

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) Online Program

**Culminating Internship Handbook LIS 4910
2025-2026**



Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Overview of Culminating Internships LIS 4910
- Basic Roles Within the Placement Process
 - Placement Team
 - MLIS @Denver Student's Role
 - Field Mentor/Supervisor's Role
- Initiating Change in Placement Site
- Culminating Internship Policies and Processes
 - Course Outcomes
 - Culminating Internship Goals
 - Class Meetings
 - Presentation of Work
 - Grades
 - Professional Expectations of Student, Field Mentor, and Faculty Supervisor
- Student Goals and Objectives
 - Goal Statements
 - Objectives
 - Flexibility
- Student Timeline
- Appendix A: Site Evaluation
- Appendix B: Evaluation of Student

Introduction

Welcome to the LIS 4910 Culminating Internship experience! You are about to begin one of the most exciting and fulfilling aspects of your degree plan. The Culminating Internship is an opportunity for you to apply the concepts learned in classes to the actual workplace while working under the supervision of professionals. The Field Mentor, Faculty Supervisor, Faculty Advisor are all cheering for your success.

Your Culminating Internship experience can be one of the most important career-enhancing choices you make. You have an opportunity to creatively build your resume and develop a professional portfolio by carefully choosing your internship site, Field Mentor, and special project. Students choose internship sites for a number of reasons:

- **Experiencing the general aspects of work in an information setting**
Example: Rotation through various departments of a public library
- **Completing a special project with a unique learning experience**
Example: Museum of Nature and Science—Digital Collection
- **Understanding different types of information-providing agencies**
Example: Denver Botanic Gardens
- **Developing an area of expertise with a large project**
Example: Summer Reading Programs

Your Culminating Internship can launch your career or help you develop expertise in a particular area. It can open doors to a special experience in a particular institution. It can provide an opportunity to work closely with an expert in the field. I challenge you to choose carefully and make it the best possible experience for your new career. Your Culminating Internship will only be as good as you make it, and its success relies on your commitment to the experience.

This Internship Handbook applies specifically to the Culminating Internship, but there are also opportunities for other internships for credit or no credit. Please check with your Faculty Advisor if you are interested in additional internships or service learning for credit.

Remember that you, the student, are responsible for reading this Culminating Internship Handbook, asking for clarification from the Faculty Supervisor if needed, and completing all requirements for the course.

Overview of Culminating Internships LIS 4910

Culminating Internship

Students who have completed at least 38 credit hours and all core classes are required to select a three-credit Culminating Internship (LIS 4910 Culminating Internship) or three-credit capstone project (LIS 4901 Capstone) for a culminating activity. Students may choose to do both and count one as an elective. (See the Capstone Handbook for capstone details.) The Culminating Internship requires a minimum of **75 hours** of fieldwork at an approved site with an approved Field Mentor. Most students complete the Culminating Internship in one quarter, but the fieldwork can be spread over two or three quarters as needed. The Culminating Internship is one where the student identifies their own goals and objectives. This planned learning experience with goals and objectives is initiated by the student and expanded and approved by both the Faculty Supervisor and the Field Mentor. It is an opportunity for students to apply the theoretical classroom lessons to a supervised work experience in a library or information agency.

Some sites may require specific coursework to be completed before beginning the Culminating Internship.

Culminating Internships may be paid, but those opportunities often require application to the opportunity directly by the student and there is still an internal DU process for approval to count the internship as course credit.

As part of the Culminating Internship course, students also need to reflect on the program learning outcomes and submit an Exit Essay.

