

# **PADM 7210:**

## **Internship in Public Administration**

## **Internship Handbook**

(Co-requisite Course: PADM 7900)



**Master of Public Administration Program  
Department of Political Science  
Valdosta State University**

Valdosta, Georgia 31698-0058  
229.253.2873  
Ninth Edition  
(2020)

## **Preface**

This manual is as a general guide for students enrolled in Public Administration 7210, their Internship Coordinators, 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 PA 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 PA Program.

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 (one semester-hour credit), is a co-requisite to PADM 7900, Capstone Seminar in Public Administration (two semester-hours credit). Both courses are to be taken in the student's final semester.
- 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 an Internship Coordinator. An intern is expected to work on managerial/administrative activities. These include, but are not limited to: program development; evaluation strategies; budgeting; process mapping; or report preparation. The primary goal of the internship is provide you with a new experience. Generally, the intern should not be engaged in direct services to clients, transporting others, clerical duties, or manual or unskilled labor. The student is also subject to the authority, rules, and regulations of the sponsoring organization. In-service students may petition the Internship Coordinator to use their current position to satisfy the internship placement requirement, but must still register for the course. **Notice must be given to the PA office as to whether the internship will be in-service or not.**
- C. There is a minimum requirement of 300 hours to be completed evenly throughout the semester in order to obtain one 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 Internship Coordinator.
- D. A waiver to the internship requirement may be granted by the Internship Coordinator upon satisfactory evidence of a minimum of three years of full-time professional work experience in a public and/or non-profit organization. Responsibilities must have included some of the following: supervision or management of a program, department, or agency; strategic planning; grant writing; program design, implementation, or evaluation; organizational development and management; financial management; or resource allocation. Waiver of the internship will still require the student to register for PADM 7210 with additional class requirements to be submitted for PADM 7900. Students are to complete an *Application for Waiver to Internship* to be considered.
- E. Both PADM 7210 and PADM 7900 are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- F. 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 2).
- B. If a student needs assistance, the Internship Coordinator will make suggestions or the student can check with Cooperative Education at 229.333.7172 for an internship placement with an appropriate agency.
- C. The Internship 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 prior to the beginning of the semester in which the internship is to take place (see Form 2).
- C. As part of the application process, the student must read the internship manual (see Form 3).
- D. Once the Internship 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

- E. the agency and returned to the PA Program Office prior to actual placement of the intern (see Form 4).  
The student intern, working with the Internship Coordinator, will ensure that a folder containing all documents related to the internship is filed with the PA Program 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 his or her field supervisor and report the absence on the Weekly Activity Report. 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 agency supervisor.
- F. Weekly reports should reach the Internship Coordinator 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 5).
- G. All material submitted to the Internship Coordinator 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 PA Program 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 the 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 Internship Coordinator. A contact report will be completed by the Internship Coordinator and made a part of the intern's permanent file (see Form 6).
- D. Provide the agency supervisor with an evaluation form to rate the performance of the intern (see Form 7).
- 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 Internship Coordinator at least one week prior to the last day of the semester (see Form 7).
- C. Offer constructive criticism when needed.
- D. Provide facilities, supplies, and space for the intern to adequately perform his or her assigned duties.
- E. Alert the Internship Coordinator about any problems relating to the intern's job performance.
- F. Request the Internship Coordinator 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 Internship Coordinator.
- H. Make suggestions to the Internship coordinator 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 case **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 Internship Coordinator 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.<sup>1</sup>

- 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 8).
- 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 7).
- C. **The internship case.** The intern's Internship Coordinator 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Application for Waiver of  
Internship Hours**

*A waiver to the MPA program internship requirement may be granted by the Internship Coordinator upon satisfactory evidence of a minimum of **three years** of full-time professional work experience in a public or nonprofit organization. See the requirements outlined in the Internship Handbook. Submit this form to the Internship Coordinator the semester prior to registering for PADM 7210/7900. Approval of the waiver still requires the student to register for both courses.*

