

MUSIC DEPARTMENT INTERNSHIPS

What is an internship?

An internship is a formal educational project involving the student, the department, and an organization that offers a learning experience consistent with the student's major. SUNY internships follow the guidelines developed by the University Faculty Senate that appear in its publication *Internships: A Guide for Planning, Implementation, and Assessment*. Internships are generally undertaken after the student has successfully completed the majority of the academic work in the major.

Where do music majors do internships?

Music students have a choice of internship opportunities in several areas, including arts administration, marketing and public relations, educational outreach, instrumental technology, audio production, social services, and studio teaching. The College cannot give academic credit for internships in which students work with an organization where they are already employed.

Does the department place students in internships?

The Music Department works with majors to find a placement, but the decision to take an intern rests with the professional site. Generally, organizations contact the department if they wish to sponsor an intern, or department faculty recommend appropriate organizations for possible internship opportunities. Students may also recommend a new site to be considered for a possible internship venue. All internship sites at which academic credit is earned must be officially approved by the College through the execution and filing of a standard SUNY Affiliation Agreement, in part to guarantee that insurance coverage is in place for students while at the workplace.

What are the academic prerequisites for an internship?

Students must have attained upper-division status (junior or senior year), and have a minimum 2.5 GPA.

What kind of work will be expected of students?

Student interns are expected to do entry-level professional work, in accordance with a SUNY Learning Agreement negotiated and signed by all parties (student intern, work site supervisor, and faculty supervisor) before the internship begins. Ideally, interns will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of projects and initiatives, in order to sample as complete an experience of the employment sector represented by the organization as possible.

How much time does an internship entail?

Plan on spending at least as much time on this course as for any other upper-division elective in your major. Most students do internships in the Buffalo metropolitan area and elsewhere in Western New York as part of a full-time semester course load. Students may also do internships in the summer or as part-time students, and may choose to apply for nationally competitive internship opportunities (these usually take place during the summer). Students may receive from 1-3 academic credits for an off-campus internship. Each academic credit corresponds to 50 hours of work, with approximately 45 hours taking place on the site and the balance devoted to

academic assignments that involve writing and reflection on the internship experience, as well as education in professional skills important to future employers. Students may amass more than the 45 required site hours per credit at their option, but are not required to do so in order to receive the corresponding credit(s).

Can students do internships at approved Music Department sites without academic credit?

No, such informal internships are becoming increasingly rare because federal law requires that all workers must be compensated, and unpaid interns are considered to be compensated by receiving academic credit. Also, most companies and organizations require that students are covered by insurance, which is gained by enrolling in a course.

What is the role of the site supervisor?

A professional at the internship work site negotiates the terms of the SUNY Learning Agreement, directs the intern's work and provides on-site guidance. The site supervisor provides feedback and evaluation of the student's work performance to the faculty supervisor at the end of each internship term.

What is the role of the academic supervisor?

A Music Department faculty supervisor serves as liaison between the department and the work site, and works with students to obtain internship placements based on students' career goals and available placement opportunities. The faculty supervisor additionally monitors both the intern's experience and the work site's adherence to SUNY guidelines via personal meetings, written reports, and the administration of final assessments to both student intern and site supervisor. Currently the internship supervisor is Dr. Carolyn Guzski (Rockwell 132A).

Do internships comply with the law?

Increasingly, lawsuits are being filed over unpaid internships and legal issues surrounding them. Buffalo State College internships comply with all the legal requirements governing internships.

- Specifically, federal labor law requires that internships have an educational component. Ours do, with course assignments throughout the internship semester involving academic oversight by the department and the granting of academic credits.
- Internship work sites must offer a legitimate professional benefit to students (such as participating in the production of creative work, contributing to marketing efforts or promotional materials, engaging with the public in artistic outreach or educational efforts, or the like, rather than getting coffee and running errands). The SUNY Learning Agreement signed by all parties at the inception of the internship stipulates the specific activities in which the student intern will be engaged, the cumulative number of hours the intern is expected to work during the semester, and the amount of academic credit received. Our interns also file reports throughout the semester describing and documenting their work activities at the internship site.
- The law is clear that interns may not be used to replace paid employees. Our vetting process for affiliating with approved work sites makes this clear.
- Additionally, Music Department internships are part-time, and the legal challenges have been over full-time unpaid internships. Also, the legal restrictions are mainly on internships with for-profit companies, and many Music Department interns work for

exempt organizations such as nonprofit arts entities; public or government agencies; and religious, charitable or social services organizations, in which the intern has no expectation of compensation beyond the academic credit and grade.

APPLYING FOR AN INTERNSHIP

Where do internships fit on the Degree Works student audit sheet?

MUS488 is an upper-division music major elective.

MUS491 counts as the required Capstone for the B.A. Music degree.

*Note that MUS488 may **not** count as an All-College Elective under our NASM accreditation guidelines (only non-MUS prefix courses are allowed for music majors under All-College Electives, as per the B.A program requirements listed in the Student Handbook). If a student has already earned the 10 credits of music electives required for the B.A. Music degree prior to completing MUS488, this course will appear under “Music All-College Elective Overflow (Music Courses Not Allowed in All-College Electives).” MUS491 is not a repeatable course; thus, if a student wishes to fulfill the Capstone requirement by performing a recital or completing a thesis/special project, an internship may only be pursued as a MUS488 elective registration.

When should I apply for an internship?

Strategically, you want to be as well prepared as possible to do quality professional work. We require students to wait until they have attained upper-division status (junior and senior years), so that they can put the most into their internship and thus get the most out of it.

What do I need to apply for an internship?

You should review your current career plans and goals and prepare an updated copy of your professional resume (you may wish to attend one of the many resume preparation workshops held throughout the academic year by the Career Development Center at Buffalo State). Then arrange for a personal meeting with the faculty internship supervisor, in order to discuss a placement site.

Is there an application deadline, and how do I register for academic credit?

Yes, the application deadline is Study Day of the semester preceding the internship placement. MUS488 elective internship registrations may be completed online on Banner; you will need the permission of the faculty internship supervisor entered onto your Banner record beforehand, so please arrange your personal meeting appointment before attempting to register.

MUS491 Capstone internship registrations must be completed via hard-copy form in the Music Department office, accompanied by the department’s official Capstone form (posted under the Resources section of the Music Department website). Both forms must be signed by the faculty internship supervisor and the department chair.

So plan ahead! An internship should be a carefully thought-out activity in order to provide maximum professional benefit.