

# Usability Test Report

*NC State University Department of English  
Internship Program Website*

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**Completed By:** XXXX XXXX

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## Executive Summary

Commented [1]: Solid executive summary. Brief and focused. Somebody does this for a living.

### Purpose of Testing

This usability test explored how users accomplish common goals on the NC State Department of English Internship program website. By observing people using the site, collecting their feedback, and measuring their time on task, errors and task success, the test aimed to understand what's working, what's not and what needs to be improved in order for users to perform desired tasks effectively and efficiently.

### Test Procedure

I recruited five participants for this study, each of whom represents one of the site's three primary user subgroups: students, faculty and employers. Meeting separately with the users in their personal environments, I observed them attempt a predefined series of common tasks with the internship program's website. During observation, I measured each user's time on task, errors and task success/failure. Following observation, I conducted a short interview with the users. I asked them to rank how easy or difficult it was to complete the tasks and also issued several open-ended questions about the experience.

### Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This test revealed several problems, which are summarized below with recommended solutions.

Problem	Recommended Solution
<b>Signification:</b> Menu, page and link headings don't clearly represent information	Revise headings and labels so that they speak more clearly to the goals of the site's audiences.
<b>Layout:</b> Important information is hard to find, or buried, in long paragraphs.	Break up long stretches of text with subheadings and calls to action.
<b>Layout:</b> Requirements and other pertinent information is partially listed on multiple pages.	Combine all related information, pertinent to the same audience, on one page.
<b>Navigation:</b> Top- and secondary-level menus don't allow users to navigate to interior pages or important forms.	Expand the left-hand navigation menu with subheadings or subdirectories that give users a quick outline of where they can go.
<b>Navigation:</b> The site's primary navigation system is not apparent. Users switch evenly between the left directory and the bottom link list.	Remove the link list headings at the bottom of each page. When appropriate, incorporate those links and headings into the expanded subdirectory (see previous recommendation).

Table 1: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

## Introduction

The purpose of this usability study was to identify what works, what doesn't and what could be improved on the NC State Department of English Internship Program website. This site serves several different purposes for several different populations. It's an information hub and portal for:

- NC State students who are prospective or current interns in the program.
- NC State faculty advisors who submit recommendations for prospective student interns.
- Employers who request, hire and supervise interns in the program.

## Test Goals and Objectives

My test assessed core functions of the site with its core audiences: students, faculty and employers. It aims to understand how easily these groups can find information they need to know and also perform desired actions. More specifically, I hoped to answer the following questions during testing:

### Site Efficiency

- Can users find information about: program requirements and responsibilities; how to apply to the program; how to apply for scholarships; how to recommend a student; and how to make a gift to the program?
- Does information on the site answer all user questions?
- How long does it take users to complete core tasks: finding information, applying to the program, applying for scholarships, recommending students, making donations?

### Site Effectiveness

- Do users understand information about program requirements and responsibilities, how to apply, how to recommend students, how to make gifts to the program?
- Can users successfully complete core tasks?

### Site Engagement

- How do users rate their experience while finding information and completing core tasks?
- What was enjoyable and what was unpleasant? Why?

### Error Tolerance

- What problems do users encounter while finding program requirements, applying to the program or for a scholarship, recommending students or making a gift? How often do they occur?
- Can users recover from errors while accomplishing these tasks? What could help them recover?

### Site Learnability

- How do users find eligibility and application information on the site?

## Methodology

Commented [2]: I think this is good bug could be focused more specifically toward the site. So what does site efficiency look like here on the internship site?

## Participants and Recruitment

I recruited five participants for this study, each of whom represents one of the site's three primary user subgroups: students, faculty and employers. After developing skeletal personas for each of the subgroups (**Appendix A**), I emailed a screener (**Appendix B**) to a list of individuals who were likely to fit one of the following user profiles:

### Undergraduate Students

- Undergraduate student in NC State's College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS); the program accepts applicants from across the college.
- Has previously used an NC State website.
- Has not previously used the Department of English Internship Program website.
- Male or female.
- Fluent in English.
- Has an interest in internships, has interned before or is familiar with the internship process.

### Faculty

- Faculty member in NC State's College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS); the program accepts applicants from across the college.
- Has previously used an NC State website.
- Has not previously used the Department of English Internship Program website.
- Male or female.
- Fluent in English.
- Advises students, either informally or formally, about internship opportunities

### Employers

- Current or prospective employer in the Department of English's Internship Program.
- Has previously used an NC State website.
- Has not previously used the Department of English Internship Program website.
- Male or female.
- Fluent in English.

Nine people responded to the screener. From that group, I selected five participants for the study, based both on their user profile qualifications and their availability for testing. Basic data for each participant is outlined in **Table 2**. While two of the participants noted they had previously used the internship program website, I discovered through a follow-up inquiry that their experience with the site was either minimal or not recent.

Participant	Gender	Age	Role	Based in CHASS?	Used NC State website before?	Used internship program website before?
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P1	M	25-34	Staff (employer)	Yes	Yes	Yes
P2	F	18-24	Student	Yes	Yes	No
P3	F	35-44	Faculty	Yes	Yes	No
P4	F	55-64	Staff (employer)	Yes	Yes	No
P5	M	35-44	Faculty	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 2:** Screener data for selected study participants.

## Test Procedure

### Test Environment and Equipment

I conducted testing sessions in each user's personal environment. For faculty and staff, that meant their office at work. For the one student participant, I conducted the test at her home. By observing each participant in their natural settings, I hoped to gather more authentic feedback and make the experience more comfortable for participants.

I provided the following equipment for each test:

- Dell laptop computer with built-in microphone
- Logitech wireless mouse
- Screencast-O-Matic screencasting software

### Testing Session

I conducted separate testing sessions with each of the five users. I administered each test myself and was the sole observer. Each session took about 30 minutes to complete.

After meeting each participant in their personal office, working space or home, I conducted the test according to a pre-prepared checklist and script (**Appendix C**), which included:

- A verbal pre-test questionnaire (**Appendix D**), which aimed to collect more information about each user.
- An introduction with participants, a description of the equipment and test procedure, and a recording consent form (**Appendix E**)
- Task scenarios, which prompted users to perform tasks on the website.
- A verbal post-task questionnaire (**Appendix F**), which asked users to rate the difficulty of each task.
- A verbal post-test questionnaire (**Appendix G**).

