College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Intern Handbook

ATLAS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Last Updated Spring 2026

APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES FOR LEARNING IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

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1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1. Welcome Message

Welcome to the ATLAS Internship Program! We're excited to have you join us. Our goal is to help support undergraduate students in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences integrate technological and professional skills into your studies, to help foster a unique and versatile skill set.

In the ATLAS Internship Program, you'll have the opportunity to work on a specific project (or a series of projects) within your placement, allowing you to apply yourself in a professional work setting, gaining valuable hands-on experience and transferable skills.

One of the unique benefits of our program is the large network of support and resources available to the interns: peer interns, intern leaders, internship coordinators, and placement supervisors are all here to support your growth.

We encourage you to take full advantage of the resources and support provided by the ATLAS Internship Program, and to approach each task with enthusiasm and dedication. Welcome to the ATLAS team! We look forward to seeing you thrive.

1.2. Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of the handbook is to provide a comprehensive guide for the ATLAS Internship Program. By providing clear information and expectations, the handbook helps to create a positive and productive internship experience.

2. Internship Program Overview

2.1. History and Structure

Since its launch in January 2016, the ATLAS Internship Program has facilitated over 1,600 LAS internship placements with more than 60 different campus and community clients. The Program is a three-way partnership with the Liberal Arts and Sciences Undergraduate **student** who is interning, the **client** who is providing the internship placement, and the **ATLAS Internship Program** (Applied Technologies for Learning in the Arts & Sciences) within the College of LAS.

2.2. Requirements to be an ATLAS Intern

- Registered student with University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign seeking an undergraduate major or minor within the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- Available to dedicate 10 hours per week to the ATLAS Internship Program between 9 AM and 5 PM, Monday through Friday

2.3. Role of the Program

ATLAS Internship Program partners with university and community agencies to develop practical, transferable technical skills for students in the College of LAS. The program oversees the entire application process, including interviewing students and matching them with client placements based on their qualifications and the opportunities available.

Throughout the internship, the program provides ongoing support to ensure a productive and successful experience for both interns and clients.

For Interns:

A curated series of tasks guides interns, aiding in the completion of a successful internship, and equipping them with professional skills and tangible takeaways for future professional advancement.

For Clients:

An internship coordinator provides consultation with clients, which include businesses, university units and faculty, nonprofits, and other organizations. Internship coordinators are available to both the client/placement supervisors and placed intern(s) to resolve any issues that may arise during the semester.

2.4. What Success Looks Like to Stakeholders

2.4.1. To Interns

- Gain technology skills
- Improve and apply professional skills

2.4.2. To Clients (Placement Supervisors)

- Collaborate with LAS student interns, aid in their professional growth
- Receive tangible deliverables

2.4.3. To Program

- Intern “alumni” receive outside internships/job offers
- Positive experiences working with clients
- Positive engagement/collaboration

2.5. Roles of the Stakeholders

2.5.1. ATLAS Intern’s Roles

All interns in the program have responsibilities to the **program** and **placement**

Program Role:

- All interns participating in the program are a part of the Semester Cohort. As an ATLAS Intern, you have the **same responsibilities** to the program, to internship coordinators, and to your peers.

- Report to and receive support from **Internship Coordinators**. Collaborate with other ATLAS Interns in the semester cohort.

Placement Role:

- Interns will have different placements with different responsibilities. Your placement role might be “communication specialist,” “web developer,” or “data analyst.”
- Report to and receive feedback from **Placement Supervisors**. Collaborate with placement teammates.

2.5.2. Placement Supervisor’s Role

- Establishes expectations for placement (e.g. project overview, methods of communication, deliverables, task management, work location, etc.)
- Meets with interns weekly to guide progress and give feedback on intern’s work
- Provide necessary information and tools to interns
- Inform internship coordinator of any issues or questions that may arise.

2.5.3. Internship Coordinator’s Role

- Review applicants and place interns
- Monitor status reports and other program deliverables
- Communicate with placement supervisors and interns to check in and address issues or questions if any
- Available to meet with interns to evaluate progress and give feedback
- Help find and provide interns with networking and learning resources

2.6. Benefits of an ATLAS Internship

- Gain professional experience and transferable skills in a workplace setting.
- Explore a prospective career path.
- Network with professionals for references and future job opportunities.
- Gain a competitive edge in the job market or post-baccalaureate studies.
- Grow in your knowledge and execution of technology skills.
- Earn credit by enrolling in an LAS internship or professional development course (recommended for all interns, required for some placements.)

