MPA Internship Handbook

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BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY | PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY

Internship Overview

Introduction

The primary purpose of the MPA internship is to provide students with meaningful experiences in applying what they have learned through classes in real-world settings. The internship also provides support and assistance to organizations and agencies in their efforts to address community needs. Student interns are expected to engage in professional tasks and projects in areas such as the development, planning, implementation, and analysis/evaluation of policy, finance, management, supervision, strategy, program, and other administrative tasks. The internship and Reflective Practitioner experiences often help students make important career choices by determining the administrative functions and areas in which they are most interested. Through the internship, students often make important discoveries and professional connections. This excellent opportunity to network may be very helpful when preparing to enter the job market.

Students must spend at least 150 hours in their internship placement. This is often spread over approximately 15 weeks (10 hours per week) and may be completed during fall, spring or summer semesters. The completed MPA internship course (PAFF 594) earns two-credits and is graded on a pass “A”/fail “F” basis.

Preparing for and arranging an internship requires planning, time, and attention over a period of at least a semester. An Internship Checklist, included on page 6 of this handbook, has been developed to guide students throughout the process.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for internship, the student must have:

1. At least 16 credits in the MPA program, including Research Design and Methods (PAFF-510), 21st Century Governance (PAFF-520), and Foundations of Public (PAFF-521)
2. At least a B in all required MPA courses
3. At least a 3.0 cumulative GPA prior to beginning the internship course

Registration

Only after completion & submission of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can the student request registration through the course instructor.

Waivers

To be considered for a waiver of the internship requirement, applicants must show that they possess at least three years of full-time professional work experience in a public and/or nonprofit organization where their responsibilities included some of the following tasks:

- Supervising a program or department
- Strategic planning
- Grant writing
- Facilities management
- Program design, implementation, evaluation
- Organizational development and management
- Financial management and/or long-range financial planning
- Information technology
- Organization, analysis, and evaluation of information

- Acquisition of resources

Internship Requirements

- **Students must register for internship before they are on site**. For example, if the student intends to complete the internship during the summer months, they must register for the summer term and pay tuition for that term. Students may carry their internship into the next term, provided the 150-hour requirement is met before beginning the e-portfolio course.
- **Students are required to work on site if possible; telecommuting is permitted if in-person options are unavailable.** Immersion in the organization is an integral part of the experiential learning experience.
- **Internships must be at least 150 hours,** spanning over a minimum of 4 weeks. Students are not permitted to work over 40 hours each week.
- **Students are not permitted to intern at all-volunteer non-profit organizations**; sites must have at least one full-time staff member.
- **Students cannot be supervised by current MPA students, family members, or friends.**

Internship Sites

While students are ultimately responsible for identifying their own internship placements, the instructor is available to help narrow down options and connect students with potential opportunities. Students are encouraged to select internship sites that are within their area of concentration or interest and placement must be located in a nonprofit or public sector agency.

Preparing and submitting applications for internships will require a well-written, updated resume, as well as a compelling cover letter. For basic guidelines in the creation of resumes and cover letters, or to request a mock interview, students can make appointments to meet with staff from the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development (DC-218 or UU-132).

In-career students employed in public or nonprofit organizations may use their place of employment as their internship site, under the supervision of a higher-level administrator. The student will need to identify a project separate from their day-to-day duties to fulfill the internship requirement.

Peace Corps Paul D. Coverdell Fellows are placed in pre-selected internships that are specifically designed to support an impoverished and/or socially disadvantaged community in the U.S. Coverdell Fellows adhere to all the same internship requirements as other students in the program. Fellows should meet with the instructor during their first semester to discuss internship options and planning.

Expectations of Students

As a graduate student who has completed two semesters of MPA coursework, the duties of the student during the internship must exceed those typically assigned to undergraduate-level interns. The student must have administrative responsibilities throughout the internship to receive credit. Examples of administrative responsibilities include program evaluation, program development, policy analysis, financial analysis, research, and strategic planning.

The student intern should have little or no office support/secretarial duties and cannot provide direct services to clients. In addition to being involved in such administrative processes, the student should be included in organizational meetings and other general events in order to maximize the overall learning experience.

Funding

Students are permitted and encouraged to pursue paid internship placements. Interns are typically paid an hourly rate (New York State minimum wage is currently at $16.50/hour), though some internships pay a stipend ($1,000-$3,000).

The College of Community and Public Affairs and the Student Affairs Internship Fund have provided periodic funding to support students in unpaid internships. Notice of these opportunities will be posted on the MPA student listserv and the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development's website.

Grading

The Public Affairs Internship course (PAFF-594) is graded on a Pass "A"/Fail "F" basis. To receive a passing grade for the internship, the student must:

1. **Receive a favorable mid-semester review.** The instructor sends the evaluation to each site supervisor at the halfway point of the student's internship term.
2. **Receive a favorable final evaluation from the site supervisor.** The site supervisor evaluates the student's performance using the Final Evaluation form. Favorable final evaluations are determined by the instructor.
3. **Submit a satisfactory internship summary.** Within two weeks of the end of the internship term, the student submits a 3- to 4-page Memorandum to the instructor, reflecting on the relevance of the internship experience to public administration theories learned in the classroom.
4. **Complete 150 hours at the internship site**. At the conclusion of the internship, the student must submit a timesheet signed by the site supervisor.

Note: All grading is at the discretion of the instructor.

Dual Degree Students

Dual/double-degree students in the Social Work or GMAP programs fulfill their internship requirement through those departments. Each internship must be at least 150 hours in length, and involve administrative duties. While Dual/double-degree students may not register for the Public Affairs Internship, they will be required to submit an MOU and fulfill all other requirements as outlined above.

International Students

F-1 visa international students must receive approval from ISSS before beginning the internship. Students submit a completed Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form, along with an offer letter from their internship site, to the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS, Old Champlain Building, Floor 1R, Rm 142).

J-1 visa international students are not required to submit a CPT form, but must adhere to different requirements to legally complete their internship in the U.S. Please see the PAFF 594 Instructor or contact the office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for more information. Guidelines to help ensure international students are meeting requirements can be found on pages 14 and 15 of this handbook.

International students who are enrolled in an accelerated MPA program should apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) several months before beginning the internship.

MPA PROGRAM – INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST

THE SEMESTER BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP

☐ **Search for possible internship placements**
☐ **Meet with Fleishman Center representative to review resume and cover letter**
☐ **Contact possible placement sites/submit applications**
☐ **Interview at potential internship sites**
☐ **Once you have a possible internship site/offer, draft MOU and submit to DPAP for review**
☐ **obtain signature from site supervisor on MOU**
☐ **Send completed MOU to DPAP to get registered for PAFF 594**

DURING THE INTERNSHIP SEMESTER

☐ **Upload MOU to MyCourses**
☐ **Keep a journal or log of internship experience (recommended)**
☐ **Track hours via timesheet**
☐ **Think about projects or products you may want to include in your e-portfolio. If you use anything from your internship site, make sure you secure permission from your site supervisor.**
☐ **Meet with your site supervisor regularly regarding your progress and their expectations**
☐ **Inform DPAP if any difficulties arise**
☐ **Your site supervisor will complete mid-semester and final evaluations on your behalf**
☐ **complete/submit internship summary and reflection to MyCourses**
☐ **complete/submit timesheet to MyCourses**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY

INTERNSHIP

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Date: DATE

To: [Name and Title of Site Supervisor of Internship at Cooperating Organization]

From: [Name of Student, B#, email address]

Re: MOU for DPAP Internship

Elements to include:

- Name, title and full contact information of immediate supervisor, student, and Internship Coordinator—Including phone numbers (cell, if available), addresses, and e-mail addresses
- A statement that the required internship period must be at least 150 hours of service with specific start and end dates
- Semester of graduation
- Work conditions: hours and days of work, semester of internship course enrollment, location of internship, student's own responsibility for transportation to and from internship site, other work conditions as appropriate
- Compensation information: hourly rate or total amount and method of payment (weekly, biweekly, lump sum, etc.) or statement that there will be no financial compensation
- Academic goals and expectations of internship
- Specific projects and task descriptions
- Administrative functions in which intern will be engaged (e.g., program development, evaluation or implementation; policy development or analysis; financial review; strategic planning)
- Expected work products or outcomes (include dates, if possible)

