



Exercise and Sports Science  
Department

**Internship Program**

**SPRING 2024**

# Exercise and Sports Science Internship Program

***Important:*** *There is a MANDATORY informational internship meeting that all students must attend before they go out on an internship. Internship packets are handed out at this meeting and an overview of the program is discussed.*

EXSS students have completed their internships at a number of sites. Among these are: Tufts Medical Center (Pediatric Echocardiology) in Boston, Department of Emergency Medicine at Heywood Hospital, Wachusett Dirt Dawgs, CrossFit EXP, the Cardiac Rehabilitation Facility at Emerson Hospital, Department of Pulmonary Medicine at HealthAlliance Hospital, Exercise Physiology lab at Children's Hospital in Boston, Caveny Chiropractic Neurology, Winchester Hospital Chiropractic Center, Joslin Diabetes Clinic, Camp Shane in Ferndale New York, USARIEM (United States Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine), Women's Professional Softball (Riptide), U-Mass Lowell Sports Performance, USA Triathlon National Training Center, Mike Boyle's Strength & Conditioning, Pfizer Corporate Wellness Center, Global Fitness, Orchard Hills Fitness Club, Verizon Health & Wellness Center, Assumption College Athletic Department, Cushing Academy (hockey team), Gardner Public Schools (track and field teams), St. John's Prep School (track team), College of the Holy Cross Athletic Department, Harvard University Athletic Department, Ramsey Rehab, Townsend Public Schools (education), Walt Disney World, FSU Athletic Training Room, FSU athletic teams, FSU Recreation and Athletic Departments, These are just a few of the sites and additional sites are continually being developed.

## Overview of the Internship Program

The internship program in the EXSS department is an experiential education program. The student intern contracts with an organization to provide specific outcomes/services that meet the students' learning objectives as well as the needs of the organization.

Using the actual work as the foundation, the students actively engage in their own educational and professional growth through conscious reflection and analysis. They grow by relating to professionals in the field, practicing what they have been learning conceptually, striving for high (but attainable) expectations, and systematically reflecting on their experiences.

**To be eligible to participate in an internship, students must have an EXSS GPA and overall GPA of 2.5 or greater, hold a current, valid CPR certification, have attended a professional conference and turned in their conference paper to their academic advisor, and have completed EXSS #3450 *Exercise Testing and Prescription*. Additionally, students doing an internship in a clinical setting must have completed EXSS #4045 *Cardiovascular and Electrophysiology* and EXSS #3600 *Exercise Response and Adaptations in Special Populations*.**

**Note:** Students planning to complete their internships in most clinical settings will need to complete additional requirements, including an online orientation; several vaccinations; drug screening; a Massachusetts and nationwide CORI/SORI check; and registering with CastleBranch (an online database that requests/maintains digital medical documentation, performs nationwide background checks and drug screenings). There is a non-refundable fee to register with CastleBranch. Once an account is established you will have lifelong access to this account. Students are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid office to see if there are any internship scholarships available to offset this fee. Please check with the FSU internship coordinator to see if the clinical site you have chosen falls into this category.

## **Financial Aid for the Internship:**

Please contact the Financial Aid Office at Fitchburg State to find out if there are any internship scholarships available. Information regarding internships can be found on this link. [Types of Financial Aid | Fitchburg State University](#) After you click the link, Scroll down to **State University Internship Incentive Program** (SUIIP). For questions regarding this scholarship program, please contact the Financial Aid Office at [finaid@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:finaid@fitchburgstate.edu).

## **Definitions**

**Field Placement (*Internship*) Site Supervisor:** This is the person you will report to while at your internship. They are overseeing your experience at the site.

**FSU Internship Coordinator:** This is an EXSS faculty member at FSU who is overseeing the internship program that given year. They will be conducting the pre-internship meetings and will collect the learning objectives (via e-mail) for students interning in the fall or spring of that year, by the assigned date.

**FSU Internship Supervisor:** This is an EXSS faculty member at FSU whose internship section you will be in (Web 4/Blackboard) if you are interning in the fall or spring. This is the person who will be grading your internship assignments.

**Academic Advisor:** This is the EXSS faculty member at FSU that you meet with in the fall or spring regarding academic advising. If you are doing an internship in the summer, your academic advisor will be grading your internship assignments. If you are doing a summer internship, you should e-mail the draft of your learning objectives to your Academic Advisor by the assigned date.

## **II. Program Objectives**

**In the Internship Program, students will:**

- Develop working relationships with professionals in the field
- Observe the organization's functions and roles in action
- Apply academic learning in a work setting
- Learn new job-specific skills and organizational knowledge
- Perform duties, projects, and/or services that meet organizational needs
- Develop work habits and attitudes needed as a professional
- Gain greater awareness of personal strengths, interests and career/educational goals

## **III. Requirements**

**Credits/Hours:** The traditional EXSS Internship is 6 credits and a total of 225 hours at the field placement site\*.

*\*It is possible to split your internship at two different sites 112.5 hours (3 credits) at one site and then an additional 112.5 hours (3 credits) at another site.*

### **Required Internship Meetings:**

There are two mandatory meetings required for the internship:

- The first is an informational internship meeting. There are two meetings offered during the fall semester for those students who plan on doing their internship in the spring, and there are two meetings offered during the spring semester for those students who plan on doing their internship over the summer or during the fall semester.
- The second meeting will be for your final internship poster presentation. The final internship poster presentations are held three times a year in December, May, and August.

