

Internship FAQ

How do I find an Internship?

Over the past 25 years, BGC MA students have completed internships at over 250 institutions around the world – don't worry, you'll find one! The bigger question will be what do you want to get out of your internship experience? Do you want the experience to be at a particular institution, type of institution (such as an art museum, historic house museum, auction house, archive, or gallery), or archaeological site? Do you want to gain professional experience in a new aspect of a field you already know or in a completely new field? Do you hope to work with objects of a certain kind or from a particular time and/or place? We think of the internship requirement primarily as career development, and these are the types of questions that you should think about as you start your first year and begin meeting people at events and in the city at large. You might also consider how your internship experience might contribute to your academic work. In the past, some students have been able to incorporate parts of their internship research into their Qualifying Papers or into a course research paper.

The Director of Masters Studies (DMS) oversees the internship program, and will meet with you all as a group, and individually, during your first term. It is important to realize that the responsibility for finding an internship is yours, but we will guide you, alerting you to particular opportunities, providing workshops on writing cover letters and resumes, and offering other advice as needed.

What is the process for setting up an internship?

The DMS will go over this with you, but basically, you will write to a person or institution to ask about the possibility of interning. This initial contact may be prompted by a call for applications, or might be an initiative of your own. Once the internship has been set up, you will fill out the Internship Petition form and also secure a letter confirming your appointment from your supervisor or institution (Internship Sponsor Letter). At the end of the internship, you will file a brief three to five-page report to the DMS / Academic Programs Office, and your supervisor will provide us with an evaluation. The relevant forms can be found in the "Handbook and Forms" (<https://www.bgc.bard.edu/ma-phd/13/forms-and-handbook>) section of the BGC website and can be downloaded or completed online and submitted electronically.

When should the internship be finalized?

Internships should be decided by the time you register for fall courses in late April of your first year. There are instances where you might still be waiting to hear from a competitive internship at that point, and that is fine. But by April you should be in the last stages, and you should keep the DMS informed of any late notices or problems. See also the "Timeline" question below.

Does the internship have to be during the summer?

For full time students, internships are traditionally completed during the summer following the Bard Travel Program and before the beginning of classes in early September. You will register for the internship credits when you register for your spring classes in November, and then complete the hours over the summer. We would encourage you to use the summer, when there are no classes, to take care of this requirement. However, and aside from any extenuating circumstances which may be discussed with the DMS, internships may extend into the fall, or begin in the spring and continue into the summer. You will have to juggle your internship with your coursework but if you have the opportunity to continue working on a project there is no rule that says you need to stop when term begins.

Part-time students have more flexibility in deciding when to register for the credits, and when they take care of the actual hours. They should meet with the DMS about this in their first year just to assess options.

Can I split my hours between two opportunities?

Yes. Internships may be split between two opportunities. Completing hours is usually not an issue. The internship requires only 100 hours, and many of you will do much more than that during a summer. But if you have two compelling opportunities, and one is for fewer than 100 hours, you may fulfill the remainder (and probably then some) at another location / organization.

How many internships should I apply for?

This varies, but on average students apply to three to five internships.

I'm interested in internships outside of NY, especially international ones. How can I make that happen?

We encourage you to look widely for internships! We have a number of recurring international internships, and other students have struck out on their own. There are some logistics to bear in mind, though. First of all, there is the reality of cost. Not only are internships often unpaid, but there are visa costs and housing / living costs to be considered. BGC does have some limited resources to help offset some of these costs, but it is still likely to be an expense. So if you are serious about, say, interning at the Victoria and Albert Museum, you should think about this early on.

A number of opportunities will be announced specially by the DMS during the semester. Some internships are competitive, and we will have a call for applications.

Does an internship need to be “unpaid”?

No. But unfortunately most institutions do not offer pay for internships done “for credit” as ours is.

What is the typical timeline for a summer internship? When should I be doing what?

Oct-Nov: The DMS will meet with students as a group and individually (by appointment) to discuss interests and options; you should also be searching for opportunities on your own. Check the Career Services wiki (<https://careerservices.commonsgc.bard.edu/>) as well as other sources, e.g. the webpages of institutions of interest.

Nov 15: Register for internship *credits* (3) when you register for spring courses.

Nov (dates vary): The DMS will announce BGC institutional domestic and international internships.

Nov 26 or Jan 14: Submit applications for BGC institutional domestic and international internships to the Academic Programs Committee (via Alec Newell) in time for Dec or Jan GCM; ideally Dec.

Nov-Jan: Submit applications to outside institutions by their own deadlines

Feb 1: Ideally, BGC institutional domestic and international internships will be finalized

March 1: The DMS will announce funding opportunities (and application instructions) to support internship opportunities that require travel and housing costs.

April (mid-to-late): Ideally, everyone's internships should be finalized; Internship Sponsor Letters and Internship Petitions should be submitted.

At the end of your internship: Ask your sponsor to complete the Internship Evaluation form. Submit your three to five-page summary report of your internship no later than one month after your internship ends. (Failure to do so will result in the loss of credit for the work done.)