

**The American University
Washington Semester
International Business and Trade Internship: IBUS 423.003T**

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Office Hours: Determined weekly and by appointment

This 4 credit course includes an internship and an academic class component. The internship experience will help you to better understand many of the concepts and issues you will be covering in the seminar portion of the semester. The internship experience will also help you to refine your career goals and to make important contacts. The academic class is designed to help you maximize your internship experience by exploring academic and practical issues that you will face, such as the search, networking, and securing a suitable letter of recommendation.

Internship Search

Bottom line: You must begin your internship by September 9. This start date affords you three weeks to locate the right internship for you. Familiarize yourself with the program's resources, such as evaluations of internship experiences by former students and from various Washington directories. There will be an Internship Bazaar the morning of August 24.

Some of the course members will arrive in Washington with an internship in-hand. For the rest, they will be spending the first few weeks of the semester securing their internship. If you are a member of the latter group, think hard about which is the right internship for you. Ask yourself, what do I want to get out of my internship experience this semester (a chance to try a profession in which I am interested in making a career; building a network of professional contacts, expanding my skills and résumé, a new experience and perspective, testing classroom theory to real world situations or all of the above)? What are the most important factors for me in choosing an internship (the type of organization, issue-area of work, name recognition, or type of work)? What type of work environment do I prefer (low pressure or have many deadlines; writing/research or fieldwork; formal or casual work environment; and independent or structured supervision)? Could I give my full commitment to this organization and could I be proud of my affiliation with this organization? To answer these questions and to be prepared for interviews, do your homework. Find out as much as possible about the organization, as time permits. For starters, look up their web site and do a Nexus/Lexus search.

You should arrange at least three interviews at different organizations. To be most effective during the internship search, you should have a "boilerplate" cover letter, résumé, writing sample, and list of references and contact information ready. **See**

“Internship Guide for Washington Semester Program,” which is in your orientation packet, for examples.

Cover letter: At the outset, state that you are applying for an internship and specify what your interest is in working at their organization. Indicate that you are a student in the American University Washington Semester program with a concentration on international business and trade and that you will be working every Monday and Tuesday for a total of 16 hours per week, August through December. Also include a brief statement of your qualifications and highlight key elements of your formal résumé. You might also request further guidance as to what other information the organization needs to make a decision.

Résumé: Include biographical and contact information, e.g., current address, telephone number, e-mail, etc.; educational record, previous employment, and relevant skills.

Make sure both the cover letter and résumé are error free and professional. Don’t rely only on your spell checker or your own eyes. I will look it over. Run your documents by the American University writing center and a roommate or friend.

Writing Sample: If available, choose a document that is not more than five pages and is relevant to the internship in which you are applying. A one-page memo addressing an issue the organization is presently concerned about is preferable.

The Interview: Here are some typical interview questions you should think about and practice in a mock interview with a friend: Tell me about yourself, why do you want to work here, what skills do you bring to the job, what are your most important weaknesses? Have some questions of your own. This not only allows you to gather important information, but also indicates your interest. For example, what will my specific responsibilities be? Who will be responsible for directing my work? Will there be other interns here on the days that I intern? From your vantage point, what are the pros and cons of interning here? At a minimum, ask for the timetable for making a decision. Immediately send a follow-up thank you email to the interviewer. This serves as a subtle reminder that they need to take action and signals to the interviewer your professionalism and commitment to following thorough on projects.

The Contract: To clear expectations by all parties and to reduce the potential for misunderstanding, the Washington Semester has the intern, intern supervisor, and faculty advisor sign a contract to assure clarity. Be sure to have a detailed discussion with your supervisor concerning your duties **before** you sign the contract, so you both have the same understanding about what will take place this semester. This careful process will help you avoid any misunderstanding and disappointment later in the semester. The contract will also serve as a basis for the performance evaluation for your supervisor to complete at the end of the term. **Make clear that you will intern every Monday and Tuesday for a total of 16 hours per week. The rest of the week you have academic requirements and you are not permitted to miss any seminar classes, guest lectures,**

or site visits because of your internship. Also indicate to the work supervisor that he will be asked to prepare an evaluation at the end of the semester.

