

# Institute of Politics

## Academic Year Internship Program 2023-24

### About the Program

The Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago seeks to connect students with opportunities to engage meaningfully with politics and public service. During the academic year, the Institute coordinates and funds academic year internships for students to engage with the Chicagoland political ecosystem alongside their typical coursework on campus.

Through the program, we hope to provide University of Chicago students with meaningful experiences in public service and local organizations with top talent and help with their valuable work.

During the 2023-24 school year, we plan to send 65 interns to an array of Chicago-area organizations and agencies. Students will complete 160 hours of internship experience and will receive a stipend of \$2,550.

A formal training and onboarding period will commence in November and December, followed by internship work time from January 3rd to May 10th, 2024. Returning employer partners will notice the addition of this formal training and onboarding period, which was formalized due to student and employer feedback during the 2022-23 season. Participants flagged that, especially for our government internships, more time and structure should be given for a sometimes lengthy security clearance and/or background check process.

Students participating in the 2023-2024 Academic Year Internship Program have the opportunity to join various IOP intern-only events, including cohort community building for interns, employer intern reception, end-of-year celebration, and other career development opportunities.

### Guidelines for Employers and Students

#### In-Person Requirements

Interns in our Academic Year Internship program should plan to meet in person with their employer partners a minimum of six times during the course of their internship (including the first site visit during the onboarding process). In addition to the six-visit minimum, we encourage employer partners and students to work together in person whenever schedules allow. Our interns develop and build on existing professional communication skills through our internships.

#### Matching Process

Students are placed in our academic year internships through a matching process conducted by the IOP. We conduct the matching process as a service to students and employers: students

submit only one application, and employers do not have to engage in a lengthy review process. According to our 2022-2023 Academic Year Internship program evaluation survey, 81.3% of IOP interns and 91.1% of employers found the matching process helpful.

For our matching process, students will submit a general application, including a resume and cover letter (or other writing sample). On the application, students will express interest in specific roles and themes. Internship descriptions and requirements will be available on the IOP website. The student application will be posted in September and will close on Friday, October 13th.

During the internship advertising and matching period in October, the IOP Career Development team will host 15-minute, optional (but highly recommended) interview slots for students interested in our program.

During the matching period, the IOP will review all student applications and match students with employers based on student qualifications, skills, and interests, as well as employer needs and preferences. Employers will then have the opportunity to conduct confirmation interviews with matched students, flagging if students are not a good fit.

### **Working Hours**

Each intern is required to complete 160 hours for their internship before the end of the Spring Quarter Internship Window (Friday, May 10th, 2024, see [Timeline](#) section for more info).

The expected distribution of the required working hours is as follows:

- November through December 2023: 10-20 hours of training and onboarding
  - Primary focus on security clearance and background check processes
- January through March 2024: 65-75 hours of work in the winter quarter window
- March through May 2024: 65-75 hours of work in the spring quarter window

Please note that the distribution is flexible to accommodate breaks and holidays based on agreements between the interns and employer partners.

We ask that students share their class schedules with employer partners to assess time periods conducive for work. Students' first priority should always be school. As a second and important priority, students should reserve their business hour availability for their internships as they build their schedules with employers.

### **Projects**

The central aim of our internship program is to plug our interns into existing organizations and work within public service. We understand that a bulk of intern time will be used for run-of-the-mill daily work with each organization. When possible, we encourage employers to

work with interns to determine a small-scale “personal project” that the student can work on and take ownership of and add value to the organization.

### **Sample Projects from 2022-2023**

1. Intern Ryan Borgdorff (Disability Lead) redesigned presentations for Disability Lead’s board members to help with fundraising efforts.
2. Intern Michelle Chen (Illinois Justice Project) drafted a research memo on affordable housing policies as a culmination of the meetings and conversations she had with stakeholders.
3. Intern Candace Fehr worked with City Colleges of Chicago to clean a large data set and use it to create meaningful visualizations for decision-makers.
4. Intern Inanna Khansa (League of Women Voters) hosted forums for the Aldermanic candidates running in Chicago’s 12th and 26th Wards.
5. Sinduri Soundararajan (Metropolitan Water Reclamation District) drafted articles for publications like the *Hyde Park Herald*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Chicago Crusader* on behalf of Commissioner du Buclet’s office to promote the MWRD’s work on environmental justice, equity in the water industry, and local environmental protection efforts.

### **Resources**

The IOP Career Development staff will host weekly office hours that are reserved for interns and employer partners in our academic year internship program. These office hours will be an open space to ask for guidance on logistics, to check in on internship content, gain career advice, or to flag and advise on issues.

With few exceptions, IOP staff will encourage student interns and employers to discuss issues directly, but we will provide active guidance on how to have important conversations.

## **Timeline and Deadlines**

### **Preparation**

#### **Monday, July 31st - Friday, August 18th**

##### **Descriptions Due from Employer Partners (2 weeks)**

- Deadline for Returning Employer Description Form: **Friday, August 18th**
- Deadline for New Employer Description Form: **Friday, August 25th**

#### **Monday, August 21st - Friday, September 15th:**

##### **Internship Description Review and Posting (4 weeks)**

#### **Monday, September 18th - Friday, October 13th:**

### **Advertising (4 weeks)**

- Host info sessions, open interviews, and alumni panels
- Host workshops on resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills for the application preparation
- Deadline for Internship Application: **Friday, October 13th**

### Matching Students with Employers

#### **Monday, October 16th - Friday, October 27th:**

##### **Intern Review and Initial Matching (2 weeks)**

- Information on matches by IOP is to be sent to students and employers by **Friday, October 27th**, or earlier

#### **Monday, October 30th - Friday, November 3rd:**

##### **Employer Confirmation Interviews (1 week)**

- Employers must notify IOP of their matching confirmation or flag after the interview by the end of the day **Friday, November 3rd**

#### **Monday, November 6th - Friday, November 10th:**

##### **Announcement and Reshuffling Period**

- IOP will send an announcement email to all confirmed students (by this point) on or by **Tuesday, November 7th**.
- Students are then given time to confirm the final matches by the end of the day **Friday, November 10th**
- A separate mechanism will be applied if there is any mismatch between employer partners and students

### Onboarding and Training Window

#### **Monday, November 13th - Friday, December 15th:**

**Training Period (5 weeks, with time away for Thanksgiving holiday between Saturday, November 18th and Sunday, November 26th)**

### Internship Work Windows

#### **Monday, January 8th - Friday, March 1st:**

**Winter Quarter Internship Window (8 weeks)**

#### **Monday, March 4th - Friday, March 15th:**

**Winter Quarter Finals and Spring Break (2 weeks)**

#### **Monday, March 18th - Friday, May 10th:**

**Spring Quarter Internship Window (8 weeks)**