

ARTS 4312: Photography Internship

ARTS 4312 is a course that allows a student to receive university credit for completing an internship at a museum, gallery, assisting a photographer, or other photo/art-related organization. This 3-credit-hour course counts as an upper-division art history elective. A student may take the internship once and earn up to 3 credit hours.

An internship serves as a bridge from the academic world into the professional world. Most often, students walk away from these experiences with the confidence that they'll be able to succeed in their chosen profession. Completing a successful internship allows you to:

- Gain practical knowledge in the field of photography
- Learn about the day-to-day business of being a photographer, working in museums, galleries, and other photo/art-related organizations
- Make professional contacts
- Get concrete experience for your resume

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I take the internship course?

It is recommended that you wait until you are in your senior year of coursework. This will give you a broader set of skills and may help to determine your specific interests in the field of photography. With that said, you should not wait until your senior year to find every possible opportunity to build your resume so that when you do apply for an internship you will have a solid set of experiences.

How many hours must I work to get credit?

Students are required to work at the gallery, museum, or photo/art-related organization for a minimum of 6 hours per week during the long semester (of 15 weeks) to receive 3 hours of credit. That's a total of 90 work hours. Your work schedule will be determined by the needs of the organization and your availability and faculty do not need to approve of those hours.

What criteria do organizations have to meet for a photography internship?

The internship must be in a photo/art-related organization or with a practicing photographer or artist. You must have a designated supervisor to whom the intern

reports directly and who will determine the work tasks, schedule, and project assignments.

INTERNSHIP PROCESS

Step 1: Find a place to intern

Start by answering these questions to narrow your search.

- Where do you want to work? San Marcos, Austin, Houston, Chicago, London?
- What type of work are you most interested in? Gallery or museum work, photo archives and conservation, commercial, weddings, or portrait photography, curatorial, education, public programs, studio/exhibitions, collection management, conservation, etc.?
- What organization or person is doing the kind of work you aspire to do?

Once you've decided what city and type(s) of work you'd like to gain experience in, do research and talk to faculty. Our students have interned for many individual photographers and artists, at news organizations, and many galleries and museums - Texas is rich in museums and art organizations! Some institutions in Texas that may offer internship opportunities include:

San Marcos

- [Texas State Galleries](#)
- [The Wittliff Collections](#)
- [The San Marcos Art League](#)
- [Collections Management Intern for TSUS Public Art](#)
- TXST Athletics

Austin

- [The Contemporary Austin](#)
- [Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum](#)
- [Blanton Museum of Art](#)
- [Women and Their Work](#)
- [Mexic-Arte Museum](#)
- [Elisabet Ney Museum](#)
- [Austin Film Society](#)
- [Harry Ransom Center](#)
- Texas Tribune
- Texas Monthly
- Co-Lab Gallery

San Antonio

- [Artpace](#)
- [The McNay Art Museum](#)
- [Blue Star Contemporary Art Center](#)
- [San Antonio Museum of Art](#)
- [Ruby City](#)
- [Esperanza Peace and Justice Center](#)

Houston

- [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston](#)
- [Contemporary Arts Museum Houston](#)
- [Aurora Picture Show](#)
- [Menil Collection](#)
- [DiverseWorks](#)
- [Houston Center for Photography](#)
- [Lawndale Art Center](#)
- [Project Row Houses](#)
- Houston Chronicle

Dallas

- [DallasVideoFest](#)

- [Dallas Museum of Art](#)
- [Nasher Sculpture Center](#)

Fort Worth

- [Amon Carter Museum of American Art](#)
- [Kimball Art Museum](#)

- [Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth](#)

Corpus Christi

- [Art Museum of South Texas](#)

More resources for finding internships (most of these are national):

- [Smithsonian Institution](#) (useful for any level of education)
- [The Association of Art Museum Curators](#) (listings of national internships for undergraduates)
- [GlobalMuseum.org Internships/Fellowships Listings](#) (they also have a great jobs website)
- [American Alliance of Museums Job HQ](#) (sometimes has internship listings, usually paid or for larger museums)
- Regional museum association websites and classifieds (e.g., [Glasstire Classifieds](#), [PA Federation of Museums](#), [New England Museum Association](#), [New York Foundation for the Arts](#)) often post internship opportunities on their job pages

In addition to these, truly the best resources are museum and photographer/artists websites themselves. Internship opportunities are usually linked through their education department or sometimes the job opportunities page.

If the museum or art-related organization doesn't list internship opportunities on their website, that doesn't mean they won't take interns. "Cold call" (see below) and impress them so much that they make up an internship especially for you.

Step 2: Prepare your application materials

First, contact the Photography Internship Coordinator (usually the same as the Photography Area Coordinator) for the [Internship Agreement](#), [Internship Evaluation](#), and the [Internship Self-Evaluation](#). These forms will ensure that you begin the process with an understanding of what you need to do to complete the internship.

Any organization you reach out to about an internship will want to see what you have already done. You need a website and a social media account specifically for that work.

A central element of your application materials will be your resume. Here are some tips for your resume:

- Keep your resume clean, simple, and easy to scan for information.

- Use lists to cut down your word count.
- Make the resume fit your content.
- You don't have to over-design your resume: clean, simple typography is best.
- Spell-check it and have someone else proof your work before you send it – ask a professor for help.

