



**Framingham**  
State University

Department of Sociology  
and Criminology

# **Your Guide to a Successful Internship Search in Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology**



View the [Internship Search Notebook](#), which contains a sample of students' internship descriptions & assessments here.

## Why should I do an internship?

Working at an internship 8 hours a week and 120 hours over the course of a semester provides an opportunity to expand and apply what you have learned in sociology, anthropology, and criminology and to gain out-of-classroom knowledge and experience. Sociology & Criminology internships help you *think like sociologists and criminologists* when you are approaching the process and substance of your work. As sociologists and criminologists, we have tools of analysis—data analysis, application of theory, knowledge about issues of diversity, inequality, power, social structure, social change, and organizations, that we bring to our work tasks. We also bring that understanding to the process of working with other people in professional organizations. Internships also help you explore careers, learn about their likes/dislikes and strengths/weaknesses, gain job experience, and develop professional contacts.

## What kinds of internships are available?

Some internships are paid; others are not. Most take place in settings that are new and unfamiliar to the student (See “Earning credit for an existing job” on the top of p. 4). FSU students have completed internships in the following areas: residential treatment, substance abuse counseling, psychiatric hospitals, childcare, guidance counseling, teaching, human resources, event planning, nonprofit organizing, housing advocacy, college student services, court systems, police work, social research, public relations, political campaigns, and more!

## How do I get an internship?

It is your responsibility to secure an internship well before the internship class starts. Most students begin the search at least one month before the semester begins, and many start two to three months before in order to be safe. Here are the steps to a successful internship search:

- **Meet with the professor.** When first considering a possible internship, you should contact the professor teaching the internship course to verify that it is a satisfactory internship. **This must occur at least a month before the start of the semester for which you are registered for the Internship course.**
- **Identify the type of work you want to do.** For example, ask yourself if you want to explore work in a clinical/counseling, educational, criminal justice, political, non-profit or business setting. Similarly, ask yourself if you want to work with infants, children, adolescents, adults, or the elderly. Answering these questions will help you focus your internship search. If you are unsure of your interests, talk with your faculty advisor, Sociology & Criminology Department professors, and/or a Career Services Counselor (<http://www.framingham.edu/careerservices>, Room 412 in the McCarthy Center).

- **Search potential internship sites.**

- FSU's Career Services & Employer Relations Office (Room 412 in the McCarthy Center) has an internship coordinator who can help you through multiple steps of the search process. You can schedule a meeting via Starfish. For details and tips on preparing for the meeting, visit <https://www.framingham.edu/the-fsu-difference/career-services/index>.
- Create an account on **Handshake**, FSU's primary job search site. After registering for Handshake, you can access internship postings for all majors, including sociology and criminology. We also suggest looking at related majors, such as psychology, business, communications, and education. For more information, visit <https://www.framingham.edu/the-fsu-difference/career-services/Handshake/>.
- Attend career-related events on campus, such as career fairs, internship/alumni panels, and employer showcases. Many times, current students and employers announce internship opportunities at these events and/or can offer excellent advice for students seeking an internship. Career-related events are often announced in soc and crim classes. In addition, if you register on the FSU Career Service's website, you will receive e-mail announcements about upcoming events.
- Networking is an *excellent* way to develop internship leads. Networking simply means talking with people who might know of internship opportunities- friends, relatives, professors, students currently doing an internship, classmates, and high school counselors or teachers! Networking is the most common way of finding job leads, so do not underestimate its value in an internship search.
- Read campus fliers that announce internship/job opportunities.
- **Develop a current résumé.** Work with a Career Services counselor for feedback and assistance on résumé development (<http://www.framingham.edu/careerservices>, Room 412 in the McCarthy Center).
- **Initiate contact with internship sites.** Once you have a good résumé, begin contacting internship sites that interest you. Ask if the internship site is looking for interns. If so, ask if it is possible to meet with someone to discuss the internship further.
  - ✓ You may need to contact a site several times before connecting with someone. Also, be prepared to answer questions over the phone (what you desire in an internship, your major, and career plans)
- **Meet with the internship coordinator at the site.** Most internship coordinators will want to meet with potential interns in person. This is great practice for what it is like to *really* interview for a job; therefore, prepare for this interview as you would for a prospective job! Interview preparation is discussed later in this packet.
  - ✓ Some sites offer students an internship position during the interview. However, it is a good idea (and common) for you to ask for a few days to make a decision. This gives you time to assess the internship fit and attend other interviews.

