at your internship and the most valuable lessons learned. A template for the newsletter submission will be provided by the internship director. Your newsletter submission is due no later than the end of Week 12.
- ❖ **Student Evaluation Form:** You will complete a final student evaluation form that assesses your internship experience and offers feedback for improvement of the program.

How will my academic work be evaluated?

The sociology internship director serves as the faculty instructor for SOC 488 and evaluates all academic work submitted in relation to the program. Final determination with regard to the awarding of academic credit will be made by the internship director based on your academic progress and the feedback from your on-site internship coordinator.

How do I get academic credit?

Awarding of academic credit is dependent upon successful completion of both the on-site work requirements and academic requirements as set forth in these ***Internship Requirements*** and in your ***Internship Contract***.

To receive credit, all internships must have PRIOR approval in accordance with the credit policies and application process described in the ***Internship Information Packet***. No retroactive credit is available for internships already started or completed. Internship credits from other departments or institutions cannot be transferred to SOC 488 credits.

How I get more information?

Please contact the Sociology Internship Director, Dr. Megan Brooker (brookerm@uab.edu) for more information or you if you have any questions regarding the SOC 488 requirements.