



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

# Norton School of Family & Consumer Sciences

Retailing & Consumer Sciences

## Retailing and Consumer Science

### Internship Policy Handbook

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Please note that all internship activity in the Retailing and Consumer Science program is governed by the [University of Arizona's Internship Policy](#), and is subject to change.

## Purpose of an Internship

The primary goal of an internship is to give students an opportunity to apply lessons learned in the classroom to a real-world experience set in a professional practice-oriented environment, with the intern's work overseen by a professional. In addition to offering students the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their technical skills, it allows students to develop professional skills such as teamwork, effective communication, social interaction and professional networking, an understanding of business procedures, leadership and critical thinking. Finally, it should provide students with work experience within a semi-formal academic framework that carries with it's official course credit from The University of Arizona.

## Objectives of the Retailing and Consumer Science Internship Program

1. To provide the student with a realistic hands-on experience in their chosen field of specialization.
2. To provide students with professional business exposure and role models who can assist in clarifying career goals.
3. To expose students to the processes involved in acquiring and holding a position in the business world.
4. To assist students in understanding the relationship of subject matter, personal skills and abilities, and responsibilities in the pursuit of professional goals.
5. To allow an opportunity for interns to learn from one another during their internship experience
6. Create an opportunity for students to share their experiences with students in the major.

## What Qualifies for Credit

An internship through the RSCS program needs to fit within one of two categories of professional learning and must be clearly justified in your Internship Work Plan for approval. See below for how to complete the Internship Work Plan.

1. The internship must be related to the Retailing and/or Consumer Sciences fields of retail, merchandising, digital marketing, planning and allocation, buying, supply chain, or other topics clearly covered in the Retailing and Consumer Science program.
2. OR the internship must be based in general management activities related directly to the student's academic and professional goal, explained in detail in the Internship Work Plan.

In addition, there are rules outlined in the University of Arizona Internship Policies that clarify what justifies as an internship experience.

- Internship credit cannot be awarded for an ongoing job. If an exception is made for a student who is a paid employee of the sponsoring organization, require the student AND the work supervisor to submit letters outlining the additional work to be performed above and beyond

the student's regular work responsibilities (e.g., the internship component might be 10 hours/week spent completing a special project beyond the student's usual work hours).

- The 80-20 rule: No more than 20 percent of the intern's task can be designated as clerical (answering phones, filing, etc). The other 80 percent should be substantial professional development engagements, continued learning, or work on a project or projects, allowing the intern to witness the primary business functions of the organization.

### Receiving Pay and Academic Credit

As stated in the University of Arizona Internship Policies, "The University of Arizona awards credit for paid or unpaid internships. Whether or not an internship is paid should not be considered as criteria by a department when determining whether an internship meets the learning objectives and other substantive requirements for academic credit."

This means a student can receive academic credit AND be paid for their internship experience.

## Overview of Credit

Credit for all internships through the Retailing and Consumer Science program will adhere to these policies.

- Credit will appear on your schedule as RCSC493b
- Internship credits will not be awarded retroactively for internship duties performed at an earlier time. It is against the University of Arizona Internship Policy.
- RCSC493b is graded on a superior/pass/fail scale and are not calculated into your GPA
- RCSC493b can be taken for between 3 and 9 units
- You may only take a maximum of 9 units of “Optional Experiential Electives” per your advising degree plan. These include practicum, independent study and/or preceptorship units you have received or plan to receive over the course of your program. Speak with your advisor to ensure you are not exceeding this limit.
- Units are awarded based on the number of hours a student will be in training, learning or working at the site
  - 45 hours participating in internship activities (including related training/learning) = 1 unit of credit
  - Students must have a minimum of 135 hours in the given semester to earn RCSC493b credit (equivalent to a minimum of 3 units)
  - See the chart under “Determining Your Number of Units”

## Dates and Deadlines

- Student must enroll in the semester their internship takes place no later than the first day of class, for Spring, Fall or full Summer.
- Enrollment can only happen when the student completes and submits their Internship Work Plan to the Internship Coordinator. The Internship Coordinator will then communicate with the student’s advisor the semester the student should be enrolled for and for how many units.
- Fall and Spring internship credit will require all academic portions due the last day of the regular class of the semester of enrollment.
- Summer internship credit will appear on students’ Summer schedule for the full Summer session. All academic portions for summer internships are due the last day of classes for the corresponding Summer session.

## Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Before applying for an internship, students should meet the following:

- Be in good academic standing with the University of Arizona and have maintained at least a 2.5 grade point average (major and cumulative) at the University of Arizona prior to enrolling for an internship. If your GPA is lower than a 2.5, you can contact the Internship Coordinator and ask for an appeal.
- Continuing students should have completed at least two full-time semesters--a minimum of 24 University Credits. Transfer students should have completed at least one full-time semester—a minimum of 12 University Credits.
- Be a declared pre-major or major, depending on your catalog, in the Retailing and Consumer Science program, within the Norton School of Family and Consumer Science.

## How to Apply

Please note that you cannot enroll yourself in internship units. It must be done through the Internship Coordinator. Any questions can be directed to Liz Marsalla at [eakelly2@arizona.edu](mailto:eakelly2@arizona.edu).

1. Secure an offer for an internship experience. We cannot enroll you for credit if you do not yet have a secure offer.
2. Create an account in the RCSC internship portal.
3. Complete the **Internship Work Plan** and **COVID-19 Workplace Evaluation** provided to you in the RCSC internship portal, including the portion with requires coordination with your Internship Supervisor or Recruiter AND the number of weeks, number of hours per week and the start and stop dates of your internship. THIS IS CRUTIAL TO YOUR ENROLLMENT.
4. Once the form is complete, you will receive a confirmation email from the Internship Coordinator regarding your enrollment status. The Internship Coordinator will have your Academic Advisor enroll you in the appropriate session (Spring, Fall or full Summer) and in the appropriate number of units (between 3 and 9).
5. Check your schedule to verify the correct number of units and semester.

## Determining Your Number of Units

As outlined above, 45 hours of internship work is equal to 1 unit of academic credit. You can use this formula to determine how many units you are eligible for

### **Formula:**

# of weeks X # of hours per week = total # of hours / 45 hours per unit = possible # of units (round down)

### **Example:**

8 weeks X 40 hours per week = 320 total hours / 45 hours per unit = 7.1 = 7 total possible units

You can also utilize this chart:

Does not qualify for credit	Less than 135 hours
3 units	135 hours
4 units	180 hours
5 units	225 hours
6 units	270 hours
7 units	315 hours
8 units	360 hours
9 units	405 hours

This portion of your Internship Work Plan must be completed correctly for enrollment. If you have questions, please contact your Internship Coordinator as soon as possible.

## Cost of Internship Credit

If you are planning to intern for academic credit, you will have to pay for the units, just as you would academic credit. To determine the cost for your chosen number of units, please visit the Bursar's Office Tuition Calculator here: <https://tuitioncalculator.fso.arizona.edu/#/>

Here are some things to note:

- If you are interning during the Fall or Spring semester, and are taking a full-time course load of a minimum of 12 units, your tuition will not go up if you add internship credit.
- Summer interns will have to pay per unit of academic credit they receive.
- If you are classified as out-of-state, during summer courses, you will get to pay in-state tuition.
- If you are Pell Grant eligible, you can utilize Pell Grant to offset costs during summer if you take a minimum of 6 units, but you do have to request it by contacting the Office of Scholarship and Financial Aid.

Summer Impact Award: There is a summer internship scholarship available for unpaid or underpaid internships you can apply to through the Office of Student Engagement and Career Development. More information can be found here: <https://career.arizona.edu/skills-experience/summer-impact-awards>

## Internship Responsibilities

### Student Intern Responsibilities

Student interns must agree to the following:

- Apply for internship credit at least one week before the beginning of the semester for credit to be earned. The internship must run within the dates of the internship semester.
- Pay any registration fees associated with the credits to be earned, and if you receive financial aid, consult with the Financial Aid and/or Scholarship Office prior to registering.
- Discuss with your prospective supervisor at the work site the possible risks and dangers associated with the planned internship through the Internship Work Plan.
- Recognize that you are representing The University of Arizona as an ambassador to the community and abide by the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Code of Academic Integrity](#).
- Fulfill all of the academic assignments and reporting requirements of the internship course as specified by the department in order for a grade to be assigned.
- Ensure that your direct supervisor is able and willing to submit an evaluation on your behalf. Some organizations have personnel policies prohibiting your supervisor from providing a written intern evaluation. If this is the case, special arrangements must be made for your supervisor to speak directly with the course instructor about your performance.
- Submit the required course assignments through D2L, as required by your instructor, communicated in the course syllabus.

