3.930 / 3.931 Internship Guidelines: During the Summer

Academic Responsibility

Six units of academic credit are awarded for each internship summer (Pass/Fail for 3.930, grades for 3.931). By special arrangement with the Registrar, no tuition is charged for this. MIT requires that such work must be done in conjunction with MIT faculty. This requires you to stay in touch with your faculty supervisor as the internship period progresses.

At the beginning of the summer, you must email your supervisor a page or two describing your project. We suggest that every two weeks after that you should email your faculty supervisor a progress report outlining what you’ve done in the previous two weeks. Send copies of these progress reports to Julia Hollingsworth-Brown (jholling@mit.edu).

By the end of September, you must submit a report to your faculty supervisor (with a copy to Julia) describing your summer work. There is no specified format for these reports; use your own judgment, but they are typically in the format of a journal article or a formal 3.014 report. Electronic copies are usually preferred (unless the faculty supervisor prefers paper).

3.931 students will also present their summer work at a public internship symposium hosted by the Department. A $500 prize is awarded for the best 3.931 report/presentation.

At the Company

While at the company, you’ll want to show a high level of professionalism. The internships are practice for your eventual employment and career, and in fact the company may well be interested in you as a potential employee. Keep your antennae up as to proper demeanor and procedure, and do your best to be a model worker.

Keep in mind that the internship companies have no formal association with MIT, so the Department has no say in how the company treats you (let us know of abuse, of course.) But each company has its own say in dress code, business hours, handling of property, etc. Almost without exception, our students have praised their companies and their policies, and we’re confident you will too.

Try to negotiate a company project to keep it basically in the area of materials, though we accept a pretty wide range here. Further, it should ideally be something you’re interested in, or interested in learning about. Be pleasant, but insistent on having a meaningful (as opposed to make-work) project. If you can arrange this before you arrive so that everything is in place for you, that’s ideal. Try to avoid losing time defining a project and then ordering materials and equipment for it.

Work with your company supervisors continually on their expectations for confidentiality. You may have to sign a confidentiality agreement, though it’s nice when they don’t insist on this. The report you’ll submit to us at the end of the summer isn’t distributed publicly, but it isn’t confidential either. We don’t require that the company clear it formally, but you’ll want to be comfortable with what the company expects of you. Communicate with us about this, and for sure communicate with the company. An MIT report will be due at the end of September regardless of the company’s stance, but we’ll work with you in cases of serious company rigidity.