Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice Minor

The Department of History
& the Blum Center on Poverty,
Inequality, & Democracy

STUDENT INTERNSHIP GUIDE

Minor in Poverty, Inequality, and Social Justice · Academic Year 2026-27

Every student in the Minor in Poverty, Inequality, and Social Justice (PISJ Minor) completes an internship: 120 hours over one 10-week quarter, about 12 hours a week, with an organization working on poverty and inequality. You earn 4 units by enrolling in HIST, GLOBL, or CH ST 196SJ, or an equivalent course, during the same quarter as your internship. The course runs in Fall, Winter, and Spring. The Blum Center does not guarantee an internship, but we will work to get you placed.

You can complete the internship in three ways:

- **With a Blum Center partner organization.** You apply directly to local partners during each quarter's application period. Steps 1 through 10 below follow this route.
- **At a site you propose.** You find a placement that fits your interests and get it approved before you begin.
- **Through a campus program** such as UCDC, UC Sacramento, or UCEAP.

FINDING YOUR INTERNSHIP

1. **Plan ahead.** Start planning 8 to 10 weeks before the quarter you intend to intern, at the beginning of the quarter before it. You must complete HIST 74 before your internship; HIST 74 is also offered in summer session. The internship webpage, blumcenter.ucsb.edu/academics/internship, carries the current quarter's timeline and every deadline mentioned in this guide.

2. **Fill out the Internship Preparation Form.** Submit the online form, linked on the internship webpage, by the deadline for the quarter you plan to intern.

3. **Attend a Preview Information Session.** To apply to partner placements, you must attend one of the required preview sessions on Zoom. The Blum Center then emails the list of partner organizations and their internship postings to every student who attended.

4. **Figure out what you want.** Before you apply, think about what you want to learn. Has a topic in one of your classes fascinated you, and do you want to see how it affects your local community? Do you want to learn how to work on a particular issue, or with a particular population? Is there a skill you want to develop, or a career you want to explore? Let your answers guide which organizations you choose.

5. **Do your research.** Read each posting closely, then get to know the organizations that interest you. Look at their mission, read about them in local papers, and learn what they do and how they do it. To see where students in the minor have interned, read past internship experiences.

6. **Prepare your resume and cover letter.** Each application is a one-page resume and a cover letter of up to two pages, written for that organization. Your main job as an intern is to learn, so no organization expects you to know everything on your first day, but you do want to show what you can offer. Have you worked a retail or restaurant job? You have experience working with a team to meet customers' needs. Have you run an event for a student organization? You have experience creating, managing, and completing complex projects. Name the skills relevant to each organization's work, and explain in your cover letter why you are interested in the organization and how your skills would help it fulfill its mission. UCSB Career Services, at career.ucsb.edu, offers free advising, resume reviews, and interview practice. During the first week of the application period, you can also schedule an optional one-on-one meeting with Dr. Arnold to talk through the organizations on the list.

7. **Apply to four or five organizations.** Apply directly to each organization by the application deadline. A few organizations ask for an additional form, so follow the instructions in each posting.

8. **Prepare for your interview.** Organizations contact the students they select and schedule interviews. Each organization sets its own format: most use Zoom, and some meet at their office, so ask the supervisor which to expect when they contact you. If an organization has not contacted you by the start of the interview window, it did not select you in the first round. Before the interview, review what you have learned about the organization and write down questions about its work and what you would do as an intern. For a first impression, dress more formally rather than less. Arrive on time, share who you are and what you care about, and decide whether you want to intern there. You are getting to know them as much as they are getting to know you.

9. **Accept your offer.** Organizations confirm offers on the date in the timeline, and you accept by the deadline that follows. For students not placed in the first round, the Blum Center runs a second round, matching them with organizations that still need interns.

10. **Make it official.** Complete your section of the Internship Learning Agreement (2026-27), then have your supervisor complete and sign theirs. Electronic signatures are fine. Email the signed agreement to Dr. Arnold at karnold@ucsb.edu by the due date in the timeline. You receive your add code for HIST, GLOBL, or CH ST 196SJ once the signed agreement arrives.