2.7. Time Commitment

- The duration of the internship program is one semester and is offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer terms
- Start date of Internship Program is the first day of class
- Start date of placement to be determined with client/placement supervisor
- End date of Program is the day before Reading Day
- End date of placement to be determined with client/placement supervisor

3. Internship Program Contact Details

3.1. Internship Program Staff

All internship staff can be reached by emailing ATLAS-internships@illinois.edu

Program Director: Michelle Rome

- mlrome@illinois.edu

Internship Coordinator: Megan Fry

- meganfry@illinois.edu

Internship Coordinator: Lisa Perry

- Lperry3@illinois.edu

3.2. Office Spaces

Two dedicated office spaces are available to all ATLAS Internship Program participants. Interns are welcome to use these spaces at any time, regardless of staff presence.

15 English Building

- If doors are locked during business hours, interns may borrow a key in 112 English

G8c Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Building

- If doors are locked during business hours, interns may request access at the Help Desk, G89 LCLB

3.3. Social Media

Facebook

www.facebook.com/atlasinternshipprogram

Instagram

www.instagram.com/illinois_atlas

4. Intern Responsibilities

These responsibilities aim to set interns up for success—both in their current placements and in pursuing future career opportunities or highly competitive internships after finishing the program.

4.1. Intern's Work Hours

- Complete 10 hours each week for the **duration of the internship**.
- Of the 10 hours, at least 6 need to be scheduled M-F 9-5
- Develop a work schedule compatible with placement meeting(s) and doesn't conflict with intern's course schedule or other obligations
- Work the same schedule every week

- Program assigned work and Client/Placement work count toward work hours. COURSE/CLASS WORK DOES NOT COUNT TOWARD WORK HOURS

4.2. Orientation

- Understand interns' roles, responsibilities, procedures, and policies
- Network, meet others connected to the internship program

4.3. Course Credit

We strongly encourage students to pair their hands-on ATLAS Internship experience with an LAS internship or professional development course. These courses support you in reflecting on work experiences, making connections to your academic program, and effectively communicating your skills and experiences as you seek your next opportunity.

Example courses that ATLAS Interns pair with their work experience include:

- LAS 302: Internships and Professional Experiences (open to all majors, all years)
- CMN 304: Communication Internship (Communication majors with approval of Internship Coordinator)
- SOC 400: Internships (Sociology majors with approval of department)

Students are encouraged to check with their academic advisor for assistance finding a course most appropriate to their program.

Here is what students share about their participation in internship and professional development courses:

- "The in-class discussions were very helpful as it helped to talk out loud about the things I've learned. I also learn well by hearing from others as sometimes it challenges my thoughts."
- "I was able to learn more about how to secure employment in the future, which I thought was really beneficial."
- "[The class] made me learn more about myself and the things I need to do to acquire a job. I need to write a good cover letter, and a good resume, how to effectively interview. Also learning qualities about myself I found very helpful. This class helped me with a lot of deeper thinking and made me realize that I need to increase my confidence in finding a long-term job."
- "[The course assignments] will help me when I apply for other jobs and make me think about how I can show the employer I am the best candidate."

Please consult with your academic advisor regarding how course selections may fit with your academic program and progress.

*Some internship placements require interns enroll in a course for credit.

4.4. Program Deliverables

4.4.1. Canvas Preboarding

- Available prior to internship program start date
- Professional Skills practiced: Learning to use digital tools, understanding job expectations, communicating professionally, and preparing for a successful internship start

4.4.2. SMART Goals

- Create personalized SMART Goals
- Make progress towards goals weekly
- Check in a mid-term to review goals, opportunity to revise
- Professional Skills practiced: Taking initiative, planning and time management

4.4.3. Kickoff Summary Report

- Review prior to Kickoff meeting to use as a guide to prepare (what can you expect to learn from the Kickoff, what questions should you ask?)
- Complete submission after attending your placement Kickoff meeting
- Professional Skills practiced: Planning/Preparation, taking responsibility for effective/efficient meetings, communication: listening, comprehending, taking notes, asking questions

4.4.4. Weekly Status Reports

- Report your work progress, any questions you have for your internship coordinator, and your plan for what you will accomplish in the next week.
- Well documented placement/project work may be used in final “ATLAS Internship Placement Documentation for Future Intern”
- Professional Skills practiced: Communication, Planning/Time Management, Documentation

4.4.5. Midterm Self Evaluation

- Complete the self-assessment
- Professional Skills practiced: reflection, self-directing, goal evaluation

