FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CURRENT STUDENTS

SIPA INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT

What is the internship requirement for MIA and MPA students?
- MIA and MPA students in the two-year degree programs are required to complete one internship as part of the core requirement. To verify completion of the internship, students are required to submit an internship report and supervisor evaluation.
- Students are required to work a minimum of 120 hours in one internship position to fulfill requirement.

Students have four options:
1) Earn 1.5 credits for 120 hours of an internship.
2) Earn an additional 1.5 credits for a second internship after completing the first 120 hours -- 3 credits total.
3) Earn 3 credits for an internship after completing 240 hours. Once you have earned the maximum three credits, you may continue to participate in internships on a non-credit basis for added experience.
4) Earn no credit for completion of the internship. Students are still required to submit the internship report and supervisor evaluation, but will not register for credit.*

*F-1 international students who are authorized for a 2nd or 3rd semester of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for a paid/compensated internship MUST register for credit in INAF U9013. See OCS CPT Form for details.

How do I know if my internship will count towards the internship requirement and/or credit?
An internship will count for academic credit if:
- It is related to your program, concentration, and/or specialization
- The work is substantive and professional in nature (in many cases, a percentage of the student's time may be involved in administrative tasks, depending on the organization and the nature of the position)
- It is not conducted in a family-owned organization/business
- It is completed during your degree program (internships completed before matriculation into SIPA are ineligible)

If you are uncertain whether your internship will counts towards the internship requirement, please contact the Assistant Director of Student Relations.

- To fulfill the internship requirement, students may elect to complete a research internship with a Columbia University faculty member or research scholar. This option is intended for students pursuing careers in academia, think tanks, research centers, or similar entities. Students will be expected to work on a clearly defined and substantive research project, either under the direction of a Principal Investigator or of their own creation with faculty consent. They will also be expected to gain concrete research skills of a quantitative or qualitative nature. IMPORTANT: Students must first obtain approval from the Senior Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs before registering for a research internship.

Updated 8/16
What do I need to do to verify that I have completed the internship requirement?

- There are two steps that you must take to verify that you have completed the internship requirement:

**STEP 1:** You must complete an online Internship Report form in SIPAlink.

**Instructions:**
1. The Internship Report form can be accessed through the following link: www.myinterface.com/cusipa/mentor.
2. **IMPORTANT:** Please use Internet Explorer or Safari when completing the form to reduce the occurrence of errors when saving your report.
3. Follow the link “Click here to report your internship”.
4. To prevent loss of information, we recommend that you first draft and save your answers in a Microsoft Word document and then transfer them to the online form.
5. Fill out all of the fields and then submit the report to OCS by clicking on “Save”.
6. **Your answers must be in paragraph form with a minimum of three sentences.** Your report will NOT be approved until this requirement is met.

**STEP 2:** Your internship supervisor must complete an online Supervisor Evaluation Survey, which is a detailed evaluation of your work and performance during the internship. Once you are nearing the end of your internship, please submit your supervisor’s contact information using the Internship Employer Information Form and OCS will send them an auto-generated survey. Since your employer will receive an auto-generated survey, it is important that you do not complete the Internship Employer Information Form until your internship is almost complete. At that time, please also reach out to your employer to inform them of this survey. To verify completion of the pre-approved research internship, students should contact the Senior Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for instructions.

How am I awarded credit for my internship?

- Students are required to fulfill the required minimum number of internship hours in order to qualify for internship credit: 120 hours for 1.5 credits, 240 hours for 3 credits.
- Students who want to earn internship credit will register for SIPA U9013 in the fall or spring semester (SIPA does not have summer registration). Students have the option of registering for 1.5 or 3 internship credits. Please look in the Registration Guides for the call numbers for SIPA U9013 Internship and register the same way you register for all SIPA courses. Registration and OCS internship paperwork deadlines are also listed in the Registration Guide.
- Students who want to earn research internship credit will register for SIPA U9040 in the fall or spring semester (SIPA does not have summer registration). In order to register, students must first complete the U9040 Research Internship Application and obtain approval signatures in the order that is listed on the form. Students have the option of registering for 1.5 or 3 internship credits. Not-for-credit research internships are also permissible but must be pre-approved. In either case (credit or not-for-credit) no approval will be granted for work that has been previously registered for independent study.
- Administration of credit for U9013 is handled by OCS. Administration of credit for U9040 is handled by the Senior Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs.

