

Information Technology Careers Internship Student Handbook

You are responsible for reading and understanding everything in this handbook before beginning the ITC Internship course. If you have any questions you must contact the ITC internship supervisor without delay to receive clarification. Do not just read some parts of this handbook before beginning your internship!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I register for the ITC Internship class?

First, you need to find an IT position you can use for internship credit. See FAQ #3 below and step 1 of the “ITC Internship Course Enrollment Steps” for more on that. Once you have a position see the section “ITC Internship Course Enrollment Steps” in this handbook for detailed steps to get registered.

The ITC Internship course is not a course where you register and then you find or are placed at an internship. Instead, you take this course to receive credit for internship work experience so you need to have an internship position accepted before you register, this is why instructor approval is required to register.

The ITC Internship course is offered every term and, although it only shows a limited number of seats, the course will not fill up as we will expand the course as needed. You can also register for this course even after a term starts so there is not a rush to register for the course. See FAQ #6 for more details.

2. When am I ready to take the internship course?

We normally recommend that you start looking for internship positions anytime after you have completed the ITC 2000 PC Hardware & Software course. The ITC Internship course is offered every term (including summer) and you can also register for this course even after a term starts so as soon as you are hired for a position and have approval from the ITC internship supervisor you can start.

It's easier to get hired if you have previous experience in IT. However, we realize this is not normally the case for students! Especially if you do not have previous experience you will probably find it easier to get hired if you have passed professional certification exams so that people know you have some knowledge, skills, and abilities in the IT area. The CompTIA A+ professional certification is a good place to start. If you've taken the ITC PC Hardware & Software course you should be well on your way to passing that certification. It's suggested you contact your PC Hardware & Software instructor for advice on passing the certification and take some practice exams to help prepare you. If you already have the CompTIA A+ and have also completed all our CCNA courses passing the CCNA certification is another great way to show you know your way around even more complex IT systems.

3. How do I find an internship position?

You will find your internship position the same way you would find any job in the IT field. IHCC does not normally place students at internships, you will seek and find a suitable position yourself. It is strongly suggested you work with the IHCC Career Development office to review your resume, brush up on interview skills, and get tips on job searching <https://www.inverhills.edu/careerdevelopment>

We realize there are very few positions advertised specifically as internships in the IT field. Most IT jobs can be used for credit in the internship course. See details elsewhere in this handbook for specific requirements for positions.

Many ITC internship students are just getting into the IT field, in that case it is most likely that you will be looking for and hired into an IT Helpdesk type position. Those can work just fine for your internship as long as the position allow you to do a little bit of project work or job shadowing with other IT positions as well. See detailed position requirements in step 1 of the “ITC Internship Course Enrollment Steps” later in this handbook. Ask your IHCC ITC internship supervisor if you have questions about whether a specific job will meet the internship requirements.

When searching for job openings it is useful to know that there are not standardized names for IT positions across companies. Some companies have titles like “Service Desk Analyst I” while others call the same position “IT Support”, “PC Technician”, “Level I Support Analyst”, etc. So, if it at first appears there aren’t many open jobs try searching with some other terms and also be sure to read through job descriptions, even of jobs that have titles that don’t sound like what you’re looking for as they may still work.

Your first IT position might be a “contract” position with a defined length (such as 6 months) instead of an open-ended job you keep until you leave, are fired, etc. Those contract positions are often easier to get as they typically do not offer benefits and are great options for getting early career experience like with the internship.

Sometimes positions are advertised through a third party (not the company you will work for) sometimes called a recruiting firm, staffing agency, or headhunting firm. This is especially the case with entry level positions. In fact, you will often see the same position advertised by multiple different recruiting firms with slightly different language. These types positions can also work as internship positions and the recruiting firms can sometimes be of assistance in preparing you for interviews, etc. However, they can also sometimes lead you to apply for jobs which you’re really not qualified for just so they can get some credit for bringing in people to interview. Be sure you’re not letting them waste too much of your time.