- **Consider the offers.** Carefully consider any internship offers you receive. Make sure the internship feels like a good fit in terms of the type of work, the hours/schedule, and location.
- **Contact the Internship course instructor.** Check in with the internship course instructor to ensure that the internship they are considering is acceptable for the course. Do this *before* accepting an offer and *before* the first day of classes.
- **Accept an offer.** Verbally accept the instructor approved internship that works best for you and clarify the start date. The start date should be the start of the semester in which the internship course begins. You will complete formal paperwork, as well, with your internship supervisor, and that paperwork will be submitted to your internship instructor.
- **Decline other offers professionally.** If you receive other internship offers, contact these sites and professionally decline the offers. Thank them for their time and be honest with them. This may feel a bit uncomfortable but there are many reasons to do it:
  - ✓ First, MetroWest can be a small community where many organizations ‘talk’ with each other. Sometimes students who tell a fib (“Oh, I decided not to do an internship”) are discovered doing an internship elsewhere. This does not reflect well on the student! In addition, these actions could negatively impact future FSU students’ searches.
  - ✓ Second, one never knows what could happen in the future. You might apply for a job at one of these organizations again in a few years.
  - ✓ Finally, contacting employers who have extended an offer is a professional courtesy - these individuals took time to do an interview and were willing to make more time for future training and supervision. It is polite to take a few minutes to respond to their offer.

## **What won’t count for an internship?**

As long as you can explain how an internship is soc/anthro/crim-related, it will most likely be approved.

However, there are two common situations that would *not* likely count for internship credit:

- **Mostly secretarial/administrative work.** An internship should provide an opportunity to build skills. An internship should provide work experience and skills that are more unique to social services-related careers, such as opportunities for counseling, developing lesson plans, observing court proceedings, collecting and analyzing research data, writing reports, or helping with personnel actions. This does not mean that an internship cannot have some administrative responsibilities - just that it cannot be primarily secretarial work.
- **Earning credit for an existing job.** The Internship class leads to *new* learning. You are unlikely to experience this in your current job. However, if new responsibilities can be added to an existing job for the duration of the internship, your professor will take that into consideration for approval.

## What can I expect at the interview?

Internship interviews range from formal to casual meetings. Regardless of the type of interview, you should prepare for it. Career Services has handouts and career counselors to help with all aspects of the internship search process (<https://www.framingham.edu/the-fsu-difference/career-services/students/Job-Internship-Strategies/>); Room 412 of the McCarthy Center]. Tips include:

- Research the organization before you arrive for the interview. You should be able to find information on the organization's website.
- Prepare answers to typical questions they might ask. Typical questions might be:
  - ✓ What interests you about this internship?
  - ✓ How would your education and background help you in this type of work?
  - ✓ What is your class and work schedule like (i.e., when are you available to work)?
  - ✓ See the Career Services Handouts for many additional common questions.
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer. Coming with prepared questions lets the interviewer know you are serious about the interview. It is also a great way for you to learn information that may not have been addressed earlier in the interview. Questions to ask include:
  - ✓ What is a typical day like for an intern?
  - ✓ What training does the organization offer its interns?
  - ✓ What will be your responsibilities?
  - ✓ What type of supervision will you receive?
  - ✓ Can this be a paid position?
- Dress professionally. If the dress code is unknown, it is usually advised that students come dressed in business or business-casual attire. The interviewer may not be dressed as formally, but it lets him/her know you are serious about the internship.
- Some sites may offer the chance to observe staff members in their regular duties. If you find this interesting and have the time, this is an excellent way to learn about the work environment.
- Be sure to leave the interview with an understanding of the next step in the process and then follow up as needed. Send a short thank-you note to the interviewer within 48 hours, even if you do not plan to take the internship.