

Tips for a Successful Final Internship Project

As noted when you applied for academic credit for your internship, at the end of the semester, you will need to complete a final paper or portfolio. On the following pages are some detailed guidelines to help you submit the strongest final project possible.

Keep in mind that whether you choose the longer paper option or the portfolio option, either way, the materials should focus most on how your internship experience related to your Major (or Minor, if the credit is for your Minor) academic coursework here at NIU. Though it is understood that some of the final project will include general reflection on the overall experience and the types of day to day tasks you did as an intern, this paper should NOT simply be a journaling of what you did each day. It should be a deeper reflection on what you learned from the internship experience, and how that related to what you've studied at NIU.

As with the Proposal for Credit you submitted at the beginning of the semester, material submitted as a part of the paper or portfolio should be your own original work. Any materials used from company information should be properly cited, and the primary text of the final project should be your own original writing. Materials submitted that are found to not be original student work will be subject to University Academic Integrity guidelines as noted in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Paper Option

For those choosing to do the longer paper option, here are the tips for completing it successfully. Please note, the page suggestions listed at the end of each bullet point are just approximate guidelines – you do not need to follow this count exactly, but this can provide a helpful guide.

Papers must be a minimum of 10-12 pages (**Note:** This length requirement varies by department – please work with the Coordinator of Internships to determine the length that your final paper will need to be), typed, double spaced, written with proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Again, this should NOT simply be a summary or journaling of what you did, but an analysis of your work and its relation to your major. Please include:

- Evaluation of how well you think you performed your job, including your strengths and weaknesses in doing the job. (1 to 1.5 pages)
- Evaluation of the job as an internship assignment – what was good, what could have been better? (1 to 1.5 pages)
- Analyze the extent to which your learning objectives were or were not met during the internship (consult the original proposal form). (1.5 to 2 pages)
- Analyze how your previous course work connected to the work you did in the internship, as well as what additional course work would have helped you in this internship. (3 to 4 pages)
- What theories, methods, and knowledge from your major were useful in doing this internship? (2 to 3 pages)
- Discuss how your internship relates to your future educational and career goals. (1 to 1.5 pages)
- State whether you would recommend or not recommend this work organization to a friend. Explain your response. What recommendations would you give the organization for future intern placement? (1 to 1.5 pages)

Though it is not required, it is strongly encouraged to consider using the above bullet points as headings within your paper. This way, it can be easily determined when you are specifically addressing each point.

Portfolio Option

For those choosing to do the Portfolio option, here are the tips for completing it successfully. Please note, the number of artifacts suggested and page number suggestions listed at the end of each bullet for the final summary are just meant to be guidelines – you do not need to follow this count exactly, but this can provide a helpful guide.

Portfolios should include:

- A collection of items that document the work you have done and the knowledge and skills you have acquired as an intern. Acceptable artifacts include: reports, brochures, memos, emails, newsletters, articles, original videos, scripts, storyboards, and press releases. Other items may be accepted. Check with the Coordinator of Internships for approval. **For the items you choose as artifacts, they must be substantial contributions you made to the organization, and not simply basic evidence of day-to-day business communication expected of any job. For example, an e-mail you wrote to solicit donations as a part of a major fundraising campaign would be an acceptable example of an e-mail being used as an artifact. However, an e-mail thread where you are interacting with a supervisor, client, or colleague on a basic day-to-day issue would not be a sufficient artifact.** As a general guideline, 4 to 6 artifacts tend to be an appropriate number to submit. In some cases, with larger/lengthier artifacts, fewer items may be submitted. If you are unsure, be sure to check with the Coordinator of Internships to be certain.
- A one-page summary (**minimum** of one page, can be longer) of EACH artifact explaining its purpose and the process you used to create it. (These artifact summaries do not count as a part of the final page count required for the 5 to 6 page summary.) These summaries should highlight which skills from your major you used in creating the artifact? What concepts from your courses did you apply? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the piece?
- A final five to six page summary of the internship (**Note:** This length requirement varies by department – please work with the Coordinator of Internships to determine the length that your final paper will need to be). This summary should include:
 - Evaluation of how well you think you performed your job (strengths/weaknesses) and whether or not you met the goals you established in the proposal (1 page)
 - Evaluation of the job as an internship assignment – what was good, what could have been better? (1 page)

- Analyze how your previous course work connected to the work you did in the internship, as well as what additional course work would have helped you in this internship. (2 to 3 pages)
- What theories, methods, and knowledge from your major were useful in doing this internship? (1 to 2 pages)
- Discuss how your internship relates to your future educational and career goals. (1 page)

Though it is not required, it is strongly encouraged to consider using the above bullet points as headings within your summary paper. This way, it can be easily determined when you are specifically addressing each point.