



Special Collection Internships



Expectations, Disappointments and
Responsibilities



Today's presentation

- Internship or Volunteer?
- The process of becoming an internship site
- Is your organization ready for an intern?
- The interview: students, supervisors and managing expectations
- Scheduling your training
- Setting an example, your role as educator

Internship or Volunteer

- Not interchangeable
- Volunteers - long term with flexible time
- Internship - Undergraduate or Graduate-level coursework equivalent
- Internship - short term (@150 hours)
- Internships are a collaboration between the Student, the Faculty Advisor, the Site Visit Manager, the Course Instructor, the Site Supervisor, and possibly the Board of Trustees
- Volunteers collaborate with the Director, staff and the Board of Trustees of an organization

The Process of Becoming an Internship Site

- Who will supervise? Who has professional experience in the field?
- What can you offer?
- Create your internship 'want ad' - examples in next slides
- Be careful not to spread yourself too thin. Internships are work for the intern and supervisor
- The University may visit and interview the internship supervisor to determine credibility and safety
- Students may approach a site they feel might be ideal for their training

Summary of Internship

This internship will provide an excellent opportunity to learn about collection management practices in the workings of an active curatorial office that oversees a diverse collection of objects and material culture. It will also offer the incumbent numerous opportunities to learn about the rich history and collection of the Gardner Museum. Projects include assisting with inventory activities, labeling objects, storage organization, and administrative support.

Desirable Qualifications

- Preferably a graduate student or upper class undergraduate student in museum studies, art history, or a related field
- Demonstrated interest in museum registration and/or experience with collection management practices
- Object handling experience preferred although training will be provided
- Excellent organizational and communication skills with a strong attention to detail
- Able to work independently and be proactive in problem solving

EXAMPLE



The intern will assist the Curator in performing a broad range of basic functions within our Costuming Department such as fittings, basic repairs/alterations, and coordination involving the costume and associated prop collections of _____.

Essential Internship Functions

Duties to include, but are not limited to:

- Uphold best practices in maintaining proper care and maintenance of costume and prop collections.
- Ensure the goals and policies of _____ Costuming Department are promoted and adhered to.
- Work with the Curator to bring Historic Village vision to life through carefully curated costuming.
- Assist with costume selections and costume fittings for historic interpreters.
- Assist with makeup and hair styling for historic interpreters.
- Assist with basic repairs and alterations of costumes (hook and eye, buttons, hemming, etc.)
- Special project as determined based upon intern interests.

Qualifications

- Enrolled in a BA or MA degree program.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite and Past Perfect preferred.
- Interest in pursuing a career in museums, theater, film/television, or similar.
- Experience relevant to costuming.
- Basic sewing skills.
- Excellent writing, research, and organizational skills.
- Reliable transportation.
- Ability to lift 40lbs.

Experience:

- Sewing Skills: 1 year (Required)

EXAMPLE



The Library & Archives intern will assist in a variety of projects that provide insight into the daily functioning of a museum library and archives, including updating the museum's exhibition history and learning how to answer basic reference questions.

Duties:

- Answer basic reference questions posed by curators and visiting scholars
- Organize the museum's extensive exhibition history which documents the exhibitions that have taken place at the Phillips from the 1920s to the present day
- Perform other duties as assigned
-

Qualifications:

- Previous museum, library, or archives experience
- Strong interest in career in museum, archives or library work
- Demonstrated interest in art/art history
- Careful worker, shows attention to detail
- Good verbal communication skills

EXAMPLE



Is Your Organization Ready for an Intern?

“Internships engage graduate students in professional-level work that supplements formal archival education and core knowledge, strengthens or introduces new skills, encourages collaboration and teamwork, and helps to develop their understanding of how [archival] theories and methods are applied in practice....

Intern supervisors and their institutions also have a responsibility to ensure a professional and safe work environment.”

From the Society of American Archivists’ *Best Practices for Internships as a Component of Graduate Archival Education* (reviewed 2014)

Is Your Organization Ready for an Intern?