### **CastleBranch:**

- For students doing internships in a clinical setting that uses their own contractual agreement, you will need to register with CastleBranch, an online database that accepts, maintains, and requests your digital medical documentation required by most healthcare organizations before hosting student interns. This includes immunizations, nation-wide CORI checks, and drug testing. Please check with your FSU internship Coordinator to see if the site you have chosen falls into this category. There is a non-refundable one-time fee when you register with CastleBranch. Once a CB (CastleBranch) account is established you will have lifelong access to this information. You will be able to access this information for future employers or graduate school. We encourage all students to apply for an internship scholarship through the Financial Aid Office to offset this fee.

#### **Fee Structure for Castlebranch** (please note these fees are subject to change):

- \$24.74 for Nation-wide background check
- \$49.99 for drug testing
- \$25.99 for Immunization documentation

### **Internship Assignments:**

- Learning Objectives
- Journals
- Time Sheets
- Informational Interview
- Reflective Paper
- Final Internship Poster Presentation

### **Description of Assignments:**

***These are general descriptions. You may be given more specific requirements for each of these assignments in the syllabus once you are registered for the internship course.***

#### **Learning Objectives:**

The Learning Objectives is a typed document that describes specifically the intern's role, responsibilities, learning goals, and objectives (academic, personal development, career development, and professional development skills) for the internship. This document is used to check the intern's progress throughout the semester. You should refer to the Learning Objective Guidelines included in this document to write your learning objectives.

#### **Weekly Journal:**

The journal is a collection of daily notes of your observations, reflective thoughts, questions and feelings about your internship experience. A critical incident journal is a technique that helps monitor and evaluate the internship experience in relation to the specific goals and learning objectives you set for the experience.

The Weekly Journal will be made up of two individual parts:

- Daily Journal Entries
- Weekly Summary

**Daily Journal Entries:** For every day of the week that you attend your internship you should write a 1 or 2 paragraph reflection about your activities for that day. This reflection does not need to

include every detail of your day, but should instead focus on what you learned that day. What you have learned and taken away from the day is the most important part.

**Weekly Summary:** The weekly journal is a summary of what you did that week that helped you to progress in attaining your learning objectives. Please review your learning objectives and write about which objective that you learned the most about for the week. You should also write about learning objectives that you have not improved on that week, or improved to a lesser extent, and discuss strategies for how you will move forward with completing those objectives in your remaining internship hours. The weekly summary should be between 1 and 2 double spaced pages (this does not include the daily journal entries).

**Weekly submission guidelines will be outlined in the course syllabus.**

**Time Sheets:**

A time sheet is a record of the intern's hours and tasks at the internship site. Each sheet *must* be signed by the intern's Field Placement Site Supervisor. Your timesheets are submitted to your FSU Internship Supervisor at the end of your internship, on the day of your final internship poster presentation. Time sheets are created by the student and can be in the form of a table where date and # of hours are recorded, or a calendar where # of hours are recorded for each day.

**Informational Interview/Professional Interview:**

Locate one professional in your chosen career field. (NOTE: You may not interview your field placement site supervisor, friends, or relatives for this assignment.) Contact and set up an informational interview with this individual. This process takes time, so start early.

***Focus on:***

- *How did this person decide on his/her career?*
- *How did this professional get to their present position?*
- *What is a typical day like?*
- *What advice would he/she give to people entering this field?*
- *What skills does he/she look for on a resume when an entry-level position is filled?*

In your written report of the interview, include: exact name, title, and phone number, why you selected this person for the interview, the list of questions asked and a summary of the answers you received. Draw a general conclusion about the career path discussed: Did the interview help you decide/solidify whether you would like to enter that field? What would your job description likely be if you entered the field? Are there any additional qualifications you need in order to begin working in this field?

**Reflective Paper:**

This written assignment will be a letter to your colleagues at Fitchburg State University and will cover the following topics:

- What you have accomplished and what you have learned (skills and knowledge) from the Internship experience.
- Whether you have fulfilled the goals you outlined in your Learning Objectives (or how/why they have changed.)
- Obstacles faced and methods you developed for overcoming them and what you learned in the process.
- Observations about your professional field and organizations (challenges, opportunities, issues)

- How your definition of “professionalism” may have changed.
- What your future educational and career plans are
- Any other reflections on the internship experience you want your colleagues to know

**Final Internship Poster Presentation:** (10% of Overall Grade):

The Internship presentations will be formatted a bit differently from year’s past. Rather than a 10-minute oral presentation, we are asking students to complete a poster presentation. When classes begin, we will set the date for the final poster presentations. There will be a 2-hour window of time where you will be expected to be standing next to your poster so that faculty, staff, and students may visit and ask you questions.

