

PADM 7210: INTERNSHIP IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

(Co-requisite Course: PADM 7900)



**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM**

Valdosta, Georgia 31698-0058
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PREFACE

This manual is as a general guide for students enrolled in Public Administration 7210, their faculty supervisors, and the agencies and organizations in which they intern. It should **not** be considered a comprehensive statement on the internship program. There most certainly will be aspects on which all parties will have to confer. It supplements but does not replace the general policies, requirements, and procedures provided in the Valdosta State University *Graduate Catalog*. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with both documents.

It is the student's responsibility to keep apprised of current internship requirements for his or her degree program. While the provisions of this manual will ordinarily be applied as stated, the Department of Political Science and the MPA Coordinator reserve the right to modify any provisions listed in this manual, without actual notice to individual students. Every effort will be made, however, to keep students advised of any such changes. Information regarding such modifications will be available in the offices of the Department of Political Science and in the M.P.A. Coordinator's.

Some concepts contained in this manual were borrowed, with permission, from the internship programs at East Carolina University, the University of Utah, the University of Texas at El Paso, and from the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice at Valdosta State University. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

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INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- A. PADM 7210, Internship in Public Administration (1 semester-hour credit), is a co-requisite to PADM 7900, Capstone Seminar in Public Administration (2 semester-hours credit). Both courses are to be taken in the student's final semester, and enrollment in both courses requires the permission of the MPA Coordinator.
- B. An internship in the Master of Public Administration Program involves field placement with an appropriate agency, normally a unit of government or a not-for-profit organization, which is designed to provide the student with a first-hand work experience in which the student is expected to apply his or her academic knowledge. The student is placed in the role of a **participant observer** in the field, while receiving academic credit under the direction of a faculty supervisor. The student is also subject to the authority, rules, and regulations of the sponsoring organization. In-service students may petition the MPA Coordinator to use their current position to satisfy the internship placement requirement, but must still register for the course.
- C. Students are expected to devote a minimum of 10 hours per week for each week in the semester in order to obtain 1 semester-hour credit. Students taking an internship are expected to maintain a daily log of activities, to submit entries to that log weekly to the faculty supervisor or to the internship Coordinator, to their field supervisor, and to the MPA Coordinator upon completion of the internship.
- D. Both PADM 7210 and PADM 7900 are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- E. A student-developed case based upon the internship must be completed for the student to receive a passing grade for the course.

PLACEMENT

- A. Students are encouraged to intern with an organization that fits their interests and career goals. Thus students are encouraged to use their initiative in seeking out possible internship opportunities with organizations that pique their interest (see Form 1).
- B. If a student so desires, the MPA Coordinator or Internship Coordinator will arrange an internship placement with an appropriate agency.
- C. The MPA Coordinator, whether initial contact is made by the student or by a faculty member, must approve all internships.

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

- A. Before a student is approved for an internship, the following conditions must be met:
 - a. The student must be in good standing in the program, including having a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
 - b. The student must be in the final semester of his or her course work.
- B. The student is responsible for meeting with the Internship Coordinator well in advance of the proposed internship, and must file an application within the first two weeks of the semester prior to the beginning of the semester in which the internship is to take place (see Form 1).
- C. As part of the application process, the student must read the internship manual and verify that he or she understands all of the internship requirements (see Form 2).
- D. Once the MPA Coordinator approves the application, the student must establish contact with and be accepted by the agency. The statement of acceptance must be completed by a responsible official at the agency and returned to the MPA Coordinator no later than two weeks prior to actual placement of the intern (see Form 3).
- E. The MPA Coordinator will arrange for the assignment of a faculty supervisor for the internship, student preference will be considered in making this assignment.
- F. The student intern working with the faculty supervisor will ensure that a folder containing all documents related to the internship are filed with the MPA Coordinator's Office prior to the final day of the exam period at the close of the semester in which the internship is taken.