During testing, I asked participants to sit at a table or desk and use the laptop and wireless mouse I provided. I sat down next to the participants and used a pre-prepared observation form (**Appendix H**) to measure and log their time on task, errors and task success/failure (see the **Metrics** section for definitions). To ensure I didn't miss critical user comments and activity, I also recorded their voice and on-screen actions using the laptop's built-in microphone and Screencast-O-Matic screencasting software.

## Tasks and Scenarios

Commented [3]: Failure conditions?

I presented several scenarios to participants, prompting them to perform a task using the internship program website. Tasks differed slightly for each user subgroup.

Task	User subgroup	Task Description	Success Criteria
1	Undergraduate Students, Faculty and Employers	<u>Find information about eligibility requirements</u>	"Eligibility Requirements" page > Reports on eligibility
2	Undergraduate Students	<u>Find information about intern responsibilities</u>	"Rights and Responsibilities" > Lists responsibilities
3	Undergraduate Students	<u>Find information about how to apply to the program</u>	"How to Apply" page > Lists application requirements
4	Undergraduate Students	<u>Find the application form</u>	Lands on the application form
5	Undergraduate Students	<u>Find information about scholarship eligibility</u>	Lands on "Requirements of Interns' Scholarship" page
6	Undergraduate Students	<u>Identify materials for Interns' Scholarship application</u>	Lands on "How to Apply to the Interns' Scholarship" page > Lists requirements
7	Faculty	<u>Find the recommendation form</u>	Lands on recommendation form
8	Faculty	<u>Contact the internship program coordinator</u>	Finds the coordinator's email and starts an email.



9	Employers	<i><u>Find out what's required of employers</u></i>	Finds employer responsibilities on the "Rights and Responsibilities" page
10	Employers	<i><u>Request an Intern</u></i>	Finds instructions for how to contact coordinator
11	Faculty and Employers	<i><u>Research how to make a gift to the internship program</u></i>	Lands on Interns' Scholarship Donations page
12	Faculty and Employers	<i><u>Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund</u></i>	Lands on secure online gift form

**Table 3:** Tasks, NC State Department of English Internship Program website usability study.

## Metrics

### Quantitative

During task observation, I recorded:

- **Time on Task:** The minutes/seconds that it takes a user to complete a task.
- **Errors:** The non-critical and critical errors that users make while performing tasks.
- **Task success/failure:**
  - Success: Users completed the task, as defined in the predetermined task narrative. Completion was marked by the user acknowledging completion ("I'm done") or by the ceasing of inputs.
  - Failure: Users did not complete the task, as defined in the predetermined task narrative, or abandoned the task.

I also compiled and analyzed the self-reported user experience ratings from my post-task and post-test questionnaires.

### Qualitative

My metrics also include qualitative test observations, including participant comments and actions — both during testing and post-task and post-test questionnaires.

## Results

**Commented [4]:** I need you to be a bit more specific here in terms of failure conditions. What counts as failure in each for each task. How long should it take? What level of frustration is an acceptable level?

In the section that follows, I've aggregated results from the five testing sessions with participants. The results are segmented by the three user subgroups I focused on in this study: students, faculty and employers (see **Appendix L** for completed observation forms).

### Student Tasks

In this test, Participant 2 solely represented the student user subgroup. This participant successfully completed four out of five tasks without error and rated each task as "very easy." Participant 2 failed the second task, which prompted users to report on intern responsibilities. After navigating to the "Eligibility Requirements" page, Participant 2 listed the responsibilities she found on that page; however, she did not continue on to the "Rights and Responsibilities" page, where additional responsibilities are listed. This resulted in task failure.

#### Task 1: Find information about eligibility requirements

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating (1- very easy to 5- very hard)
P2	1:11.26	0	X		1

#### Task 2: Find information about intern responsibilities

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P2	00:23.73	0		X	1

#### Task 3: Find information about how to apply to the program

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P2	00:16.49	0	X		1

#### Task 4: Find the application form

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P2	1:15.24	0	X		1

#### Task 5: Find information about scholarship eligibility

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P2	00:21.19	0	X		1

#### Task 6: Identify materials for scholarship application form

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
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P2	00:17.03	0	X		1
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**Table 4:** Results from task observation (student tasks only).

#### Faculty Tasks

Participants 3 and 5 represented the faculty user subgroup. Both participants made multiple errors while finding information about eligibility requirements; they clicked on incorrect links and menu headings. While Participant 5 eventually found the "Eligibility Requirements" page, Participant 3 did not and abandoned the task, resulting in task failure and a post-task difficulty rating of 4 (somewhat difficult).

Commented [5]: Very well organized.

#### Task 1: Find information about eligibility requirements

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating (1-very easy to 5- very hard)
P3	3:02.00	3		X	4
P5	2:25.00	3	X		1

#### Task 7: Find the recommendation form<sup>1</sup>

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P3	2:37.00	0	X		2
P5					

#### Task 8: Contact the internship program coordinator

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P3	00:37.00	0	X		1
P5	00:15.00	0	X		1

#### Task 11: Research how to make a gift to the internship program

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P3	1:50.00	0	X		3
P5	00:59.00	0	X		1

#### Task 12: Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund

<sup>1</sup> I excluded Task 7 from Participant 5's testing session after he found the recommendation during a previous task.

Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P3	1:00.00	1	X		3
P5	00:37.00	0	X		1

**Table 5:** Results from task observation (faculty tasks only).

#### Employer Tasks

Participants 1 and 4 represented the employer user subgroup. Participant 1 abandoned Task 10 (resulting in task failure) after spending close to 3 minutes searching for information on how to request an intern. He also failed to research giving options after clicking on the “Give Now” button, landing on the giving form and not proceeding any further.

Task 1: Find information about eligibility requirements					
Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating (1-very easy to 5- very hard)
P1	00:56.71	0	X		2
P4	00:22.00	0	X		1
Task 9: Find out what’s required of employers					
Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P1	1:06.44	0	X		2
P4	1:22.00	0	X		2
Task 10: Request an Intern					
Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P1	2:40.02	3		X	5
P4	00:12.00	0	X		1
Task 11: Research how to make a gift to the internship program					
Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P1	00:45.09	0		X	1
P4	00:59.00	0	X		1

Task 12: Make a “contributor” gift to the scholarship fund					
Participant	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Post-Task Difficulty Rating
P1	2:25.97	1	X		3
P4	00:38.00	0	X		1

**Table 6:** Results from task observation (employer tasks only).

## Findings

In analyzing the test results, I identified several usability issues that extend throughout the internship program’s website. These global problems (outlined in **Table 4**) all affected multiple users and fall into three broad categories of use:

- **Signification:** How well the site conveys meaning to users.
- **Navigation:** How well users can move around the site.
- **Layout:** How page elements are arranged to accommodate users.

