

Completing the Merchandising Internship

CADS 4920 – Section 001

Syllabus

AM Internship Coordinator:

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Internship Faculty Supervisor:

You will be notified of your internship faculty supervisor by the first class day of the semester in which you intern.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Work requirement** At least 10 weeks of full time employment (or 400 hours total).

2. **One e-mail letter each week** to your faculty supervisor (put *your name, the name of your firm and the week number on the subject line*).

- The first letter must include a brief overview of your role and responsibilities, the firm's product &/or service (what they provide) organizational structure, their contact information.
- All emails should relate your experiences that week - what you have learned, did, and contributed. This may be brief.
- Call or email your faculty supervisor if there is a problem or issue of concern to you.
- The weekly email should NOT be a replication of each day's journal entry – Typically, one short paragraph will suffice.

3. **Daily anecdotal journal** describing your work, learning experiences, and your thoughts and insights. This is a brief record of your experiences & reactions to your work assignments to be submitted at the end of the term as part of your notebook. A computer log is preferred.

4. **Internship portfolio/notebook** presenting your company (in your own words) and your role/work there must include the following:

- A brief description of your company, e.g., its business (products &/or services offered), size (sales, no. stores, no. employees, etc.), and position in the marketplace (compared to all competitors).
- A description of your company's target customer / core customer and how the firm targets this market.
- A brief summary of the key systems, procedures, policies, and/or technology the company uses -- in your own words.
- Ten (10) (digital) action shots/photos of you "on the job in your workplace" in professional dress. Include captions with each photo providing explanatory information.
- Ten (10) Interviews of key management and executives (see # 5 below). Include a brief overall summary of all interviews (1-page limit) along with a 1-page (or shorter) summary

of each interview. Include a business card (or complete title and contact information) for each interviewee. A photo of you and the interviewee is optional.

- Store/firm project (see # 6 below)
- Self-evaluation & program analysis (see #7 & # 8 below)
- Thank you letters. Write and mail personal thank you letters to your internship supervisor, principal(s) of the firm and other key players in your internship. (Include photo copies of these written letters in your notebook)

5. Interviews with 10 employees who occupy *key leadership positions* (not other associates) in your company. **These are to be one to one, face-to-face interviews. In a small setting, you may also interview vendors, executives in competitive firms, or executive level professionals in related businesses.** The objective of these interviews is to introduce you to varied functions, perspectives and approaches to the same business at the executive level. **So interview only top management &/or corporate level executives.** Begin interviews early in your internship and finish them by mid-term. **For a 1-page summary of each interview, list the person's name, complete position/title, company, contact information, and date/time/place of the interview, at the top of the page.** Include their business card in the hard copy of your portfolio/notebook (if they have business cards). You may add a photo of you with the person you're interviewing. No group interviews, e-mail or survey interviews. In addition to individual interview summaries, also include a brief overall summary (1-page limit) of all the interviews (combined) to summarize your impressions and any themes that emerged as you reflect on the interviews.

Suggested Interview protocol/questions:

- Briefly summarize your career path, your current position and future goals.
- What are the "primary responsibilities of this position?
- What are the major challenges of this position?
- What competencies are necessary for success in this position?
- What advice would you offer a student interested in a career in this industry?
- What current trends or issues have the greatest impact on this job/business?

Because executives are busy, carefully prioritize your questions before the interview. Keep your questions limited in number. Always be professional in manner and appearance.

6. Internship project – You must complete a project to solve a problem or capitalize on a work-related opportunity. Before beginning your project, you must submit a **project proposal** first to your work supervisor, and then submit the project proposal with the work supervisor's signature to your faculty supervisor. **The deadline for project proposal submission to the faculty supervisor is _____ [a date determined by the faculty supervisor].** Your internship project proposal must include **three sections** as instructed below (**2 pages maximum**):

Proposal Section 1: Problem/Opportunity and Goals

This section should start with a description of the specific problem of the firm that your project will target to solve or the particular opportunity given by the firm that you will use for your project. This description needs to contain specific information

about what the problem/opportunity is and why it is important for the company to solve the problem or do well in completing the work for the opportunity.

Then, the statement of the problem/opportunity should be followed by a statement of specific goals that you hope to achieve as a result of your project. The scope of these goals varies by the nature of the project. In any case, the goals must be SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-specific). Also explain how these goals will benefit the firm.

Proposal Section 2: Plan of Action

This section should describe the specific actions (or steps) that you will take to solve the problem (or complete the work for the opportunity) stated in the previous section and achieve the stated goals. This description should provide the details of “what” will be done “when,” “where,” and “how” as well as “who” will be involved in each action (or step).

Proposal Section 3: Plan of Evaluation

This section should be used to explain how you will objectively document success in meeting your stated project goals. The plan of evaluation must specify how you will assess whether or not “each” of the goals is achieved. Depending on the nature of each goal, its evaluation may need to be done through securing qualitative feedback from the people involved (e.g., supervisor and colleagues’ verbal feedback, customer feedback, etc.), or done through some quantitative measures or numbers (e.g., improvement of sales or other firm operation records, direct measures of project success devised by the firm, etc.). You will need to examine each goal stated in Section 1 carefully in order to develop its appropriate evaluation plan.