Basic Roles Within the Placement Process

The placement process outlined here is applicable only to students enrolled in the Online MLIS@Denver Program. Students in the Online program may register for an Onsite version of the course, and vice versa. **Online MLIS@Denver students must be in contact with their Faculty Advisor and the Program Manager at least two quarters before an intended internship.**

- **Student Success Advisor:** Liaison between placement team and student
- **Placement Specialist:** Coordinates the logistics of setting up your placement; works with sites for approval and confirmation processes
- **Field Instructor:** Teacher for field seminar coursework
- **Program Manager:** Approves sites and field supervisors
- **Field Mentor/Supervisor:** Oversees minimum of 75 field work hours

Placement Team

The Placement Team works to introduce MLIS students to the Placement Process, identifies one qualified sites, and/or partners with students who are submitting referrals. MLIS students will work with the Placement Team from the beginning of the Placement Process until a student is confirmed in a Placement.

MLIS Students will work with a Placement Specialist, a member of the Placement Team, whose role is to:

- Conduct outreach and development within the student's community to identify a qualified placement site
- On average, Placement Specialists reach out to 25 - 50 sites per student. Most of a Placement Specialist's time is spent working with potential placement sites.
- Determine if sites fulfill MLIS@Denver Placement competencies & requirements.
- Collaborate with sites to obtain paperwork including resumes, qualification form, and other needed information as requested by faculty.
- Initiate Affiliation Agreements (legal document) to establish partnership and liability coverage. (Note: this is **required** for every site).
- Clearly communicate internship logistics, training, and requirements to all sites.
- Work with Practicum & Internship Coordinator to submit all placement information for MLIS@Denver faculty review. Note that all placement sites are subject to faculty/staff approval.
- Communicate with students on an ongoing basis to explain the placement process, confirm student information, and provide updates on the student's individual placement process.

MLIS @Denver Student's Role

- Students are expected to be responsive to all correspondence with the Placement Team, with a response time within 2 days (48 business hours, M-F).

- If students are interested in pursuing Referrals: reach out to potential placement sites to inquire about placement opportunities that meet student needs/preferences. The Placement Team cannot search for sites specific to a student's preferences, but students are welcomed and encouraged to submit referrals that can accommodate the student's preferences.
 - Submit **qualified** and interested site(s) through our Referral Form (provided by the Placement Team).
- Submit referrals prior to the referral deadline.
- Schedule interview with referral site once it is approved by faculty.
- Schedule an "Actual Placement Start Date" once confirmed in a placement.
- Complete all required security clearances and background check per sites' need. Students are responsible for any costs incurred for clearance items and transportation to/from their placement.
- Acknowledge and adhere to placement policies as outlined in the MLIS@Denver Placement Handbook.

Field Mentor/Supervisor's Role

- Meet with the student regularly for individual and/or group supervision as assigned, providing educational and developmental feedback.
- Train and supervise the intern related to site policies, protocols, mission, functions, etc.
- Assign and oversee all intern's tasks and responsibilities.
- Encourage and support the intern's development as a library and information science professional in the context of their placement.
- Link professional core values, vision and mission to the work the student is doing.
- Attend "virtual site visit" with the Field Instructor who is facilitating the coursework.
- Oversee completion of all intern evaluations.

Initiating Change in Placement Site

Rarely, students may need to change their placement site because of extenuating circumstances. This type of change can be initiated at any time, and will only be approved on a case-by-case basis with the involvement of Course Instructor, Faculty Advisor, and MLIS@Denver faculty. If a student wants to change sites based on specific circumstances, they must follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Discuss the situation with the Course Instructor and Faculty Advisor as soon as possible.
2. Write a letter of petition to the faculty explaining the situation and requesting a change.
3. Wait for a faculty decision before any new site is contacted. It is very important that these steps be followed to ensure that both students and sites have the best experience possible.
4. MLIS@Denver Faculty will communicate with the student and the Placement Team about the status of the requested change.

Note: It can take anywhere from 4 – 8 weeks (or more) for a new placement site to be identified.

Culminating Internship Policies and Processes

Course Outcomes

As a result of successfully completing one of the following classes LIS 4910/4911/4912, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to effectively interpret and apply theory under the supervision of a practicing librarian or information professional.
2. Identify their professional strengths and weaknesses and their areas of interest as they participate in the duties and responsibilities of library and information professionals.
3. Develop and clarify professional goals.
4. Contribute in a positive way to the operations of a library or information agency.
5. Meet the individual goals and objectives identified before beginning the Culminating Internship experience.

