



524 West 59th Street, New York, NY 10019



FOS 401: Forensic Science Laboratory Internship (3 credits)

Forensic Science Laboratory Internship Coordinator: Professor Linda C. Rourke

E-mail: FOS401@jjay.cuny.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Internship pre-requisites: ENG 201 and senior standing in the Forensic Science major

Students may enroll in FOS 401 for the fall & spring semesters or 8-week summer session.

FOS 401 is **not** offered for the other summer sessions, nor for the winter intersession.

Preparing for the Internship

The FOS 401 capstone course requires a minimum of 280 hours spent in the laboratory environment of a forensic science laboratory, medical examiner's office, prosecutor's office laboratory, or similar institution or agency. The location **MUST** be approved by the Forensic Science Laboratory Internship Coordinator at John Jay College before beginning the internship, to ensure the agency can provide the requisite forensic/laboratory experience. With few exceptions, internships are unpaid. Currently held employment positions **cannot** be considered in lieu of the internship - attempts to separate work hours from internship hours are traditionally unsuccessful and, therefore, not permitted. Similarly, time spent working in a laboratory prior to enrolling in FOS 401 may not be considered as part of the internship. Another internship scenario that is not permissible is one where confidentiality forbids an intern from maintaining and providing a daily lab book of activities and tasks. Such internships do not fulfill the spirit of a laboratory experience, which fosters the documentation and sharing of information.

Begin researching internship opportunities at least one semester **prior** to the semester in which you want to start the internship. It may be prudent to apply for a few internships in case you are not accepted by your first-choice host laboratory. Some agencies will require a thorough background check prior to accepting the student as an intern and it may take several months to complete the administrative steps before a student can be approved as an intern.

The internship experience can be a very exciting and rewarding experience. One key to getting

the most out of the experience is good communication between the intern and the agency hosting the internship. It is highly recommended that the intern meets with a representative of the hosting agency to discuss how the required 280 hours will be most beneficial for both parties. This meeting must take place before the start of the internship. Research what forensic disciplines are available at a particular host agency prior to contacting them (e.g., firearms analysis will not be possible in a toxicology laboratory). The learning possibilities exceed those that may be achieved within the academic institution, because there is no substitute for practical experience. A successful internship may even result in a job opportunity. Historically, many student-interns have been hired as full-time forensic analysts by their host laboratory.

Some laboratories require the intern to perform a research project during the internship. This project will be defined by the current research program in place at the host laboratory. In very rare circumstances, you may be able to perform a research project of your own design. To prepare for this possibility, perform a literature search on your topic to gain a better understanding of the area of interest. If you hope to perform such a research project, have all relevant information regarding this project with you at the interview with the host agency. Be aware that you can only work within the scope of the host laboratory - you will not be able to perform a research project without approval from the host laboratory.

The student will only be permitted to register for FOS 401 after all the pre-requisites have been fulfilled, as described in the current John Jay College Undergraduate Bulletin. It is the student's responsibility to secure the internship with an approved host agency, obtain and fill out permission forms or applications, and supply the agency with any documents that it requires. It is also the student's responsibility to make whatever arrangements are necessary to complete the 280 hours, whether full-time or part-time, directly with the agency. A recent listing which has current information for laboratories where student have interned in the last few years can be provided upon request. Furthermore, the prospective intern is not limited to the agencies on the lists. (To benefit future interns and perpetuate the list, students are encouraged to bring updated information to the attention of the FOS 401 Coordinator.)

Be aware that some government agencies will show preference to those individuals residing within their jurisdictions. If a student has family or friends in other regions of the country or the world, an internship remote from the New York City metropolitan area may be desirable. In the past, students have done internships in California, Massachusetts, Washington DC, Brazil, China, Thailand, and Israel. If a student has contacted a laboratory that appears to meet the requirements but is not on the list, the contact information for that lab must be forwarded to the FOS 401 Coordinator for the development of a memorandum of understanding before the internship can be approved.

It is also advisable to show this syllabus to the laboratory supervisor at the host agency so that there is no ambiguity that the supervisor will be asked for an evaluation of the intern at the conclusion of

the internship.