4.4.6. Showcase

- Submit availability form for scheduling showcase presentations
- Submit Presentation Slides
- Showcase Presentation
- Feedback Forms
- Professional skills practiced: Presentations, communication, creating clear visuals to accompany and enhance verbal presentation

4.4.7. Spotlight

- Spotlight Form Submission

- Communication with ATLAS Intern Comm Team
- Professional skills practiced: Clear written communication, sharing accomplishments in a professional setting, collaborating with a communications team to highlight your internship experience

4.4.8. ATLAS Internship Placement Documentation for Future Intern

- Submit documentation of your placement work
- Professional skills practiced: Technical writing, documentation, knowledge transfer, portfolio development

4.4.9. Resume Update

- Update your resume to include your ATLAS Internship experience.
- Professional Skills practiced: Writing a strong resume, identifying and describing relevant experience, presenting yourself professionally to future employers

4.5. Placement Responsibilities

- Fulfil duties in job description
- Familiarize yourself with agency/client's vision and mission
- Attend all meetings, participate in discussion and take notes
- Meet supervisors' expectations
- Follow supervisor's instructions, listen to their feedback
- NOTE: a missed meeting is an automatic written warning and meeting with ATLAS staff, see section 7 *Performance Management* for details

4.6. Additional Responsibilities for Returning Interns

Some interns may choose to continue with ATLAS for a second semester to deepen skills or explore new technologies. Returning interns are expected to:

- Meet all expectations of first-semester interns (Canvas work, showcase, client meetings etc.)
- Set **three new SMART goals** that build on prior experience.
- Support new interns by answering questions about tools or technologies you've previously used.
- Reapply to the program.

4.7. Additional Responsibilities for Student Leaders

Exceptional returning interns may be appointed to **Student Leader** roles. These positions may involve:

- Organizing or leading team meetings.
- Holding regular in-person office hours in the ATLAS Internship Office spaces to be determined the first week of the internship.

- Providing peer mentorship to other interns (may include assisting interns with program responsibilities, active listening to interns' questions, finding helpful resources, referring interns to other support if necessary.)
- Assisting Internship Staff with presentations, promoting the Internship Program to LAS Students.

* Student Leader candidates are often recommended by coordinators and clients.

5. Workplace Policies and Procedures

All ATLAS interns are expected to uphold professional behaviors and practice the professional skills defined in this section. Interns' placements may have additional workplace policies and procedures, which will be communicated by placement supervisors.

5.1. Behavior

- Be respectful, responsible, and reliable
- Always represent ATLAS and yourself professionally
- Be a self-starter: figure out what needs to be done and do it. Take initiative when you can; ask for guidance if you are uncertain.

5.2. Attendance

5.2.1. Schedule and Work Hours

Maintain your **regular work schedule** and adhere to agreed-upon hours (work on Internship program or placement work when scheduled)

5.2.2. Absences

- It is expected that ATLAS interns notify both the placement supervisor and ATLAS coordinator (in writing) when reporting absences.
- When requesting time off, give notification at least 3 business days in advance.
- For illness or emergencies, notify placement supervisor and internship coordinator as soon as possible.
- ATLAS follows the Illinois Student Code of Conduct. - Article 1, Part 5 regarding excused absences. Interns are responsible for reviewing the Illinois Student Code of Conduct in absences including medical, religious and bereavement.
- If you miss a placement meeting, you are still responsible for:
    - Completing work assigned to you
    - Communicating to your supervisor and team your progress, what you plan to do the next week, and any questions you have regarding your work
    - Learning what was discussed during the meeting and responding – if your absence is planned, you could ask a peer intern to take notes or record the meeting

5.2.3. Punctuality

Be on time and fully prepared for all meetings and work sessions.

5.3. Communication

5.3.1. Method

- University email, Canvas, and Microsoft Teams are the main methods of Communications used in the program (with ATLAS Internship staff and ATLAS interns.) Other methods of communication may exist in your internship placements
- When using email, always use your @illinois.edu email address. (Clients and ATLAS Staff may overlook a message if it originates from a different email provider)

5.3.2. Frequency

Respond to **all communications** in a timely manner (48 business hours at most) “All Communications” include but are not limited to:

- Canvas messages, notifications, surveys
- Emails
- Meeting Requests
- This includes communications from peer interns, ATLAS staff, and placement supervisors

5.3.3. Email

- Include clear subject lines, greetings, body, closing, and signature
- Proofread and keep messages professional and concise
- Check your inbox regularly

