

Professional M.A. Program Internship Information and Guidance

1. Introduction

The Professional M.A. program at VIMS requires a 4-credit, minimum 160-hour internship. The internship helps the students gain knowledge and experience acquired through practical work which will help prepare them for their subsequent professional careers.

The internship is intended to fulfill the following goals:

- Supplement the academic knowledge through experiential learning
- Allow the student to gain new skills and experiences relevant to the career goals
- Address selected competencies that will help the student grow in a robust and well-rounded way
- Prepare the student to pursue their career goals

2. Guidelines

- Students will complete an internship with an organization that is engaged in clearly defined marine or environmental science-oriented programs or activities relevant to the student's preparation, capstone project, and individual development plan. Internships should build new skills and help with professional development.
- All internships must be reviewed and approved by the M.A. Program Director before they begin, in order for them to count towards completing the internship requirement.
- Students are responsible for arranging their own internships; however, the M.A. Program Director, your Capstone Advisor(s), and Academic Studies have relationships with many organizations and can help identify opportunities.
- Students are to be supervised by specialist supervisors in the internship organization that can help them realize their specific goals.
- Internships are expected to be done in-person except in extenuating circumstances. Working collaboratively within an office setting can be an important career skill. Remote internships will require permission from the M.A. Program Director and the student must provide a specific reason for requesting it.
- Any wages earned through an internship are to be agreed on by the student and the internship organization.
- A minimum of 160 hours is required to fulfill the 4-credit hours. The internship can be done full-time or part-time to allow for flexibility in student schedules.

3. Internship requirements

- Students consult with the M.A. Program Director on the type of internship they are seeking and potential opportunities.
- Students contact organizations or companies or apply for publicized internship opportunities.
- Students complete an internship plan in collaboration with their internship supervisor. Internship plan requirements include:
 - Form A: Internship Plan
 - The internship plan must be submitted and approved by the M.A. Program Director before the start of the internship.
- Students must submit a 1-page reflection/blog every 40 hours (4 total for the internship) detailing their experiences, knowledge gained, and progress made in their

identified competencies. Each reflection/blog must be a minimum of 450 words. The goal of this requirement is to provide students with an opportunity for a reflective analysis of their experience and how it is contributing to their development as both a student and as a professional. Reflections/blogs contribute to the internship grade and they must be submitted to the M.A. Program Director at each 40-hour milestone.

Topics that should be included in each reflection/blog are:

- What competencies did you focus on? How have you gained experience or grown in those competencies?
 - What skills you are developing in your internship? How are they helping shape your professional trajectory?
 - What problems or challenges did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- Internship supervisors will be asked to fill out an internship evaluation (Form B). The internship evaluation will contribute to the internship grade.

3. Internship grading rubric

Internships are graded (Pass/Fail). The course grade will be determined by the criteria below and all components listed below must be met in order to pass the course.

Evaluation Tool:	Graded By:	% of Grade:
Internship Plan (Form A)	M.A. Program Director	10%
Supervisor evaluation (Form B)	Internship Supervisor	50%
Reflections/blogs	M.A. Program Director	40%