The best way to find open jobs in IT is to “network”. Ask your friends, family, social media friends, etc. if they know of any open entry level IT positions. It never hurts to make a profile on job networking sites like LinkedIn as well. A good resource for looking for IT jobs is a job search website focused on the tech area. One example of such as site is <https://www.dice.com> It’s suggested that you upload your resume to these sites *and* you search the sites for jobs and apply to jobs. As mentioned above there are a lot of

different titles for entry level IT jobs so you will probably need to search a lot of terms. Some suggested terms are:

- Support
- Technical Support
- CompTIA A+
- Helpdesk
- Service Desk

4. What if I am unable to find a position titled intern or described as an internship?

No problem! We realize there are very few positions advertised specifically as internships in the IT field. Most IT jobs can be used for credit in the internship course. See details elsewhere in this handbook for specific requirements for positions. For advice on looking for a position see FAQ #3.

5. What about jobs that list a requirement for a degree or experience?

You are encouraged to apply for jobs you think you're qualified for even if they list a degree (2 year or 4 year) or experience as a requirement which you don't have yet. In many cases these requirements are listed in the hopes they can get someone who has that qualification but that is often times wishful thinking on the part of employers. There is nothing about an entry level IT position, such as a helpdesk position, at most companies which requires a degree. Of course, you will be at an advantage if you do have a degree and apply. The same goes for experience or professional certifications. These things will give you a "leg up" during the hiring process but "requirements" are usually negotiable. If you don't have a degree or previous experience it is helpful to have one or more professional certifications though. This is why you are strongly encouraged in your classes to complete professional certifications such as the CompTIA A+ and CCNA. Once you have these certifications you should certainly include them on your resume and applications/interviews.

6. What if I don't have an internship position when classes start for the term or I won't have 192 hours done by the end of the term?

This is why we require you have a position and receive approval *before* you are allowed to register for the internship course. Keep looking for a position. Internships are not like regular classes, we can register you for the internship course at any time during the semester, you do not need to register before the semester starts. As soon as you find and are hired for a position you can contact the ITC internship supervisor to get registered for the class even if it's the middle of the semester.

We will normally register you for the course during the semester where the majority of your hours will be completed. This may mean that you start working at your internship even before you are registered for the course, that's OK as long as you have cleared it with the ITC internship supervisor and have completed all the assignments as described in this handbook.

If you get to the end of a semester which you are registered for the internship course and have been working at an internship but don't have all your 192 hours or assignments completed yet you should

contact your ITC internship supervisor. Our normal process is for you to request an “Incomplete” grade for the internship course, due to campus policy *you* must request and agree to the incomplete. You can then finish your hours and/or assignments and work with your ITC internship supervisor to get your final grade submitted and the course completed.

7. Can I get credit for work I did in the past? What if I worked somewhere last summer and want to get internship credit for that work?

Sorry, no. You must contact the ITC internship supervisor, register for the class, and complete some of the assignments before you can begin counting your hours towards the internship. You then must do other assignments during the course of the 192 hours, and still others after the internship is over. You cannot do these assignments after the fact and need to collaborate with the ITC internship supervisor to get approval for your internship before you can count work towards the internship.

8. What if I already have a job and am unable to take an internship?

Our goal with the internship course is to launch or propel your career in IT so it is important to get real-world work experience in the IT field.

If you already work in the IT area it is possible that your existing job may be able to count for the internship. In this case you should read through the requirements in this handbook and then contact the ITC internship supervisor to discuss your situation and request approval to use your current job.

If you do not currently work in the IT field you probably will not be able to count your current job for the internship and will need to find an internship which meets the requirements in this handbook. We do normally require that internships are paid (more information later in this handbook) so the internship course may provide an opportunity to leave your current position and begin your IT career.

Finally, there is much flexibility in the internship program, while many students work 20-40 hours a week during their internship you don't have to do this, it's possible to complete the internship (over a longer period of time) working 5-10 hours a week if you have another job which you need to keep.

Internship Guidelines and Policies

Introduction

Involvement in a professional, field experience has significant value during your academic career. The practical application of classroom learning and practice gives meaning and fulfillment to formal education experienced and the world of full-time professional work.

The purpose of this internship experience is to augment formal classroom instruction and to provide you with an opportunity to carry out the concepts discussed during formal classroom instruction. It is a goal of the Inver Hills Community College ITC Internship program to prepare you for the workplace by introducing you to an environment where you can exhibit resourcefulness, effectively execute situational leadership, think critically, and use problem-solving to determine solutions to a variety of technology related challenges.

At least once during the course of your internship you will be visited by your supervising faculty member who will meet with your on-site supervisor at the same time at the site of employment. At the discretion of your supervising faculty member a second meeting may be required. Again, at the discretion of the supervising faculty member the followup meeting may be conducted electronically (via video chat, telephone, etc.) In all cases at least one meeting must occur at the site of employment. At the end of the internship your on-site supervisor will be asked to complete an evaluation of you and return to your supervising faculty member.

Internships provide an invaluable addition to your curriculum. Not only do they give you an introduction to the world of work, they also enable you to apply specific skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom. This work experience, coupled with the on-site supervisor's written evaluation, helps you carefully examine your career options within the information technology field.

The internship also provides you with an opportunity to learn new skills, both technical and interpersonal. Hopefully, an additional benefit for many interns will be the chance to create opportunities for future employment.

Specific Internship Guidelines

- There must be at least 192 hours of workplace experience for a three credit internship course.
- You may sign up for the internship course on a standard graded course or a pass/fail basis.
- Internship grades will, at a minimum, be based on an expectations paper, a work journal, a post-internship report, the meeting(s) with you and your on-site supervisor, and your on-site supervisor's written evaluation.
- Except in very specific circumstances the US Department of Labor requires that interns be paid at least minimum wage by employers. Inver Hills Community College will not allow internships which do not meet US Department of Labor criteria. For more information see the US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division Fact Sheet #71.

ITC Internship Course Enrollment Steps:

1. Find an employer willing to take you on as an intern, apply for and be accepted to the position. The position does not have to be specifically advertised as an internship position but it must be an IT position and the employer must be willing to assist in developing you as an employee and fulfilling their role in the internship.
 - *Note: Except in very specific circumstances the US Department of Labor requires that interns be paid at least minimum wage by employers. Inver Hills Community College will not allow internships which do not meet US Department of Labor criteria. For more information see the US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division Fact Sheet #71.*
 - *Note: Helpdesk work alone is not usually acceptable as an internship, though this can certainly be a large component of it. You are expected to participate in at least one bigger IT project which involves collaboration with others in the IT department, project meetings, change management, etc. or other such experiences above and beyond providing support. If you have specific questions about whether a job would qualify as an*

internship discuss it with your faculty supervisor prior to signing up for the internship class.

2. Contact your faculty supervisor and provide them with your name, your star ID, the name of your employer, and the name and contact information for your on-site supervisor. Once this information is received and the faculty supervisor has approved your internship they will create a permission for you in eServices so you can register for the ITC 2189 course.
 - *Note: Your internship does not necessarily need to start and end at the same time as the regular college semester schedule. We can accommodate internships which start before one semester begins and/or end after a semester normally ends. Typically, you will be assigned the internship course during the semester in which the majority of the work will occur. Contact your faculty supervisor for additional details.*
3. Prior to the beginning of your internship period (the 192 hours for a three credit internship) you must complete a goals and expectations paper and submit it to your faculty supervisor as well as your on-site supervisor. For more information see the assignments section of this document.
 - *Note: Although you can be working at the employer before writing the goals and expectations paper you need to write it and submit it to your faculty supervisor before you can begin counting the 192 hours minimum and begin keeping your work logs.*

Employer Responsibilities

The employer plays a key role in preparing you for the professional world. As an intern, you will gain insight into the information technology profession in a way not often attainable through classroom experiences. The on-site supervisor will help guide you through a progression of experiences ranging from site orientation to assuming progressively greater responsibilities. The expected responsibilities of the employer include:

1. Providing qualified supervision of the intern
2. Determining, with the intern, the types of learning experiences that are mutually beneficial and rewarding.
3. Preparing the firm's employees for the arrival of the intern.
4. Orienting the student to the mission, policies, programs, and services provided by the employer.
5. Evaluating the intern's performance and the degree to which the intern meets stated goals and objectives, completion of a final written evaluation.
6. Participation in at least one meeting with the supervising faculty member to review internship progress and the facilitation of hosting that meeting at the workplace. Participation in a second meeting with the supervising faculty member at the discretion of the faculty member.
7. Integrating the intern, at all appropriate levels, as a fully functioning participant in the company's activities, projects, programs, and services.
8. Notifying the supervising faculty member promptly of any problems regarding the intern on the intern's conduct which may adversely affect the intern, your company, or Inver Hills Community College.

Intern Conduct

As an intern, you must accept the responsibilities and obligations of a professional staff member and adhere to the principles, practices, and policies of the organization. You will need to understand the nature of privacy, confidentiality, and human respect that are prime factors in the workplace. Even as an intern, you are also a representative of Inver Hills Community College and, as such are governed also by college policies and practices. A breach of conduct may have consequences detrimental to you, clients, employers, the ITC department, and the school.

It is expected that you will respect, acknowledge, and abide the policies set forth by your employer as well as by Inver Hills Community College. Any variance from these policies is cause for immediate concern, and could ultimately result in the termination of your employment, failure or removal from the internship, and/or legal action.

In all instances, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. That conduct should extend to writing reports, exchanging information, and interacting with staff and clients.

Assignments

The following section will describe the core required assignments for successful completion of the internship. Your faculty supervisor may have additional assignments or questions for you which you will be notified of at the time you are enrolled in the internship.

Goals and Expectations Paper

Prior to the beginning of your internship period (the 192 hours for a three credit internship), but not necessarily before beginning your work, you must complete a goals and expectations paper and submit it to your faculty supervisor as well as your on-site supervisor. This paper should be about three pages (double spaced) in length and should, at a minimum, include:

- Your name, the name of the company where you'll be interning, the dates your internship will start and is projected to end, and the name/contact information for your on-site supervisor
- A description of the types of projects and work you expect to be doing as part of your internship
- A description of the types of non-technical skills you expect will be important to a successful internship
- A list and description of the broad goals you have for your internship. What do you hope to get out of the internship experience?
- A list and description of any specific skills you would like to attain or improve upon as a result of your internship experience.

Engineering Journal/Work Reflection Log

You must maintain an engineering journal or work reflection log with entries at least once per week. The log must be submitted in its entirety to your supervising faculty member at least once per month, one week before any meetings the faculty supervisor has with you and your on-site supervisor, and a final copy at the conclusion of the internship. You must have at least one substantial entry per week in your

journal but may have more. A substantial entry is typically 2-3 paragraphs in length. Entries should include topics such as:

- Assignments and responsibilities
- Insights about professionalism
- Discoveries about the needs and trends of the profession
- Problems encountered and how they were dealt with
- How internship expectations and goals are being met or the challenges of meeting them

Each journal entry should emphasize your reactions to and reflections of your work situation in addition to a summarized description of your activities.

1. Record the date the entry is being made as well as the hours worked each day and a total for the week. Remember that your internship must include working a total of at least 192 hours.
2. Describe a positive situation/comment, which happened at work this week, and why you think it happened.
3. Describe an area of your current performance, which you could improve, and how you could do so.
4. Evaluate your progress on meeting last week's goals.
5. Describe any problems or issues you are having at work, and what you could do about them.
6. Did last week's problems get resolved? How or why not?
7. Describe any interesting interaction or conversations with your on-site supervisor or co-workers.