When do I register for an internship and submit my paperwork?

- If you do your internship during the fall or spring semesters, we recommend you register your internship during that semester. There is no registration in the summer. Therefore, if you do a summer internship, we recommend you register for internship credit in the fall or spring semester immediately following the internship. The call numbers and registration and paperwork deadlines are listed each semester in the MIA and MPA Registration Guides.
The only exception is for international students doing a second paid internship in the United States (effective Fall 2012). In order to receive authorization to work, the student must register during the semester in which he/she is doing the internship and complete the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form. Please see the Curricular Practical Training fact sheet for more information.

How is the internship graded?

- All internships are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Can I satisfy the internship requirement and not register for credit?

- A student who completes an internship and submits the required internship report and supervisor evaluation may choose not to register for credit. In this case, the student must indicate on the internship report that he/she does not wish to register for internship credit. OCS will confirm that the student has satisfied the internship requirement in SIS and the Degree Audit Report will be updated.

Can I waive the internship requirement?

- Students who meet any of the following criteria may be eligible to waive the internship requirement:
  - Students on leave from their jobs.
  - Joint-degree students who complete an internship in another program.
  - Students who have worked on a full-time, professional basis for a minimum of four years in a field relevant to their concentration and career goals.
- To request a waiver, complete the Professional Development/Internship Waiver Form available online or in hard-copy in Room 420 and submit it to OCS with a current copy of your resume.
- Please note that if you waive the internship requirement you will not be awarded any internship credits.

If I am an international student and want to conduct a paid internship in the US, what steps should I follow?

- Review the International Student Work Authorization section of the OCS website.
- If you are a student in F-1 status, please refer to the Curricular Practical Training fact sheet.
- If you are a student in J-1 status, please refer to the Work Authorization for Paid Internships in the US for International Students with J-1 Visas fact sheet.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What is the Professional Development Course?

- Professional Development is a half-credit course that is mandatory for all MIA and MPA students. The class is offered in both the fall and spring semesters and should be taken in your first year at SIPA. The course is offered by the Office of Career Services (OCS) and teaches skills needed to compete effectively in the international and public affairs job markets. Topics such as resumes, cover letters, job search tactics, successful interviewing, networking, and salary negotiation are covered in the course.

Can I waive Professional Development?

- Students who meet any of the following criteria may be eligible to waive Professional Development:
  - Students on leave from their jobs.
  - Students who have worked on a full-time, professional basis for a minimum of four years in a field relevant to their concentration and career goals.
To request a waiver, complete the Professional Development/Internship Waiver Form available online or in hard copy at OCS office, Room 420. The form must be submitted to OCS together with a current resume and other required documents as specified in the waiver form. Once reviewed, OCS will contact you regarding your waiver status.

If you are granted a waiver, we recommend that you make an appointment with an advisor at OCS to review your resume and job search strategy.

FULL-TIME RECRUITMENT

Who is eligible to participate in full-time recruitment?

In order to be eligible for full-time recruitment, you must be a matriculated student at SIPA planning to graduate in the current academic year. For individual position eligibility, you must meet the employer’s eligibility requirements, which could include a minimum GPA and/or citizenship status. If you have an F-1/J-1 visa and you plan on accepting a paid position in the United States, you must process optional practical training (OPT) through the International Student and Scholars Office (ISSO).

How long do I have access to full-time recruitment?

As an October or February graduate, you will still be eligible to continue to participate in full-time recruitment throughout the academic year. All October, February and May graduates’ access to on-campus recruiting will continue through the summer until August 1st. At that time your student access will change to alumni access and you will officially be considered an alumna/us in the system. Please be aware, however, that as an alumna/us you will have lifetime access to job postings on SIPAlink.

