



American University of Central Asia

Department of International and Comparative Politics

Internship Policy

I. Purpose and Objectives

The Department of International and Comparative Politics (ICP) at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) recognizes the importance of internships in providing students with practical experience and enhancing their understanding of academic concepts.

Internships are mainly designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering essential skills that prepare ICP students for careers in political science and related fields.

At the end of the internships, ICP students will gain first-hand practical experience in the fields related to their studies, enhancing their academic learning and preparing them for careers in international relations, comparative politics, or related areas.

After successful completion of the internships, the ICP students will be able to:

- Bridge the gap between academic learning and practical application,
- Gain practical skills and learn where further improvements are needed,
- Apply their knowledge from the classroom in an actual work setting.
- Enhance career readiness and employability through practical experience.
- Network opportunities with professionals in the field of political science and international relations.

On the one hand, ICP students are responsible for acting professionally and adhering to the host organization's guidelines, maintaining a log of activities and responsibilities performed during the internship, and regularly communicating progress with the internship course coordinator (through the internship diary). On the other hand, the ICP department is responsible for ensuring all internships meet academic and professional standards, providing guidance and resources, and addressing any issues arising during the internship efficiency. Students should adhere to ethical guidelines and AUCA policies during their internships. Any breach of conduct or internship agreement may result in disciplinary action or failure of the course.

The Internship-I practice should involve at least **180 work hours**, *typically four hours per day over six weeks in the summer*, and the Internship-II should involve **270 work hours**, *typically*

eight hours per day over seven weeks in the summer. At the end of two internships, the ICP students should complete **450 hours of practice**.

II. Where to Take Internships

The internships should be relevant to their field of study. They can be undertaken in various settings, including governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and private sector firms engaged in political analysis or public policy.

ICP students are encouraged to seek independent internships relevant to their field. The ICP department should maintain a list of potential internship opportunities and facilitate placements in the case of an emergency. In any case, it is advised that before taking an internship, a student consults with a faculty member who coordinates internship courses and the Head of the Department. The internship coordinator and the Head of the Department must approve all internship placements to ensure academic relevance.

Sometimes, the ICP department might offer internship positions through its Development Clinic, Politics Club Panorama, or some of its research projects and administrative tasks. Any student who has difficulties finding a place for an internship due to some restrictions such as citizenship status or language barriers should consult with a faculty coordinating internships and the Department Head in the first two weeks of the semester.

III. Internship Courses

This policy, furthermore, outlines the requirements and expectations for students enrolled in the ICP program to complete two required courses on internship (ICP - 390.1 and ICP - 391.1) successfully with a passing grade (P) as part of their degree requirements. In these courses, the ICP students will be able to test their skills and apply what they have learned in the classroom while earning academic credits.

For instance, they will receive six credits for the Internship-I course (ICP-390.1) and nine for the Internship II course (ICP 391.1). As a result, two courses will total fifteen credits on top of their graduation requirements (242 credits). Students must receive credit for a satisfactory evaluation from their internship supervisors.

Subsequently, ICP sophomores and juniors will need to undertake two internship courses to fulfill curriculum requirements. It is advised that the Internship-I course should be taken starting from the spring semester of the second year, and the Internship-II course should be taken by the end of the third year of studies.

The internship courses aim to:

- Learn how to organize important documents for the professional career such as Curriculum Vitae, Cover Letter, Interview, Application process, Minutes, Application process, Briefing paper/Memo, and Critical Thinking Skills.
- Develop professional skills relevant to political science and international relations, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
- Enhance ICP students' understanding of the job market's needs and be well-prepared for life after graduation in a competitive job market.

IV. Forms, Reporting, and Grading

There are four primary forms that the ICP students need to submit.

The ICP Department prepares *Form 1 (Verification Letter)* if/when the internship place asks for a verification letter that the student is currently enrolled in the program and needs to complete the internship. This letter should be prepared by the end of the second week of the semester. This form is available in Kyrgyz, Russian, and English.

The organization prepares *Form 2 (Acceptance Letter)*, whereby the student becomes an intern. The form can also be found in Kyrgyz, Russian, and English.

Form 3 (Internship Completion Report) will be prepared by the student at the end of the internship practice and should be signed and stamped by the internship organization. The student should submit the form by the latest two weeks after completing the internship. There will be seven sections. The first section is dedicated to the intern information. The second section is about the internship place. The third section is about internship objectives and achievements. The fourth section focuses on the internship tasks and responsibilities. Section five is about a reflective summary. Section six includes the supervisor's comments, whereas the last section concerns the intern's declaration of the internship.

Form 4 (Internship Reflection Form) is the students' self-assessment at the end of the internship practices. The form critically evaluates the student on the internship by examining skills development, key experiences and accomplishments, and personal and professional growth.

Internship Diary. During the internship, the students should also prepare a weekly *diary* to list the tasks and responsibilities, achievements, skills and knowledge they learned, and overall assessment of the process and progress of the internship practices. It includes activities, theoretical knowledge required, practical skills obtained, and student reflection.

Presentations. ICP students will also need to present to other students enrolled in a course about their experience. This presentation will be in an informal format with an interactive session. Since

the ICP students will complete their internship during the summer, these presentations will be conducted in the fall semesters, and participation in the internship experience presentations is required to pass the course. Please note that this public event will be open to all ICP students.

In this vein, an internship is graded as pass/fail. Students will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the internship experience and relevance to the field of study.
- Engagement and professionalism are demonstrated during the internship.
- Quality of forms, reflective diary, and presentations.

In Sum, the Internship Policy equips ICP students with the necessary skills and experiences to succeed in their future careers. By integrating practical experiences with academic learning, the ICP department fosters a comprehensive educational environment that prepares our students for the complexities of the political landscape. The policy ensures that internships are a valuable component of the educational experience for the students, equipping them with the tools and insights necessary to excel in political science and international relations. By adhering to this policy, ICP students will ensure a productive and enriching internship experience, which is crucial for their academic and professional development in International and Comparative Politics.