

What is a Writing Internship?

WRT 490, Writing Internship, is a supervised work experience in an area of a student's potential career interest. It is usually initiated by the student who plans the work experience with the internship coordinator to supervise the internship and the supervisor at the worksite. Credit is awarded only when the student, the internship coordinator, and the work supervisor, have completed evaluations of the internship.

Each student is responsible for finding an internship, but the department will help in the effort. Since internships are learning experiences, they may be unpaid; but since the intern will do actual work, some organizations do offer stipends and other forms of reimbursement. An internship scholarship may also be available through Career Services.

Starting in fall 2006, professional writing students are required to take a three-credit WRT 490 Writing Internship for graduation. For creative writing students, WRT 490 is a course highly recommended to increase the student's competitive edge on the job market.

By taking WRT 490, you not only get work experiences for your resume but also earn academic credits on your transcript under the guidance of a faculty advisor who helps you reflect on these experiences and prepare for future job searches.

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WRT 490 INTERNSHIPS

*Information for Writing Students
and Parents*

Benefits of WRT 490

- Apply course concepts to workplace communication problems
- Try out a career option
- Gain practical work experience in a real-world workplace
- Build self-confidence and gain a competitive edge
- Network with professionals in your field
- Build a professional portfolio
- Obtain work references

How Do I Qualify for WRT 490?

In order to have your writing internship approved, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a major or minor in writing
- Be at least a junior
- Have a 2.75 cumulative GPA minimum, OR approval of the internship coordinator
- Have taken at least four courses from this list: WRT 200, WRT 210, WRT 219, WRT 251, WRT 350, WRT 351, and WRT 360
- Your internship must be at least 50% writing or editing.

Course Requirements

You must meet both field hour and academic requirements in order to receive academic credits.

Field Hour Requirements — 50%

45 field hours per semester in the internship and supporting academic work for each credit awarded. For a three-credit internship, it will be 135 hours a semester (e.g., 10 hrs/week x 14 weeks = 140 hrs). Credit is awarded only when the student, the faculty coordinator, and the work supervisor have completed evaluations of the internship, including the organization's evaluation, administered by Career Services, and site visits by the academic internship coordinator.

Academic Requirements — 50%

For a three-credit internship course, you need to attend a weekly one-hour seminar and complete course work, including reading reflections, work reports, final report, internship portfolio, and other assignments that will help you better understand your internship experience.

A sample WRT 490 syllabus is available in the Writing Department office.

How Do I Register for WRT 490?

First, have your internship approved by the internship coordinator. Schedule a meeting with the internship coordinator right after you are offered the internship position to discuss the nature of the job, possible learning and training experiences you will obtain at the worksite, and how many credits you want to get awarded (a three-credit internship will require your attendance and participation in a weekly seminar). After you receive the oral approval, you must complete the following paperwork to obtain the course permit:

Official statement signed by job supervisor

- This statement should list objectives and writing projects to be completed during the internship, number of weekly work hours, and beginning and ending dates of the internship. It will be regarded as a “contract” between you and the internship site.
- You may want to work with the supervisor together to reach an agreement of your internship projects.
- It should be faxed or mailed to the internship coordinator, preferably on the organization's letterhead.

A GVSU Internship Agreement Form

- This form needs to be signed by all three parties, including the student, the onsite supervisor, and the internship coordinator, along with Writing Department chair.
- The major part of the form is about your information, which you need to complete.
- You can obtain the form from the Writing Department (LOH 326).

After you return the completed *Internship Agreement Form* to the Writing Department (LOH 326), the Writing Department coordinator will give you a permit to register for the course.

Tip: You should plan for this early because it takes time to complete paperwork from different parties. You don't want to miss the deadline of registering for the course.

Finding a Writing Internship

- Plan early. The search for an internship may take months, so it is important to begin searching in advance.
- Schedule a meeting with the internship coordinator to discuss your background and career interests and set up an action plan. You should try to set up the meeting at least three months prior to the beginning of the semester in which you wish to do the internship to allow time to find a site that meets your needs and interests.
- Join the **Writing Job & Internship Listserv** to receive e-mail announcements on a regular basis. To sign up, please send an e-mail to the internship coordinator.
- Sign up for the department internship workshops. Every semester a series of internship workshops will be offered to all writing students. Topics include searching for writing internships, resume critiques, and professional networking.
- Sign up for the career counseling workshops offered by the Career Services (206 STU). You can find out the event information at this website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>.
- Get your resume and cover letter reviewed and critiqued by the internship coordinator, Writing Center, or Career Services.
- Register an account at the website of Career Connections (<http://gvsu.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>), GVSU's full-service web-based employment system. You will be able to find a lot of internship information there.
- Network with local professional writers by attending monthly STC (Society for Technical Communication) chapter meetings. Two students will be sponsored every time. Event information can be found at this website: <http://www.wms-stc.org/>.

A list of internship locations is available in the Writing Department office. Some previous internship locations include the:

- Red Cross of West Central Michigan
- Zondervan Publishing
- Humane Society of Kent County
- The Grand Rapids Children's Museum.