In order to be granted a permission to register for FOS 401 on CUNYfirst, the prospective intern must supply the following information to the FOS 401 Coordinator **prior** to commencing the internship: **a signed copy of this document** (including contact information and emergency contact information), a **current resume or curriculum vitae** (CV) (IEI academic advisor Julie Kiss, jkiss@jjay.cuny.edu, may be able to provide guidance on resume/cover letter writing and interview preparation; John Jay College's Center for Career and Professional Development provides guidance on resume writing and offers workshops on a regular basis), **an unofficial transcript from CUNYfirst**, and a **photograph** (a full color copy of your John Jay ID/driver license/passport is acceptable). Electronic versions of the aforementioned materials must be sent to FOS401@jjay.cuny.edu. Please note that the hosting agency may have additional requirements, such as a statement of intent, a minimum GPA (usually 3.0), pre-requisite science classes, senior standing in the major, a reference letter, a polygraph test, or a background check. Some laboratories may require hours in excess of 280 hours. The number of hours required must be negotiated prior to commencement of the internship. A letter of sponsorship, indicating that the internship is a requirement for graduation, will be provided upon request if required by the host agency (such as the NYPD forensic lab, which also requires proprietary forms to be filled out).

Note that there exists a capstone alternative to the forensic science laboratory internship: Undergraduate Research Internship, **FOS 402**, is a faculty-mentored research project as described in more detail in the current Undergraduate Bulletin. It is completely separate from FOS 401. You can find a course description, enrollment information, a list of professors that can serve as FOS 402 Faculty Mentors, and advice from some of these Faculty Mentors about what to expect from your FOS 402 experience here:

<https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/academics/academic-departments/department-sciences/academics/undergraduate-graduate-degrees/fos-402-undergraduate-research-internship>

Responsibilities During the Internship

The intern MUST keep a daily log of activities in the form of a bound lab notebook, clearly labeled on the front cover with the student's name, semester of enrollment, and the course name: "FOS 401 Internship". All pages in the bound notebook must be numbered, not only the pages used. Entries are to be made in pen and must be legible. Marble composition notebooks, with the binding sewn in the center of the book, are acceptable. Spiral bound notebooks are not acceptable and will incur a grade penalty.

On Page 1 of the notebook, provide your student e-mail address, your 8-digit EMPLID number, the name and address of the internship laboratory, the name and title of your laboratory supervisor(s), and their contact information (phone number and email address).

The time log must be maintained after the first page. You may use the next 2-3 pages of the notebook for the time log. The time log must be in a tabular format with the following columns: Date, Start Time, End Time, Number of Hours, Cumulative Total Hours; exclude any time taken for meal breaks. You may write this directly into the notebook or tape in a table with the headings specified above. Some laboratories have their own time logs which supervisors must sign; copies of these may be taped into the notebook.

After the pages reserved for the time log, the student may begin documenting a summary of their daily activities in the internship. Provide the date on the top line of the page to the left of the margin and follow with a summary of the hours invested and work performed each day. Only items/tasks of importance should be documented, such as experiments, procedures, description of instrumentation used, data collected (if applicable), and other laboratory activities. Judgment must be exercised regarding what to document. In some instances, you will document as you would for a college laboratory course; in other instances, a summary of the day's activities will be acceptable (preparation of samples or reagents, maintenance of instrumentation, waste disposal, and other non-research types of activity).

During the internship, if there appears to be a misunderstanding of the intern's role at the hosting agency, the student is encouraged to communicate this concern with the FOS 401 Coordinator as soon as possible.

Interns must send an update as soon as possible once each 90-hour time point has been reached (90, 180, and 270 hours), via e-mail to the FOS 401 Coordinator at FOS401@jjay.cuny.edu to track progress. The subject line in the email should read "Student's Last Name Internship Update at # hours" (e.g., Jones Internship Update at 90 hours). These internship update emails will become a part of the intern's official internship file, so it is expected that they be written in traditional format, with proper sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar. Failure to send timely internship updates, or updates sent without regard to punctuation and grammar may adversely affect the final grade. Each update should provide a 2-3 paragraph summary with details of the work done during the defined time period.

As representatives of the John Jay College Forensic Science Program, interns must conduct themselves in a professional, courteous, and ethical manner. Interns who make favorable impressions are frequently encouraged to apply for future employment with the host laboratory and may request a letter of reference from their supervisor. Examples of proper ethics for forensic scientists may be viewed on the websites of forensic science organizations through their Code of Ethics/Rules of Professional Conduct links.

Completion of the Internship and Grading

At the conclusion of 280 hours, the intern will prepare a double-spaced word-processed reflective paper about the internship, including the work or research performed, what was learned, how theoretical concepts learned in school were integrated into practical applications, and how it might affect their career in forensic science. Your reflective paper should range between 4 to 6 pages in length, incorporating all the aforementioned attributes. Do NOT provide detailed protocols for the laboratory procedures performed during the internship; instead summarize the goals of the procedures and your role performing these procedures. You are not permitted to use artificial intelligence apps like ChatGPT to write your paper. Upload your paper to the Assignments section of the FOS 401 Brightspace site for grading. Additionally, the student must upload to Brightspace a short critique of the internship experience, specifically in consideration of how this feedback may be helpful for future students who are considering the host laboratory for their internship experience. This critique must be separate from the reflective statement. The content of the critique will not be factored into the grade or submitted to the host agency. It is for the benefit of future interns only. Finally, the internship notebook with time log must be submitted to the FOS 401 Coordinator by the deadline posted on the FOS 401 Brightspace site.