Site Information

- Other terms and conditions required by the organization or the student (e.g., health screening, criminal record clearance)

- **Special circumstances, risks to the student, or additional requirements (e.g., exposure to dangerous environments)**
- **If student is covered by the organization's liability insurance**
- **Policies and procedures that may be relevant for the intern (e.g., building security, parking, confidentiality)**
- **Additional organization supervisor(s) and contact information (if more than one works with student and if primary site supervisor is not available)**

Must include the following section, <u>as written</u>

Agreements:

The <u>student</u> intern agrees to conduct themself as an ethical professional and perform the assigned duties to the best of their abilities. The intern will not engage in any activity, including accessing confidential information or the collection of data, without the permission of the site supervisor. They will respect the confidentiality of all organizational and client information provided by the agency and will not share it with persons outside the agency without permission. The student will meet the time requirements and notify the supervisor in advance if unable to come during the agreed upon hours. The intern agrees to immediately notify the supervisor if problems arise during the performance of their duties at the agency. If problems cannot be resolved with the site supervisor within a reasonable period of time, the student will notify the DPAP Director of Operation and Student Services who will set up a meeting with the supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved, the Director reserves the right to terminate the internship and will meet with the student to discuss options for completion of the internship requirement.

The <u>site supervisor</u> agrees to willingly provide guided supervision during the internship period. In the case that the supervisor leaves the agency, they are responsible for identifying a replacement supervisor to fulfill the commitment. The site supervisor agrees to provide an ethical work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination and will address issues immediately, should they arise. The supervisor will engage the student in projects and tasks that are administrative in nature. The intern will not be expected to provide secretarial support, direct services to clients or the public, transport others, or supervise minor children or vulnerable populations. The supervisor will meet regularly with the student to provide feedback on their progress on projects, areas of growth, and to review responsibilities. They will provide the student with access to adequate information, assistance, and staff cooperation to enable the student to fulfill their assigned responsibilities. The supervisor will verify that the student's time and task completion are documented. The supervisor agrees to complete a mid-semester assessment and a final evaluation. They will also meet with the intern to provide a final performance appraisal. If, during the course of the internship, an issue arises that cannot be resolved

by the site supervisor or in the case that the student intern's performance does not meet expectations, the supervisor will contact the internship. The supervisor shall provide details about the student's internship performance at any time with the Director of Operations and Student Services, however, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) the university cannot provide any information about a student's academic record without their express written permission. This includes information about academic credit and grading for the internship course.

The Director of Operations and Student Services agrees to provide consultation to both the student intern and site supervisor, as needed, throughout the semester. They will help resolve issues, answer questions, and provide support, as needed. The Director will conduct a mid-semester assessment of student performance with the site supervisor. They will periodically contact the student for updates or to address problems as they arise. After the successful completion of the internship, the coordinator will assign a grade based on the final evaluation provided by the supervisor and the internship summary submitted by the student. Grading is at the sole discretion of the Director. They reserve the right to terminate an internship at any point for the well-being of the student and the agency.

Site Supervisor:

I affirm that I have reviewed the established organizational policies in regards to internships and I have the authority to hire and supervise interns.

If there are specific organizational policies and procedures for internships, please attach these to the MOU or provide a link to the policies online.

Signatures:

_____ _____

Student/Date **Site Supervisor/Date**

Distribution:

- ***Participating Organization***
- ***Student***
- ***Department of Public Administration and Policy, Binghamton University, P.O. Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000 Phone 607-777-2719 DPAP@binghamton.edu***

Summary of Internship

The final requirement of your internship is to complete a 3-4 page memorandum that summarizes your internship activities and provides reflections on its relevance to your MPA coursework. It should describe how you have demonstrated the professional and core competencies expected of MPA students as outlined below:

MPA Core Competencies & Values

- Writes clear and concise communications
- Organizes thoughts and evidence in a logical sequence
- Articulates ideas well
- Recognizes & rectifies inequalities and demonstrates the ability to use equity as a core value in analyzing problems
- Communicates at a level appropriate for the intended audience
- Communicates well through formal presentations
- Promotes inclusive institutions by taking steps to address implicit & unconscious bias
- Respectfully listens & demonstrates emotional intelligence
- Conducts a thorough literature review
- Recognizes the role of multiple stakeholders & diversity of voices when analyzing & addressing an issue or policy
- Effectively applies research/theory to public problems
- Understands and interprets trends and debates in administration
- Develops clear problem statements
- Gathers information from a variety of sources
- Distinguishes between sources of information on the basis of quality
- Identifies and applies appropriate analytical techniques
- Interprets results effectively
- Prepares appropriate graphical representations of data
- Possesses an ability to adapt to changing circumstances
- Models high ethical standards

In particular, you should explain how you were able to integrate public administration theory and knowledge into practice through the internship experience, using specifics such as insights gained during your internship, areas in which you acquired new knowledge, areas where you pinpointed inequities & the steps you or your organization are taking to rectify them, challenges that you faced and how you addressed & adapted to them, and the “fit” of the internship with your interests. You should also incorporate your anticipated career direction in your final summary as well.

Guidelines for International Students Seeking Internship Placements

College of Community and Public Affairs

Binghamton University

The regulations that govern students in F-1 or J-1 status (see reverse of this form) require these students to receive authorization to engage in an internship, field placement or practicum before the student begins the activity. Under the regulations, any of these activities is considered employment regardless of the word used to describe the activity. This authorization is required even when a student is required to do an internship, field placement or practicum as part of a degree program.

When you have been offered an internship placement, follow the steps below based on the type of Visa you are holding. Failure to complete the required documents may result in revocation of your visa status and serious personal consequences for you.

F-1 Visa

☐ Ask your internship or field placement supervisor to write an offer letter on their business's letterhead. The letter should state the terms of your internship: starting and ending dates, number of hours per week you will be working, location of the internship, and brief description of duties.

☐ Complete a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form, available at the office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). (The ISSS Office is located in the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center, Room G-1), or on the ISSS website (http://www2.binghamton.edu/isss/employment/CPTAdvForm.pdf). This form requires information and a signature from your academic advisor.

☐ Submit the official internship offer letter and the completed CPT form to ISSS main office.

☐ Within 7 to 10 business days, ISSS staff will let you know if your paperwork has been accepted and approved. You will receive an I-20 with your CPT employment endorsed on page 3. You cannot begin your employment until you have the I-20 with the endorsement in hand.

J-1 Visa

☐ When the internship offer is finalized, ask your internship coordinator to write a letter to your sponsor explaining the purpose of the placement, dates, contact information, and include that the internship is a requirement of the program.

☐ If your J-1 sponsor is Binghamton University, complete an Academic Training Recommendation Form available at the office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). (The ISSS Office is located on the main floor of the Bartle Library on main campus, in room LSG-500), or on the ISSS website (http://www2.binghamton.edu/isss/essential-forms/Train_Form.pdf). This form requires information and a signature from your academic advisor.

If your J-1 sponsor is an organization other than Binghamton University, contact your J-1 advisor at the organization that manages your DS-2019 form for information on how to have your academic training approved.

Once the sponsor receives this letter, he/she will write an authorization letter to the internship site supervisor, which will allow the student to do the internship. The student will also need to submit a new DS-2019 form to accompany the letter. Both are required in order for the student to begin the internship.

Please remember!

1. You may not begin working at your internship site until your application forms have been submitted and approved by the ISSS.
2. You will receive a new I-20 or DS-2019 that has a notation granting the approval.
3. You must possess the new I-20 or DS-2019 document before you begin your internship.

Any questions regarding internships or any other kind of employment for F-1 or J-1 students may be sent to the Employment Team in the ISSS: intl.work@binghamton.edu You can also set up an appointment with an international student advisor at the ISSS, by calling the ISSS office at 1-607-777-2510.

To learn more about these regulations you can view webcasts numbers 4 and 5 on the International Student and Scholar Services website: http://www2.binghamton.edu/isss/employment/empWebinar.html