



***Science Influencers* Internship Program GUIDELINES**

Introduction

The *Science Influencers* program integrates research, education, and extension (REE) experiences for undergraduates to become effective, influential communicators of science in the public domain. Students with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) knowledge and communications experience are needed in the Food, Agriculture, Natural resources, and Human (FANH) sciences.

For each student in *Science Influencers*, a summer internship including scientific and technical communications training and social media experiences is a key component of the program. *Science Influencers* also includes technical and leadership skills development, a science communications symposium, and one elective outreach experience. Participants will gain invaluable knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) with cooperating internship agencies such as public/private scientific research laboratories, communications firms, and/or county extension programs. *Science Influencers* summer internships provide experiential opportunities to integrate classroom concepts into real world science communications workplace settings.

Science Influencers summer internships require contractual agreements between Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) institutions and approved internship partners who furnish facilities, instruction, and professional experiences to improve students' KSAs. Interns will work with supervising agencies to complete regular or special projects relevant to the *Science Influencers* program.

Objectives

- To provide students with experiential learning opportunities related to studies of science communications in STEM- or FANH-related sciences.
- To facilitate students' independent exploration of career interests that incorporate communicating science with the public.
- To increase students' motivations for careers involving science communications by integrating classroom instruction with planned and supervised practical experiences.
- To strengthen students' science communication effectiveness and influence.
- To prepare students for employment through field training and professional experiences.

Eligibility

- Active student members in the *Science Influencers* program.
- Students must be enrolled in summer internship credits in one TAMUS institution.

Operational Principles

Science Influencers' internships are based on these operational and philosophical principles:

- Each internship requires specific learning objectives relevant to the intern's work activities.
- The program directors, cooperating internship supervisor, and student intern will review the learning objectives periodically during the internship to ensure that students derive maximum benefits from the experience.
- Student interns have well-defined work activities that are agreed upon by the cooperating internship, student interns, and the *Science Influencers* program directors.
- Student interns are regarded as independent agents who perform work activities and pursue learning objectives with their cooperating agencies.



Enrollment Procedures

Students must complete an internship application before approval for enrolling in *Science Influencers'* internship credits. Student should ensure that their interests and academic preparation meet the requirements of the cooperating internship agency. Upon approval from the *Science Influencers* program directors and the cooperating internship supervisor, the student will register for summer internship credit at their TAMUS institution.

Responsibilities of the Principal Participants

Students:

Assisted by the student's Faculty Internship Director, the student will seek potential opportunities for the internship program. The student should have an updated resume, and cover letter before searching for an appropriate internship program and/or interview with prospective internship agencies. While participating in the internship program, student interns are expected to:

- Complete 400 hours of work (i.e., suitable for three academic credits).
- Complete internship tasks and activities, as agreed upon by all parties.
- Work with the internship partner to gain technical and/or scientific knowledge.
- Produce weekly blog posts about the internship experience.
- Practice reflective writing for professional development.
- Conduct self-assessments of work performance during and after the internship.
- Develop and present oral reports for the *Science Influencers* program.
- Produce written materials for publication through the *Science Influencers* program.
- Present a scientific poster or an oral presentation about the internship experience at the *Science Influencers* annual fall research symposium.

Cooperating Internship Supervisors:

Cooperating internship partners are expected to provide a variety of educational experiences for the intern and involve the student intern in specific projects. The cooperating partner assigns an internship supervisor who evaluates the intern's work performance during and after the internship. These evaluations contribute to an overall appraisal of the internship experience. Additionally, supervisors' evaluations help verify the *Science Influencers* internship as a credit-bearing experience. All evaluations and program forms are online.

Faculty Internship Directors:

Faculty associated with the *Science Influencers* program serve as academic directors for students in summer internships. Academic directors review internship plans to verify they:

- Are academically relevant to the learning process (e.g., related to the *Science Influencers*) and are appropriate for TAMUS institutional credit.
- Involve initiative, creative opportunities, meaningful responsibilities, and assignments – in contrast to routine or continuously repetitive work activities.
- Provide the student with practical experiences to refine their KSAs in science, etc.
- Include appropriate supervision and direction by qualified and interested persons.

Questions about the *Science Influencers* internship experience should be addressed to:

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