I am interested in obtaining a position at either a finance firm or a consulting company, and I notice that several of the employers are coming to Columbia Business School to recruit. May I attend their presentations at the Business School?

Unfortunately, unless SIPA students have been specifically invited to a joint presentation at the Business School, you are not allowed to attend. Each professional school at Columbia University is a separate entity, and they operate independently of each other. Therefore, the Business School will only allow students from other Columbia University graduate schools to attend their presentations if the employer has confirmed that a joint presentation will be held. If there is a joint presentation, it is advertised in OCS Career Newsletter and on-line through SIPAlink. You are required to sign up in order to attend as there is a limited number of invitations. If you do not see a presentation advertised through SIPA OCS, you are not able to attend.

How do I enhance my job search and interviewing skills?

OCS offers dozens of different workshops for students’ professional development, such as case interviewing techniques, how to market yourself, and job-search tips for international students. We hold a half-credit course, mandatory for all students, which teaches the fundamentals of the job search. You may also schedule a mock interview session or an appointment with an OCS advisor. Please take advantage of our services to practice your interviewing skills and enhance your job search techniques.
SIPAlink

What is SIPAlink?
The Office of Career Services (OCS) uses the online SIPAlink system to post all job and internship opportunities. All activity between students and employers who recruit SIPA students is conducted through this system. SIPAlink enables students to search and apply for opportunities online; manage multiple resumes, cover letters, and other employment related documents; schedule on-campus interviews; sign up for career events and employer information sessions and maintain an online calendar.

How do I register?
- Go to sipa.columbia.edu/careers/career-services.
- Click on the link under [Job & Internship Listings].
- Go to [Click Here to Register] link.
- Complete your profile.
- Resume is not required during the registration, but you will have to upload it into the system before you can apply for positions.

How do I search for a job or internship on SIPAlink?
- Put your cursor over Jobs and select Job Search.
- Fill in the search criteria to narrow down your job search OR just click the Search button (without entering any search criteria) to view all current jobs and internships.
- Click on the Job ID to see the specifics of the position and how to apply.
- You can save your search and choose to be emailed about new jobs by clicking on Save Search.
- What do I do if I forget my password in SIPAlink?
- Go to www.myinterface.com/cusipa/student/ and click [Forgot Your Password?]. The system will email you your login information.

SIPA ALUMNI AND STUDENT NETWORK ON LINKEDIN

Why use LinkedIn?
- To obtain valuable career information and feedback from SIPA alumni.
- To enhance your current knowledge of a field or sector.
- To gain exposure to new career paths.
- To develop your professional network.
- To discuss other working world-related issues.

How to begin your search?
- Begin with researching careers or jobs that interest you.
- Narrow your search to alumni whom you would like to contact.
- Research the specific organization the alum is working with, and learn more about their position.
- If you are looking for a specific person or organization, enter his/her last name or the name of the organization in the appropriate section. Type in multiple versions of the organization name, for example the UN may also be written as the United Nations.
How to Contact Alumni and Conduct Informational Interviews?

- Contact alumni through LinkedIn or other means they deem appropriate.
- The purpose of networking phone calls or meetings is not to ask for a job, but to ask for career and job hunting advice and contacts.
- You should always have your resume ready to send before you contact anyone about your job search. Do not send your resume unless you are asked.
- Do not ask an alumna/alumnus to forward your resume to someone else without first establishing a relationship with her/him.

You should be well prepared for your informational interview. Since you will be taking the lead, decide what kind of information you would like to gather and prepare questions in advance.

- Dress professionally and be on time.
- Be honest about your background and skills. Promise only what you can deliver.
- Always follow up a networking meeting or interview with a thank you letter within two days of the interview.
- When you receive a job offer, send a note of thanks to your networking contacts for their help in the process. Even if they might not have provided you with that specific job, their advice helped you become a successful interviewer.

Current SIPA students who would like additional information and/or help with navigating the system, please email sipa_ocssipa.columbia.edu.