In addition to assigning categories, I also prioritized these issues using a three-dimensional severity rating scale (**Appendix I**) that considered frequency of occurrence, impact on user experience and impact on the program’s goals. In the sections that follow, I’ll provide a closer examination of the five usability issues I’ve outlined.

Problem Category	Problem Description	No. of Participants Affected	Severity Rating
Signification	Menu, page and link headings don’t clearly represent information.	4	High (5)
Layout	Important information is hard to find, or buried, in long paragraphs.	3	High (5)
Layout	Requirements and other pertinent information is partially listed on multiple pages.	2	Medium (3)
Navigation	Top- and secondary-level menus don’t allow users to navigate to interior pages or important forms.	2	Low (2)
Navigation	The site’s primary navigation system is not apparent. Users switch evenly between the left directory and the bottom link list.	2	Low (1)

**Table 7:** Usability problems, NC State Department of English Internship Program website.

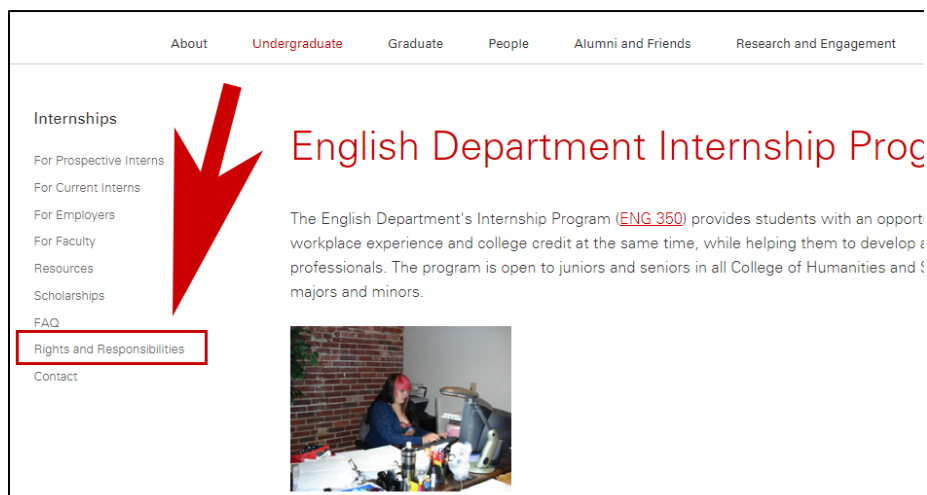
## Signification Problem: Menu, Page and Link Headings Aren't Clear

Participants struggled to make sense out of ambiguous menu, page and link headings found throughout the site. They were confused on the front-end — before clicking to or viewing a page — and also after performing actions. I've noted several examples below.

### 'Rights and Responsibilities' Menu, Page and Link Headings

While the “Rights and Responsibilities” page includes important information for multiple sub-user groups, participants either overlooked the menu headings (see **Image 1**) or were hesitant to click to the page. They appeared to be unsure of who the section was for — and whose “rights and responsibilities” were going to be presented. The title didn't seem to speak to a specific audience.

Participant 1's question during task observation speaks to this issue: “I see ‘Rights and Responsibilities’ for participants. Is an employer a participant?”



**Image 1:** In this screenshot from the internship program website, the “Rights and Responsibilities” menu heading doesn't clearly speak to one of the site's user subgroups.

### 'Scholarships' Heading Versus the 'Give Now' Button

When I asked four out of the five participants to research their giving options on the site, they took drastically different paths (see **Table 5**). One likely reason is the ambiguity of both the

“Scholarships” heading and the “Give Now” button. While the “Scholarships” menu heading does lead to information about the internship program scholarship, it also serves as a path to resources on how to make a gift. Yet because the heading only addresses one of these purposes — scholarships — participants didn’t intuitively recognize the section as a place for giving information.

Instead, participants typically saw or clicked on the “Give Now” button, which had its own subtle ambiguity. While the “Give Now” message certainly sends a clearer message, one participant wasn’t sure whether the button would lead to giving options for the internship program, the entire Department of English or the College of Humanities and Social Sciences as a whole. Lastly, the “Give Now” button only leads to a giving portal, not information about giving options. This caused confusion and a failed task for Participant 1, who thought he had adequately researched giving options after landing at the portal and not proceeding further.

Task: Research how to make a gift to the internship program				
P	Task Path/Journey	Time on Task	Success	Failure
P1	1. Sees “Give Now” button “floating above everything.” 2. Clicks on it. At first doesn’t notice intern scholarship, but then sees it. 3. Acknowledges completion and doesn’t research options further.	00:45.09		X
P3	1. Sees “Give Now” button. “What I don’t know is if this gives to the English department or the internship program.” 2. Didn’t click on “Give Now.” 3. She had noticed information about donating on one of the previous pages. Went to “For Faculty” and found “Interns’ Scholarship.” Saw “give a gift” link but hesitated to click because she wasn’t sure where it was going to go. 4. Ultimately clicked link.	1:50.00	X	
P4	1. Sees the “Give Now” button and also sees “Scholarships.” “I have a hunch as to where the ‘Give Now’ button would take me.” 2. Hits back button to see if the same information is under “Scholarships.” 3. Clicks on “Scholarships” > Interns’ Scholarship Donations page	1:05.00	X	
P5	1. Looking at left menu and doesn’t see link to donation. 2. Instead, searches within the college website for “donations to internship program” (using the embedded search function). 3. Saw second result for “English Department Interns’ Scholarship...”	00:59.00	X	

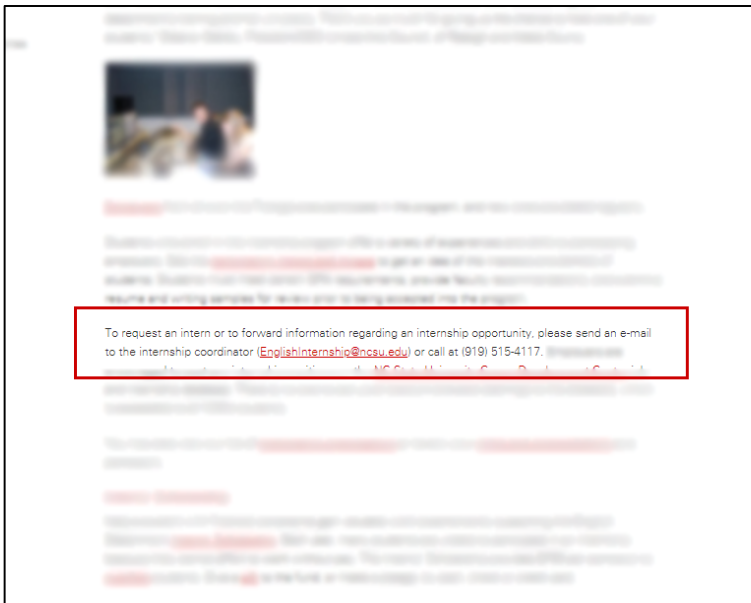
	4. Clicked on that and saw the scholarships program.			
	5. Performs "Alt+f" search for "donations."			
	6. Found the information at the bottom of the screen.			

