

Internship Guidebook



Professional
Practice Center

Internship Guidebook

Kansas City Art Institute
4415 Warwick Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64111

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Professional experience through internships

This guidebook is designed to give you the tools and information necessary to plan for a successful internship experience. Did you know that an internship experience is considered so important that many KCAI majors require one? Even those that do not make it a requirement strongly encourage students to have at least one internship.

The following are a few compelling reasons why internships are valuable:

- Companies often hire their interns first.
- An internship is a great way for students to find out if this is what they want to do (or not).
- Internships allow students the opportunity to grow both professionally and academically. Students take their academic experience and apply it within the working world.
- Internships provide students with the opportunity to network prior to starting their professional career.
- KCAI alumni surveys show that students who had successful internships while in school are better prepared for their professional lives, whether they maintain a studio practice or follow one of the many career paths open to artists and designers.

What is an internship for academic credit?

An internship for academic credit lets you earn college credit while gaining real-world experience in a chosen field of study

by working alongside professionals in a creative business or studio setting.

Students in the following majors and minors are required to complete an internship as part of their coursework before they graduate from KCAI:

- **Ceramics**
- **Entrepreneurial Studies in Art & Design**
- **Filmmaking**
- **Photography**
- **Printmaking**
- **Product Design**

Students can earn up to 12 credit hours for internships. Internship credits are often applied toward studio elective requirements, but may also be applied to academic minor or Liberal Arts requirements.

Internships for credit are available in the fall and spring semesters as part of your full-time tuition. There is an additional expense to enroll in a summer internship. Tuition is \$125 per credit hour. Scholarships and financial aid may be available; please contact the financial aid office for details.

All internships require a signed contract between you, your faculty advisor and the internship site supervisor. The contract outlines the work that will be completed during the semester and must be submitted to the registrar's office before the last day of add/drop for the semester in which you wish to receive credit **(see page 7 for details)**.

Internships not for academic credit

You can arrange non-credit internships at any time. Even though you won't receive academic credit, you will gain valuable professional experience, which looks great on a resume! You do not need to notify KCAI regarding non-academic credit internships.

Academic credit internship eligibility

You will be approved to participate in the internship program if:

- You have completed your sophomore year major studio
- You have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above
- The internship site meets the registrar's office criteria
- You submit a completed internship contract prior to the add/drop deadline
- The internship credits applied toward your B.F.A. degree do not exceed 12 credits

Transfer students must have completed one semester in a major studio at KCAI before enrolling in an internship for credit.

Internship requirements

In order to earn academic credit, you must complete the following requirements and your faculty advisor will grade you on each component:

- Work a specified number of hours based on the number of credit hours in which you are enrolled
- Midterm evaluation
- Two professional interviews
- Reflection paper
- Final evaluation

The following chart shows the number of work hours required to earn academic credit:

Number of credit hours	Minimum work hours required per semester	Average work hours per week
3	90	6
6	180	12
9	270	18
12	360	24

(Semester = 15 weeks)

Researching and selecting an internship site

As you research locations for an internship, start with the internship opportunities listed on KCAI's [Professional Practice Portal](#) . Simply log on to the Portal and search for the most current list of internship offerings. The Portal is constantly being updated, so check the site often.

Additionally, many locations on the Professional Practice Portal have been pre-approved as an internship site and understand what is involved in serving as a KCAI internship site. Please note that approved internship sites may not offer internships each semester; we recommend you contact the sites to determine availability and find out how to apply.

You are welcome to find an internship site on your own. All sites must agree to [KCAI's Policy for Internship Sites](#) and submit required documentation before the internship can be approved.

Explore

Finding internship opportunities takes time and energy. Be prepared to dedicate time to research potential sites and perfect your application packet; the Professional Practice Center (PPC) is a great resource to help hone your resume and cover letter. The good news is that as you engage in this work, you'll be learning lifelong skills and preparing yourself for the job search that comes after graduation.

Network

Talk to others. Ask faculty, PPC staff, family and friends about their networks. The more other people know about your

internship search, the more they can help point you in the right direction.

National and regional publications

Industry and local magazines can be incredibly helpful in your search. The Jannes library subscribes to several titles. When reviewing these resources, mine information from featured companies and artists, usually included at the back of the magazine where galleries, competitions and resources are listed. We also recommend that you search industry and discipline-specific professional organizations websites.

