

## **Department of Chemical Engineering Policy on Internships, Curricular Practical Training, and Optional Practical Training**

Internships enhance the professional experience of our students and the reputation of the graduate program. An Internship is an engineering assignment, typically paid, for which a student receives course credit, thus maintaining student status. An Internship should be a planned part of the student's academic program and professional development. International students must consult with International Student and Faculty Services (ISFS) to confirm their eligibility for off-campus employment authorization, usually Curricular or Optional Practical Training.

Prior permission of the Graduate Program Chair and of the Thesis / Dissertation Advisor is required for all graduate student Internships to ensure that it is a professional experience meriting chemical engineering credit, and to ensure that all parties involved are aware of the impact on the student's progress towards degree, the advisor's research program, and the stipend / scholarship support available to the student. A student who takes time off from school without formal department permission is not on Internship. That student risks loss of financial support or removal from the graduate program for inadequate progress, depending on the circumstances. Also, inadequate or improper enrollment may have important consequences for insurance, student loans, and/or immigration status.

A student should have approval to undertake an Internship from his/her Thesis / Dissertation Advisor prior to seeking a position. The approval should be in writing (e-mail acceptable) for a specific intended time period. The Advisor shall consider the timely progress of the student's thesis/dissertation research and particularly the progress expected by funding agencies. Externally-funded research often cannot be delayed or extended at will. Because the time to degree will normally be extended by the time of the Internship, the Advisor's written approval must specify the duration, level, and source of the student's stipend funding (if any) following the Internship.

A student should have approval to undertake an Internship from the Graduate Program Chair prior to the start date. Requests for approval must be made by the student in writing at least 3 weeks prior to the start date. (The Department Chair may approve requests made in a timely fashion if the Graduate Program Chair is absent for more than 7 consecutive working days.) The Graduate Program Chair shall consider the opinion of the Advisor, the progress of the student with respect to continuation and procedural requirements, and the quality of the professional experience.

A request to the Graduate Program Chair for Internship must include:

(1) a signed offer letter from the employer on letterhead. The offer letter must include the job title, the start date and approximate end date, the number of hours per week, the place of employment and a brief description of the position. It must contain sufficient information to allow the department to contact the employer. This letter will be used to assess the quality of the proposed professional experience. A photocopy will be retained in the student's file.

(2) an approved “Final Course of Study” or “Revised Course of Study” form showing 1 credit of “Chemical Engineering Graduate Internship” for each quarter of Internship planned. Including the Internship in the Course of Study makes it a required part of the academic program for the student, and documents that the student is making progress towards degree. The original will be retained in the student’s file and a photocopy returned to the student.

(3) a copy of the written approval from the Thesis / Dissertation Advisor. It must be dated and must specify the duration, level, and source of the student’s stipend funding (if any) following the Internship. This is to avoid misunderstandings among the student, advisor, and Graduate Program Chair about stipend funding. A photocopy will be retained in the student’s file.

For M.S. students, requests for Internship will NOT normally be approved unless the student has completed the four required M.S. courses and has an approved research proposal on file. For Ph.D. students, requests for Internship will NOT normally be approved unless the student has passed the qualifying exam and the comprehensive exam and has an approved research proposal on file. Advisors may place conditions on the timing of an Internship, such as submission of a report or paper for publication, or successful defense of the Thesis / Dissertation. The Graduate Program Chair will not overrule such conditions.

Students must register for 1 credit of Chemical Engineering Graduate Internship at their expense while on Internship. Note that university-administered graduate appointments (assistantships / associateships / fellowships / scholarships) require registration for 12 – 15 credits. Unless the advisor makes special arrangement with the Graduate Program Chair, students on Internship will not have a concurrent graduate appointment. Internship does not count towards the 10 technical elective credits required as part of the M.S. in Chemical Engineering.

International students must consult Ohio University International Student and Faculty Services to arrange Internships that comply with U.S. immigration law. Compliance with the law is the responsibility of the student. International Student and Faculty Services is aware of our department policy requiring approval by the Advisor and the Graduate Program Chair for international students applying for an off-campus employment authorization prior to successfully defending the thesis / dissertation and completing all academic program requirements except submission of the final copy.

Students who have successfully defended the thesis / dissertation, completed all academic program requirements except submission of the final copy, and are registering only to meet university requirements for the quarter of graduation should register for Thesis (ChE 695) or Dissertation (ChE 895), not Chemical Engineering Graduate Internship.