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What is an 'academic' internship?

An internship is a structured work experience, providing a learning opportunity for you, as a student, in a real work environment. The experience should enhance your academic, professional and personal development. It should be supervised by a professional in the field and allow you to make a real contribution to the work of the host organisation.

An academic internship covers these same elements, while fitting into an academic programme and allowing you, the student undertaking an internship, to gain academic credits at the same time. BSc Social Sciences students undertaking an academic internship will be registered to a 30-credit, GPA-neutral module for the trimester you are on internship. Like any other module there will be learning outcomes and assessment to help you to make the most of your experience and solidify your learning. You will not undertake any other modules during this trimester.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment for the module will follow best practice in the area, comprising a learning agreement, continuous assessment through reflective writing pieces, a final report, submitting an ePortfolio of work completed, and of course attendance.

How is my GPA calculation affected if I undertake an internship?

Please see the website [here](#) for full information on GPA calculation.

Are internships open to all subject combinations and streams?

All students studying BSc Social Sciences can apply to undertake internships in either Autumn or Spring trimester, with the exception of the following combinations:

- Students studying Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) are not able to undertake an internship due to the structured nature of the programme.
- Students on a major/minor pathway, where the minor is a language, should study abroad for the year, and therefore are not able to engage with academic internships (unless they are given an exemption from this from their language Head of Subject). The one exception for major/minor students studying a language are those students studying Irish, who will not be required to study abroad.
- Students studying Economics, Mathematics & Statistics (EMS) are only able to undertake an internship during the Spring trimester.

Is there any eligibility criteria to be aware of? Is there a GPA requirement?

There is no GPA requirement to undertake an academic internship as part of the BSc Social Sciences degree.

Students must, however, have passed 60 credits from stage 1, and must then have progressed to stage 3 - ie passed 60 credits from stage 1 and at least 50 credits from stage 2 - before starting an internship.



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Do I need to tell anyone that I am interested in doing an academic internship?

Yes, you should complete the [Registration of Interest Form](#) so that you can see the internship roles when they are made available and outline what kind of internship you are interested in. As part of the registration of interest, you will have to submit a generic CV and cover letter for review.

If you want to discuss anything related to academic internships you should make contact with the Social Sciences Internship Manager at socialsciencesinternships@ucd.ie.

How long does an internship last? How many hours a week are internships? What are the start and end dates for an internship?

Internships will typically last 12-15 weeks (ie one academic trimester), and should be in keeping with the full-time working hours of the host organisation (ie typically 35-40 hours per week, although in some instances less hours and a longer duration may be possible). The immersive learning which will take place during an internship demands that students undertake a full-time internship in order to gain the full benefits of the experience. Given that the internship equates to a full academic workload for the trimester, students should have no other academic obligations at UCD for the duration of the internship.

Internships will start in either September or January/February, in keeping with the needs of the host organisation. Students should pay close attention to internship timing when applying for specific roles, as these are often inflexible and are set at a specific time of the year to fit business needs for the host.

Some internships may last longer than 12-15 weeks where the organisation indicates the value in the student being with the organisation for a longer period. This will be clearly stated in the internship role description. These internships will typically begin in July/August or January/February, running partially during the summer and academic trimester or vice versa, and the academic element will be undertaken during the autumn or spring trimester. Internships cannot span across the Autumn and Spring trimesters.

Can I source an internship during the summer instead of during the school trimester?

Internships undertaken during the summer cannot be considered academic internships as part of your BSc Social Sciences degree, unless they also run for 12 weeks during either the autumn or spring trimester (ie July-December or January-August).

You may, of course, undertake a summer internship outside of your programme, and we would encourage this option, particularly for those wishing to go on exchange abroad for the full academic year.



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Will I have to find my own internship, or will students be informed about opportunities available?

Students can apply to internship opportunities sourced by UCD Social Sciences (across a range of public, private and charitable organisations), or may source your own internship if you have a particular role you wish to pursue and/or someone in your network who can assist with making such an opportunity feasible. All self-sourced internships must be approved by the Social Sciences Internship Manager in advance of the internship being confirmed.

What does the application and interview process consist of?

Roles sourced by the UCD Social Sciences office will be made available to students on the degree who have registered their interest. Roles will be released during the spring trimester of stage 2 through [MyCareer](#). Further roles will be available during the autumn trimester of stage 3 for students to apply to.

You should carefully review the different opportunities (role, organisation, location etc) and submit an application (usually a CV and cover letter) for roles you are interested in, all through the MyCareer portal.

