

English 4630: Internship in Professional Writing Overview for Potential Interns

Department of English Internship Coordinator:

Ms. Cathy Dice

432 Patterson Hall

(901) 678-4535

email: cdice@memphis.edu (best means of contact)

- **Time Requirements**

The University of Memphis standards for a 3-hour-credit internship require approximately 150 hours of work, or 10-12 hours per week over the course of one semester. Some host facilities will want the intern to be on site for most or all of those hours, while others will allow interns to complete most of the work at home on their own time, provided that all deadlines are met.

Because of the time obligations of an internship, you should carefully consider all of your other academic, professional, and personal obligations before you commit to an internship. It is not to be viewed simply as a supposedly easy way to fill three credit hours. A successful internship is an invaluable way of developing your writing and editing skills, gaining “real world” experience, building professional connections (and potential references!), expanding your portfolio, and refining your vision of your future career. By the same token, sloppy work or irresponsible conduct can contribute to a negative reputation that will follow you for years to come.

- **Prerequisites**

Ideally, candidates for writing and/or editing internships should have successfully completed English 3601 and English 3602. In some cases, students who have not completed both of these courses may be considered for internship placement, depending upon the nature of the internship assignment and provided that the students submit letters of recommendation from two Department of English faculty members. These prerequisites are meant not to exclude interested candidates but to ensure that all potential interns are fully prepared for the demands of the position.

- **Compensation**

Most internships are unpaid, though there are occasionally paid positions (either hourly wages or by special stipend).

- **Placement**

All internship placements are decided by the sponsoring business or organization, not by the Internship Coordinator. In other words, interested students must apply for a specific internship position and be selected by the host facility. In most cases, you will be asked to submit an application letter, a resume, and several samples of your best writing; most facilities will also conduct an interview, either in person or by telephone. Once the facility has offered you an internship position and you have accepted, you will be issued a permit to enroll in English 4630.

Information on possible placements can be found through the Internship Coordinator and through the University of Memphis Career Services eRecruiting site:

<http://memphis.experience.com/er/security/login.jsp>. It is also possible to create your own internship position through your own contacts; for example, one past intern approached her employer, a local private school, about helping the school's development office with a variety of publications.

- **Grading and Academic Requirements of English 4630**

The for-credit component of the internship is English 4630: Internship in Professional Writing, for which the student will receive the appropriate letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F).

All interns will complete a weekly work log and submit this log via email to the Internship Coordinator at cdice@memphis.edu.

Supervisors will complete a mid-term and final evaluation of the intern's performance. Assessment criteria include punctuality, dependability, self-motivation, cooperation, confidentiality, work ethic, and professional grooming. These evaluations will be included in the calculations for the final course grade for English 4630.

All interns will submit final report to the Internship Coordinator. This report will include a review of the internship experience as a whole, a self-assessment, and samples of all major writing and/or editing projects completed during the internship period. A formal assignment sheet for this report will be provided. If time allows, the Internship Coordinator may also ask all interns from the current semester to present these reports to other professional writing students.