Health-Related Internships (HRI) Online System
https://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/hbs/hri/student/index.htm

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Health-Related Internships (HRI) is an online sign-up system available for students to sign up for internships, fill out necessary documents and assume responsibility for their professional development – allowing the Internship and Career Center’s Health and Biological Sciences (HBS) team at UC Davis to offer hundreds of experiential learning opportunities per quarter to students in a semi-automated, inclusive manner.

The HRI system was created by UC Davis’ Internship and Career Center (ICC) in response to the growing demand for internship opportunities by undergraduate students pursuing careers in the health field. Previously, the ICC operated using a computer program unable to meet student and staff needs – resulting in dedication of large amounts of staff time and limitations on partnership potential and overall customer service.

The Heath-Related Internships online sign up system, a solution unique to UC Davis, has increased the center’s capacity to place students across varying health-related disciplines in a more organized and efficient manner. Using an online system similar to class scheduling, students are now able to browse internships online and register for an internship without going through a traditional application process. The system allows for a significant increase in professional experiences available to students, has streamlined daily staff operations, and increased overall efficacy. HRI has reduced at least 70 hours of dedicated staff time per quarter, saved more than 2000 sheets of paper per quarter, and established an easily accessible record of student internship participation throughout an academic career.

The additional staff time saved by the system allows continual development of unique, mutually beneficial partnerships throughout the local region. Currently partnered with 166 sites, approximately 600 students get internships every quarter in areas related to medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, nutrition, therapies, and optometry. The system is available year-round to students across multiple academic backgrounds and class standings. For example, a student could gain experience in an emergency department, a transplant clinic, and dentistry all in one academic year. The system tracks each student’s internship record; the record is available for the student, internship sites and the Internship and Career Center.
The user-friendly design of the online system clearly categorizes internships by interest area, organization, and days of the week offered. This allows students to choose internships in a manner similar to choosing a class. During lottery assigned pass-times, students select a pre-arranged internship time slot that fits their schedule (i.e. M-F 9am-1pm or T 8:30am- 12:30pm). In the image below, green circles intuitively indicate a position during said time and date is open and available to a student, while red indicates it is occupied by another student. Clicking a sign up button on a slot with a green circle will automatically enroll a student into an internship.

Once internship registration is complete, students may view requirements and action steps on the internship information page. Information about meetings, required paperwork, immunizations and/or placement specific instructions is readily accessible, reducing the need for staff to handle multiple inquiries related to these components of the program. The HRI system grants students online access to documents and internship information, significantly reducing paper cost and waste.


This combination of technologies was selected based on scalability, reliability, active development and support by the vendors, popularity and compatibility among the web application environment, and cost. The software technologies are open source, or in the case of MS SQL Server, provide a free edition. The MS SQL Server database is an upgrade to another database system, MS Access, used in past projects. The SQL Server is more robust, allowing for more concurrent users as our user base has significantly grown and is expected to grow further, giving more control of data and more features.

Several years were dedicated to development of the system, from concept to implementation. The system has been in use for the last year and has run successfully. Our team continues to meet weekly to improve the system’s functionality and ease of use. Some of the many features created and integrated into HRI within the last year include:

Attendance tracking
   Students are required to attend orientation meetings to prepare for upcoming internships. In the past, attendance was tracked via paper check-in systems which was complex, time-intensive and prone to error. HRI now has the functionality to connect with a student ID card reader, tracking attendance digitally with a simple swipe of a student ID card. Students that do not attend required meetings can be dropped from internship positions en-masse rather than individually and manually.

Priority registrations
   When students register for multiple quarter internships, they do so one quarter at a time. This is done to create flexibility for students as they register for courses throughout the academic year. Students in multiple quarter internships are automatically provided priority registration for an upcoming quarter to ensure access to their specific internship site.

Site specificity
   Each of the internship sites on HRI have unique instructions, contacts, requirements and notifications. With the click of a few buttons, staff can collate students into batches by site so students receive only the information needed for a specific internship site.

Cloning
   The system allows information from previous quarters to be duplicated for upcoming internship participation periods, so each new site and its relevant information no longer need to be entered in individually and manually. The cloning process additionally preserves all former data for sites and unique slot history for reference as needed.

HRI was created, piloted and refined at UC Davis’ Internship and Career Center and can be easily adopted to benefit other universities looking to increase the ease of internship
placements for students. In a job market where it is essential that students have relevant experience upon graduation in order to be competitive, HRI offers a very easy and accessible way for students to get hands-on experience in the health field. Students are able to explore various professional health settings to determine the best fit for skills sets and career goals. Many students have reported their HRI internship experiences shed light on true callings, as well as inabilities to withstand the sight of blood.

The Health-Related Internships online sign up system is the innovation solution to meet the needs of university students during a time of limited resources. We believe the experience students received and the staff time saved due to the implementation of the HRI system is invaluable.