Geographic resources

When you have decided on an opportunity, use regional and local resources, such as chambers of commerce, cultural centers, creative alliances, area arts councils and departments of education to find the right internship for you.

Note: If your internship site has not been approved by the registrar's office, you will not be registered for an internship. You should direct your potential site to the [Policy for Internship Sites ↗](#) on KCAI's website. Once your site has been approved, you are ready to register for the internship.

Registering for an internship

When you register for classes also register for the internship placeholder. This lets the registrar's office know you plan to complete an internship and they will communicate all the necessary steps. In order to finalize your internship, you must:

Arrange for a faculty advisor

A faculty advisor must be a full-time faculty member in the same discipline as your internship. When you have identified a potential faculty advisor, ask that individual if they would be willing to assume that role.

The faculty member will likely ask you some questions about the type of internship you are interested in and your overall goals. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- How will this internship support my academic learning goals?
- How will this internship support my life or career goals?
- What skills do I hope to gain or strengthen during this internship?

Identify your internship site supervisor

This is the person at the internship site who will be meeting with you regularly and overseeing your work.

Complete the internship contract

As part of the contract, you will outline your **learning objectives*** in consultation with your internship supervisor.

The contract must be signed by you, the internship site

*Learning objectives are goals that describe what you intend to learn during your internship. Be specific. Articulating what you want to learn from an internship requires some thought. It is good to begin with a general idea of what you want to learn, then develop and refine this idea through discussions with your internship supervisor and faculty advisor. Finally, write down the results of this process as a number of discrete learning goals on your contract.

supervisor, your faculty advisor and your department chair, all agreeing to follow the stated guidelines and work together to ensure that your learning goals are met. At the end of the semester, you will be expected to write a reflection paper stating how you attempted to meet those learning objectives during your internship. This involves identifying experiences and tasks that were available at the internship site and analyzing how they connected with your goals.

Submit the internship contract

The internship contract with all the required signatures must be submitted to the registrar's office no later than the last day of add/drop for the semester you are doing the internship.

Summer tuition and non-paid internships

If you plan to participate in an internship during the fall or spring semesters, there is no additional cost for the academic credit. If you would like to take your internship in the

summer, there is a small fee to cover the administrative and faculty costs, which is currently \$375 for a three credit internship (or \$125 per credit hour).

We do our best to encourage our internship sites to offer paid internships. However, some nonprofit organizations or studio artists may not be able to offer payment. KCAI has created a special fund where students can apply for a **\$1,000 non-paid internship stipend** to support their for-credit internship. The registrar's office can provide additional information on how to apply when you register for the internship.

Professionalism at your internship site

An internship provides you with a chance to begin establishing your professional reputation. Be careful not to sabotage your reputation with inappropriate behavior. Remember that your internship site is full of people who could be potential employers, colleagues or competitors. If you plan to work in the industry, you will see these people in the future.

Manage your online persona

Employers are quite savvy about social networking sites, blogs and other online entities. They will often conduct an online search to learn more about a given candidate. If you use sites such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, or if you maintain a personal website or blog, review the content and consider what messages you might be sending to potential employers. You may want to edit your pages or change privacy settings.

Once you are in an internship, check with the employer about any applicable policies related to your use of online sites. Some companies have a very strict confidentiality policy that may preclude you from publishing any details about the internship.

Some tips for being a professional include:

- **Avoid missing work.** If you must be absent, request permission from your supervisor in advance.
- **Be timely when arriving for your internship hours.**
- **Meet deadlines and keep your commitments.**
- **Take only the specified break-time for lunch and/or coffee.**
- **Dress for success by using cues from coworkers, or by asking about the dress code.**
- **Understand that some general office work is part of the job.**
- **Introduce new ideas gradually and avoid trying to change too much too soon.**

Shape your experience

Don't underestimate your power to influence an internship. You do not have to be a passive participant. Select your internship opportunity with specific goals in mind. At the beginning of your internship, meet with your supervisor and have a conversation about expectations.

Over the course of the internship, ask for more responsibility and actively look for things to do. Consider your goals and look for opportunities to meet them by participating in special events or projects or by participating in meetings and presentations.