INTERN PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

- A. Dress appropriately for the internship.
- B. An intern who will be absent on a particular day should report his or her absence at the beginning of normal work hours on that day to both his or her field and faculty supervisors. Repeated failure to notify the appropriate persons and/or a pattern of reporting late will result in termination of the internship with a grade of U (unsatisfactory).
- C. The intern is expected to behave in a professional manner, avoiding any involvement in office politics or ideological disputes. The intern's role is that of a participant observer—an objective, impartial outsider.
- D. Confidentiality of records and internal matters must be maintained at all times. Any violation of confidentiality will result in termination of the internship with a grade of U.
- E. No written work by the intern will be circulated outside of the internship agency or the Department of Political Science without prior written consent from the faculty and agency supervisors.
- F. Weekly reports should reach the faculty supervisor by the Tuesday of the following week. All weekly reports will be signed by the intern's field supervisor and submitted with a cover page (see Form 4).
- G. All material submitted to the faculty supervisor must be word processed on good quality paper, and all submitted materials become the property of the Department of Political Science.
- H. Any behavior determined improper (detrimental to the agency or to VSU) will result in termination of the internship with a grade of U.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

It shall be the responsibility of the MPA Internship Coordinator, as the representative of the Department, to:

- A. Fully cooperate with organizations and agencies participating in the internship program, and to provide a faculty supervisor as an Internship Coordinator to oversee individual student activities.
- B. Screen applicants and recommend only those who possess the necessary skills to function satisfactorily in a particular agency or organization.
- C. Maintain regular contact with the intern's agency supervisor through the faculty supervisor. A contact report will be completed by the faculty supervisor and made a part of the intern's permanent file (see Form 5).
- D. Provide the agency supervisor with an evaluation form to rate the performance of the intern (see Form 6).
- E. Discuss any problems concerning the intern's performance with the agency supervisor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES ACCEPTING INTERNS

It shall be the responsibility of organizations and agencies to:

- A. Provide the intern with meaningful tasks and to insure exposure to as many operational aspects as possible. The intern should not serve as a secretary or clerk.
- B. Assign a supervisor to direct and coordinate the internship and to prepare a written evaluation of the intern's performance, which should reach the faculty supervisor at least one week prior to the last day of the semester (see Form 6).
- C. Offer constructive criticism when needed.
- D. Provide facilities, supplies, space, etc., which are necessary for the intern to adequately perform his or her assigned duties.
- E. Alert the faculty supervisor about any problems relating to the intern's job performance.
- F. Request the faculty supervisor to withdraw the intern when personal conduct or educational progress is such that additional time and effort on the part of the agency would not be worthwhile.
- G. Terminate an intern only with just cause and prior notice to the faculty supervisor.
- H. Make suggestions to the faculty supervisor about how the internship program might be improved.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MPA INTERNSHIP CASE

- A. The case developed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for academic credit for MPA Internships is very important. It will build upon the student's work in PADM 7900. Remember that the primary justification for the award of credit is that the internship experience must be fundamentally educational in value. The MPA Program looks upon its interns as students engaged in activities that give exposure to new and significant persons and ideas and which thus provide opportunities for growth and learning about the political administrative system and its processes.
- B. More than a simple description of experiences is expected in an internship case. Diaries or journals will be very helpful to the intern in writing your case and to the MPA Program in evaluating the internship experience; but cases written on a subject such as "How I Spent a Semester..." will not be evaluated very positively.
- C. The internship cast **must** be analytical. That is, it should be based on a significant question or subject of study. Work on the case should begin early and take place throughout the internship, and it should, from the very beginning, focus upon a question or study subject that will guide the entire experience usefully. The case must relate to the skills and knowledge gained through the program. Relevant coursework, readings, etc. **must** be brought into the case, and **must** be properly cited.

MATERIALS THAT WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR STUDENT GRADE

All material submitted must be deemed by the faculty supervisor to meet minimum standards for graduate work (normally the equivalent to a letter grade of at least B-) in order for the student to receive a satisfactory grade for the internship. The following is a minimum list of the material that must be submitted.¹

- A. The intern's personal evaluation. The intern is responsible for evaluating his or her own internship experience, based upon a number of criteria (see Form 7).
- B. The supervisor's evaluation. The intern's field supervisor will be asked to provide feedback concerning the on-going performance of the intern, and to evaluate the overall performance and contribution made by the intern during the internship (see Form 6).
- C. The internship case. The intern's faculty supervisor will assess the internship case on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory basis. As indicated above, the case must be evaluated at the equivalent of a B- or better to receive a satisfactory grade.

YOUR CASE IS CLEARLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN DETERMINING YOUR GRADE.

Personal and supervisor evaluations are important primarily because they can point out personality conflicts or other problems which might be factors in the success or failure of a given internship. The evaluations give the Program significant help in maintaining the kinds of relationships that will allow continuation of intern placements, and, less significantly, they provide helpful data about an intern's performance.

¹ Students who have successfully petitioned to use their current work as their internship should check with their instructor to determine which of these are required.