**Table 8:** Task Path/Journey for, "Research how to make a gift to the internship program."

## Layout Problem: Important Information Buried Long Paragraphs

Participants had trouble quickly finding pertinent information embedded in long paragraphs of text. They often knew what they were looking for, and correctly assumed it was on the page; however, they struggled to locate important resources and links. While some of the site's pages include helpful page elements such as subheadings, many others don't. And clickable buttons and other "calls to action" are few and far between, which made it difficult for participants to achieve their goals quickly.

This problem likely led Participant 1 failing the task, "Request an Intern." The site's only explicit instructions on how to request an intern are located in one sentence in the middle of the "For Employers" page (see **Image 2**). Participant 1 never found that one sentence after nearly three minutes of searching and abandoned the task.



**Image 2:** Important information, such as instructions for requesting an intern, is sometimes buried in long paragraphs of text.



Comments from participants in **Table 6** also underscore the difficulty of distilling important information from the on-page copy.

Layout Issues Contributing to Findability	
Participant	Comment
P1	"It should be called out somewhere more prominently."  "I didn't come across it on my own. I think most people skim text. A call-to-action or spotlight would have been a lot better."
P4	"If I'm looking for, 'This is not going to add to my workload, I'd like to see really quickly what are my responsibilities as an employer.'"
P5	"One thing that I would find helpful: if this information was not embedded in paragraphs."  "What I'm assuming is that faculty members have a lot going on and what they're looking for is, 'Look, I know I have to submit a recommendation — what do I need to do?' And so if I can get that information without having to commit to reading many paragraphs, that would help me."

**Table 9:** Participant comments about layout issues contributing to findability.

## Layout Problem: Requirements and Other Pertinent Information Partially Listed

Throughout the site, information pertinent to specific audiences is partially listed on multiple pages. For example, while the "Eligibility Requirements" page lists eligibility and course requirements for students, it does not include the full list of student responsibilities. That information is located elsewhere, on the "Rights and Responsibilities" page. This disparity led Participant 2 to assume she had all the necessary information about student responsibilities, even though she never visited the "Rights and Responsibilities" page (resulting in task failure).

When attempting to research a student's eligibility, Participant 3 quickly realized it might be difficult to collect all the information she needed: "I'm guessing I'll have to look at multiple of these to get everything I would want." In the end, Participant 3 never visited the "Eligibility Requirements" page, resulting in task failure.

Information about scholarships and donors/giving is also partially listed on multiple pages. The lack of a "go-to" place for all information related to a subject negatively impacts the learnability and efficiency of the site.

**Commented [6]:** This is good evidence but mixing P3's experience in with other people's experience will make it less likely that designers will ignore it or think it is just one user's "problem."

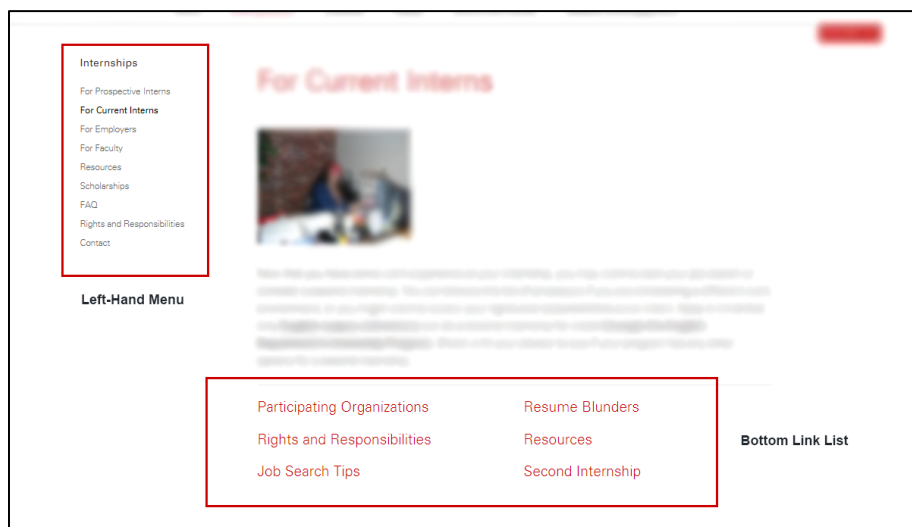
## Navigation Problem: Top- and Secondary-Level Menus Don't Allow for Interior Navigation

When offering feedback, multiple participants sought an expanded navigation menu that offered additional pathways to interior pages. For example, when trying to locate the faculty recommendation form, Participant 5 desired a menu option or similar call-to-action that pointed directly to the form: "It would have been easier if I had seen on the landing page something that said, 'Recommendation Materials for Faculty Members.'" He echoed that statement after looking for information on how to donate: "There wasn't an 'idiot's button' to click on that left menu."

Participant 4 also desired heavier "top-level menus": "I think the drop-down menus are really nice. Then, it tells me what kind of stuff prospective interns want to know, what kinds of stuff faculty want to know. It lets me know what kinds of things I would expect to find."

## Navigation Problem: Primary Navigation System is Not Apparent

Similar to the last issue, participants had trouble establishing a primary navigation system during their experience. They equally used the left-hand menu and the bottom link list to find their way around the site (see Image 3). While multiple pathways could benefit a user's experience, menus that compete against one another can also make it more difficult for a user to develop consistent habits and could negatively impact memorability.