### Academic Department Responsibilities

Department Internship Coordinators Agree to:

- Ensure students who participate in scholarships are in good academic standing.
- Ensure that students are not awarded internship credit for their ongoing job. If an exception is made for a student who is a paid employee of the sponsoring organization, require the student and the work supervisor to submit letters outlining the additional work to be performed above and beyond the student's regular work responsibilities (e.g., the internship component might be 10 hours/week spent completing a special project beyond the student's usual work hours).
- Ensure that interns are not used as free labor in for-profit organizations/facilities that are owned or operated by the faculty member who will award the internship credit and grade. If internships are permitted in such a facility, the interns should be compensated as an employee of the organization.
- Inform students of the necessity of complying with pertinent department and workplace policies and procedures.
- Require that instructors document communications with the student and work supervisor regarding internship activities.
- Notify the student that, unless other agreements are made between the student and instructor, the instructor and department will not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by the student for his/her participation; this includes, but is not limited to, travel and housing arrangements.
- Notify the student that neither the instructor nor the University will be responsible for the payment of any medical care for injuries alleged to have resulted from the student's work experiences.

Course Instructor Agrees to:

- The instructor and sponsoring organization supervisor should maintain regular communication about the student's work activities during the internship. Any conflicts should be quickly resolved by communication among the student, instructor and sponsoring organization supervisor.
- The instructor should ensure that the internship experience is related to the curriculum by building into the schedule regular interaction with the student. Communication with the student is an important component that elevates the work to a meaningful learning experience.
  - The instructor should require the intern to report on a regular basis throughout the internship. These reports should include:
    - a brief comment on allocation of the intern's time during the period,
    - progress toward objectives, and
    - discussion of any significant difficulties with the internship.

### Sponsoring Organization Responsibilities

An internship provides organizations with an effective outreach to qualified and motivated students. The primary goal of the internship, as stated above, has educational and mentoring components that can be satisfied only through a formal partnership between the organization and University of Arizona college or department. It is the intent of the program that this partnership provides a meaningful learning experience to students as prospective professionals. In this manner, the organization becomes an important asset in the development of interns. As a secondary benefit, the organization has access to well-qualified students as potential candidates for full-time employment after graduation. As a tertiary benefit, the program allows supervisors to evaluate prospective long-term employees under actual work conditions at minimal cost. Initial contacts through the internship may lead to recruitment and eventual hiring, upon graduation, of an employee who has experience with the employer's operating procedures. In addition, multiple internships with the same student over his/her academic career may enable the intern to function at a higher level that will free full-time professional staff for more complex work.

The sponsoring organization's responsibilities are:

- Assign a full-time professional as the Internship Supervisor.
- Provide an agreement outlining the organization's understanding of the internship it intends to offer, including the purpose of the internship, status of the intern, minimum qualifications, and the job description.
- Provide proper information and signatures on the student's Internship Work Plan form. This is an agreement between the student, the organization, and the department.
- Provide pertinent policies and procedures to the prospective intern before she/he begins working.
- Provide relevant education/training to the intern.
- Maintain the intern status of the student, to be distinguished from employment status.
- Make individual arrangements, if agreed upon between the student and organization for any stipend or other benefit of service deemed appropriate.
- Notify the department of any decision to remove the student from the internship prior to the agreed upon time, due to the student's failure to comply with rules or regulations, and provide a written report to the department regarding the reasons for terminating the intern.



- Complete and submit to the course instructor the Internship Final Evaluation by the deadline specified on D2L. The Internship Evaluation form will be provided by the student intern.

## Tips for How to Land an Internship

Finding and then securing internship opportunities is the sole responsibility of the student. While the Retailing and Consumer Science program and the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing can support students in their search and in prepping their materials and themselves for interviews, they cannot place students directly into internship experiences.

Students looking for this kind of hands-on experience should **start researching early**. Retail internships can be competitive and some larger retailers with more structured, formal programs have early deadlines to apply and be accepted into their programs. The best thing is to do your research on what experiences you are looking to gain and what companies, retailers and/or brands offer them.

***If you follow these steps, you have a better chance at landing the internship you are hoping for and gaining invaluable experiences and connections during your undergrad experience.***

