

# Policy on Internship Credit

Department of Computer Science – University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

*Approved by the Department on 28 March 2016*

**Purpose.** The purpose of this document is to provide a uniform policy and set of practices to be used by the Department of Computer Science at UW-Whitewater to grant credit to students who complete internships in computer science. This document provides guidance for students who seek credit from our department for internships, employers who offer internships to our students, faculty and staff who advise students, and faculty members who supervise internships for credit.

**Effective Date.** This policy is in effect beginning with the Summer 2016 term.

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**Introduction.** The Department of Computer Science grants internship credit through the course COMPSCI 493, Internship in Computer Science, for supervised work experience that is relevant to the field of computer science. To ensure that the student's work during the internship is relevant to the field and will complement the student's education, the Department requires a written agreement between the student, the employer, and a faculty supervisor before a student can earn credit for COMPSCI 493. This agreement, which serves as the syllabus for the course, confirms the scope and technical nature of the work experience and thus offers both student and employer some "protection" by guaranteeing more than just incidental work.

**Student Eligibility.** Students must receive permission to enroll in COMPSCI 493 from the faculty member who will supervise their internship. Before requesting permission to enroll in COMPSCI 493, a student must do all of the following:

1. Pass either COMPSCI 220 Intermediate Java or COMPSCI 222 Intermediate C++.
2. Have sophomore standing or higher (at least 24 credits toward the degree).
3. Be in good academic standing (i.e., not in academic probation or dismissal status). This generally requires a UW-Whitewater GPA of 2.0 or greater.
4. Apply for and be offered an internship whose job description is relevant to the field of computer science. In most cases, this must be done independently by the student. The Department posts advertisements for internships that we receive from employers, but it is the student's responsibility to arrange for an internship position.
5. Submit the request to enroll in COMPSCI 493 no later than the "last day to add a course" in the Schedule of Classes for that term. For the summer session, the deadline is the last day to add a 12-week course. "Late adds" will not be allowed.

Students who have not met all of these requirements will not be given permission to enroll.

**Internship Eligibility.** An internship experience for academic credit must be more than incidental employment; it should call upon and challenge the student’s prior academic and practical experience. The internship *must* include an obvious element of computer science to be approved. This generally involves work to develop, modify, secure, or maintain algorithms, computer programs, and/or computer hardware/software systems. This does not (and should not) only mean writing code; students can contribute to any parts of the software or system development process, from gathering requirements through unit testing, integration testing, and maintenance. It is the burden of the student and employer (i.e., work site supervisor) to clearly identify the validity of the computer science component.

Work experience is *not* eligible for COMPSCI 493 credit if any of the following are true:

- The work was completed before the student enrolled in COMPSCI 493, including prior work experience, military experience, etc. Students who want credit for this type of experience should go through the Credit for Prior Learning process.
- The work is not primarily related to developing, modifying, maintaining, or securing algorithms, computer programs, or computer hardware/software systems.
  - If the work involves deployment, administration, or management of technical resources, ITSCM 493 credit may be appropriate. Contact the Department of Information Technology and Supply Chain Management for information.
  - If the work involves design and development of games or electronic media and does not include a significant software or website implementation or maintenance component, COMM 493M credit may be appropriate. Contact the Media Arts and Game Development program for information.
- The work is used to earn other internship credit. For example, students cannot earn COMPSCI 493 and ITSCM 493 credit for the same internship during the same term.

**Units of Credit.** In general, one unit of credit will be given for every 80 work hours, with no more than 3 units per term. Most students enroll for 3 units at a time. Specific examples:

Units of Credit	Terms of Work
<b>3 units</b>	Full-time (40 hours) for at least 6 weeks (e.g., part of summer)
<b>3 units</b>	Half-time (20 hours) for at least 12 weeks (e.g., entire summer)
<b>3 units</b>	At least 15 hours per week for entire Fall or Spring semester
<b>2 units</b>	10-15 hours per week for entire Fall or Spring semester
<b>2 units</b>	14-20 hours per week for at least 12 weeks (e.g., entire summer)
<b>1 unit</b>	5-10 hours per week for entire Fall or Spring semester
<b>1 unit</b>	7-14 hours per week for at least 12 weeks (e.g., entire summer)
<b>1 unit</b>	30 hours or more per week for entire Winterim term

Students may take other courses at the same time as COMPSCI 493. However, students are advised to take no more than 16 units (including COMPSCI 493) during an internship.

