

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE INTERNSHIPS

Program in Public Administration
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INTRODUCTION

In addition to the completion of 42 units of course work for the award of the M.P.A., the graduate program in public administration provides its pre-service students with a 6-unit internship option.

Internships are intended to provide the students with a meaningful work experience related to their field of interest. The internship period should serve to provide the student with the opportunity to examine a functioning agency, to review its major policies and management processes, and to participate in work experiences related to the administration of that agency. The academic goal is to provide integration of the theoretic concepts in public administration with the demands and constraints imposed within an administrative or professional work role. From the students' perspective the internship presents an opportunity to achieve this integration and to acquire experience in the area in which they have been trained.

Guidelines for Completion of Internship

1. The duration of the internship is 400 hours with the student assuming a schedule consistent with the needs of the organization. Students will comply with the usual work and holiday schedule prescribed by the agency. Internships may be extended for a longer period as appropriate to successful completion of a work assignment.
2. Students will earn 6 units of academic credit for successful completion of the internship.
3. The student is expected to submit written progress reports to his or her

academic advisor during the entire internship period. It is suggested that this report be shared with the agency preceptor and serve as the basis for scheduled discussions of the student's performance. Individual advisors will determine the frequency of these reports.

4. The agency preceptor is expected to provide guidance and supervision during the internship period and to submit a written statement of the students' performance to the academic advisor at the conclusion of the internship.

5. The student is to submit a final internship report to the academic advisor prior to the completion of the internship.

Suggestions for Preceptor and Agency

It is expected that the Agency's participation will be active and enthusiastic and that they will provide a reasonable amount of assistance, advice, and guidance throughout the period of this work experience.

The following suggestions are made to assist the Agency in this responsibility.

1. The beginning of the internship should focus on a comprehensive overview of the Agency's role and function including an introduction to major policies and procedures. In addition to the indoctrination component, the internship should include a component of directed inquiry.

2. The purpose, role, and expected performance of the intern should be widely communicated within the Agency.

3. Intern work assignments should be professional and challenging, as well as useful for the agency. The intern would not normally be assigned routine office or

clerical work unless such work is a necessary part of a more responsible assignment. Additionally, the purpose of the internship is not that the intern should assume a routine position in a single subunit of the organization but that he should benefit from an exposure to the entire organization during his stay, if feasible.

4. It is expected that the intern will be organizationally placed near the agency head or near another senior manager. The intent is to facilitate observation and participation in broad managerial activities, and, whenever possible, the intern should be permitted to attend meetings of governing bodies, councils, staff or other policy sessions.

5. The intern should have a close working relationship with a responsible administrative or professional person where reasonable access to the assigned supervisor (preceptor) will be available.

6. Open communication between all parties involved is essential to a successful internship. The agency preceptor should contact the academic whenever the progress of the internship is in question. The intern's status reports will provide the academic advisor with a basis for judging the intern's progress toward the completion of his academic requirement.

7. The valuation of the contribution of the work experience to the academic program is made through their preceptor's report and the individual's internship report.

Suggestions for the Intern

1. The intern should be reminded that the work experience of the internship is a critical portion of his or her academic program and should represent a necessary bridge

between theory and practice.

2. The internship may give the student a first serious look at the professional arena that he or she aspires to enter. This is an opportunity to test knowledge and skills in an operating situation, providing an important synthesis to aid professional development.

3. While this exposure will give the agency an excellent opportunity to conduct a probationary type review of the student, it is emphasized again that internships should not be expected to lead to a full-time permanent position in that agency. But the experiences should enhance the student's opportunity for employment in similar agencies or professional areas.

4. The intern, in consultation with the agency preceptor and the academic advisor, is responsible for preparing himself or herself for the assignment, including the preparation of an internship proposal which outlines specific learning objectives. Familiarity with the planned objectives and the framework for analysis will focus the intern's efforts, lessen the amount of wasted time in the agency, and improve the quality of the final report.

5. The student is reminded that he or she is both a student and a working member of the agency. Work assignments should conform to agency formats, procedures, and deadlines. The development of personal rapport with supervisors and associates is very important, and likely necessary for a successful internship. A rule-of-thumb is that an intern is a student trying to gain professional experience and is neither a consultant nor a researcher, but a regular employee in a temporary relationship with

the agency.

6. The intern is advised to keep regular notes and maintain data packages to aid the completion of the final report. The regular reports are intended to keep the three-party communication active as well as to provide a mechanism for clarifying the intern's progress toward a final report.

7. After completion of the internship, a draft of the final report should be completed as soon as practical for submission to the academic advisor. This draft must be submitted in sufficient time for the advisor to review and suggest revisions that can be incorporated by the student before the end of the semester.

Requirements for the Academic Department

1. The internship advisor must be responsive to the interns' progress reports. They should be read on a timely basis, compared to predetermine objectives, and the advisor's reaction should be communicated to the agency and the intern.

2. The advisor's role is to assist both the agency and the intern in the completion of the work experience.

3. Drafts of internship reports should be promptly reviewed by the advisor and discussed with the student.

The Nature of the Final Internship Report

There is no specified or required format for the final report. It is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with his or her advisor to develop the appropriate analytic framework and format, and the student and the advisor should agree on an outline of the report early in the internship experience. The report should be 30 pages.

In general, the report should be a comprehensive analysis of the internship experience that shows an awareness and understanding of the organization, the services it provides, and its administrative processes. The content of the report should include: 1) a brief description of the agency and the tasks, projects, and roles assigned to the intern; 2) a thorough analysis of the goals, processes, structure, personnel, and environment of the organization; 3) an in-depth discussion of the convergence or divergence between academic preparation and the reality of practice; and 4) a set of conclusions and recommendations regarding the agency's operations, the internship experience, and the academic/practice dichotomy.

While these items are desirable for inclusion in the report, their relevance is conditioned by the particular internship setting. In any case, the 30-page internship report should emphasize analysis. It should not be a diary or journal of day-to-day occurrences during the internship. A daily diary should be added to the 30-page report as an Appendix.