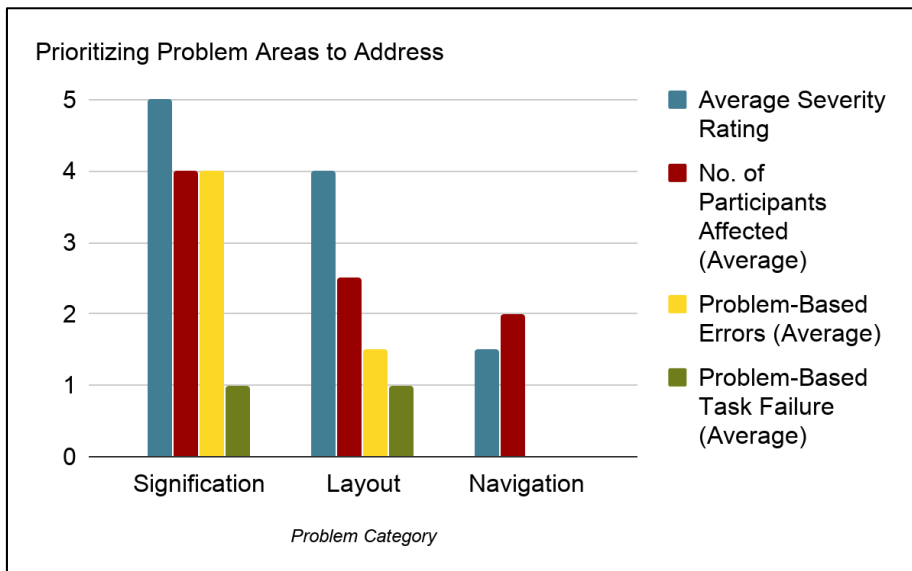


**Image 3:** The left-hand menu and bottom link list.

## Recommendations

Addressing each of these problems will improve the site's usability for its primary users: students, faculty and employers. However, the significance and layout should take priority, as they scored a higher severity rating, affected more users and caused the most task errors and failures (see **Chart 1**). As noted earlier, my severity rating scale considered the predicted frequency of occurrence, impact on user experience and impact on the program's goals for each issue.

While lower in priority, the navigation issues should still be explored further and corrected, as time and resources allow.



**Chart 1:** Prioritizing Problem Areas to Address.

The following list of specific recommendations provide some ideas for improving the internship program's website. However, if possible, additional testing and evaluation can help further examine the extent of these problems — and identify others not listed.

### High Priority

Commented [7]: Excellent, XXXX.

Problem	Recommended Solution
<b>Signification:</b> Menu, page and link headings don't clearly represent information	Revise headings and labels so that they speak more clearly to the goals of the site's audiences. Lengthen headings, when possible, to provide more context and a clearer message. Add new labels, if needed, to speak to a sub-ground that's currently unaddressed, or remove others that aren't needed. For example, adding an menu item that appeals directly to donors, such as "Give to the Program" or "Make a Gift," could facilitate their experience on the site (see <b>Appendix J</b> ).
<b>Layout:</b> Important information is hard to find, or buried, in long paragraphs.	Break up long stretches of text with subheadings and calls to action. These on-page elements help users skim websites quickly to find information. Calls to action can also help your users accomplish goals quickly. For example, adding a button or call-out box to the "For Employers" page could make it easier for employers to request interns (see <b>Appendix K</b> ).

**Table 10:** High-priority recommendations.

## Medium Priority

Problem	Recommended Solution
<b>Layout:</b> Requirements and other pertinent information is partially listed on multiple pages.	Combine all related information, pertinent to the same audience, on one page. For example, prospective student application information, eligibility requirements and responsibilities can all be moved to the "For Prospective Students" page. There's no reason to separate that information in fragments on different pages. Additionally, by making this change, you could eliminate the "Rights and Responsibilities" page altogether and move that information to the other audience-specific pages: "For Prospective Students," "For Employers," etc.

**Table 11:** Medium-priority recommendations.

## Low Priority

Problem	Recommended Solution
<p><b>Navigation:</b> Top- and secondary-level menus don't allow users to navigate to interior pages or important forms.</p>	<p>Expand the left-hand navigation menu with subheadings or subdirectories that give users a quick and more comprehensive outline of where they can go. For example, potential subdirectories could look like the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Prospective Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Eligibility and Responsibilities</li> <li>◦ Application Form</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For Faculty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Faculty Recommendation Form</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Navigation:</b> The site's primary navigation system is not apparent. Users switch evenly between the left directory and the bottom link list.</p>	<p>Remove the link list headings at the bottom of each page. When appropriate, incorporate those links and headings into the expanded subdirectory (see previous recommendation).</p>

**Table 12:** Low-priority recommendations.

## Appendix A: Skeletal Personas

### Student

"As an **undergraduate student at NC State**, I want to **work an internship**, by **applying to the Department of English's Internship Program**, in order to **prepare myself for a career after graduation**."

### Faculty

"As a **faculty member at NC State**, I want to **recommend my advisee for the internship program**, by **going to the program's website**, in order to **make sure my advisee gets into the program**."

### Employer

"As a **staff member at NC State**, I want to **hire an intern**, by **going to the Department of English's Internship Program website**, in order to **get some help around the office**."

## Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Screener (Transcribed from Google Form)

Hello,

My name is XXXX XXXX, and I'm a graduate student in NC State's M.S. in Technical Communication program. I'm working on a project to improve a university website, and I'm looking for NC State students, faculty and staff who can try out the site and provide feedback.

Please complete this short questionnaire if you're interested in participating in this study. If you qualify, I'll ask you to participate in a single 45-minute testing session on campus.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me via email: wnXXXX@ncsu.edu.

First Name:

Last Name:

Gender:

What is your age?

- ☒ Under 18
- ☒ 18-24
- ☒ 25-34
- ☒ 35-44
- ☒ 45-54
- ☒ 55-64
- ☒ 65-74
- ☒ 75+

Are you fluent in English?

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

What is your role on campus?

- ☒ Faculty
- ☒ Staff
- ☒ Undergraduate Student
- ☒ Graduate Student

Are you a student, faculty member or staff member in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

- ☒ Yes

☒ No

Have you used an NC State University website before?

☒ Yes

☒ No

Have you previously used the Department of English's Internship Program website?

☒ Yes

☒ No

#### **For Students**

Have you previously interned during your time at NC State?

☒ Yes

☒ No

Are you interested in pursuing an internship?

☒ Yes

☒ No

#### **For Faculty**

In your role, do you advise students about internships, study abroad or other experiential education opportunities?

☒ Yes

☒ No



## Appendix C: Moderator Checklist and Script

### Before Participant Arrives

- ✓ Arrive at testing location (unlock testing room, if applicable).
- ✓ Bring a bottle of water for the participant.
- ✓ Connect laptop to power source and clear desktop and open incognito window.
- ✓ Set up Screencast-O-Matic software.

### Pre-Test Activities

- ✓ Introduce myself and thank the participant for coming and participating in the test.
- ✓ Escort the participant into the testing room and offer them a bottle of water.
- ✓ Ask the participant to sit at the table, in front of the laptop. Sit down next to the participant.
- ✓ Explain the purpose of the test: **“Today, we’ll be conducting a usability test. A usability test helps assess what works and what doesn’t with a product or technology. The technology we’ll be testing is the website for the Department of English’s internship program. While I’m a student in the English department, I want to emphasize that I don’t work for the English department. So I won’t be offended by any feedback or suggestions you offer; I’m open to any and all feedback. Also, I want to stress that this test is not an assessment of your ability; it’s an assessment of the website. I’m only interested in how the product and your experience can be improved.”**
- ✓ Point out the microphone and describe the Screencast-O-Matic screencasting software.
- ✓ Have participant sign recording consent form: **“I plan to record your speech and on-screen actions so I can review them if necessary after testing. I may also use screenshots from the test in my report. If that sounds alright, can you sign this recording consent form?”**

### Instructions

- ✓ Explain testing process and scenarios: **“OK, here’s how the testing process will work. In a minute, I’ll present you with several scenarios that prompt you to complete a task on the website. I’ll sit here and take notes while you complete the tasks.”**
- ✓ Explain “think-aloud” protocol: **“As you work through each task, I’ll ask you to “think out loud,” or describe out loud everything you’re thinking about or doing. Just as an example, if someone asked me to “think out loud” while trying to open email on my phone, I may say something like, “I have to pull my phone out of my pocket...I hate how I have to enter my password to get into my phone, etc. You can say whatever you want, good or bad, even things like, “I don’t understand this task...this website is hard to navigate...I love the website’s navigation.”**

✓ Explain the post-task and post-test questionnaires: **“After each task, I’ll ask you a couple of follow-up questions. After testing is over, I’ll ask you to fill out one more questionnaire, in which you’ll rate and respond to your overall experience.”**

✓ Questions: **“I know that was a lot of information. Do you have any questions before we begin?”**

### **During Testing**

✓ Turn on microphone and start Screencast-O-Matic recording.

✓ Retrieve observation form and prepare to start logging.

✓ Start FIRST TASK SCENARIO: **“OK, let’s get started with the first scenario. [INSERT FIRST TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for first task.

✓ Start the SECOND TASK SCENARIO: **“[INSERT SECOND TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for second task.

✓ Start the THIRD TASK SCENARIO: **“[INSERT THIRD TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for third task.

✓ Start the FOURTH TASK SCENARIO: **“[INSERT FOURTH TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for fourth task.

✓ Start the FIFTH TASK SCENARIO: **“[INSERT FIFTH TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for fifth task.

✓ Start the SIXTH TASK SCENARIO: **“[INSERT SIXTH TASK SCENARIO FOR THIS AUDIENCE].”**

✓ Do post-task questionnaire (verbal) for sixth task.

✓ Reassure and remind participants to “think out loud” before and after each task scenario.

### **Post-Test**

✓ Have participant fill out post-test questionnaire and ask follow-up questions: **“Thanks for going through those scenarios. That was great. Now, I have one more questionnaire for you. On this one, I’d like you to rank the ease or difficulty of each task and answer a couple of other questions.”**

✓ Thank participant again, and let them know testing is complete.

✓ Pack up materials and leave.

## Appendix D: Pre-Test Questionnaire

### For Students

1. As a student at NC State, are you required to have an internship as part of your curriculum?  
  
Yes ✓      No ✓
2. Why are you interested in pursuing an internship?
3. What questions do you have about the internship process?
4. What is your preferred way to search for, find and consume information about NC State academic requirements, announcements, etc.?  
  
Desktop ✓      Mobile Phone ✓      Tablet ✓

### For Faculty

1. As a faculty member at NC State, do you advise students as part of your formal job responsibilities?  
  
Yes ✓      No ✓
2. What is your preferred way to search for, find and consume information about NC State academic requirements, announcements, etc.?  
  
Desktop ✓      Mobile Phone ✓      Tablet ✓

### For Employers

1. As a staff member on NC State's campus, have you employed undergraduate students as interns?  
  
Yes ✓      No ✓

2. If you have employed interns in the past, what are some of the responsibilities they've had?

3. What is your preferred way to search for, find and consume information about NC State academic requirements, announcements, etc.?

Desktop ✓    Mobile Phone ✓    Tablet ✓

## Appendix E: Recording Consent Form

I agree to participate in the Department of English Internship Program website study conducted and recorded by XXXX XXXX/NC State University.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the recording by XXXX XXXX/NC State University. I understand that the information and recording is for research purposes only and that my name and image will not be used for any other purpose. I relinquish any rights to the recording and understand the recording may be copied and used by XXXX XXXX/NC State University without further permission.

I understand that participation in this usability study is voluntary, and I agree to immediately raise any concerns or areas of discomfort during the session with the study administrator.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and you understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the session have been answered.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign your name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Post-Task Questionnaire (verbal)

1. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 1].

- ✓ 1-very easy
- ✓ 2-somewhat easy
- ✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult
- ✓ 4-somewhat difficult
- ✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:

2. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 2].

- ✓ 1-very easy
- ✓ 2-somewhat easy
- ✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult
- ✓ 4-somewhat difficult
- ✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:

3. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 3].

- ✓ 1-very easy
- ✓ 2-somewhat easy
- ✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult
- ✓ 4-somewhat difficult
- ✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:

4. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 4].

- ✓ 1-very easy
- ✓ 2-somewhat easy
- ✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult
- ✓ 4-somewhat difficult

✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:

5. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 5].

✓ 1-very easy

✓ 2-somewhat easy

✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult

✓ 4-somewhat difficult

✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:

6. Please rate how easy or difficult it was to [TASK 6].

✓ 1-very easy

✓ 2-somewhat easy

✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult

✓ 4-somewhat difficult

✓ 5-very difficult

Explain your rating:



## Appendix G: Post-Test Questionnaire (verbal)

1. Overall please rate how easy or difficult it was to use this program's website.

- ✓ 1-very easy
- ✓ 2-somewhat easy
- ✓ 3-neither easy nor difficult
- ✓ 4-somewhat difficult
- ✓ 5-very difficult

*Explain your rating:*

2. What did you like about the site? What was helpful?

3. What didn't you like about the site? What wasn't helpful?

## Appendix H: Observation Form

Participant Name:			Date/Time of Session:			
Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes/Comments
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

## Appendix I: Severity Rating Scale

### Severity Rating System of Problems

Impact on User Experience (0 = low; 1 = medium; 2 = high)

Predicted Frequency of Occurrence (0 = low; 1 = medium; 2 = high)

Impact on Program Goals (0 = low; 1 = medium; 2 = high)

Category	Problem	Predicted Frequency of Occurrence	Impact on User Experience	Impact on Program Goals	Severity Rating
Signification	Menu, section and page headings don't clearly signify or represent the information presented	2	2	1	5
Layout	Important information is buried in paragraphs and hard to find	1	2	2	5
Layout	Requirements and other pertinent information is partially listed on multiple pages	0	1	2	3
Navigation	Top- and secondary-level menus don't allow users to navigate to interior pages or important forms	0	1	1	2
Navigation	Primary navigation system isn't clear; users switch evenly between the left directory and the bottom link list evenly	1	0	0	1

### Priority Level Chart

High = Rating of 5-6

Medium = Rating of 3-4

Low = Rating of 0-2

## Appendix J: Recommended Solution ("Make a Gift")

ROCK STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Department of English

AboutUndergraduateGraduatePeopleAlumni and Friends

Internships

For Prospective Interns

For Current Interns

For Employers

For Faculty

Resources

Scholarships

FAQ

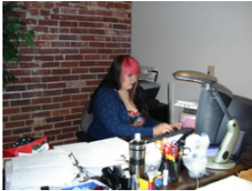
Rights and Responsibilities

Contact

Make a Gift

English Department Internship Program

The English Department's Internship Program ([ENG 350](#)) provides students with valuable workplace experience and college credit at the same time. The program is open to juniors and seniors in English majors and minors.



ENG 350 consists of a workplace practicum of 120 hours. For students who complete the course, the course will count as a free elective. Your credit will count toward your major. The course will count toward

## Appendix K: Recommended Solution (“Request an Intern” button)

AboutUndergraduateGraduatePeopleAlumni and Friends

Internships

For Prospective Interns

For Current Interns

For Employers

For Faculty

Resources

Scholarships


FAQ

Rights and Responsibilities

Contact

## For Employers

"We have appreciated having an NCSU English Department in Council. She has picked up the slack we have here in attempt publicity person—writing numerous press releases and creatir been well executed. We have found her to be well-trained anc department's training and her university. Thank you so much f students." Eleanor Oakley, President/CEO United Arts Council



Employers from all over the Triangle area participate in the prc

Students who enroll in the internship program offer a variety c employers. See the participating majors and minors to get an i students. Students must meet certain GPA requirements, pro resume and writing samples for review prior to being accepte

To request an intern or to forward information regarding an int to the internship coordinator ([EnglishInternship@ncsu.edu](mailto:EnglishInternship@ncsu.edu)) or encouraged to post any internship positions on the [NC State L](#) and internship database. There is no cost to set up an account is accessible to all NCSU students.

You may also view our list of participating organizations or rev participant.

REQUEST AN INTERN

## Appendix L: Completed Observation Forms

### Participant 1

Participant Name: Participant 1			Date/Time of Session: Oct. 24, 2018			
Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes
1	<b>Find out what's required of interns</b> Success: Finds intern requirements.	00:56.71		X		"Seems like something that might be on the front page." Reads through info. Finds that it's 120 hours required.  Clicks on "Eligibility Requirements."
2	<b>Find out what's required of employers</b> Success: Finds employer responsibilities on the "Rights and Responsibilities" page	01:06.44		X		Saw section, "For Employers." Clicked on it. Read through information and, "I see information about employers, but not necessarily information an employer would need to know."  I see "Rights and Responsibilities" for participants. Is an employer a participant?
3	<b>Request an Intern</b> Success: Finds the coordinator's contact information.	02:40.02	1 (click on "Resources") 2 (FAQ) 3 (Participating Organizations) 4 (eligibility requirements) 5 (how to apply)		X	"You would think that's a resource for employers, but I didn't see that before." Go to "Resources" section. "This seems to be resources for students."  Clicked on FAQ. Don't see it on FAQ section. Clicked on "Contact" and sees info, [but not info about how to request an intern.] For Employers > Participating Organizations. "So far, we're lost." "So can you actually apply and notify somebody? It looks like you can send an email to Douglas Walls and tell him you have an internship available."  (Gave up). "It should be called out somewhere more prominent."
4	<b>Research how to make a gift to the internship program</b> Success: Navigates to Interns' Scholarship Donations page (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations)	00:45.09			X	Sees "Give Now" button "floating above everything." Clicks on it. At first, doesn't notice intern scholarship, but then sees it. (acknowledges completion and doesn't research options any further)
5	<b>Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund</b> Navigates to "secure online gift" form (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations > Secure online gift)	02:25.97	1 (goes to Give Now)	X		Goes to "Give Now" button again and searches for giving levels. Can't find any of that info. Goes back to intern home page > Employers > Sees link for Interns' Scholarship page and clicks on it. Finally clicks on Interns' Scholarship Donations contribution levels.

### Participant 2

Participant Name: Participant 2			Date/Time of Session: Oct. 21, 2018			
Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes
1	<b>Find information about eligibility requirements</b>  Success: "Eligibility Requirements" page > Reports on eligibility	1:11.26		X		Prospective Interns tab > Read through page and considered clicking on "How to Apply" link but chose "English Internship Requirements" instead > Read info and concluded, eligible
2	<b>Find information about responsibilities</b>  Success: "Rights and Responsibilities" page > Reports on responsibilities	00:23.73			X	Participant read course requirements on "English Internship Requirements" page and acknowledged completion of the task.  *Didn't proceed further to "Rights and Responsibilities" page, where more responsibilities are listed.
3	<b>Find information about how to apply for the program</b>  Success: "How to Apply" page > Verbally reports on requirements	00:16.49		X		Clicked on "How to Apply" link at the bottom of the page. Verbally read out requirements for applying.
4	<b>Find the application form</b>  Success: "How to Apply" page > Application Form link	1:15.24		X		Found "Application Form" link and read through form fields.
5	<b>Find information about scholarships</b>  Success: Lands on "Requirements of Interns' Scholarship" page	00:21.19		X		Clicked on "Scholarships" tab on the left-hand navigation.
6	<b>Identify materials needed to submit scholarship application</b>  Success: "How to Apply to the Interns' Scholarship" page > Verbally reports on scholarship application materials	00:17.03		X		Clicked on "How to Apply" link on the "The English Department Interns' Scholarship" page.