Once your project proposal is approved by the faculty supervisor, complete the project according to the approved plan of action and evaluation. Your **final internship project** must include five sections [**5 pages maximum**, including text and visual documentation (pictures, charts, illustrations, etc.) to show the process (before & after)], following the outline below:

1. ***Problem/Opportunity and Goals***: The same content as Proposal Section 1 explained above.
2. ***Plan of Action***: The same content as Proposal Section 2 explained above.
3. ***Procedure***: Briefly describe how you actually executed your plan to meet the goals and measure your success in meeting each goal.
4. ***Outcome***: Findings presented in text, charts, tables, pictures, etc.
5. ***Evaluation of the Outcome –Document*** your success in achieving your goals, according to methods you proposed in the Plan of Evaluation from your Proposal Section 3 (explained above). Explain why you did or did not meet a goal. What would you do differently "next time?"

7. Self-evaluation - (1 page) Evaluate yourself as to how you handled yourself at work (e.g., your work habits, thoroughness, reliability, assertiveness, role as a team member), your reaction to the type of training or supervision received, and your potential (and desire) for working in a

similar environment. Include your reaction to your supervisor's evaluation.

8. Program analysis -Evaluate your preparation for the internship. (1 page)

- What courses or course activities were most helpful to you?
- Were there any assignments that particularly prepared you for this internship?
- Is there anything you would have benefited from knowing better? Were there any situations when inadequate preparation interfered with you doing your best?
- Are there any courses which you wish you had elected to take?
- Are there any curricular topics which should be strengthened?

Your analysis, coupled with the same from other students helps us to continuously evaluate the program. Mention any ideas that you think deserve consideration.

9. Evaluation by on-site supervisor (Use the **CADS 4920 INTERN EVALUATION form**, which can be found at the end of this document). Have this evaluation form completed by your on-site supervisor and include it in your internship notebook. Ask your supervisor to discuss your performance with you and suggest any areas that you may need to work on to improve your performance. Include your reaction in your self-evaluation.

10. EXTRA CREDIT (OPTIONAL)

- **If you meet any AMDP alumni, please network with them and share** the person's title, contact information, year graduated, and AMDP degree option (merchandising or design) with the Program Coordinator.

Send your portfolio/notebook (hard copy) to Your Internship Faculty Supervisor, 308 Spidle Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5603, so it will be received by the last day of class of the semester AND also upload an electronic copy (a single PDF file) of the completed notebook on CANVAS.

LATE PENALTY: Assignments received after the due date will be penalized (Deduction of 10% of total points for each school day that is late).

EVALUATION FOR GRADE ASSIGNMENT

Your grade will be based on the following components and percentage weights:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 10% | Daily anecdotal journal- regular entries with evidence of thoughtful comments |
| 15% | Notebook/portfolio -thoroughness, creativity, professional presentation |
| 15% | 10 Interviews - logical selection of executives and thoughtful, written description |
| 20% | Internship project -quality of analysis, planning and execution, and evaluation of success. |
| 5% | Self-evaluation, program analysis -evidence of thoughtful analysis |
| 25% | Evaluation by on-site supervisor |
| 10% | Evaluation by faculty supervisor, including evaluation of weekly letters |

Merchandising Intern Evaluation

Department of Consumer & Design Sciences College of Human Sciences, Auburn University

Name of Intern _____ Date of Evaluation _____

Please rate this intern on the following attributes:

	<i>Excellent</i> 5	<i>Very Good</i> 4	<i>Good</i> 3	<i>Fair</i> 2	<i>Poor</i> 1
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN THE WORKPLACE					
Initiative	5	4	3	2	1
Resourcefulness	5	4	3	2	1
Dependability	5	4	3	2	1
Performance under stress	5	4	3	2	1
ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS					
Knowledge to complete assigned tasks	5	4	3	2	1
Problem solving ability	5	4	3	2	1
Oral communication skills	5	4	3	2	1
Written communication skills	5	4	3	2	1
PROFESSIONALISM					
Ability to work independently	5	4	3	2	1
Quality of work	5	4	3	2	1
Timeliness in completing work	5	4	3	2	1
Professionalism	5	4	3	2	1
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS					
Response to supervision	5	4	3	2	1
Response to criticism	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to work with others	5	4	3	2	1
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	5	4	3	2	1

If there was a suitable entry level management position open in your firm, would you hire this intern?

____ Yes, already have! ____ Yes I would ____ Not Sure ____ No

If you answered "No" or "Not Sure", please share your reasons.

(over)

What are the intern's greatest strengths?

Please list specific instances of performance or personal attributes that contributed to the positive evaluation of this intern.

What specific attributes, personal and/or professional, do you believe need further development?

Please list specific instances where performance or personal attributes could be developed to further the intern's success.

Based on this Student Intern's performance would you consider employing other Student Interns from Auburn University's Apparel Merchandising and Design and Product Development program?

_____Yes _____No

Signature and Title of Supervisor

Firm

Date

We welcome your comments about this intern and/or the Apparel Merchandising program. Please attach any additional comments. Thank you for providing an internship experience for our student and for taking time to provide this evaluation.

Please give this completed evaluation to the intern (and discuss performance with intern) at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester. If there are issues that you prefer to discuss directly with the faculty supervisor, contact Dr. Kwon (334 844-4011).