This is a professional presentation- your demeanor should be formal as should be your attire. We will be inviting your internship site supervisor to attend, although their attendance is not required.

You will be given a template for the poster, but it is your job to work on alignment, sizing, and spacing. Please also feel free to include pictures (with your internship site supervisor’s approval!). You will need to have your poster complete and submitted to print through Print Services at least one week in advance of the presentation. You will not need to pay for this service, but the print deadline is firm- if you do not meet the deadline, this will result in an automatic 25% deduction in your final internship presentation grade. Your poster should have the following headings:

- **Internship Site Overview:** Please give us the name of your internship site, what type of internship site it was (PT, OT, S&C, Personal Training, etc.), and your Site Supervisor’s Name/Credentials. Feel free to list other staff that work there, as well as their credentials.
- **Learning Objectives:** Use bullets! What did you hope to learn while at your internship site? Feel free to put them into categories of those you achieved or weren’t able to achieve. Please do not include your explanations for how you planned to achieve each goal here!
- **Skills Gained:** In your role, what skills did you practice? Anything you mastered?
- **Goals Accomplished:** Anything unexpected that you achieved in your experience here? Or the learning objective you felt most proud of achieving?
- **Duties/Responsibilities:** Let other students/faculty know what they should expect on a day as an intern at this site.
- **Obstacles Faced:** What was an obstacle(s) you faced at this site? How did you overcome it? Is there anything you would do differently?
- **Feedback to the site:** Constructive feedback is always great! Do you have any recommendations?
- **Recommendations:** Overall, would you recommend this site to other students? If I am a student who wants to intern here, what should I know? Is there anything I can do to be better prepared for this internship site?
- **Future Plans:** What are your next steps?

**Mid-Term and Final Internship Evaluations**

Please have your Internship Site Supervisor do your mid-term evaluation after you have completed ~ 112.5 hours of your internship and the final evaluation upon completion of your 225 hours. You will turn in these evaluations on the day of your final internship presentation.

## IV. Student Role and Responsibilities

The student intern is primarily responsible for developing the internship and gaining approval for the internship from the FSU Internship Coordinator/Academic Advisor and Field Placement Site Supervisor. The student contracts with the organization to serve in a paraprofessional or professional capacity during the semester. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring the experience fulfills all the learning goals and course requirements:

1. Attendance at both mandatory Internship Meetings (Informational meeting before the student begins the internship and the Final Internship Poster Presentations)
2. Typed Learning Objectives document (Objectives are drafted then discussed/reviewed with FSU Internship Coordinator/Academic Advisor first, and then by their Field Placement Site Supervisor, *prior* to final approval).
3. Learning Objectives Form and Contractual agreement form signed by the Field Placement Site Supervisor and submitted along with the Red Card Checklist to the FSU Internship Coordinator/Academic Advisor by deadline.
4. Submission of weekly Journals.
5. Fulfillment of the required hours at the internship site to meet credit criteria (*signed timesheets will be the documentation*).
6. Evaluations by the Field Placement Site Supervisor (mid-term evaluation AND final evaluation).
7. Informational Interview
8. Reflective Paper
9. Time sheets (to be turned into faculty advisor at the time of student's Final Internship Poster Presentation).
10. Final Internship Poster Presentation

## V. Field Placement Site Supervisor Role and Responsibilities

The Field Placement Site Supervisor, who directly supervises the student intern, plays a dual role. As the staff *supervisor*, he/she trains the student in the work duties and oversees the daily work. As an educational *mentor* for the student intern, he/she supports the student's learning goals and provides valuable feedback and insights. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Provide thorough orientation to the organization and job role training
2. Discuss and sign formal Learning Objectives document
3. Review and sign Fitchburg State University Contractual Agreement
4. Review and sign weekly time sheets
5. Provide on-going and constructive feedback
6. Provide appropriate opportunities to learn about the work unit, organization, and profession
7. Support the intern achieving his/her goals as outlined in the Learning Objectives
8. Be available to discuss topics and issues for selected written assignments
9. Complete written mid-term and final evaluation forms for the intern, and hold evaluation discussions

## VI. FSU Internship Supervisor Role and Responsibilities

The FSU Internship Supervisor for the internship serves as a resource to the student during the placement process, grades all written assignments, and monitor's the student's progress throughout the internship. In addition, he/she serves as the University's liaison between the organization (field placement site supervisor), student intern, and Fitchburg State University. Responsibilities include:

1. Orient the field placement site supervisor to FSU requirements and quality expectations
2. Grade and record all assignments
3. Be available to support the field placement site supervisor on matters related to the internship
4. Be available to advise student interns on any program-related or work-related issues as needed
5. Contacting the field placement site supervisor (in person or by phone) during the time of the internship
6. Submits final grade for semester

## **VII. Grading**

***The way you will be graded will be outlined in the course syllabus.***

*Updated: October 2023*