1. Start your search at least a year before you are planning to intern and harness your networks.
  - a. Research companies, learn where opportunities exist and find multiple employers you would like to intern with.
  - b. Make sure you are using this time to build YOUR skills. What are you doing to enhance your learning and make yourself a good candidate? (Clubs, part-time jobs, co-curricular or extra-curricular activities that demonstrate your personal and professional experiences and growth).
  - c. Connect with Retailing and Consumer Science students who have interned where you are interested. What advice or tips do they have?
2. Refine your job search materials. This includes your resume and cover letter.
  - a. These two documents are often the first opportunity you have to show recruiters and employers your best self. Make sure you put time and effort into getting them right.
  - b. Meet with the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing, the CALS Career Center or Career Services for constructive feedback on these documents. Remember that while your parents and friends can help, career centers are up-to-date on all important pieces of your career search documents.
3. Connect with people at the company/companies you are looking to intern with.
  - a. You can often find the recruiter or recruitment team on LinkedIn. Connect with a note about your interests and see if they have time to chat about the opportunities in a respectful way.
  - b. Use LinkedIn to search the company and see if you have any connections in common. Connect with connections in common or with UA alumni and ask if they have time to chat for a few about the company and what they might be looking for or ask via email if they have any advice for you.
4. Complete the application early and follow-up with the recruiter/employer to see if they have any questions about your qualifications or interest.
5. Practice interviewing.
  - a. The Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing, the CALS Career Center and Career Services all have abundant opportunities for you to practice your interviewing and will help you to feel more confident and give you valuable feedback before your actual interview.
6. Thank the interviewer and any who have helped you along the way.

- a. Remember that representing yourself in a respectful manner helps you to build long-lasting and valuable relationships. You never know how these connections can serve you in the future.

### Where to look for Internship Opportunities

Finding internships can be a task and can sometimes be overwhelming. If you want to chat with someone about how to seek out these opportunities, you can schedule a meeting with someone the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing who can help you refine your search.

1. The Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing has partnerships with companies and brands looking for interns. This is a great place to start and get referred for positions.
2. [Handshake](#) is the University of Arizona's job and internship connection. All employers listed are vetted and are looking specifically for interns or are looking to fill full-time positions with recent grads.
  1. Make sure to upload your resume and complete your profile so employers can reach out to you, too!
  2. Use the filter tool to seek out internships that fit your needs, including the timeframe/semester, if the position is paid/unpaid, specific locations or remote opportunities, etc.
3. [LinkedIn](#) is a tool used by many brands and retailers to share their opportunities and find interns.
  1. Make sure your profile is complete and professional and start building a strong network with your connections.
  2. Make sure to do some work researching the company and ensuring they are legitimate before applying.
4. [NRF Job Boards](#) has been created by the National Retail Federation has regularly updated positions posted for jobs and internships all over the country.
5. Company websites are also a great plan to find internship opportunities, directly from the source. However, just submitting an application isn't typically going to land you an internship.
  1. If there is a contact, be sure to email and demonstrate your interest and experience.
  2. If you can't find a contact, turn to LinkedIn and do a search of the company and their recruiters/HR contacts.
6. University of Arizona Alumni network is a great resource for you to find internship opportunities. Retailing and Consumer Science alumni are all over the world in companies large and small and many would welcome the opportunity to connect with you! Find out how to make these connections by connecting with the [Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing](#).

Remember if you have questions or are looking for guidance, email the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing at [terrylundgrencenter@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:terrylundgrencenter@cals.arizona.edu) to set up a meeting and discuss your strategy.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *When should I complete an internship?*

- Students typically seek out an internship between their junior and senior years, but can do an internship earlier with special permission.
- RCSC student interns typically intern during Summer session, however there is the ability to complete an internship in the Spring or Fall semester as well. Please keep in mind the number of units you are looking to enroll in and balance it adequately with your courses.

### *Besides working what do I have to do?*

- This internship is closely monitored and evaluated by the employer, the student, and the Internship Coordinator, unlike general work experiences or co-op experiences.
- Internship assignments include professional reflections, a log showing hours worked, a midterm and final presentation to share your experience and learning.
- And other requirements as required in the course syllabus.

### *Where do students do internships?*

- Many larger retailers who have offered internship experiences for several years have developed internship training programs.
  - These organized internships are rigorous and usually provide a wider variety of experience and more challenges to the student with an expected sound background in sales experience.
  - The organized programs expect students to be self-directed and self-starters, building on their prior part-time work experience.
- Internships with smaller employers which can offer more one-on-one specialized guidance.
  - The smaller companies may have less experience with interns; however, they can frequently offer an excellent overview of the total management and business operation difficult to experience in larger firms.

### *Why should I earn academic credit for my internship?*

- You will have the ability to complement your work experience with an opportunity to reflect on your experience through academic assignments.
- The internship experience is recorded on your transcript as academic credit.
- You will have the opportunity to participate in conversations with other interns regarding their experiences and allowing you to network.
- Employers that require credit will receive documentation describing your enrollment.
- At the end of the semester, you will walk away with a full understanding of what you accomplished and know how to articulate it to future employers, as well as an evaluation of your performance.
- Internship credit can reduce the number of other electives you would otherwise need to take in the RCSC program.