

ARTH 4325 Art History Internship Guide

ARTH 4325 is a course that allows a student to receive university credit for completing an internship at a museum, gallery, or other art-related organization. This 3-credit-hour course counts as an upper-division ARTH elective. A student may take the internship twice (with two different institutions and/or organizations) and earn up to 6 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 art history
- Learn about the day-to-day business of museum, galleries, and other art-related organizations
- Make professional contacts
- Get concrete experience for your resume

When should I take the internship course?

It is recommended that you wait until you have 1-2 upper division art history courses completed before you apply. This will give you a broader set of skills and may help to determine your specific interests in the field of art history and/or museum and curatorial studies.

How many hours will I work to get credit?

Students are required to work at the gallery, museum, or art-related organization a minimum of 6 hours a 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.

What criteria do organizations have to meet for credit?

The internship must be in an art-related organization. The organization must assign a designated mentor to whom the intern reports directly and who will determine the work tasks, schedule, and project assignments.

Step 1: Finding an internship

Start by answering these questions to narrow your search.

Where do you want to work? Austin, Houston, Chicago, London?

What type of art history and/or museum and curatorial work are you most interested in?
Archives, External Affairs, Curatorial, Education, Public Programs, New Media,
Studio/Exhibitions, Collection Management, Conservation, etc.?

What organization is doing the kind of work you aspire to do?

Once you've decided what city and what type(s) of work you'd like to be exposed to, do some research, talk to your faculty, and look over the following general resources (NOTE that many of these sources are for internship listings in other states):

- [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
- The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) [National Internship Program \(HNIP\)](#) provides students with opportunity to receive valuable work experience through paid internships with federal agencies and private corporations nationwide.

In addition to these, truly the best resources are museum websites themselves. Internship opportunities are usually linked through their education department or sometimes the job opportunities page. If you know what museum you want to work at, then their website is the place to look. Here are some selected local resources:

San Marcos/Austin

- [Texas State Galleries](#)
- [The Contemporary Austin](#)
- [Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum](#)
- [Blanton Museum of Art Internships](#)
- [Women and Their Work](#)
- [Mexic Arte Museum](#)
- [Borderland Collective](#) (contact [Jason Reed](#))
- [Elisabet Ney Museum](#)
- [Austin Film Society](#)
- [Harry Ransom Center](#)
- [The Wittliff Collections](#)

San Antonio

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

Houston

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

Dallas

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

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: What you'll need to apply

First, contact the Art History Internship Coordinator (usually the same as the Art History 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, and you'll need to give the first two forms to your internship supervisor once you've got one.

[Career Services](#) can help with cover letters, resumes, and interviewing skills. Here are some additional tips about your resume:

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 fine. Spell-check it and have someone else proof your work before you send it.

Things that should be on your student resume:

- Education: Schools, degrees, expected graduation date, minors, etc.
- Experience: Only include work experience that is relevant, art related positions, internships, etc.
- References: Available upon request. These can be professional or academic references.

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: 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, excellent hand-skills, bookbinding, photography, printmaking, drawing, etc.

Step 3: Applying and Contacting the Organization

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. In addition, 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 the organization. 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 _____, an Art History 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: The 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. 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 art history 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: Registration

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 ARTH 4325 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.

Step 6: Evaluation Forms

- Track your hours so you can make sure you meet or exceed the 6 hours per week requirement.
- Remember that the Art History 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 mentor is responsible for filling out your Internship Evaluation and assigning you 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.

4 ways to deliver your paperwork to the coordinator:

- Drop it off at Gina Tarver's office JCM 2112E
- Email a PDF copy to gt17@txstate.edu
- FAX it to Gina Tarver's attention, the general fax number for the school is: 512.245.7969
- Drop it by the Art Office (JCM 2112) and have it placed in Gina Tarver's mailbox.

For more information contact the Internship Coordinator, Gina Tarver by email at gt17@txstate.edu.

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