COMPSCI 493 credit can be applied to the following graduation requirements:

- CS major, general emphasis: Upper-division COMPSCI elective (300 or higher)
- CS major, comprehensive emphasis: Capstone requirement (replaces COMPSCI 476)
- CS minor: 11 units of COMPSCI courses numbered 300 or higher (or related courses)

With the consent of the Department chair, COMPSCI 493 credit can be “personalized” to fulfill other requirements instead. Contact the Department chair or your advisor for details.

COMPSCI 493 can be repeated for up to 12 units of credit, but only the first 3 units will count toward the Computer Science major without special permission from the Department.

**Grading.** COMPSCI 493 is offered on the S/NC grade basis only. If all requirements given in the internship agreement (syllabus) are satisfied, the student will earn a grade of S (Satisfactory). Otherwise, the student will earn a grade of NC (No Credit). Satisfaction of requirements is determined by the faculty supervisor based on the reports submitted by the student and the work site supervisor.

**Student Responsibilities.** Each student enrolled in COMPSCI 493 must satisfy all of the following requirements in order to earn a Satisfactory (S) grade:

1. Complete the Internship Agreement Form in consultation with the work site supervisor and submit it to the faculty supervisor for approval before the end of the first week of the internship (or the first 20% of the period if one month or less).
2. Report progress to the faculty supervisor. The student and faculty supervisor should agree on the schedule and format (e.g., email, phone call, meeting, or D2L posting) for progress reports before the internship begins. Progress reports should summarize (a) activities the student has been performing and (b) what the student has learned since the last report. (This is not required for internships of one month or less.)
3. Arrange for the work site supervisor to submit a brief evaluation (usually 1 page or less) of the student’s performance at the end of the internship period. See “Work Site Supervisor (Employer) Responsibilities” for more details.
4. Write and submit a final report describing and reflecting upon the internship experience. This report should be at least 5 pages long (including the cover page), double-spaced, and set in 12-point or smaller type. It must include the following:
  - a. Cover page, including COMPSCI 493 course title, number of credits, student name, dates of employment, submission date, employer name and address.
  - b. Introduction: describe the intent of the position, employment dates and number of hours worked per week, and the general nature of the work.
  - c. Description of the Work: describe the work in moderate detail, making it clear that the experience was valid practical computer science experience. Choose one particular project or task you were involved with and detail your work in more depth. Clearly indicate the significance of this work to both you and the employer.
  - d. Conclusions: Briefly summarize your work experience and conclude whether you did or did not achieve the objectives of the work plan. How will you be a better computing professional after completing this work?

If permitted by the employer, the student is encouraged to include a sample of work (e.g., diagrams, memos, reports, presentations) produced during the internship as an appendix to this report.

5. Fulfill the objectives of the internship. This is determined by the faculty supervisor based mainly on the reports submitted by the student and the work site supervisor.

**Work Site Supervisor (Employer) Responsibilities.** The student's work site supervisor and/or employer is expected to do the following:

1. Provide sufficient information about the internship position to allow the student to request COMPSCI 493 credit.
2. Assist the student in completing the Internship Agreement Form before the first week of the internship period (or the first 20% of the period if one month or less).
3. Submit a brief (usually 1 page or less) evaluation of the student's performance at the end of the internship period. The evaluation must indicate whether the employer is satisfied that the student has achieved the approved objectives. It may also include any other information about the student's performance that the work site supervisor wishes to share. The student does not need to approve this document.

*Note:* Although candid comments about the student's performance and potential are encouraged, Federal law (FERPA) requires us to share comments with the student if the student requests it. With this one exception, comments are confidential unless both the work site supervisor and the student give permission to disclose them.

**Faculty Supervisor Responsibilities.** A member of the Department faculty shall serve as the instructor of record for each student who requests COMPSCI 493 credit for an internship. The faculty supervisor shall:

1. Ensure that both the student and the internship meet the requirements for COMPSCI 493 credit before giving permission to enroll.
2. Receive, evaluate, and file internship agreements and required reports from COMPSCI 493 students and their work site supervisors.
3. Communicate with COMPSCI 493 students and their work site supervisors as needed to ensure submission of reports and assist in evaluating students' work.

Faculty supervisors are not responsible for soliciting internships from employers, matching students with internships, or assisting students with applying for internships. Students are responsible for finding and applying for internships on their own, though the Department job board and Career & Leadership Development can assist students with this.

**Required Forms.** The Department will make required internship forms available on its website and in the Department office.

**Acknowledgement.** Portions of this policy are taken from the internship policy for computer science programs in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at South Dakota State University, as of November 2011.