

The “Challenging” of Psychology Internships/Fieldwork Departmental Policy & Procedures

General Policy*

Internship (or fieldwork) is considered an integral part of the curriculum in the psychology undergraduate program. Students must complete two quarters of internship/fieldwork—two quarters of research internship (PSY 448 and 449), two quarters of fieldwork (PSY 453 and 454), or one quarter of each (PSY 448 and PSY 453). Those who opt for fieldwork may be allowed to “challenge” (i.e. obtain credit by examination for) **one** quarter of fieldwork only in the following circumstances:

(a) The student has previously worked a minimum of 150 hours in an applied setting, the work experience is judged by the department to be comparable to an approved fieldwork experience, and the student was supervised by an appropriate professional at the work site. Examples of appropriate work settings include a variety of social service agencies, schools, forensic sites, and nonprofit or governmental organizations. **Sites already on the official internship list will not be considered for Challenges.**

(b) The student completed PSY 323, The Helping Relationship, which is a prerequisite to PSY 453 and 454, *prior to* completing the work experience;

(c) The student could not realistically have anticipated the need to enroll for PSY 453 or 454 during the time that they did the work. (In other words, if you *could* anticipate that you would like to use a job or volunteer experience as the basis for fieldwork credit, you should arrange to work with a faculty supervisor *while completing the work* and register for 453 and 454 credit in the usual way.)

Challenge (or Credit by Exam) Procedures

1. Talk with the Psychology Internship Coordinator or another faculty member who regularly supervises undergraduate psychology internships to determine whether or not your past experience meets the criteria for a challenge. If it does, discuss the content and organization of the paper you will need to write to obtain credit.
2. Obtain a “Credit by Examination Petition” from the Office of Academic Records Office in room 222 of the Administration Building (Bldg 01).
3. Get the preliminary signatures as indicated on the form (a faculty advisor and the department chair must sign).
4. Take the form to the University Cashier’s office in room 131 of the Administration Building to pay the \$25 credit by examination fee and attach the yellow copy of the receipt to the form.

5. Submit the **form** and **receipt** to the fieldwork instructor (the person you spoke with in step 1) along with: (a) a **letter** from your supervisor at the site documenting your duties and how well you performed them and verifying that you worked at least 150 hours, and (b) a 10-page **paper** in which you detail you activities at the site, what you learned and how it related to your psychology coursework (and vice versa), and any additional content required by the instructor (for example, a case study, a report of a project you completed for the site, a summary of a behavioral intervention you conducted with a student or client, etc.).

6. After your paperwork is evaluated and approved by the instructor, she or he signs the form and passes it on to the department chair who may also choose to review your materials. Once the chair has approved the work for credit, the form will be forwarded to the Office of Academic Records for processing.

Additional Considerations

The decision to challenge an internship should be made thoughtfully and not made simply because you happen to have prior work or volunteer experience that might qualify. The internship/fieldwork experience is one of the hallmarks of our program, and it is both a “resume builder” and an important opportunity to develop personally and professionally. Internships provide important job-related experience, can increase your chances of getting into graduate programs, provide you with another potential source of letters of recommendation, and can help you “check out” different career options. In addition, if you obtain credit by exam for one quarter, it can be difficult to find another fieldwork site that matches your interest for the second quarter. This is due to the fact that many fieldwork sites will not accept interns for only one quarter; they require a commitment to two consecutive quarters of work, most often because it would be a detriment to their clients to change staff more frequently. For these reasons, you may prefer to enroll in two quarters of fieldwork, regardless of your past work or volunteer experience.

*Child Development students cannot do a challenge.