5.4. Meetings and Collaboration

5.4.1. Virtual Meeting Standards

- Join from a quiet space with minimal distractions
- Use a device that supports audio and video, (borrow one via atlas.illinois.edu/students/atlas-share if needed)
- Familiarize yourself with virtual meeting tools like Microsoft Teams or Zoom, (e.g. learn how to share your screen)

5.4.2. Meeting Conduct

- Confirm meetings with attendees, check your schedule to avoid double-booking
- Do not multitask during meetings (e.g. send emails or work on projects)
- Actively listen, take notes, and ask clarifying questions
- Note taking suggestions: Keep a notebook or a document on your computer that you use at every meeting, so you know where your notes are located

5.4.3. Collaboration

- Keep shared workspaces (both physical and digital) organized and professional
- Be responsive to feedback

5.5. Dress Code

- Dress appropriately for your work setting.
- It is not required to dress up to use the ATLAS Internship office spaces

5.6. Confidentiality

- You may work with sensitive or confidential information. Always follow the client's guidelines for data use and privacy.
- You may include internship work in your personal portfolio only after removing confidential information and receiving client approval.

5.7. Safety/Legal Considerations

International students are responsible for obtaining authorization for CPT if it is required. For information, visit International Student and Scholar Services. https://isss.illinois.edu/

6. Exit Procedures

6.1. How to Resign

While interns are expected to complete their semester-long commitments, we understand that unforeseen circumstances may require an early exit. If you need to leave the program, it is your responsibility to resign in a professional and respectful manner. If you find yourself overcommitted or unable to continue, follow the steps below.

Steps to Resign:

- Schedule a meeting with an ATLAS coordinator to discuss your situation. There may be alternatives worth exploring
- (2 weeks in advance of your last day of work) Send a professional resignation email to your client explaining that you are unable to continue, include your last working day, express your appreciation, and CC atlas-internships@illinois.edu
- Offer to wrap up any ongoing work and help ensure a smooth handoff to minimize disruption for your client or project teammates

6.2. Evaluation – Certificate Criteria

Interns receive a rating based on the following criteria. Interns may request a PDF certificate of completion.

Exceeds Expectations (3)

- All ATLAS Internship Program responsibilities and two professional development submissions completed and submitted by deadline

Meets Expectations (2)

- ATLAS requirements:
    - Less than 2 late or missing submissions
    - Responded to feedback and made corrective actions
- Client expectations achieved with minimal corrective measures

Participation (1)

- Didn't qualify for Exceeds or Meets expectations
- Completed full length of internship
- Client received deliverable

Incomplete (0)

- ATLAS and/or Client requirements are incomplete

6.3. Exit Survey

7. Performance Management

7.1. Accountability and Process for Improvement

As an intern, your performance impacts both your growth and your project's success. ATLAS Internship Program uses a progressive process to address concerns. This process ensures fair treatment while providing opportunities for improvement.

If your placement/program performance is below expectations, the Program Director will be notified. Coordinators will assess the situation and determine the appropriate follow-up, which may include:

- Informal discussion
- Written warning
- One-on-one meeting
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Discharge from the program

NOTE: Placement supervisor may have additional or different expectations for performance management separate from what the coordinators will discuss.

7.2. Reasons for Interns entering Remediation process

- Unprofessional conduct
- Repeated failure to respond to email.
- Repeated absenteeism or tardiness, including missing client meetings or scheduled work hours

- Repeated failure to meet 10-hour work requirement
- Failure to follow client or ATLAS directions including any required submissions, including status reports

7.3. Remediation and Discharge Policy

Written Warning

ATLAS staff may issue a written warning identifying the problem area(s) and expectations for improvement. You must reply within 48 hours to acknowledge the message. If you don't respond, a one-on-one meeting will be scheduled.

Note: In some cases, the warning and meeting may be combined as a first step.

One-on-One Meeting

A coordinator will meet with you to review issues and expectations. Afterward, you'll receive a follow-up email that must be acknowledged within 48 hours. Failure to respond may result in a Performance Improvement Plan.

Note: This step may be skipped depending on the situation.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

This is a structured plan outlining what actions are required for improvement. It includes a timeline, assigned tasks, and check-ins. If performance does not improve by the end of the PIP, further action may be taken.

Discharge

If poor performance or policy violations persist, the intern may be removed from the program. A final meeting will be scheduled to explain the decision and next steps.

8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Who do I report to?

A: This will depend on your placement and what you are reporting. See Section 2.5 Roles of the Stakeholders for details

Q: What if I am sick or out of town?

A: See Section 5.2.2 Absences for details

Q: What if I am overwhelmed and don't know what to do?

A: See section 6.1 How to resign for details.