INTERNSHIP GUIDE

The University of Memphis
Computer Science
COMP 4/6911: Internship in Computer Science

Purpose of the internship program:
To provide students with a valuable and enjoyable real-world experience in computer science related work, mostly with local businesses, industries and/or organizations.

The Department recognizes the value of on-the-job experience to the educational development of students. We strongly encourage majors to pursue internship experiences as part of their academic program.

Students can receive academic credit for a qualifying internship. A student participating in an internship who wishes to receive academic credit must register for COMP4911/6911. A qualifying internship satisfies 3 elective credits in the computer science major; however, a student may apply an internship to an elective credit only once. A student may apply for a 3-hour or 1-hour internship credit.

Qualifying Internships
An internship for which academic credit may be awarded is one in which:
1. Students are able to apply the concepts and methods of one or more academic disciplines to an appropriate work experience or field setting;
2. Students are able to grow intellectually by the extension of the general intellectual tools of one or more academic disciplines to the workplace; and
3. Department faculty are able to assess the quality of academic work completed by the student.

Work that is clerical in nature or involves routine maintenance responsibilities does not qualify for academic credit.

How to set up an internship

1. Make an appointment with your academic advisor the semester prior
You need to discuss with him/her how the internship fits into your degree requirements. The internship can be counted as one of the elective courses (and only once), so it cannot substitute for another required course.

2. Secure an internship position
There are many opportunities available to students through internships at local businesses and organizations. Students are encouraged to explore paid and unpaid internships via formal programs at large companies and ad-hoc intern postings at small companies and start-ups. You can find a partial list of
current and previous internships opportunities on the department website and through the University of Memphis career office.

3. Formulate the Internship
The final result of this step is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a formal contract between a student and a sponsor describing their goals and expectations, the intern’s scope of work, and criteria for evaluation.

The scope of work will also help you decide whether to take an internship course for 1 or 3 credit hours, and what kind of compensation you will receive for it, if any, beyond the other benefits of the internship.

Please note that international students must visit the International Student Office in order to arrange for a permit to work in the US. This procedure may take time, so contact the Office with due anticipation.

4. Follow through with Your Academic Advisor
Once an internship has been arranged, you can obtain a permit for registering and take COMP 4911 or 6911. Bring the following items to the meeting with your advisor:
- “Memo of Understanding” document
- INS certification form/permit to work (for international students)

Once your advisor forwards his/her approval to the internship coordinator (IC), the IC will issue a permit for you to sign up so you can register into the appropriate section of COMP 4/6911 (1h or 3h credit.) It will be part of your academic load, and will require payment of tuition/fees.

5. Obtain Your Employer Evaluation

All students must obtain an internship evaluation from their employer. This form must be printed, filled out, signed, and returned to the student’s academic advisor before a grade for academic credit will be awarded.

6. Deliver Your Final Presentation

To receive academic credit, all students who complete an internship must deliver a presentation on their experiences. The presentation must be done no later than the semester following the internship; i.e., if a student completes an internship in the summer, they would complete their presentation in the fall.

It is preferred for students to deliver presentations to their peers, during a lecture period of COMP1950. If this is not feasible, then students may arrange to present to a small faculty committee and record the presentation for sharing.

Department Requirements
In addition to the work itself, all students enrolled in the internship course are to perform the activities described below. In particular, students are required to report on their internship experience through a
formal presentation to their peers. Additionally, all students must submit a brief summary of their internship suitable for posting on the department website.

All presentations and written communications must comply with Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) formalized between the student and the company. It is the student’s responsibility to acquire necessary permissions for presentation materials.

Department requirements are designed to both fortify students’ communication skills and to make internship experiences broadly known among computer science students.

- **Formal Presentation**. Interns must prepare and deliver a 10-minute presentation describing their internship experience. This presentation must be delivered no later than the term following the internship. The internship grade will be recorded as incomplete until this requirement is fulfilled. One lecture period during COMP2800 (Ethics and Professional Development) will be dedicated for these presentations. Students must reach out to the course instructor for scheduling and preparation.

- **Presentation Video**. COMP2800 may not be offered every term, and we recognize that scheduling conflicts may arise. If it is not feasible for a student to deliver a presentation during COMP2800, then the student may arrange to present his or her materials to a group of 2-3 faculty members (e.g., this presentation may be organized for the student’s advisor and the IC). It is the responsibility of the student to enroll the faculty members, organize a time and meeting place, and record the presentation for sharing.

- **Brief Written Summary**. Submit to the Internship Coordinator (IC) a summary of your internship, including name of the company, your job title, duration of internship, number of hours you worked per week, and a 2-sentence summary of work accomplished. The IC will publish all summaries on the department website for the benefit of all students exploring internships.

Your faculty advisor will mentor you for the internship and you should seek his/her advice, particularly prior to or in the first couple of weeks when you are setting your goals and evaluation for the work. Your advisor will also be responsible for assigning you a grade for your internship. The IC (contact the Computer Science office for the current name) will issue permits for registration.