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Date:**

**Work History Date: From              to              Position:**

**Reason for Request and Work Experience (in addition, please attach a copy of your current Curriculum Vitae):**

**Approved**  
 **Denied**

**Internship Coordinator**

**Date**

Curriculum Vitae:

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Signature

Form 2

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Application for Internship**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

**Student ID:**

**Semester:**

**Local Address:**

**Permanent Address:**

**Email:**

**Daytime Phone:**

**Semester/Year of Expected Graduation:**

**List Courses Completed or Currently Enrolled:**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>

**Cumulative Graduate GPA at VSU:**

**All Graduate Work:**

**Internship Placement Organization:**

**Agency Contact Information:**

**Approved**  
 **Denied**

**Internship Coordinator**

**Note:** This application is to be completed and returned to the Internship Coordinator before the student can be enrolled in PADM 7210.

Form 3

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Student Internship Agreement**

I understand that I am participating in an internship sponsored by the Department of Political Science. 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 internship supervisors deems appropriate for the organization or agency.

I understand that I am not covered by the agency's benefits and that it is my responsibility for my own insurance, including accident, health, and hospitalization coverage. I agree to hold harmless the internship agency or organization, Valdosta State University, or any of the personnel employed by these organizations for injury or death as a result of this internship.

I understand that in the internship I will be representing Valdosta State University and the Department of Political Science. I will do nothing that would adversely affect the image of the university. I agree that if my behavior is deemed improper 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:

- Dress appropriately for the internship;
- Notify my field supervisors as soon as possible should I be unable to report to work for any reason;
- Conduct myself in a professional manner, and avoid becoming involved in office politics and/or ideological disputes;
- Maintain the confidentiality of records and internal matters; and
- Obtain prior approval from the Internship Coordinator or field supervisor before circulating any written work outside of the internship organization or the Department of Political Science.

Student

Student ID

Date

Form 4

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Statement of Acceptance  
Internship Program**

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Agency Name:**

**Address:**

**Supervisor:**

**Email:**

**Date of Acceptance:**

**Telephone:**

**Dates of Internship: From**

**to**

**Hours per Week:**

**Will this internship placement by in-service?  Yes  No**

**The above student has been accepted as an intern with this agency.**

**Contact Person**

**Date**

Form 5

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Weekly Intern Report Form**

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Agency Name:**

**Period:**      to

**Week Number:**

**Duties/Work Performed This Week:**

## Form 6

For Public Administration Office Use Only

Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program

## **Agency Contact Worksheet**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

## Field Supervisor Contact Information

## Agency

## Contacts with Field Supervisor

Weekly Reports			
Week 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 8	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 10	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 13	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 14	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Week 16	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Comments and Observations:

Form 7

# **Valdosta State University Public Administration Program**

## **Supervisor's Evaluation of Intern**

A Qualtrics link will be provided in place of this form. Please see below for the content of the Qualtrics survey.

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the MPA Program, thank you for the excellent learning experience you have afforded the above-named student. Please provide your candid evaluation of the intern and of his/her experience with you and your agency.

1. What were the specific responsibilities that the intern was asked to perform?
  2. What were the intern's most valuable skills?
  3. How would you evaluate the intern in the following areas:

	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Excellent	N/A
Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Judgment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What areas do you think the intern should build on or improve?
  
  5. Provide any comments about the MPA Internship Program you may have here:

We appreciate your association with the MPA program. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the program, please contact a PA faculty member at [pa@valdosta.edu](mailto:pa@valdosta.edu).

Form 8

**Valdosta State University  
Public Administration Program**

**Student Evaluation of Internship**

Name

Student ID

Date

**Assignment**

Agency

Address

Dates of Internship

Task/Projects Assigned

Total Hours Worked      Supervisor

**General Evaluation of Internship Experience**

Did the internship meet your expectations? Why or why not?

What were the positive aspects of the internship?

What were the negative aspects of the internship?

Identify any suggestions for improvement: