



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

Purpose of the Internship

The Michigan State University Museum Studies Program Internships are supervised work experiences designed to complement the theoretical, methodological, and practical instruction received in MSU's Museum Studies courses, and to assist in preparing students for professional careers in museums. Ideally, this experience should occur after completing the other courses associated with the Museum Studies minor.

The internship should serve as an opportunity for the student to develop patterns of professional behavior and skills, and to apply academic knowledge to a museum work situation. The internship should be constructed so that the student gains experience appropriate to a position that s/he may ultimately seek, i.e., curator, educator, registrar, administrator, exhibit designer, public relations officer, collections manager, preparator, digital assets manager, etc.

Student interns and sponsoring institutions should benefit equally from the internship relationship. For the student the objectives of the internship include:

- to function as a professional within a museum environment, as well as in the broader community of museums;
- to increase awareness of current and practical museum issues and trends;
- to gain knowledge of the organizational structure of a museum and to develop understanding of governance and administrative operations;
- to acquire knowledge and skills related to specific areas of museum work;
- to develop the ability to identify, assess, and solve on-the-job museum problems; and
- to assess and re-assess individual professional goals and development.

Placement of Interns

The MSP Director, Intern Coordinator, or Advisor may assist in the placement of students in internships but the majority of students arrange their own internships. *In any case, it is the student's responsibility to furnish the prospective museum sponsor/supervisor with this information sheet and to negotiate the specific content of the internship experience with that person.*

Notices of some available internships are posted on the MSP web site. Both the Michigan State University Museum and the Broad Art Museum regularly host internships but internships can take place at any appropriate museum in the world as long as the student and sponsor can meet the requirements of the internship.

Internship Course Numbers and Credits

Currently there are three options. Only AL 493 has variable credits but since the *MSU Museum Studies program certificate requires 3 credits, it is recommended that MSU Museum Studies students sign up for AL 496.*

- **AL 493C Museum Internship**
variable credit (2 or 3)

A student may earn a maximum of 6 credits in all enrollments for this course. Restrictions: Not open to freshmen or sophomores. Approval of college.

- **AL 496 Museum Studies Internship**
3 credits

A student may earn a maximum of 6 credits in all enrollments for this course. Prerequisite: AL 485; Recommended Background: AL 498 and AL 494. Restrictions: Approval of college.

- **AL 893 Museum Internship**
3 credits [for graduate students]

A student may earn a maximum of 6 credits in all enrollments for this course.

How to Enroll in Internship

Internships undertaken to satisfy the requirements for the Museum Studies minor or certification must follow an enrollment procedure as follows prior to beginning the internship.

1. Student meets with a prospective internship supervisor, and discusses and agrees on the nature and objectives of the work that will be done in the internship.
2. Student and the supervisor of his/her internship complete and sign the MSU MSP internship contract (downloadable at <http://museumstudies.msu.edu/internships-information-sheet-contract-form-and-evaluation-form/>).
3. Student sends (via email with scanned attachment or by fax) the completed and signed form to MSU MSP Internship Coordinator (macdowel@msu.edu; FAX: 517-432-2856).
4. The MSU MSP Internship Coordinator signs and forwards contract to the MSP Advisor, who will enroll student in the course.

Requirements for Students

Students must work at least 6 hours a week (for a two-credit internship) or 9 hours a week (for a three-credit internship) spread over a fifteen-week period. In addition to fulfilling the obligations of the signed MSP Internship Contract, students who are pursuing the Museum Studies minor must also complete the following for each internship intended to count towards the MSU MSP minor:

- Read at least one journal article, approved by your intern supervisor that relates to the nature or the content of the work you are doing for the internship. Write a typed, double-spaced two page review of it. The first page should be descriptive, the second page analytical. Graduate students should do two article reviews.
- Maintain a journal of internship activities including descriptions of tasks; observations of issues, procedures, challenges, or opportunities encountered. The journal should also include your journal review(s).
- Prepare a 2-3 page double-spaced critical summation about your internship experience and include what impact it has had on your understanding of museum practice as well as on your own career trajectory.
- Prepare a "portfolio". There are no set guidelines for portfolio content since each internship situation is so different but, essentially, it should include documentation of those experiences. Documentation could be photos of you doing the work, photos or copies of any outputs (catalog descriptions, exhibitions, mount building, rehousing collections, educational programs, etc.) in which you have been involved. If you are at a loss what to put in portfolio, consult with your supervisor. The format of the portfolio can also vary. It can be as a Powerpoint, an organized notebook or folder of materials, etc. Think of the portfolio as something (or at least a draft of something) you might show a prospective employer or graduate admission committee.

General Requirements for the Sponsoring Institution/Supervisor

MSU's Museum Studies Program (MSP) requires that sponsoring institutions treat interns as they would any trained and qualified professional staff member. Interns should observe the same work rules as other staff members, attend staff meetings as appropriate to a beginning professional, carry out work assignments productively and efficiently, and accept supervision. The intern/supervisor relationship should be seen as similar to a student/teacher relationship. MSU's MSP expects sponsoring institutions to provide ample opportunities for students to exercise independent professional judgment and decision-making responsibilities. Students should not be excused from performing the less glamorous tasks associated with museum work, but they should be challenged by important and useful projects. The intern must assume professional-level responsibilities and become involved in a major project during the internship period.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the student needs to experience day-to-day museum operations under the direct supervision of a museum professional.

At the end of the internship period, the intern's supervisor will be asked to complete a brief evaluation form assessing the intern's performance.

Evaluation and Grading

To the Interns: Portfolios, journals, and summary statements must be turned into supervisors no later than a week before the end of the semester.

To the Intern Supervisors: At least two weeks before the end of the semester, the Intern Coordinator will send out an Intern Evaluation Form and the date that semester by which it must be completed and sent back.

Upon receipt of the MSP Internship Evaluation Form, the MSP Internship Coordinator will submit a Pass/No Pass grade to the MSU Registrar's Office.

Information Sheet and Forms

- MSU Museum Studies Program Intern Evaluation Form (pdf)
- MSU Museum Studies Program Intern Evaluation Form (doc)
- MSU Museum Studies Program Internship Information (pdf)
- MSU Museum Studies Program Internship Information (doc)

Revised 9.29.2010, Revised 9.16.2010MM, Revised 9.1.2010MM