Handling problems/concerns

If you have a problematic situation or concern at your internship, address it early. The sooner it is addressed, the more readily a solution can be reached. If comfortable, approach your supervisor to discuss the situation. You can also consult with your faculty advisor or the Professional Practice Center for an objective viewpoint. Problems or concerns may include the following situations:

- Being asked to do something that is illegal or unethical
- Feeling harassed or unsafe at the site
- Feeling pressured to work more hours than were agreed upon
- Spending the majority of the internship hours doing clerical work

Build a portfolio

It is helpful to keep records about what you did while at your internship. Even if your internship experience seems unforgettable, you may need to refresh your memory later on.

Journal about your days at the site. Create a list of your daily tasks and chart your feelings about your work. Which tasks did you like the most? Which seemed the least interesting? Reviewing the list later can help you write your reflection

paper and can help when putting together content for your resume.

Record your various projects. Describe the purpose and guidelines of each project and your particular contribution.

Keep professional souvenirs. Ask your supervisor if you can keep copies of any projects you work on: brochures, reports, etc. These can be great additions to a portfolio when you are looking for a job.

Capitalize on your contacts

An internship is an invaluable chance to connect with people who work in the business. Network with these valuable resources! It is important to establish contacts with people who are doing what you think you would like to do. They may also be able to help you with future career opportunities or suggest contacts at other companies or organizations.

- Collect business cards from people you meet.
- Conduct informational interviews. Ask people for career and industry advice.
- As you near the end of an internship, ask people if they will serve as a reference for you in the future.
- Ask for copies of performance reviews or letters of recommendation.

Frequently asked questions

When should I start looking for an internship?

At least three to six months prior to the internship start date. The amount of time it will take to find an opportunity varies. Some employers have formal internship programs with predetermined deadlines for each semester.

Will KCAI provide an internship for me?

We believe that the internship search and application process is an essential part of the internship learning experience. Obtaining an internship is your responsibility. However, there are several people on campus who can help you through this process, including the registrar's office, corporate programs and the Professional Practice Center. The best advice is to begin your search early.

What if I don't know what I am interested in?

You are not alone. Many students are uncertain of their career interests. Fortunately, the Professional Practice Center has a variety of resources that can help you. Make an appointment to discuss strategies and resources to help identify your interests.

Does my internship have to be related to my major?

No. Internships offer students an opportunity to explore a possible career field outside of their studio major. The career you choose to explore or pursue may or may not be related to your major.

Can I do an internship for credit in a different city or abroad?

Yes. The procedure to get credit for an internship in a different city or abroad is the same as getting credit for a local internship. Inform the registrar's office well in advance to verify the site meets the KCAI internship program requirements. You will need to complete all the documentation before you leave in order to get academic credit for your internship abroad or in a different city.

Can I turn an existing job into an internship?

It is possible to turn an existing job into an internship. Your work as an intern should reflect your academic, personal and professional goals. The registrar's office will evaluate the internship site's proposal to determine whether the experience would qualify as an internship. Talk with your faculty advisor and the registrar's office prior to arranging such an internship.

Can I get credit for an internship that I did in the past?

No. All internships for academic credit have to be approved by the registrar's office before you can begin the internship.

Do I have to work the same number of hours every week?

No. We recommend that you negotiate your schedule with your site supervisor. As long as you have completed the stipulated work hours at the end of the semester, you will receive credit for the internship. The average number of hours you work per week will depend on the length of the internship and how many credits you are earning.

KCAI Resources

If you have questions about the internship process, please contact the following departments for assistance:

Registrar's Office

Registration for academic credit internships

registrar@kcai.edu ↗

DeBruce Hall, second floor
(816) 802-3569

Corporate Programs

Researching and improving new internship sites

corporateprograms@kcai.edu ↗

Vanderslice Hall, second floor
(816) 802-3527

Professional Practice Center

Resumes, cover letters, interviewing skills and help with selecting an internship site

careers@kcai.edu ↗

kcai.edu/professional-practice-center/ ↗

Vanderslice Hall, second floor
(816) 802-3464

Links

URLs for linked sites are listed below:

[Professional Practice Portal ↗](#)

<https://kcai.12twenty.com/SignUp/Student>

[KCAI's Policy for Internship Sites ↗](#)

https://kcai.edu/documents/145/Policy_for_Internship_Sites.pdf

[Request for Intern Google Form ↗](#)

<https://forms.gle/NnHNVGNEHrbSkE8L7>