Course Requirements and Grading:

The Internship	40%
Academic Evaluation	60%

The Internship: Your internship supervisor will complete a Washington Semester Program evaluation form at the end of the semester. The evaluation covers such skills and attributes as diligence, initiative, follow-through, dependability, and working well with colleagues. You should meet with your supervisor at least three times during the course of the semester to discuss your performance, any problems you have, and to invite constructive criticism. This will help your supervisor to start thinking about the evaluation early in the process. Also, at the end of the semester, ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation.

I will be in communication with your supervisor. This is primarily to establish contact and to ensure that the internship is going well. If at any time you sense problems that you are unable to resolve, you should bring them to my attention. My role is to act as liaison and trouble-shooter in these cases. Such instances are fortunately rare, but do not hesitate to speak to me if your duties are unclear or the terms of your contract are not being met.

Academic Evaluation:

Internship Search Debriefing memo (10%): In 3 to 5 pages, you will discuss and analyze your experience in finding an internship. Explain how you executed the search process and analyze what lessons were learned. Also, give background information about your organization and supervisor. Finally, clearly state your goals for the internship. This also includes the Internship Search Questionnaire worksheet.

Internship Billable Hours sheet (15%): Twice during the first half of the semester, you are required to submit a maximum of one double spaced page (you may attach completed projects) that details the previous two weeks (Monday and Tuesday) internship experience. At a minimum, you will, as lawyers and business consultants do, account for your time, your billable hours. You will also give the week's experience and your supervisor a grade and an explanation for that grade. I recommend you go beyond outlining your daily activities and that you include analysis and personal feelings about your experience, including professional networking and interesting or humorous anecdotes. Ask important questions about the organization such as "why are they conducting business in this way." If you don't turn in the sheet, you will receive zero points and if you write an excellent sheet, you will receive 5 points. (see sample)

Informational Interview paper (10%): Select one person in your organization (not your immediate supervisor) for an informational interview. After the meeting, write up a 3 to 4 page summary and analysis (don't just repeat the questions and answers) of the interview. This project is intended to broaden your understanding of the organization,

provide you with more information about careers in business and trade, add a new person to your professional network, and show the value of informational interviews. Here are some suggested questions: How and why did you get involved in this area of business? What is your educational background? What other jobs did you hold prior to this position? What are your career goals? Do you have any advice or suggestions for me regarding my future in the business world?

Class Participation and Attendance (15%): We will meet as a group approximately four times through the semester to discuss the internship, the assignments, and assigned readings. Thoughtful and informed class participation will improve your grade. On the other hand, not attending class or coming unprepared will significantly lower your grade.

Internship Evaluation paper (10%): Based on an evaluation of your billable hour sheets and the second half of the semester, you are to write a 4-5 page paper that evaluates your internship experience. Include in this paper a discussion of the level of challenging work, amount of work, percentage of substantive work, quality of supervision, location / commute, office dynamic and access to Washington resources. Explain why you would or would not recommend this internship to other students. Finally, explain the differences between what you observed in your internship and what you learned in the International Business and Trade seminar.

Class Schedule

The following is a general (approximate) outline of our class schedule for the semester.
Orientation Week: (August 20)

Internship Session 1

Introductory meeting and Intern search strategy discussion (Wednesday, August 26)

Due: Internship Search Questionnaire worksheet is due by 9pm, August 23. Attach your resume and a cover letter and email the documents to Sosland@american.edu. An E-version of this document is on Blackboard.

Internship Session 2

Internship Search Debriefing (Wednesday, Sept. 16)

Due: Intern Search Memo Monday, Sept. 14 (to my mailbox, no later than 5pm)

Due: Billable Hours #1 Sept. 22 (email to Sosland@american.edu before 10pm).

Due: Billable Hours #2 Oct. 6 (email to Sosland@american.edu before 10pm).

Internship Session 3

Discuss Informational Interview and networking (Wednesday, Nov. 4)

Due: Informational Interview paper Monday, Nov. 2 (to my mailbox, no later than 5pm)

Internship Session 4

Class presentation of Internship Evaluation (Wednesday, Nov. 18)

Due: Internship evaluation paper Monday, Nov. 16 (to my mailbox, no later than 5pm)