University of Central Florida Forensic Science Program Internship

Strategy:
CHS 4591 is a four credit hour scheme of professional assessment undertaken in the ultimate or penultimate semester of the Program. This four hundred hour experience exposes candidates to the professional attitudes, challenges, and ethical behavior demanded by the forensic science agencies practicing scientific investigations of criminal activity.

The University cannot offer such an experience to students, and relies heavily on the willingness of forensic agencies to support this learning activity. The faculty is deeply indebted to the profession for this aspect of the educational process in the forensic sciences. Candidates will recognize those unique experiences to which they are exposed, and should follow all rules of engagement during this period.

Preparation:
Candidates are expected to contact agencies of their choice following discussion with their Forensic Science Academic Advisor. The internship requires an override for registration, which is granted only to seniors, where extensive exposure to the forensic sciences gives the internee a deeper understanding of the scientific nature of the investigative process.

Apply in writing to the agency internship coordinator. In your cover letter, explain clearly your interest and motives for selecting that agency, the dates you are available and the section in which you would prefer to receive training. Attach a CV, which includes student contact information (address, email, telephone). Complete all application forms and requirements and return as instructed (by mail or electronically) to the agency internship coordinator. Be aware that the agency will conduct a background assessment, which may take a considerable period of time. This background assessment may include your academic, social, and/or financial records.

The agency is asked to provide training in one or more specialties. In full service laboratories sections may include biology, toxicology, chemistry, trace evidence, firearms, latents, and crime scene investigation. Medical examiner’s offices may also offer the opportunities in toxicology, death investigations, and autopsy examination.

Federal agencies offer a limited number of internships. These agencies require early application and are usually highly competitive in selection. State agencies usually offer the full range of specialties, whereas local agencies often focus on crime scene investigation.

The candidate should be specific in their interest(s) when applying to the agency. The UCF program’s experience is that all agencies try to place interns in their area of specific interest, and willingly allow rotation through different sections if asked.

Requirements:
1. Students must provide the UCF advisor with the following information within two weeks of starting the internship:
   a. The name and official title of the internship coordinator and the supervisor(s)
   b. The mailing address of the agency
   c. The telephone number, fax number, and email address of the supervisor
   d. Students mailing address and telephone number
   e. The starting and end dates of the internship
2. Students must maintain a daily logbook of their activities, which is signed by the supervisor every two weeks as an accurate record of study.

3. Students must present a report of a research project conducted under the direction of, and authorized by, the internship supervisor. If such a practice is not possible, an alternate report may be substituted (with approval from the UCF internship coordinator).

4. Students must upload a biweekly report of their activities to Webcourses.

5. An assessment form seeking an opinion upon intern conduct, aptitude, and performance will be completed by the supervisor.

6. The grading of the internship experience is based upon the following scheme:
   a. Biweekly reports 20%
   b. Research/Casework report 20%
   c. Supervisor assessment 60%

The Agency Support:

The program asks that each intern be assigned a supervisor, who will be responsible for directing training as appropriate. The interns have considerable experience in instrumental analysis and DNA typing protocols, supported by chemistry, biological sciences, physics, statistics, and computer skills. All are aware of the challenges imposed upon the profession. Interns are expected to observe agency discipline, dress code, safety procedures, and practice good time management. Where possible, interns should be offered a research project of specific interest to the agency, and achieve success under minimum supervision. Interns must fulfills the requirements sited above (1-5). The program seeks an assessment by the immediate supervisor on the character, personal qualities, conduct, and abilities of the intern at the end of the period. This assessment is weighted heavily in awarding the final grade to the student.

Experience has demonstrated the immense value of the internship in student careers. For the faculty, it is an essential element in the professional development of aspiring forensic analysts.

Dr. Tamra Legron-Rodriguez  
Undergraduate Program Coordinator for Forensic Science  
Tamra.Legron-Rodriguez@ucf.edu  
Phone: 407-823-1167

University of Central Florida  
Department of Chemistry  
4104 Libra Drive  
Chemistry Bldg.  
Orlando, FL 32816