Form 1

APPLICATION FOR INTERNSHIP

Name _____ Student No. _____ Date _____

Sex _____ Age _____ Semester Applying For _____

Local Address _____

Permanent Address _____

Local Telephone _____ Permanent Telephone _____

Semester of Expected Graduation _____

List Courses Completed/Currently Enrolled In:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Grade</u>
1. _____	_____	6. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	7. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	8. _____	_____
4. _____	_____	9. _____	_____
5. _____	_____	10. _____	_____

Cumulative GPA at VSU, MPA _____; All Graduate Work _____

Placement Organization/Agency Preferred _____

Note: Application must be completed, returned to the Coordinator of the MPA Program, and approved before the student can be enrolled in PADM 7210.

Approved: _____

Internship Coordinator

Form 2
STUDENT AGREEMENT

I understand that I am participating in an internship sponsored by the Department of Political Science and an off-campus organization or agency. I recognize that in the internship I am subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of Valdosta State University, as well as those that the field supervisor deems appropriate for the organization or agency.

I understand that I am not covered by the agency's fringe benefits and that it is my responsibility to make arrangements for my own insurance, including accident, health, and hospitalization coverage. I will not hold the internship agency or organization, or Valdosta State University, nor any of the personnel employed by these organizations liable for injury or death as a result of this internship.

I understand that in the internship I will be representing Valdosta State University, the Department of Political Science, and the Master of Public Administration Program; and I will do nothing that would adversely affect the image of any unit. I agree that if any of my behavior is deemed improper (detrimental to the intern organization or Valdosta State University) I will withdraw from the internship and accept a grade of U.

I understand that my failure to abide by the policies and procedures of the internship program will result in termination of the internship with a grade of U.

I further agree that I will:

- a. Always dress appropriately for the internship.
- b. Notify my field supervisor and faculty supervisor as soon as possible should I be unable to report to work for any reason.
- c. Conduct myself in a professional manner at all times, and avoid becoming involved in office politics and/or ideological disputes.
- d. Maintain the confidentiality of records and internal matters at all times.
- e. Obtain prior approval from my faculty and agency supervisors before circulating any written work outside of the internship organization or the Department of Political Science.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT. THE NATURE, SCOPE AND POLICIES OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, AND I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM.

Student

Internship Coordinator

Date

Form 3
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Political Science
Master of Public Administration Program
Valdosta, Georgia 31698

STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE

Name _____ SS No. _____

Placement Agency: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Date of Acceptance: _____

Internship Starting Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Number of hours to be worked per week: _____

The above named student has been accepted as an intern.

Contact Person

Date

Form 5
FACULTY SUPERVISOR - AGENCY CONTACT WORKSHEET

Student: _____ Agency: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Telephone: (____) _____

Faculty Supervisor: _____ Agency Supervisor: _____

Contacts With Agency Supervisor

Date Nature of Contact Comments

Weekly Reports

Week One: _____ Week Seven: _____ Week Thirteen: _____

Week Two: _____ Week Eight: _____ Week Fourteen: _____

Week Three: _____ Week Nine: _____ Week Fifteen: _____

Week Four: _____ Week Ten: _____ Week Sixteen: _____

Week Five: _____ Week Eleven: _____

Week Six: _____ Week Twelve: _____

Comments and Observations:

Form 6
SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION OF INTERN

Re:

On behalf on the MPA Program, I wish to express our thanks for the excellent learning experience you have afforded the above-named student who has just completed an internship with you. We urgently need your candid evaluation of the intern and of his/her experience with you. We would be most grateful if you could respond briefly to the following questions:

1. What were the specific responsibilities that he/she was asked to perform?
2. What were the intern's most helpful skills?
3. How would you evaluate your intern in the following areas of performance?

Attitude:

Judgment:

Initiative:

Writing Skills:

Interpersonal Relations:

Availability/Dependability:

4. What areas do you think the intern should try to build or improve?
5. Would you care to comment of the MPA Internship Program in any general way? We would be grateful for any constructive criticism that you may wish to offer.
6. Were you satisfied with the procedure used to select and assign the intern or are there ways in which this process could be improved?

We appreciate your association with the MPA Program and thank you for your help with this evaluation.

Supervisor's Signature

Respectfully,

Supervisor's Name (Please Print)

Internship Coordinator

Date

Form 7
Student Evaluation of Internship

Name:

ASSIGNMENT:

Place:

Address

Dates:

Tasks/Projects:

Hours Worked (Average/wk):

Supervisor:

GENERAL EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:

How did it meet your expectations?

What were the most positive aspects?

What were the most negative aspects (if any)

Suggestions for improvement: