

This is a sample for prospective students. Current students should NOT purchase books based on this - consult your instructor!

PADM 6500: Internship in the Public Service
Six credits

Course description:

Students not exempt from the internship requirements will fulfill the internship under a joint administrative arrangement between the MPA program and a designated agency or organization. Permission of instructor or program director required.

For six credits of internship students must complete a supervised internship of at least twenty hours a week for fifteen weeks. Students typically work for state or city agencies acquiring on the job experience in government. Students with little or no experience in public or non-profit administration should contact the director or coordinator concerning an internship. Those preferring an internship in non-profit, health or higher education organizations may also apply.

Students may locate an internship on their own, use the *Careers Now* Program offered by the State of Tennessee, or request assistance from instructors in locating one. Once an internship has been agreed upon by the sponsoring agency, the instructor and the student, a contact person – preferably the intern’s work supervisor – must be identified. This individual will play an important part in providing periodic feedback to the instructor concerning the intern’s performance on the job. Thus, students must inform the instructor of this individual’s contact information.

Students may be approved for an internship and enrollment in PA 6500 after completing at least 15 credit hours of coursework.

Evaluation of the internship experience consists of three activities. The student is responsible for the Employment Log and the Internship Self-Evaluation and of course, effective performance as an intern. Interns also must submit to the instructor the letter of award, a job description, and any performance evaluations completed during the internship. The supervisor should submit an internship report evaluating the intern’s performance at the end of the internship. Also, performance evaluations completed during the internship period should be submitted to the instructor.

Employment Log

Students will need to keep a log or journal of their internship experience. Use a three-ring binder or large notebook divided into three sections.

I. “Job Notes” (20%)

One section of the notebook will be written in, during or after each work day. These “Job Notes” simply record what you did at the internship assignment that day. Each entry should be dated. Try to be as descriptive as possible. You do not need to enter a chronology of events. Instead, strive for as complete a description of your overall activities of the day as you can. In addition, information about the agency’s mission, your job description, a discussion with a co-worker, feedback from your supervisor or a colleague can be entered here. Aim for at least a page per day. Note: please do not refer to supervisors or co-workers by name; initials or pseudonyms will suffice.

II. “Reflections” (20%)

The second section labeled “Reflections” will record how you felt about the assignment recounted in “Job Notes.” As in “Job Notes” students should write in this section every day. Each entry should be dated. Ask yourself questions such as:

What do you expect from this job?

What do you think are your work strengths and weaknesses?

What are your short-term career goals? Do you think the internship will help you arrive at those goals or are you merely trying to gain job experience?
Did you feel good, bad, confused, indifferent about your assignment today?
Did you receive direction or feedback from anyone?
If you dealt with clients, what did you think about those encounters?
How would you evaluate today's job experience?
Did your experience today mesh with what you understand of your agency's mission or your job description? Or did it violate your expectations?

III. "Theory and Practice" (20%)

The third section labeled "Theory and Practice" should discuss how what you have studied thus far in public administration elucidates your job experience. For example, if February 29th's entry cites your work that day consisting of envelope stuffing for a mass mail-out, what have you read or studied in public administration which helps you understand why you were stuffing envelopes or how. Writings or lectures on bureaucracy, efficiency, customer service or Taylor's scientific management might be introduced depending on how you conceptualized the work assignment that day. While this section may not consist of daily entries, students are encouraged to write in this section at least several times a week.

Internship Self-Evaluation (40%)

This paper will be due at the end of your internship. It should evaluate your internship as a learning experience. Since you will be turning in your Log as well at the same time, you can refer to it as a secondary source (e.g. Log, p. 29 or Log, February 29th). You are aiming to achieve three general purposes with the Self-Evaluation. You must:

1. Evaluate whether/how your internship experience effectively taught you how a government/non-profit/health agency works; how an employee helps to deliver that agency's mission or goals; how people fit/don't fit organizations, etc.; and
2. Demonstrate the relevance or application of PA writings in the context of your internship. As you have done in a sketchy way in the section of the Log on "Theory and Practice," here you will discuss many of these same issues on a grander scale. For example, if you stuffed envelopes not for just one day but for a week, you may want to regard this from a variety of theoretical perspectives in the Internship Self-Evaluation.
3. Articulate career goals or a career strategy more precisely as a result of the internship experience.

Your paper will be evaluated according to whether and how well you meet these three criteria.