Things that should be on your student resume:

- Education: Schools, degrees, expected graduation date, minors, etc.
- Experience: Highlight work experience that is relevant: art related positions, internships, etc. but don't shy away from including work that pays your bills
- References: List people that a potential supervisor can contact for a reference, or put "available upon request." Your references can be anyone you've worked for professionally or academically (i.e., professors).

Other things that could be included on your student resume:

- Objective statement: Write a statement about what you hope to learn rather than what "you bring to the table". Humility is important. Try to make it specific to the organization to which you are applying.
- Honors: G.P.A. if it's 3.5 or above, Dean's List, academic scholarships, etc.
- Awards or Accomplishments: If your list is slim you might combine "Honors & Awards".
- Courses: Photography, Art History, or Art and Design related
- Languages: Can you read/write/speak other languages?
- Clubs/Organizations: List art history related organizations first
- Technical Proficiencies: List software skills, operating systems, etc.
- Digital or social media skills
- Volunteer work: You might consider including some highlights if it says something positive about you.
- Activities: This could be a good "catch all" if you don't have enough to list things out in other categories. You could include organizations, volunteer work, memberships, study abroad, etc.
- Additional skills: If you have relevant talents you couldn't fit into another category: writing, construction, excellent hand-skills, bookbinding, printmaking, drawing, etc.

[Career Services](#) can help with cover letters, resumes, and interviewing skills.

Step 3: Contact the organization and apply for an internship

Many larger organizations have specific guidelines for intern applications so be sure to review each website for guidelines as well as specific application materials.

- If there is an application form, read it over carefully to make sure that you've included everything that is asked for.
- If letters of recommendation are required, be sure to give your recommenders adequate time to write letters of your behalf.
- Be sure to also read over your application materials for grammatical and spelling errors. Ask someone to look them over for you as well.

If there's no information for how you should apply, then you can call or email the organization. This process is known as cold calling:

- If you have to "cold call" an organization, meaning you don't know who you need to be talking to, tell them: "Hello, I'm _____, a Photography major at Texas State. I'm interested in working with your organization as an intern, can you tell me who is in charge of your intern program or who the appropriate person is to talk to?"
- If you have to leave a message and do not hear back from them, give them a week and then follow up. After 2-3 follow-ups assume that they aren't interested and move on.

Step 4: Prepare for an interview

Be prepared: Find out as much as you can about the organization before you walk in the door. Be sure that you've visited it several times or researched online extensively. During the interview, you may be asked why you picked their organization. Be prepared to discuss this.

Express your interests: Most interns are responsible for some day-to-day tasks, filing, research, Xeroxing, etc. That's a part of being an intern. If you have the opportunity, let them know some things that you'd be interested in. If your mentor knows your interests, there's a better chance you'll get to participate.

Ask questions: We require you to have a mentor to report to during your internship so it's appropriate to ask who you would be assigned to. It's also a good idea to ask what your responsibilities would be as an intern or what sorts of tasks you might be asked to do on a typical day.

Be sure that they understand the photography program's internship requirements: Explain to them that you need to work an average of 6 hours per week for 15 weeks (for a total of 90 hours) to earn internship credit. Give them a copy of the Internship

Agreement, which you should partially complete (i.e., fill in your name, time period of internship, hours per week, and place of internship) before the interview. Also give them a copy of the Internship Evaluation that they'll need to complete at the end of the internship, so that they know what's expected of them.

Step 5: Complete the agreement and register for the class

When you get an offer, you'll be responsible for working out a schedule with the organization yourself. Before you can register for the internship course, you'll need to have your internship supervisor complete and sign the Internship Agreement. Send the agreement to the Internship Coordinator, who will have the hold removed for the ARTS 4312 Internship course so you can register. The coordinator will also send an introductory email to your internship supervisor so that she/he knows who to contact with questions or concerns.

Step 6: Gain some professional experience!

Unless you have an ongoing assignment, every time you walk in the door ask for work. If your mentor doesn't have anything for you to do, ask if you can talk to the other employees to find tasks. Remember that it might take a while for people to get comfortable enough with you to hand you work. These are things that will help you get established:

- study the organization's website so that you understand, or can ask questions about, the organization's mission, goals, structure, etc.
- show up on time
- follow instructions
- complete tasks in a timely fashion and to the best of your ability
- show your willingness to take on additional tasks
- have a good attitude regardless of the task you're assigned
- don't be afraid to ask questions

Also, remember that you should:

- track your hours to make sure you meet the 6-hours-per-week requirement
- contact the Photography Internship Coordinator if you have any questions, problems, or concerns

Step 7: Submit the evaluation forms

Remember that the Photography Internship Coordinator is the one to contact for the appropriate forms that you and your mentor will fill out at the conclusion of your internship.

At the close of your internship:

- Your supervisor is responsible for filling out your Internship Evaluation and recommending a grade.
- You are responsible for completing an Internship Self-Evaluation Form and for ensuring that both forms are returned to the coordinator by the last day of the semester.
- You won't be assigned a grade or receive credit for the course until the Internship Coordinator receives these forms. Failure to provide them may result in an F for the course.

How to deliver your paperwork to the coordinator:

- Email a PDF copy to jr68@txstate.edu

For more information contact the Internship Coordinator, Jason Reed by email at jr68@txstate.edu

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