The intern's supervisor at the host agency will be sent an intern assessment survey which will be submitted directly to the FOS 401 Coordinator at the conclusion of the student's internship. The survey will require the supervisor to certify that a minimum of 280 hours was spent working on the internship, recommend a grade, and rate the intern's performance, work ethic, abilities, attitude, professionalism, laboratory skills, etc. The supervisor can fill out and sign the survey electronically or scan the completed survey and email it directly to FOS401@jjay.cuny.edu. To provide a hard copy of the survey, they must sign across the seal of the envelope containing the survey so that the intern can submit it along with their internship notebook; it is to be opened only by the FOS 401 Coordinator. Any unsealed assessments will be verified with the supervisor. The grade recommended by the supervisor will be used in assessing the student's final grade with the recommended grade as the starting point.

The assessment of these three items (intern reflective paper, completed supervisor survey, and lab book content, including time records) will all factor into the final grade, which will be assigned by the internship coordinator. **All three items must be submitted by the deadline posted on Brightspace in order for a letter grade to be assigned before the college's final grade submission deadline.**

Many students have found their lab books invaluable when preparing for a job interview, so students are encouraged to retrieve their notebooks as soon as possible after the next semester begins. Note that storage space is extremely limited, so notebooks will be discarded after one year.

If the course requirements are not fulfilled within the semester that the intern is registered for FOS 401, an INC (incomplete) grade will be assigned, which will be updated with a letter-grade upon

completion of the course requirements. INC grades from the spring semester & 8-week summer term should be resolved at the beginning of the subsequent fall semester; INC grades from the fall semester should be resolved at the beginning of the subsequent spring semester. If the internship is not completed, with all post-internship documents submitted, by the third week of the subsequent semester specified, the registrar will automatically change the “INC” to “FIN” (Incomplete changed to F) in the fourth week of the subsequent semester. The FIN grade will be included in the calculation of your GPA. Upon completion of the requirements, the FIN grade can be changed without penalty. This type of grade change takes longer to process because it must be approved by the administration, so patience on the part of the student is required. Once the submitted grade is approved, the “FIN” will no longer appear on the transcript, being replaced by a letter grade. The college’s academic calendar specifies the relevant due dates.

The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD)

The CCPD is a valuable resource located at L.72.00 NB. Every semester, the CCPD conducts Internship Info-Session Workshops and a Job & Internship Fair. The CCPD internship director can assist with fine-tuning your resume/CV and cover letters. The CCPD also has an online listing of job/internship opportunities. Visit the CCPD for information regarding the resources available to you. <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/Career-services>

Summary

Pre-Internship Items (needed before the internship commences): a signed copy of this document (with appropriate courses circled), resume/CV, unofficial transcript, and photo. Once these FOUR items are submitted, a permission to register for FOS 401 can be added to CUNYfirst which will lift the registration hold.

Items needed during the course of the internship: e-mail updates once the 90, 180, and 270-hour time points have been reached, providing a detailed summary of the intern’s activities and experiences within the specified time frame; maintenance of lab notebook and time log.

Post-Internship Items (needed at the conclusion of the internship): a completed intern assessment survey from the internship supervisor, the lab notebook with the time log included, a detailed report of the internship experience (reflective paper), and a short critique of the internship (separate from the detailed report).

The post-internship documents submitted must include the student’s name, 8-digit EMPLID number, and semester of enrollment in FOS 401, all of which are required for the grade to be submitted to the Registrar, especially when resolving an INC or FIN.

Science courses successfully completed as of this date (circle all that apply):

General Chemistry (CHE 103 and CHE 104)

Biology (BIO 103 and BIO 104)

Organic Chemistry (CHE 201 and CHE 202)

Calculus (MAT 241 and MAT 242)

Physics (PHY 203 and PHY 204)

Probability & Statistics I (MAT301)

Physical Chemistry (CHE 301 or CHE 302)

Biochemistry (CHE 315)

Instrumental Analysis (CHE 320 and CHE 321)

Courses currently enrolled (list only science and math courses): _____

Student Name (PRINT CLEARLY)

8-digit EMPLID Number

Student Signature

Semester/Year registered for FOS 401

Date

Track in Forensic Science Program

Student Email

Student Phone Number

Emergency Contact Information

Name/Relationship to the Student

Phone Number

This syllabus is subject to revision as more information is received by the Science Internship Coordinators. It supersedes all previous versions.

Office use only

Received by

Date