Culminating Internship Goals

The Culminating Internship is customized for each student. The student, Field Mentor, and Faculty Supervisor work together toward the achievement of the mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives. The expected outcomes of the internship are to:

- Help students in the development of professional areas of interest
- Provide students with an opportunity to translate concepts and skills into professional practice
- Assist students in the clarification and development of professional goals
- Enable students to identify professional and interpersonal strengths and weaknesses
- Support students in the expansion of their professional networks
- Encourage students to contribute in a positive way to the professional agencies, institutions, and organizations of the community.

Class Meetings

There will be three class meetings of the Culminating Internship at the beginning, mid-quarter, and the end of the quarter scheduled by the Faculty Supervisor.

Presentation of Work

Typically, the class requirement for the Culminating Internship will also include a class presentation of the work the student did during the internship. The structure of this presentation is described in the LIS 4910 syllabus found in Appendix B.

Grades

The Faculty Supervisor determines the final grade with input from the Field Mentor. Students must earn at least a “C” grade for this class to count toward their MLIS degree. If a student receives a grade lower than “C,” the student will need to retake LIS 4910.

Professional Expectations of Student, Field Mentor, and Faculty Supervisor

While no set of guidelines can address every potential situation, the basic principles for all internships lie in the understanding that students and faculty not only represent themselves, but also represent the University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education, and the Library and Information Science program. Each person involved in the internship experience is expected to demonstrate responsible, ethical, and professional behavior in setting goals, meeting responsibilities, and addressing problems. Principles include the following:

Propriety. The internship student should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity of their position as a student of the University of Denver.

Competence and Growth. The internship student should strive to become proficient in professional practice and performance of professional functions and activities.

Service. The internship student should regard the service obligation to the agency, institution, or organization as a primary obligation.

Integrity. The internship student should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.

Development of Knowledge. The internship student should take responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

Scholarship and Research. The internship student engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.

Confidentiality. The internship student should respect the privacy of information users and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy. The internship student should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.

Commitments to the Agency or Institution. The internship student should adhere to commitments made to the agency, institution, or organization.

Integrity of the Profession. The internship student should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.

Professional Dress. The internship student should dress appropriately for the standard of the library or institution where they are working—generally more formal than attending class.

Student Goals and Objectives

The Culminating Internship is an opportunity for students to design their own learning experience. The design is done with the advice of Faculty Advisor, Faculty Supervisor, and Field Mentors. The first step for the student is to identify what they want out of the experience. Ideally, students will begin thinking about their Culminating Internship experience long before defining the plan.

Once a general idea is conceived, then the student should write 3-5 general goals. Under each goal it is appropriate to identify several specific objectives. Consider the acronym SMART when writing objectives, i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.

Goals and objectives are sometimes called by different names in different settings such as targets, actions, etc. For the purposes of the Internship(s) we are using Goal as the general statement and Objective for the specific. The relationship is best understood when they are presented in outline form:

Goal #1 - Objective - Objective - Objective

Goal #2 - Objective - Objective - Objective

The Field Mentor may have suggestions for ways to enhance the goals and objectives, but it is critical that the student initiate the areas of focus. See the descriptions of internships, service learning, and special projects for a clear understanding of the perspective. It is a difference in perspective, and there is a fine line of distinction in many cases. The point is that “DU/the student” is initiating the focus of the Culminating Internship, while in the other cases the library or information provider is initiating the project or focus of work. That is not to say that a project cannot be part of the Culminating Internship work but generally, it should not be the major focus. Setting goals is an excellent way to raise the probability of success in implementing your projects and changes.

Goal Statements

Identifying the goals is the easy part. The goal statements are broad and general. Example:

Goal #1—To practice reference skills in a public library. (ALA Core Competencies, Item 2.A)

Objectives

Applying the SMART elements to your objectives is more difficult for students.

