

Dear Industry Partner,

We appreciate your indicating an interest in partnering with us to enrich the learning of our Apparel Merchandising students by providing internship experiences. On the job experiences for academic credit allow our student interns to apply concepts, principles, and skills learned in lectures and studios to business environments. Our required 10-week, full time internship has a powerful impact on our juniors or seniors in preparing them for a successful career. The learning experiences obtained through internships in a supportive environment are an important component of our program at Auburn University, which is why our Department, Consumer and Design Sciences, requires internships for all of our students and why the internship course carries 8 credit hours and is undertaken without being registered for any other courses at the same time.

Because the internship experience is so important, we strive to ensure that each student's internship experience provides maximum opportunities for exposure to functional areas of the organization. The next page presents a summary of the work that the intern has to complete, primarily on his/her own time away from the internship site. Although we realize that each internship is unique, the requirements provide some standardization of the expectations for all of our students in the earning of their academic credit. If you decide to offer an internship to an Apparel Merchandising student, please read the **Overview of Internship Requirements for Industry Partners** and **Internship Employer Q&A** on next pages before you agree to have and supervise a student intern, which is done by signing the student's **internship contract** form.

Please contact Dr. Kwon if you have any questions. Again, we appreciate your support and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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Overview of Internship Requirements for Industry Partners

Requirements for Merchandising Interns include (but are not limited to) the following:

Student interns must work full time for a minimum of 10 weeks (or 400 hours) and spend time learning about each functional area within the firm. They must strive to become knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of key management positions in each area and gain some level of expertise in one or more areas. In addition, student interns must complete all assignments included in the internship syllabus. These assignments (summarized below) are to be completed on the student's own time to the extent possible.

One letter each week - written by the intern to the faculty member supervising the internship - communicated via e-mail. Contents should relate to students' experiences; what they have learned; and their contributions. They may include a brief overview of each job/assignment on which they work and their role in that assignment.

Daily anecdotal journal – describes work, training, and experiences.

Firm portfolio - presents a description of your company, and is the major work document turned in to the faculty supervisor at the end of the internship. It should incorporate the following:

- a brief description of your company -its business, size, and position in the marketplace
- a description of your company's target customer as well as the range of customers to whom it may sell
- a brief summary of systems, procedures, policies, and technology the company uses; may include relevant examples of work forms (e.g., purchase orders, markdown requests, transfers, RTV)
- Photos of workplace and 10 action photographs of intern in the workplace.

Interviews - with 10 persons who occupy key leadership positions. These interviews should introduce the student to varied functions, perspectives and approaches to the same business. In a small setting, interns should interview vendors, key personnel in competitive firms, &/or professionals in related businesses. In a large company setting, these interviews will be with corporate level executives in your firm.

Internship project -**With your firm and the student's faculty supervisor's prior approvals**, the student will solve a problem or capitalize on a work-related opportunity to benefit the firm. First, the student must define the problem (or opportunity), the specific goal of the project, the steps necessary to achieve the goal, and the means for evaluating the success of the defined project in meeting the stated goal(s). Second, present the idea to the firm supervisor and then the faculty supervisor for approval by the deadline. Students must secure each supervisor's written approval **before** beginning the project.

Evaluation by firm supervisor (written) – The firm supervisor must complete intern evaluation forms and discuss it with the intern two weeks before the end of the internship. The intern will include these evaluation forms in the firm portfolio notebook for submission to the faculty supervisor. These evaluations comprise 25% of the student's final internship course grade.

Internship Employers Q&A

Why hire an Auburn Apparel Merchandising (AM) intern?

Work with the best and brightest. Through rigorous practice and critical scholarship, students in our #4 nationally ranked¹ Merchandising Program prepare to become leaders in their professions. Project-based learning experiences inside and outside the classroom familiarize students with the pace, required skills, and culture of workplaces, allowing them to adapt quickly to internship sites and contribute right away.

Find new talent. Internships let you observe students' skill sets, work habits, and personalities to determine if they might be a good fit for your company in the future. Interns can also bring fresh perspectives, technological skills, and methods to projects and teams.

Help Auburn Merchandising students develop professionally. By hiring Auburn AM students as interns, you help them learn to apply the skills acquired at Auburn University to real-life work settings. You have opportunities to share resources – your wisdom, networks of contacts, and tools – with the next generation of merchandisers and retailers.

How do I hire an Auburn Merchandising intern?

Find an intern and make an offer. All proposed internships must be approved by the Program Coordinator.

The **Merchandising Internship Contract** is an electronic form that includes the intern's duties, learning objectives, work hours, and start and end dates. It is completed first by the student, then by the employer, and finally by Auburn University. The student is responsible for downloading the Internship Contract, filling out the student section, signing the contract, and then sending it to you.

Once you have received the contract from the student, please fill out the employer section using a PDF editing program (e.g., Adobe Acrobat Pro). We encourage you to work with the student when completing the Learning Objectives field so that both parties can take part in determining the pedagogical goals of the internship.

Internship Criteria / Requirements

All internships approved for the AM Internship Program **must**

- Involve useful work related to the student's field of study and support his or her professional goals. (Please see our **Learning Objective** section to develop internship learning guidelines.)
- Be performed under the direct supervision of a professional. Continuous mentorship throughout the semester is crucial to the success of the internship program. A Mid-Point Check by week 5 of the internship is helpful to ensure that the Learning

¹ Ranking by fashion-schools.org.

Objectives are on their way to being achieved by the end of the internship. A final intern evaluation is required before the end of the internship. **AM Intern Evaluation** form may be used for the final intern evaluation.

- Meet requirements stipulated on the **AM Internship Contract**, such as those outlining work hours, dates, and credits.

Intern Payment

Students must pay full tuition while completing their internships. Lack of intern pay sometimes deters highly qualified students from accepting internships. If you cannot pay an hourly wage for an intern, consider offering other forms of compensation, such as a stipend & travel reimbursement.

How do I mentor an intern?

Mentoring interns lets you guide students to use their growing skills on real-world projects and in actual work settings. The AMDP Internship Program formalizes this process by outlining **AM Learning Objectives** and documenting your student's progress toward them in a Student Evaluation **AM Intern Evaluation**.

Intern Learning Objectives

We strongly recommend that you work with your student to set useful, reasonable internship learning objectives and goals. You may refer to the **AM Learning Objectives** to establish learning objectives with the student intern.

How do I evaluate an intern?

You are encouraged to evaluate your intern's performance at the middle and the end of the internship. The **AM Intern Evaluation** used for the final evaluation. A mid-term evaluation is useful to provide feedback on the intern's

- General level of preparedness
- Ability to achieve goals set out in the Learning Objectives
- Contribution to the work environment
- Relevant skill set
- Overall professionalism
- Attendance
- Areas that need development and specific suggestions for improvement

The **AM Intern Evaluation** must be completed and submitted to the student intern or the program coordinator before the end of the internship or by July 25th for summer interns in order for the student to receive a grade for his or her work.

Internship Issues

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kwon at kwonwis@auburn.edu or (334) 844-4011.

Employer Ethics and Responsibilities

The university expects employers not to expose our students to anything that would be reasonably considered sexually explicit, obscene, libelous, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, or hateful—in other words, any behavior or material that is personally embarrassing or is offensive to another person or group.

By offering an Auburn AM student an internship opportunity, you agree to the terms, conditions, and limitations outlined.