When the closing date for a role passes all applications will be sent to the host organisation who will review the applications and shortlist students for interviews. Students will then be interviewed and offered positions based on the strength of their application and interview. The Social Sciences Internship Manager will be notified about successful candidates, and students offered positions will be encouraged to accept the position as soon as possible in order to finalise contracts ahead of exams. Once you accept a position you should inform the Social Sciences Internship Manager, in order to withdraw from all other competitions you have applied for.

The interview process (shortlisting, interviews and offers) will, in almost all circumstances, be conducted solely by the host organisation to give the best opportunity for both the student and organisation to find a good fit.

Can I self-source my own internship?

You can source your own internship. We encourage students with a specific interest, and/or connections to a particular organisation or industry, to pursue this approach and will offer support for students wishing to source your own internship.

Are there any restrictions on where I can go on internship? What assurances must UCD Social Sciences get to support a self-sourced internship?

When self-sourcing an internship, you must be clear with the host organisation concerning the timeframes and general expectations of the internship (see [‘What is an ‘academic’ internship?’](#)). The internship will have to be approved by the Social Sciences Internship Manager to ensure that the host organisation is aware of its responsibilities and that they understand what to expect from a BSc Social Sciences student on internship. It is generally not advisable for students to source an internship working with an immediate family member.



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How should I approach self-sourcing an internship?

Self-sourcing an internship can be approached from different angles. You may have a connection or have networked with someone which has opened an opportunity which you would like to explore through an internship. Or, you may have a particular organisation or industry which you really want to know more about and are happy to make approaches with no previous relationship in place.

Check out our Self-Sourcing Toolkit & Template letter on the [Internships Toolkit](#) for guidance on how to approach an organisation, and what exact information you need to make sure the organisation needs to have to effectively offer a suitable internship. Until your proposed internship has been approved by the Social Sciences Internship Manager, you will not be registered to the internship module.

What are the timelines if I want to self-source my own internship?

If you wish to source your own internship you are encouraged to discuss your proposed opportunity with the Social Sciences Internship Manager as soon as possible. You should reach out to prospective organisations and have an agreement in place with a host by 11 August for an autumn internship, or 8 December for a spring internship.

When will I know if an internship is secured or not?

You should know by mid-summer whether or not you have secured an internship for the autumn trimester through the applications process. You will also have until mid-August if you wish to self-source an internship for the autumn trimester.

There will be further opportunities for students to apply for, and self-source, internships during the autumn trimester, to go on internship during the spring trimester.

Is there a limit to the number of internships a student can apply for?

While there is no restriction, we would strongly encourage you to limit your applications to 5-6 different internships. The roles on offer will all have distinct requirements and specifications, so you should carefully decide upon which roles and host organisations you are most interested in. Applications should then be tailored to closely fit the needs of the role description, rather than simply submitting a generic CV and cover letter.

How many internship places are there?

There are no restrictions in terms of the number of students who can undertake an internship during stage 3 of your BSc Social Science degree. It is anticipated that 40-50 internship positions will be advertised specifically for BSc Social Sciences students, while there will also be the opportunity to apply for open competitions (ie against students from other colleges and universities), and to source your own opportunity.

How are places allocated? Does UCD decide or does the host organisation?

UCD will not allocate students to particular internship opportunities. You will apply to the roles that interest you and all applications will be forwarded to the host organisation, who will review the



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applications and shortlist a number of students for interviews based on the merit of these applications.

The process is similar to the standard job application process, and is therefore helpful in preparing you for future employment, as well as being the best way to ensure a good fit between student, role and host organisation.

Are internships paid?

Roles available for students to apply to through MyCareer with private and public organisations will be paid roles. Unpaid roles with charitable, NGO and certain strategic public organisations will be linked to the Community Engagement internship modules and will carry a stipend payment which all students will receive.

If you are self-sourcing an internship, we encourage you to suggest that payment is a reasonable expectation (see our [Internships Toolkit](#) for suggestions on how to approach this) but ultimately the decision rests with each student on how they approach this when self-sourcing.

How competitive is the process? Are there certain internships that are more competitive than another?

You will be competing against your peers for internship positions, so there is an element of competition in the process. This is valuable for post-university life, as for many students it will be your first real, professional application and interview process.

The nature of certain roles or organisations means that, inevitably, certain internships will be more highly sought after than others. However, the status of an organisation should not dictate where you make your applications to, nor should you feel 'put off' at the prospect of competition for a position.

While the process will have an element of competition, there will be a variety of opportunities on offer to ensure that students have an excellent internship opportunity.

Will you be able to apply for more than one internship and then choose one internship if you get multiple offers?

While you can apply for more than one internship, we would encourage you to accept the first offer you receive so as to ensure that relationships with partners are maintained and students and partners are not disappointed. You will be given one week to confirm your decision.

Are there specific internships I can apply for based on my subject choices?

The internships made available for application on the MyCareer portal will be open to all eligible students on BSc Social Sciences. You will not be restricted in terms of which areas you undertake your internship, or what kinds of work or tasks you will be performing during your time with the host organisation.



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Inevitably, however, specific roles will demand particular skills or interests, and this may include particular subject-knowledge. This will be made clear in each role description, and you should pay close attention to this to ensure you are a good fit for the position.

How can I improve my chances in standing out in the application process? What can I do to make my application stand out?

The best applications for any role pay close attention to the requirements of the position, and you should make sure to tailor your CV and cover letter to specifically highlight how you meet the desired criteria. Demonstrating that you understand the work of the host organisation is very important, as is showing self-awareness as to what you could bring to an organisation and how your skills fit with what they need.

Pay close attention to the roles on offer, rather than the organisation involved, and show a willingness to learn and put skills you already have into action. Focus on skills and competencies, and outline how these have been developed (whether through work, volunteering, societies or otherwise) to present yourself in the strongest light.

What are the most sought after skills and experiences needed in order to secure an internship?

Direct feedback from employers tells us that they expect students to be well-versed in the subject-area knowledge they have focussed on, and that it is personal skills that are particularly valued in the modern workplace, including: critical thinking, leadership, taking initiative, team-working, communication and research skills. You will have developed many of these skills during your first two years of the BSc Social Sciences degree.

Some internship hosts will value demonstrable examples of you putting into action some of the above skills. This may be through previous work experience, volunteering in the community, or through a student society. There are different ways to present your skills and achievements, and you should ensure you represent yourself as confidently and positively as possible, while also highlighting how a particular internship would assist you in developing new competencies.

Is past work experience necessary in order to get an internship?

Past work experience is not necessary to get an internship. For some host organisations it may be preferable, as a means of demonstrating your skills and experience, but there are many other ways which you can outline your qualities and capacities, whether through volunteering, being part of a society, sports team or community group.

How can I best prepare my application(s)? How should I engage with UCD Careers Network?

Students are encouraged to avail of the many resources available through the [UCD Careers Network](#). You can make [1-to-1 appointments with a Careers Consultant](#), and get [advice on interview preparation and undertake mock interviews](#) ahead of interviews with organisations as part of the internship application process.



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Students should also make sure to login to [MyCareer](#) to register for employer events and workshops going on around campus, and familiarise themselves with the portal which will be used for internships applications.

Before engaging with the internship application process, it's a good idea to sit down and consider all the activities you have engaged with during the last few years, whether through school, UCD, in the community, or in other areas. Breaking down your experiences will help you highlight the different skills you possess, and make it easier to present your best self in relation to different roles on offer.

The [Careers Network's Careers Guide for Social Sciences students](#) offers great advice on how to identify your skills, formulate a strong cover letter and how to present your CV (see pages 14-15 especially). CV and Cover Letter clinics, along with mock interviews, will take place during the spring trimester.

What are the different areas I can work in? Will there be different options of where we can go and do our internships?

Internship partners will span a wide range of organisations from the private and public sectors, as well as charities and NGOs. The different areas you may apply to as part of the internship application process will reflect the wide range of different places graduates have gone on to work in over the past number of years.

What partner companies and organisations are UCD linked with?

Internship agreements and role descriptions will vary from year to year. Students have previously done internships in healthcare, media, PR, financial services, politics, NGOs, charities, research institutes, technology and insurance sectors amongst others, and we are continually developing new relationships and opportunities.

Does each company only have one internship available for UCD students?

No, some organisations will have multiple internship positions available to students.

Am I guaranteed to get an internship? What happens if I don't get offered an internship?

There is no guarantee that all students will be offered an internship. We have endeavoured to make sure a wide range of internship opportunities are available to students, but ultimately there may be more interest than roles available, and the decision to offer positions lies with the partner organisations.

If you are not initially offered an internship, you will still have the opportunity to source your own internship, or apply for internships that become available at a later date. Students who have not secured an internship when registration opens should ensure that they register to a full 60-credit workload of modules before starting stage 3.



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If you are ultimately unsuccessful in attaining an internship and are not going abroad during the academic year you will have a wide range of modules to take at stage 3, offering an opportunity to specialise further in your subjects, or taking experiential learning modules that are set aside for this stage of the degree.

Where can I do an Internship?