- **Specific**—Write the objective in one specific statement.
- **Measurable**—Ask yourself: “How will I know I accomplished the objective?” Is there a product, a statistic, a percentage?
- **Attainable**—Is it possible to do this within the required parameters?
- **Realistic**—Is it within reason to expect to complete the objective?
- **Time-bound**—Typically, “time-bound” implies a date or a deadline e.g., six months or by June 1, 2024. For internship(s) planning, think about the number of hours you

expect it will take to accomplish the objectives. Think carefully about how you are spending your 75 hours of the internship(s).

Example:

Work 10 hours on the Information Desk and answer at least 20 questions with 90% accuracy by the end of the first 30 hours of the internship.

Flexibility

Your goals and objectives are not set in stone. They are simply a planning guide. Once you have verbalized your wishes, talk with your Faculty Advisor and/or the Faculty Supervisor for additional input. Only then should you consider possible sites and Field Mentors that you think will help you to best achieve what you want out of the Culminating Internship. Once you are conducting the field work, it is expected that you will make some adjustments in the time estimates as well as objectives as new opportunities or interests are revealed.

Student Timeline

6-12 months before the culminating internship begins

- Connect with your Faculty Advisor and the Program Manager to verify that you would like to be placed.

8-16 weeks before the culminating internship begins

- Identify 3-5 goals for the culminating internship; write several objectives for each goal.
- Discuss your ideas with your faculty internship supervisor.

6-8 weeks before the culminating internship begins

- Verify approval of the field mentor with the Internship Placement coordinator.
- Register for the LIS 4910 class.

3-4 weeks before the Culminating Internship

- Polish your goals and objectives and provide an overview of the field work or project.
- Review proposed goals and objectives with Field Mentor and the Faculty Supervisor.

2 weeks before the Culminating Internship

- Plan your work schedule.
- Complete the Internship Application through the Qualtrics form.

During the Culminating Internship

- Attend scheduled class sessions.
- Report promptly to the site, complete all required hours, and maintain a time sheet of hours worked (please see Syllabus for details on Time Log).
- Submit the outline of your goals and objectives.
- Complete learning journal reflections on activities and learning and responses to peers.
- Schedule the Site Visit at a time when both Field Mentor and Faculty Supervisor can attend
- Participate in the class discussion of the program learning outcomes and complete the Exit Essay.
- Complete a written report at the end of the experience.
- Prepare and present the work in a classroom presentation
- Complete and submit all paperwork required by the deadline

Appendix A: Site Evaluation

(To be completed by the student and submitted via an online questionnaire.)

Student: _____

Quarter: _____

Internship Site: _____

Field Mentor: _____

Please answer the following questions honestly and completely.

1. What were the advantages of doing an internship at this site?
2. What were the disadvantages of doing an internship at this site?
3. Would you recommend this internship site to another student? Why or why not?
4. Other comments

Appendix B: Evaluation of Student

(To be completed by the Field Mentor via an online questionnaire)

Student: _____

Quarter: _____

Internship Site: _____

Field Mentor: _____

The field mentor completes the evaluation and discusses it with the student. Both student and field mentor must sign the evaluation. The form must be returned to the faculty supervisor for review. The faculty supervisor will assign a portion of the student's grade based on the following criteria 0-100%.

Evaluation Criteria
1. Accepts professional responsibility to learn
2. Completes assignments in a professional manner
3. Honors schedules, appointments, and deadlines
4. Demonstrates professional knowledge and behavior
5. Remains open to feedback and evaluation
6. Organizes, plans, and completes work efficiently
7. Recognizes personal strengths
8. Recognizes areas for improvement
9. Demonstrates initiative and resourcefulness
10. Maintains ethical behavior
11. Communicates clearly in writing and speaking
12. Works cooperatively with other staff members

What were the student's particular strengths?

In what area(s) might the student improve? General comments.