

IDS 890: Internship in Liberal Studies Process Description and Definition – Advisor Only

About the Master of Liberal Studies

The Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) is a unique interdisciplinary graduate program available through the College of Arts and Sciences at Fort Hays State University. The program consists of a 10-hour core requirement, an 18-hour customized plan of study designed to meet the goals of the individual student and a 3-hour culminating experience for a total of 31 credit hours. The MLS is directed toward the individual seeking either career enhancement or life enrichment through graduate liberal study.

About the Internship

The internship is designed to be the final practical culminating project for a student in the Masters of Liberal Studies degree program. Taken in the final semester or two, the purpose of the internship is two-fold:

- ? To integrate the knowledge learned in the core courses as well as the concentration, and
- ? To give the student practical experience in change in a real world environment.

The successful MLS intern should have a broader understanding of the quickly evolving world and a greater understanding of the discipline they studied as a concentration. In fact, this requirement, above most others, is critical. The successful MLS intern will act as a graduate candidate, not just a graduate student.

The internship is only one of the possible options for the MLS candidate. MLS graduate students could also complete a traditional research paper or thesis, depending on their interests. These decisions should be made in collaboration with a graduate advisor. It is anticipated that advisors will allow for customized internships given the flexible and customizable nature of the program, but some MLS students may be best served by a more traditional approach.

Internship Proposal Guidelines

The first step of completing the internship is the submission of an Internship Proposal. The proposal is basically a 8 to 12 page document that outlines, essentially, the basic processes and outcomes expected to be completed. The graduate advisor and graduate student should mutually agree upon the general topic of the proposal.

The proposal might contain many, if not all or more, of the following topics:

- ? Introduction,
- ? Problem/Issue Background,
- ? Theoretical Considerations,
- ? Statement of Purpose and Objectives,
- ? Detailed Outline of Proposed Accomplishments,
- ? Timeline,
- ? Expected Outcomes,
- ? Criteria for Evaluation,
- ? Summary.

The draft internship proposal should be submitted to the graduate advisor. After the graduate advisor has had a chance to review the proposal they'll return the proposal with additions or revisions. Your graduate advisor will need a minimum of 1 week to review the proposal, so please be patient. Your advisor may need a phone conference/proposal meeting in order to clarify what you seek to accomplish. During the proposal meeting the graduate student should be prepared to detail their proposal and answer any questions relevant to their project. At this stage the graduate advisor may make changes to the proposal, asking a graduate student to adapt their project in one way or another, to make it more academically enriching. Once the advisor has approved the proposal, and applicable changes, the graduate student may start on the internship.

Internship Guidelines

During the internship the graduate student must be doing two things. First, and perhaps most important, the graduate student should be compiling notes and other relevant records over the course of the project. Notes should be taken to help the intern recall the important events of the experience. Documents should also be collected since many advisors find them informational and reflective of the intern's performance. In many cases a journal is a very helpful tool in order to keep track of project milestones and your learning experiences. Second, the graduate student should be in regular communication with both their graduate advisor. Keeping your advisor apprised of the progress of the project is often easily done by sending a bi-weekly or monthly email about important milestones that have been accomplished.

Final Report Guidelines

As the internship comes to a conclusion, several events are triggered. It is important that the graduate student contact the Graduate School to make sure they have declared their intent to graduate. This triggers an Examination Report to be sent to the graduate advisor. As ever, the student is responsible for meeting deadlines and monitoring their academic progress. In terms of the actual internship, the graduate student should be compiling the notes and documenting items that demonstrated results in their internship. These notes should be folded into the original proposal document to form a final internship report. The internship report will likely have a similar structure as the proposal, but the information will focus more on what was accomplished, rather than background and expectations. Upon completion of a draft of this work, the graduate student should forward a copy to the graduate advisor for review and approval. The graduate advisor will suggest changes to the document. Once the report has been revised a final draft copy should be forwarded to the graduate advisor, and a final defense meeting may be scheduled. Please give your graduate advisor at least 1 week to read and prepare for the final internship defense meeting.

The final internship defense should be an opportunity for the graduate student to demonstrate what they did for their internship, as well as what they learned from the internship and its process. Some level of questioning, and perhaps some confrontation of ideas and conclusions characterize many of these defenses. In some cases, the graduate student may be sent back to rework elements of their internship, or internship report. If this is the case the graduate student must contact the Graduate School and realign their graduation date, if need be. If the student needs to re-defend their internship report, then they would essentially repeat the submission to their advisor, then scheduling and holding another final defense. Many final internship defenses take an hour or more to adequately cover the many intricacies of the internship and how it relates to their customized program of student and the MLS core.

Ultimately, the advisor is looking at the widest range of attributes of the soon-to-be graduate including:

- ? Ability to articulate and defend theories in their area,
- ? Understanding of applicable research methods,
- ? Objectivity in conducting their inquiry,
- ? Amount of learning through the coursework,
- ? Amount of learning through the internship process,
- ? Ability to act in a professional and “Master”ful manner.

The final defense period has dual purposes. First, it is to be a final reflection on the internship. Second, the final internship defense is the final examination of the student. As such, elements related to coursework and how that information relates to the internship are fair game.

Comprehensive Exams

The Graduate School requires that every graduate student be examined based on their coursework and project. The MLS program is not excluded from this. This position is clearly stated in the FHSU catalog:

“Each applicant for a graduate degree must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive examination over the subject fields of the program. The comprehensive examination is not merely a reexamination of materials covered in coursework but is a test of the graduate degree candidate’s ability to integrate materials from the graduate major and any related or supporting field. If a student writes a thesis, the student will sit for a total of four hours of comprehensive examinations; if a student does not write a thesis, the student will sit for a total of eight hours of comprehensive examinations. Each department will determine the content of the comprehensive examinations; the examination may be written and/or oral.” (FHSU Catalog, p. 82).

Individual departments make decisions as to the form and content of the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is the opportunity for your committee to evaluate your learning. The defense period (of the Internship) may also allow the graduate student to demonstrate their learning over the course of their graduate career, but the primary place for that to occur is when the student completes the comprehensive exams. Please contact your graduate advisor for more information on the comprehensive examination process.