Before organizing your thoughts about or outlining this paper, it is recommended that you re-read your Log and try to derive larger themes or a "bigger picture" of what you did, how you felt about it or even, your conception of public administration. Fictional examples follow:

"I had originally thought of my job description as vague but now I see that the vagueness was intentional. As a temporary, part-time employee, my task was to fill in the gaps between everyone else. I was the 'glue' that held things together!"

"I began the internship with great confidence in my abilities in any Situation but gradually discovered by the second month that I had So much to learn about the organization's operations, three more months just weren't going to be enough."

"So much of the public administration and management Literature discusses the big issues, the idealistic side. You don't really get a sense from most of the readings of how much

time and effort goes into a task (such as a mass mail-out) that its purpose – why you are doing it gets displaced by concerns of *how* you're doing it. I can see how larger values like responsiveness and accountability get lost in a crisis or time crunch.”

As discussed, the self-evaluation is intended to draw the “big picture” from the student’s internship experience. You are trying to put the internship’s lessons in perspective both in the context of PA as well as your career goals. To get started, ask yourself about the goals and expectation you had at the beginning of the internship. Review what you wrote under “Job Notes” and “Reflections” those first few weeks and ponder your experiences with the benefit of hindsight:

- What do you know now you didn’t then?
- What knowledge or information would have made those first weeks easier?
- And, have you revised your career plans as a result of the experience?
- What do you want to learn now?

The self-evaluation paper can be anywhere from 12 to 20 pages. It must be typewritten and double-spaced. It will be due May 1st before 4:30 PM. These papers and the log can be turned in via email if they are posted prior to 4:30 the same day. **Note: late papers will not be accepted.**

Supervisor evaluation; instructor responsibilities

As noted above, it is essential that the instructor be able to contact and work with the intern’s work supervisor. The supervisor’s role is to help evaluate the intern’s work experience. **This includes making sure that the instructor receives copies of:**

**the intern’s award letter,
the intern’s job description,
performance evaluations and
the work supervisor’s written evaluation of the intern’s job performance.**

In addition, the work supervisor should contact the instructor if the intern’s performance or the internship experience is not satisfactory.

Once the student has identified the contact person, it is up to the instructor to:

1. secure periodic evaluations of the intern’s work performance;
2. observe the student at the internship site;
3. check with the student about his/her progress during the internship semester.

An important final note:

If at any time the student’s internship placement does not proceed as promised – for example, the student is asked to work extra hours or is assigned work outside the scope of the initial agreement, if the student feels treated unfairly or unethically – he or she is urged to bring these matters to the instructor’s attention. If serious problems arise, another internship may be required.

Recommended Learning Resources:

There are a few books dealing with the value of internships and how to succeed in achieving the most from the internship. Most will deal with the subject from a broad perspective, that is, they cover both undergraduate and graduate-level internships and examine internships in the arts, business, retail, etc. in addition to government. These resources may not serve your more immediate needs. Nevertheless, if you are thirsty for additional information, I list three very different books to begin the search. They are:

Coplin, William D. *10 Things Employers Want You to Learn in College: The Know-How You Need to Succeed.*

Oldman, Mark. *The Internship Bible.* 10th edition (Princeton Review Series).

Sweitzer, H. Frederick and Mary A. King. *The Successful Internship: Transformation and Empowerment in Experiential Learning.* Wadsworth, 2nd edition.

A “Faculty-Student Contract” follows. Interns should submit a completed contract to the instructor prior to the internship, before course registration or as early in the term as possible.

Tennessee State University
Department of Public Administration

PADM 6500 Internship in Public Administration

FACULTY-STUDENT CONTRACT

Student's name:

*Agency name and immediate supervisor
(please provide complete contact information)*

Duration of internship

Purposes of internships project(s):

Course assignments to be completed:

*Student **Employment Log** to be maintained on a daily basis. See PADM6500 syllabus for details*

***Internship Self-Evaluation** to be completed at the conclusion of the internship.*

Please append to this form or send under separate cover the following information:

1) a current job description for your internship which has been approved by your immediate supervisor or other agency representative

2) An award letter or official correspondence from the internship agency concerning your employment or projects for which you will be responsible

During and at the conclusion of the internship please make sure you provide:

3) copies of any completed performance evaluations at the sponsoring agency

Finally, bear in mind that your internship supervisor will need to observe you in the internship setting at least once during the internship. Your supervisor should be notified in advance that this will occur.