Usually internships sourced by the UCD Social Sciences office will be based in Ireland (many of the internships will be based in Dublin, but some opportunities will be located in other areas), but self-sourced internships can be outside Ireland and the Social Sciences Internship Manager will do everything possible to support students who wish to pursue this.

If you are interested in finding an internship outside Ireland, bear in mind the general advice concerning [self-sourcing internships](#), particularly giving adequate time for the Social Sciences Internship Manager to confirm the internship as this may take more time due to language differences, and different processes and requirements from both UCD and the host country/organisation.

Please also be aware that it will be up to you to consider any visa requirements when considering an international internship, and other issues that need to be navigated including language/cultural differences and finding accommodation.

If you undertake an internship within the EU, you may be eligible to apply for an Erasmus grant to support your time abroad. Please talk to the Social Sciences Internship Manager at socialsciencesinternships@ucd.ie for further information.

What if the internship isn't easy to travel to?

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a means of getting to your internship location. This is something you should consider during the application process and may be asked about during the interview.

Are remote internships possible?

The impact of Covid-19 has meant that many businesses and organisations have had to shift to remote working, and a knock on effect has been the need for internships to run remotely as well. While this is not an ideal situation, particularly in terms of building relationships and developing a network, we have successfully supported students through trimester-long remote internships and they have found these to be greatly beneficial. Many internships now operate online or in a hybrid style.

Can I apply to go on exchange and also apply to do an internship?

If your subject combination allows trimester-long Erasmus/Exchange and Internship, you can apply to do both Erasmus/Exchange and an Internship at stage 3.

If you are studying with a two subject combination (eg. Joint Major in Politics & Economics, or Major with a minor) and are doing both an internship and studying abroad, you may be required to study both of your subjects while abroad.



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Can I apply for both an internship and an exchange and then decide which one you want to do?

We understand that it may be difficult for you to know exactly what you want to do during stage 3, and that some students will want to keep options as open as possible. However, we would discourage students from applying for internships which you do not anticipate taking up, should you be offered the position.

If you are interested in both doing an internship and going on exchange, you should intend to do both elements if successful in your applications, so ideally should apply for internships in one trimester and exchange in the other trimester.

Is there a way of making sure I would be starting in a particular month/trimester?

The start date of an internship will be dependent on the needs of the host organisation. There may be some flexibility in start dates but students should pay close attention to the dates mentioned in role descriptions. Do not assume that you will be able to decide your start date and you should pay close attention to which trimester an internship will run in.

Are academic internships only open during stage 3 of BSc Social Sciences?

Yes, this internship programme is only open to BSc Social Sciences students during stage 3 of your degree.

What happens if I don't like the internship?

The internship experience will likely be very different to previous employment experiences and certainly a different educational experience to the rest of the degree. With that in mind, it may take some time for you to feel fully comfortable in the experience. It is always best to share any concerns you may have, should you feel unsure about the internship experience. Firstly we would advise you to speak to your mentor in the host organisation, and also to make contact with the Social Sciences Internship Manager at socialsciencesinternships@ucd.ie.

What about my part-time job? Will my internship employer accommodate this?

We recognise the importance of part-time jobs in supporting students financially during your studies. However, the nature of the internship opportunity is that it should take priority over any other work. You should clarify your capacity to continue with part-time employment prior to accepting an internship position and should not expect that an internship host will be able to accommodate part-time work during the week.

Can I fail the internship module? If so, what happens if I do?

Like any academic module, it is possible to fail an internship module and the responsibility lies with you as the student undertaking the module. You will be offered support to ensure that you do not fail the module, and any student who engages fully with the module and assessment elements



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should not fail the module. There will be opportunities to re-sit elements of the assessment should a student fail in particular areas.

It will not be possible for students to repeat the internship module. Therefore, should you fail the module you will fail to earn any credits for the trimester, and will need to complete stage 3 credit requirements prior to progressing to stage 4. This would result in it taking longer to complete your degree.

Who do I contact if I have a problem?

If you have an issue at any point, before or during your internship, you should make contact with the Social Sciences Internship Manager at socialsciencesinternships@ucd.ie.

Can non-EU students do an internship of more than 20 hours per week?

Yes, non-EU students on a stamp 2 visa are able to undertake internships of more than 20 hours per week, without a work permit, as academic internships are part of the BSc Social Sciences degree and this is allowed where the internship is an integrated part of the degree programme.

Do I need to stay in contact with UCD while I'm on internship?

You should check your UCD email regularly during your internship. Keep in mind the assessment elements required through Brightspace, and contact the Social Sciences Internship Manager at socialsciencesinternships@ucd.ie with any queries.