Must be a credentialed library professional (MLS, MLIS)

Supervisors should be prepared with small projects or one project with several learning components. Ideally, there will be various types of work, with some projects being completed by the intern during their tenure:

- Processing a collection (Arrangement, description, finding aid, etc.)
- Digitizing
- Metadata and cataloging
- Collection inventory and development
- Rehousing
- Outreach / program execution
- Exhibition installation of physical items

The Interview

Institutions expect interns to perform productively and students should feel they are receiving guidance from professional-level staff. Collaboration during the interview process is necessary in determining the right fit for both intern and organization.

Engage the student:

- Prep work for the Learning Contract....
 - What is it about special collections work is appealing to the student?
 - What is the best use of the student's (and your) time?
 - Make clear educational objectives

Schedule the Training

Make clear educational objectives

What are the student's responsibilities (time log, meetings with course instructor, possible meeting with a Site Visit Manager)

Create a calendar or a lesson plan for your Intern to follow. The more detailed the better, understanding the realistic amount of time each project may require. This set schedule will allow the intern to plan around other classes, jobs, family commitments, etc.

See the example for Dan S. on the following slides...

Dan S. Internship Schedule

1

M JUNE	T	W - 22	H - 23	F - 24
		Dan starts: paperwork / set up schedule for the internship/basics of Past Perfect Software.	House tour / reference questions from online users	Scrapbooks & scanning tutorial

2

M - 27	T - 28	W - 29	H - 30	F - 1 JULY
		Scrapbooks	Scrapbooks	Dan out

3

M - 4	T - 5	W - 6	H - 7	F - 8
4th of July Parade and Ice Cream Social in Oyster bay		Dan out	Help the Staff to install exhibit. Will learn some basic for displaying archival materials.	Help the Staff to install exhibit. EXHIBIT OPENING

4

M -11	T - 12	W - 13	H - 14	F - 15
		Textiles Project: Photograph/Catalog/re-house the OBHS collection	Textiles	Textiles

Dan S. Internship Schedule

5

M - 18	T - 19	W - 20	H - 21	F - 22
		Textiles	Textiles	LILRC Workshop: 9-12:30

6

M - 25	T - 26	W - 27	H - 28	F - 29
		Moving objects from old location to new location: handling of objects	Move from historic house to new location	Christ Church Records preliminary processing for deed of gift

7

M - 1 AUGUST	T - 2	W - 3	H - 4	F - 5
		Christ Church Records	Christ Church Records	Christ Church Records

8

M - 8	T - 9	W - 10	H - 11	F - 12
		Christ Church Records	Christ Church: Deed of gift and simple finding aid. Paperwork process.	Choose WWII interview, convert cassett to MP3 using Audacity

Dan S. Internship Schedule

9

M - 15	T - 16	W - 17	H - 18	F - 19
		WWII interview transcription	WWII interview transcription	WWII interview transcription

10

M - 22	T - 23	W - 24	H - 25	F - 26
		WWII interview transcription	Dan out	Dan out

11

M - 29	T - 30	W - 31	H - 1 SEPTEMBER	F - 2
		Book and Document repair	Resume review & rewrite / Evaluation and exit interview	Dan blogs about his experiences as an intern including photos/footage

Setting an Example as a Supervisor

Meeting the goals outlined by the Internship Learning Contract

Completing a mid-term and/or final evaluation

Help student to meet all of the deadlines outlined by their course instructor

Mentor the student throughout the internship

Treat the student as a professional

Final grade (example)

Activity	Percentage of Final Grade
Site Supervisor Evaluations	40%
Site Visit Manager Evaluation	15%
In-Class Attendance	10%
Student Experience (journal, paper, etc.)	35%
Total	100%

Conclusions

Internships should provide a solid foundation of practical experience that is typically unavailable during the course of regular study. Prepared graduates yield confident professionals who, in short order, become the the future protectors of the historical record. Students should expect more from their site supervisors and advocate for their hands-on experience in the field. While supervisors should be prepared for the responsibility of guiding the student to a successful completion of their internship.

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Thank you!

Nicole Menchise

Regional Archivist

Long Island Library Resources Council

nmenchise@lilrc.org

631-675-1570 x2004

