

Internship Program

The University of Kentucky Retailing and Tourism Management (RTM) Internship Program is a combination of RTM 340, which is a 1-credit hour pre-internship course and the 6-credit hour RTM 499 course. Both courses are required for students majoring in Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) or Merchandising, Apparel, and Textiles (MAT).

All RTM students are required to complete a **320-hour** internship at an organization in the retailing or tourism industries. The internship experience should be designed so that students can rotate among departments or job functions, assist managers with administrative functions, and, where possible, manage staff. The internship should be completed over an **8-week period**.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERNSHIP

An internship is a supervised academic experience designed to be both practical and academically enriching. The internship in the Department of Retailing and Tourism Management (RTM) is a cooperative arrangement between the Department and the employer.

ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP

Internships can be completed at an approved organization (i.e., the internship site) at which the student gains management experience with the guidance of a qualified professional associated with the organization. Internships allow students to apply classroom knowledge to real world experiences.

The RTM Internship Program is designed to enable students to:

- Identify prospective internship and employment opportunities
- Create a cover letter, resume and reference list specifically for identified opportunities
- Connect classroom experiences to their internship experiences and articulate learning through doing
- Process constructive feedback from the internship supervisor to enhance performance
- Assess their passions and abilities prior to entering the profession after graduation
- Ready themselves for professional life after college while applying concepts and theories learned in college
- Build a network of professional contacts

BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENT

- Develops self-awareness and future career interests
- Provides a professional experience that links academic coursework to the disciplines that a student may want to pursue for a career
- Students will gain a better understanding of a specific company or industry and the possibility of a longer term career fit
- Potential to have a full time job offer after the internship experience and/or graduation

BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYER

- Internships provide a source of skilled, motivated pre-professionals
- Interns offer fresh perspectives to old problems.
- Internships offer a cost effective way to recruit, evaluate, train and retain potential employees.
- Organizations can improve their access to diverse populations

Understanding the internship is a broad educational experience with a wide range of responsibilities, the intern should be given the opportunity to observe the work of the supervisor within their own organization, at staff meetings, and in connection with other agencies and organizations. The intern's supervisor in the organization should:

- Meet with the intern prior to beginning the internship to determine the experiences and schedule for the internship
- Orient the intern to the norms, purpose, policies, key staff, and facilities of the organization
- Observe the performance of the intern as often as possible
- Interact regularly with the intern to discuss performance, highlighting opportunities for improvement, and suggesting ways to improve
- Communicate negative issues with the university supervisor if behavior or performance is unsatisfactory or detrimental to the organization
- Conduct a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation of the intern, using the appropriate evaluation forms
- Provide work experiences leading to the intern's professional maturity
- Challenge and inspire the intern to become a leader in his or her future professional activities

CONTACT INFORMATION

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