Participant 3

Participant Name: Participant 3			Date/Time of Session: Oct. 24, 2018			
Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes
1	<b>Finding the recommendation form</b>  Success: "For Faculty" page > Recommendation Form	2:37.00		X		<p>"The first thing I'm looking for is a link where I can find out how to do this." (But she'd also put the burden on a student to do that)</p> <p>"I'm not seeing anything obvious here on the left, but do see 'For Faculty' and 'How to Apply.' But I'll probably start up here 'For Faculty.'"</p> <p>Sees the Recommendation Form. Before looking, looks around to see criteria. Not seeing anything here.</p>
2	<b>Research a student's eligibility</b>  Success: Finds eligibility requirements (Prospective Interns > English Internship Requirements)	3:02.00	1 (How to Apply) 2 (Rights and Responsibilities) 3 (How to Apply)		X	<p>Seeing "Internship Requirements" and "How to Apply" (criteria to get in). Also sees "Rights and Responsibilities." I'm guessing I'll have to look at multiple of these to get everything I would want. Went to "rights and Responsibilities" next. Went to "How to Apply" again.</p> <p>"If I'm a student or a faculty member, I can see that writing is important. It's pretty ambiguous. That may be necessary for a program like this that's open to all students in the college. It's nice to give letter writers an idea of what's required. I can guess, but that information would be helpful."</p>
3	<b>Contact the internship program coordinator</b>  Success: Finds the coordinator's email and starts and email	00:37.00		X		<p>Looked at the footer first, to see if the contact info was there. Didn't see that. Went back up to main directory and found "Contact" menu item.</p>
4	<b>Research how to make a gift to the internship program</b>  Success: Navigates to Interns' Scholarship Donations page (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations)	1:50.00		X		<p>Sees "Give Now" link. What I don't know is if this gives to the English department or the internship program.</p> <p>Had noticed information about donating on one of the previous pages. Went to "For Faculty" and found "Interns' Scholarship." Saw "give a gift" link but hesitated to click because she wasn't sure where it was going to go.</p>
5	<b>Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund</b>  Navigates to "secure online gift" form (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations > Secure online gift)	1:00.00	1 (FAQ page)	X		<p>FAQ page first. Scholarships page &gt; Interns' Scholarship Donations.</p>

Participant 4

Participant Name: Participant 4	Date/Time of Session: Oct. 23, 2018
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Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes
1	<b>Find out what's required of interns</b>  Success: Finds intern requirements on either the "Eligibility Requirements" page or the "Rights and Responsibilities" page	00:22.00		X		Scrolls to the bottom of the page and clicks on "English Internship Requirements" link.  "A lot of times when I land on a page I'm not familiar with, I like to scroll down the page anyway." It was kind of far down on the page but because I was going to do that anyway, that's how I saw it."
2	<b>Find out what's required of employers</b>  Success: Finds employer responsibilities on the "Rights and Responsibilities" page	1:22.00		X		Saw "For Employers" link, but also looked at the bottom of the page in the link list.  Clicked on "For Employers." "I'm seeing a page that's not very well laid out. And I wouldn't start it with a pull-quote. If I'm looking for, "This is not going to add to my workload, I'd like to see really quickly what are my responsibilities as an employer."  Read through info and found "rights and responsibilities" link at the bottom of the page.
3	<b>Request an Intern</b>  Success: Finds the coordinator's contact information.	00:12.00		X		Used the "Contact" menu item. (After the fact, Lauren looked at "For Employers" to see if there was a form or something). "How to Apply" link list item could also be confusing.
4	<b>Research how to make a gift to the internship program</b>  Success: Navigates to Interns' Scholarship Donations page (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations)	1:05.00		X		Sees the "Give Now" button and also sees scholarships. I have a hunch as to where the "Give Now" button would take me.  Hits back button to see if the same information is under "Scholarships." Then to Interns' Scholarship Donations page.
5	<b>Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund</b>  Navigates to "secure online gift" form (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations > Secure online gift)	00:38.00		X		Went to "Scholarships" page because I had seen my list of options. See Contributor is less than \$100. Use credit card to go to "secure online gift" link.

#### Participant 5

Participant Name: Participant 5			Date/Time of Session: Oct. 23, 2018			
Task	Task Description	Time on Task	Errors	Success	Failure	Notes

1	<b>Finding the recommendation form</b>  Success: "For Faculty" page > Recommendation Form	2:25:00	1 (clicked on Prospective Interns first)  2 (clicked on English Internship Requirements)  3 (clicked on How to Apply page)	X	<p>See left-hand menu first. First thing saw was "Prospective Interns" and "For Faculty." Clicked on "Prospective Interns" first. Scrolled through page. "What I'm looking for is requirements for people submitting recommendations, so I'm going to look at English Internship Requirements first. I see that's not relevant for what I'm looking for."</p> <p>Clicked to How to Apply page. Found recommendation form on "How to Apply" page. (recovered from errors). After the fact, Shervon realized the recommendation form is more easily accessible on the For Faculty page.</p>
2	<b>Contact the internship program coordinator</b>  Success: Finds the coordinator's email and starts and email	00:15:00		X	<p>Go to "For Faculty" first. Found the email address for the internship program coordinator.</p> <p>Additional feedback: "One thing that I would find helpful: if this information was not embedded in paragraphs. A bullet point list. For me, the way I look at it is, something that just said, "Recommendation Form." Subheadings and paragraphs. Visual markers that show what's important. What I'm assuming is that faculty members have a lot going on and what they're looking for is, "Look, I know I have to submit a recommendation — what do I need to do?" And so if I can get that information without having to commit to reading many paragraphs, that would help me."</p>
3	<b>Research how to make a gift to the internship program</b>  Success: Navigates to Interns' Scholarship Donations page (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations)	00:59:00		X	<p>Looking at left menu and doesn't see link to donation. Instead, searched within the college website for "donations to internship program" (using the embedded search function). Saw second result for "English Department Interns' Scholarship..".</p> <p>Clicked on that and see scholarships program. "Again, there are a lot of paragraphs, so I'm just going to do an 'Alt+F' search for donations." Found the information at the bottom of the screen. "I'm OK with reading paragraphs, but it depends on the time of day, the time of semester and how busy I am, and how much time I have to read."</p>
4	<b>Make a "contributor" gift to the scholarship fund</b>  Navigates to "secure online gift" form (Scholarships > Interns' Scholarship Donations > Secure online gift)	00:37:00		X	<p>Go to "Scholarships" in left-hand menu. Scroll down to Donors section, sees the "click here" for more information" link. Sees information on "contributor-level" gift.</p> <p>Saw the "Give Now" button in the right hand corner and almost clicked on it. But Shervon saw the "secure online gift" link and instead clicked on that.</p>