In addition to the description of your activities every other week you should reflect on a professional aspect of your work experience. This means the entries every other week should be a bit longer (typically 4-5 paragraphs). The following topics may assist you in completing this part of your journal entries:

1. Interview Process – Reflect on the interview process for your internship. What aspects of the process were easiest and which were the most difficult for you? What did you find helpful or unexpected in the interview process and what would you do differently in the future?
2. IT Careers – Research and identify major objectives of the IT department at the company and how the various positions within the IT department support those objectives. Focus on the differing types of careers available within the IT department and the knowledge, skills, abilities, education, and experience needed to achieve them.
3. Interpersonal – Reflect on how you fit within the IT department and organization. What types of teams (intra-departmental or cross-departmental) have you gotten to work on and how has that experience been? What types of interactions with your colleagues have you had and how is your work environment?
4. Current Events – Read enterprise IT trade magazines or news sites (such as ComputerWorld, NetworkWorld, etc.) on topics which impact the IT industry. Discuss these topics and current events in the world of IT with your on-site supervisor or another senior employee and reflect on

how you believe your organization is addressing these trends and issues within the corporate environment.

5. Problem Solving – Reflect on some of the work challenges you have faced and the progress you have made on overcoming them including next steps and how you might do things differently in the future.
6. Management and Learning – Identify the different management styles you have experienced at the company (i.e. supporting, delegating, directing, and guiding). Explain a scenario showing how the management style was used, the skills you developed to work successfully in this management system, and what you learned from the experience.
7. Project Management – Track your progress while working on a major project reflecting on the work you have completed as well as the project management process. Identify project management tasks which were helpful in successful completion of the project as well as those which could be improved upon.

Faculty Supervisor Meetings

You are responsible for coordinating with your supervising faculty member and your on-site supervisor to arrange at least one meeting during the course of your internship. This meeting must take place at your workplace. At the discretion of your faculty supervisor you may need to arrange at least one more meeting. Meetings beyond the first may be an electronic meeting (video chat, telephone, etc.) at the discretion of your faculty supervisor. The meeting(s) must include you, your on-site supervisor, and your supervising faculty member. The first meeting should normally take place about halfway through your internship. Both your faculty supervisor and your workplace supervisor typically have busy schedules so you should start planning and scheduling this meeting early!

The general purpose of these meetings is to review some of the content in your engineering journal, discuss how your internship is going, the technical and non-technical skills you are learning, and assess your growth in the internship process. Don't forget to make sure a copy of your current engineering journal is submitted to your supervising faculty member about one week before any meeting.

These meetings should last between 20-30 minutes. The first 10-15 minutes will be you meeting alone with the faculty supervisor, the second 10-15 minutes should include your on-site supervisor and the remaining time an opportunity to show the faculty supervisor your workplace. If the on-site supervisor wishes to have some time alone with the faculty supervisor that can also be accommodated. If concerns are raised by the on-site or faculty supervisors additional meetings may be required.

End of Internship Reflection Paper

After completing your internship period (the 192 hours for a three credit internship), but not necessarily before your last day of work, you must complete a reflection paper and submit it to your faculty supervisor as well as your on-site supervisor. This paper should be about 5-8 pages in length (double-spaced) and should, at a minimum, include:

- Your name, the name of the company where you'll be interning, the dates your internship started and is concluded, and the name/contact information for your on-site supervisor

- An overall summary of your experience as an intern: things that surprised you, things that worked out about as you expected, things that challenged you, and an overall evaluation of the experience.
- A summary of the main things you did throughout the internship, what did you spend most of your time doing? Look back at your goals and expectations paper and consider how what you ended up doing compares with what you thought you would be doing.
- A discussion of the non-technical skills you utilized as part of the internship and how important they were to the work environment. Were non-technical skills more or less important than you expected? Which skills were the most important and why?
- Look back at your goals and expectations paper, how did you do at achieving the broad goals you set for the internship experience?
- What new skills did you learn or improve as a result of your experience?
- How do you feel your internship prepared you for the IT workplace?
- What advice do you have for future internship students?
- Describe your greatest accomplishment or success.
- How well did your Inver Hills Community College classes prepare you for this internship, as related to specific technical skills, broad skills for learning about new technologies, and non-technical skills?
- How have your academic and career goals been affected by your internship experience? How about your personal growth?
- What new insights have you gained about the IT profession?

Nondiscrimination Statement

Inver Hills Community College is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer and educator. This information is available in an alternate format by calling 651-450-3508 or TTY/Minnesota Relay at 1-800-627-3529.

