

Southern Connecticut State University
College of Education
Department of Information and Library Science

ILS 582 Library Science Internship Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

A professional field experience (internship) is central to the SCSU program for all MLIS students. The expectation is that this degree requirement will provide a practical application of coursework, the opportunity to build professional relationships and relevant real-world experience that will add value to a graduate's resume. Students with library or archives experience are strongly advised to seek an internship that will broaden their experience, such as a position in a different type of library or in a specialized unit of a library. Students who choose to explore new areas are encouraged to complete relevant courses before the internship.

This internship provides experiential learning that contributes to creating and strengthening the “serving to learn and learning to serve” ethic that reflects the core responsibilities of the library and information science professions (ALA, 2021). Internships as academic service learning provide experiences that are intentional in their purpose to mutually benefit the provider and the recipient of the service, as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring (ALISE, 1990; Furco, 1996).

The goal of the ILS program is to provide a rich research-based learning experience that links theory to practice, promotes ethical development as professionals, and ensures hands-on experiences in libraries and information agencies (Cooper, 2013; Nutefall, 2012).

REQUIREMENTS

Students applying for an internship must:

- be matriculated into the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program
- have completed at least fifteen credits towards the MLIS degree
- follow any special procedures specified by the host institution, such as completing background checks, fingerprinting and generally adhering to any host institution employment or volunteer requirements.

PROCEDURE AND POLICIES

The internship course (ILS582) requires a minimum of 150 contact hours. Usually, this requirement is carried out as a regularly scheduled number of hours each week of the semester, but other scheduling may be approved if both the student and site supervisor agree and there is a compelling reason for the deviation. Most of the internship (120 hours) will comprise a professional experience in a library, archives, or other information institution, while about one-fifth (30 hours) will consist of academic assignments.

A student should complete their scheduled hours and assignments during the semester in which they are registered for ILS 582. In certain situations, with the permission of the internship coordinator and the site supervisor, hours may be extended into a second semester. Course credit is given only after all course requirements are met.

An internship experience cannot be completed at a site where a student is currently, or was formerly, employed. Final decisions regarding field study placements are made by the internship coordinator with input from the academic advisor as necessary.

The site supervisor at the host institution must be professionally qualified, possessing an MLIS or MLS degree or other relevant credentials.

The internship coordinator is responsible for reviewing the site supervisor's qualifications and determining if her or his background and capabilities are appropriate supervisory credentials. Additionally, the internship coordinator will make an informed evaluation as to the ability of the potential site and supervisor to provide a professional-level educational experience for the student, considering such factors as the supervisor's expressed intentions for the student, the supervisor's workload, and the supervisor's autonomy within the workplace environment. The internship coordinator will ensure that the site supervisor understands that the student is there to learn as well as to work.

Steps to arranging an internship:

1. The student must contact the internship coordinator early in the semester that precedes the one in which they intend to take the course.
2. The internship coordinator will refer the student to information and documentation regarding the internship program and requirements.
3. The student will review the internship materials and make inquiries regarding potential positions that meet the stated program requirements.
4. The student will submit their application and resume by the middle of the semester preceding their anticipated internship term, with
 - a. evidence that they have made exploratory inquiries, including contact information for any potential positions they've identified
 - b. information about the type of institution and geographic location of internship opportunities they are looking for

5. The internship coordinator will review the application and pursue student leads, suggest additional sites, or attempt to find internship placement opportunities if the student has been unable to identify a potential placement.
6. When a potential match is found following these informal inquiries, the internship coordinator will provide the potential site supervisor with internship guidelines and “introduce” the student to a potential site supervisor via email.
7. The student will arrange an interview with the library or archives site supervisor.
8. If both the student and potential site supervisor agree on the placement
 - a. The student will contact the internship coordinator to confirm acceptance.
 - b. The site will complete a “site application” for approval as a sponsoring intern institution.
9. The student will receive instructor permission to register for ILS 582 and develop a 120-hour schedule with their site supervisor
10. The internship coordinator will be responsible for university supervision and will post readings and other assignments to the course Blackboard platform for all interns in each semester cohort.
11. The internship coordinator or other supervising faculty will visit and observe the intern during the semester. In certain instances, due to distance or online/virtual site assignments, the “visit” may occur in an online format.

EVALUATION

A Pass/Fail grade will be issued for completed internships.

The following documents must be submitted to the internship coordinator at the completion of the internship course to receive a grade:

- Completed Evaluation Form or Evaluation Letter from the site supervisor
- Journal entries from throughout the semester, documenting the student’s experience
- Summary and reflection of the internship experience, including samples and evidence of work accomplished

References

American Library Association. (2021). *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*. American Library Association, adopted 1939; amended 1981, 1995, 2008, 2021. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics> (Accessed March 1, 2025)

Association for Library and Information Science Education. (1990). *Guidelines for Practices and Principles in the Design, Operation, and Evaluation of Student Field Experiences*. ALISE Position Papers. http://www.alise.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49 (Accessed March 1, 2025)

Cooper, L. (2013). Student reflections on an LIS internship from a service learning perspective supporting multiple learning theories. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 54(4).

Furco, A. (1996) Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education. *Expanding Boundaries: Service and Learning*. Washington DC: Corporation for National Service, 2-6.

Nutefall, J. (2012). Structuring a Successful Instruction Internship. *College and Undergraduate Libraries*, 19:1, 80-94.