OTHER WAYS TO COMPLETE THE INTERNSHIP

A site you propose. If you find a placement on your own, it must be approved before you start; contact Dr. Arnold for guidance. An approved site places poverty, inequality, and social justice at the center of its mission, assigns a supervisor to a defined project with tangible tasks for you, and has the capacity to supervise and mentor an undergraduate. The Blum Center approves no site after the fact, and hours you work before approval do not count toward the 120.

A campus program. Internships through programs such as UCDC, UC Sacramento, or UCEAP can fulfill the minor's internship requirement. Staff in those programs can help you find a placement. You may not need to enroll in the internship course, but you must still complete the Internship Preparation Form to earn minor credit.

WHEN YOU START YOUR INTERNSHIP

As an intern, you represent yourself, the Blum Center, the PISJ Minor, and UCSB. Whether your internship site takes on UCSB interns in the future depends partly on your attitude and performance.

You play a major role in the success of your internship. You are there to learn actively, not passively, and your engagement and dedication make a big difference. No one expects you to know everything, but your site will expect you to make an effort to learn. Take initiative, try things out, and suggest tasks you can take on next, but when in doubt, ask. A question or two saves you from redoing a task or project.

A few tips for your internship and for workplaces more generally:

- **Log your hours from your first day.** You need 120 hours by the end of the quarter, and your supervisor confirms them on the Supervisor Evaluation Form.
- **Set reasonable expectations for yourself and your site.** The main goal of the internship is to learn. We hope you contribute to work you care about, but you should not feel pressured to do the work of a staff member, and you should tell us if you do. That is not only unethical; it is illegal. At the same time, you should not spend all your time on clerical work. Many sites are busy, and everyone helps make copies or run errands. Work like this, or routine tasks like managing a spreadsheet, can be vital to your organization, and you should be ready to help. If you feel this is all you are doing and you have no other chances to learn, talk with your supervisor, your course instructor, or Dr. Arnold.
- **Communicate with your supervisor.** Meet with your supervisor regularly to check in on your work, how you are feeling, and upcoming projects. Tell your supervisor when you feel ready for more responsibility, or when you need more support and guidance. Your supervisor is your first point of contact and should be the main person assigning you tasks. You will want to say yes when any staff member asks for help, but check in with your supervisor when someone else asks you to do something. Your supervisor knows how your time should be spent and can tell you whether the new task should come first.
- **Arrive on time and be fully present.** Everyone runs late occasionally, but arriving on time helps you make the impression you want. While you are there, stay focused and engaged.
- **Dress to match the work you are doing.** Take your cues from the staff at your site. If they wear suits to important meetings, dress up when you go with them. If they wear jeans to work on the organization's farm, leave the suit at home.
- **Be friendly, but avoid office drama.** If you overhear staff making petty comments about each other, or someone tries to get you on their side, say politely that you would rather not take sides and that you want a good relationship with everyone. If interpersonal dynamics at your site are affecting you, or if you experience any kind of harassment, speak with your supervisor, your course instructor, or Dr. Arnold as soon as possible.
- **Be careful how you represent your site.** If your site gives you an email account, use it only for internship work. If you help with the site's social media, or speak for the site at an event, use the tone and message the organization wants, and check with your supervisor if you need guidance.

HOW TO GET CREDIT FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP

To earn credit and have the internship count toward the PISJ Minor, you need to:

- Submit your signed Internship Learning Agreement and enroll in HIST, GLOBL, or CH ST 196SJ, or an eligible alternative course, which you take during the same quarter as your internship.
- Complete 120 hours at your site.
- Fulfill the commitments in your Learning Agreement and the course requirements in the syllabus.
- Submit the Student Evaluation Form at the end of the quarter, and have your supervisor complete the Supervisor Evaluation Form and review it with you. Give your supervisor a copy of your Learning Agreement for reference. Both forms are linked on the internship webpage.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Internship webpage: blumcenter.ucsb.edu/academics/internship