ITC 2189 Internship Syllabus

General Course Information

Prerequisites: Permission of Instructor, Available Position, Approval of Sponsor

Course Description: Provides a supervised work experience utilizing and extending the skills learned in CNT networking and security courses. The experience is intended to result in new learning and increased capabilities for the intern and the completion of authentic work for the sponsoring organization. Internships may be arranged upon the mutual agreement of the student, instructor and sponsoring organization. Internship depends on student qualifications and a successful interview for a particular position. Interns are required to abide by all policies governing employees and meet expectations of regular employment.

Resources: This course requires only the ITC department internship handbook. Additional information related to this course may also be posted on the ITCwiki (<http://wiki.ihitc.net>) and/or course D2L pages.

Course Outcomes:

- Develop a learning plan with specific objectives based on the role and duties of the defined position
- Relate how classroom-based learning was applied in fulfilling the responsibilities encountered on the job
- Specify new learning or enhanced skill sets that were acquired during the work experience
- Evaluate their performance on the job and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement

Assignments and Grading

Assignments in this course will consist of a goals and expectations paper, an engineering journal/work reflection log, two faculty supervisor meetings, an end of internship performance review by your employer, and an end of internship paper. A description of these assignments can be found in the ITC Internship Student Handbook. Failure to turn in one or more of these assignments without approval from your instructor may result in an additional lack of participation penalty of up to 20% of your final course grade depending on the type of assignment not completed.

Grades for the course will be computed by weighting these assignments as well as a participation grade based on feedback from your employer and observations by your instructor:

Goals and Expectations Paper	18%
Engineering Journal/Work Log	25%
Faculty-Supervisor Meetings	12%
End of Internship Paper	25%

Employer Feedback/Observations	20%
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The instructor may round up based on student participation and individual improvement.

Grading Scale

A	100-90%	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B	89-80%	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
C	79-70%	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
D	69-65%	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
F	<65%	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see also I).
I		(Incomplete) Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student.

Course and Campus Policies

Attendance

Students in this course are expected to follow the attendance policy of their employer. A student may receive a course grade of FN or NC after two consecutive weeks of unexcused absence at any time during the semester.

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism and Cheating)

Academic integrity is one of the most important values in higher education. This principle requires that each student's work represents his or her own personal efforts and that the student acknowledges the intellectual contributions of others. The foundation for this principle is student academic honesty. IHCC students are expected to honor the requirements of the College Academic Integrity Policy. The following are some examples of unacceptable academic practices that will be viewed as policy violations.

It is unacceptable to submit the work of another person as your own. If you quote, summarize, paraphrase, or use the ideas of another, you must accurately attribute that information. If you do not acknowledge the source, you are plagiarizing. Academic dishonesty also includes unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting the same assignment for multiple classes without instructor permission; taking an examination for another person and many other situations. If you are unsure whether you are plagiarizing or how to cite a source please ask an instructor or staff member for help.

In this course, the first offense of plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a score of zero on the assignment, quiz or test and reporting of the incident to college administration. Further plagiarism and/or cheating may result in a failure of the course and additional consequences determined by college administration. In addition, plagiarism and cheating are covered by the Student Code of Conduct. Please see the Catalog or IHCC website for details.

Withdrawing from the Course

The last day to withdraw from your course will be the date on which 80% of the course has elapsed. The last day to withdraw for each course can be viewed in E-Services by searching for the course at the following link: <https://webproc.mnscu.edu/registration/search/basic.html?campusid=157>. Click on the course title to view additional details about the course, including last day to withdraw. You may or may not be eligible for a refund, please see the Add, Drop and Withdraw page on the IHCC website: <http://www.inverhills.edu/CourseRegistration/DropWithdrawal.aspx>

E-mail Communications

Recognizing the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail Inver Hills Community College has designated e-mail as an official mode of communication. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. Therefore, students are asked to regularly check and utilize their official college email address while registered for IHCC courses. You should check your email on a regular basis as course changes and communications may be sent by email.

Updates to this Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to modify and adjust this syllabus as needed during the course of this class. The most up to date version will always be available on the course website or from the instructor.