



GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY™

School of Community Leadership and Development

The Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration Degree Program Internship Guide

Congratulations as you begin to embark on an important milestone in your academic preparation toward a degree in Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration from Grand Valley State University (GVSU).

Our internship program focuses on the transition of interns as they move from student in the classroom, to learner in the field, to finally a Public, Nonprofit and Health professional. The department's faculty believes that this mentorship experience creates a relationship that enhances your future career. Your internship is a mutually beneficial relationship for both you and the public or nonprofit agency you choose for your experience. For a promising college student, an internship provides a chance to explore various public and nonprofit fields, to be exposed to the world of work, and to serve alongside professionals whom you respect. For professionals, the intern brings fresh new perspectives to the organization and enables them to serve as mentors.

This guidebook includes a variety of tips and forms that you will need to use to help you organize and navigate your successful internship experience.

I wish you much success and stand ready to be of assistance to you in this important process!

Mr. Quincy B. Williams

Undergraduate & Internship Coordinator

Grand Valley State University, School of Community Leadership and Development



The Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration Degree Program Internship Guide

An internship, as defined by the School of Community Leadership and Development at Grand Valley State University is a structured academic opportunity that allows students to apply academic skills and knowledge in the workplace. Experiential education that is based on a set of learning objectives helps students to prepare to meet career responsibilities after graduation.

GOALS OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:

- ✓✓ To allow students to apply, evaluate, test and integrate academic knowledge and theoretical concepts in a work setting.
- ✓✓ To develop and expand students' knowledge about themselves and their abilities, goals, and career interests in a work setting.
- ✓✓ To expand students' awareness of the world beyond the campus by exposure to a variety of careers, disciplines, lifestyles, and environments.
- ✓✓ To provide students with experience in the disciplined and discriminatory use of evidence in making decisions and solving problems in a work setting.

Why complete an internship?

What is it about an internship that is so valuable? Why should you consider doing one? What advantages will you have over students who do not participate in an experiential education experience?

An internship:

- Gives you a chance to explore career fields through firsthand experience.
- Promotes development of confidence, maturity, responsibility, and skill in human relations.
- Increases the development of decision-making and analytical skills through experience in actual work environments.
- Creates a better understanding of theory by its actual application in practice.
- Helps you develop a more positive attitude toward coursework as a result of seeing its usefulness on the job, which often leads to better grades.
- Helps you gain professional experience to include on your resume, which can significantly improve your marketability to employers.
- Provides useful contacts that may lead to future employment.

Before The Internship Begins

REQUIREMENTS OF A PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT INTERNSHIP:

In order to earn credit for your internship, you will need to work closely with the internship coordinator who will coordinate certain aspects of your internship experience.

Be sure that you make this request at least one semester before you intend to do an internship. Though it is not the internship coordinator's responsibility to find an internship placement for the student, the coordinator can offer suggestions or personal contact names which can help you with the search process. Your internship coordinator will help you develop your internship agreement, serve as a liaison between you and your work supervisor, and support you through the internship experience.

Students must complete and submit the **Online Internship Agreement Form** through the GVSU Career Center. The form can be found in the GVSU Internship Management System at <https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/ims-login.htm>.

To request credit for your internship, please log-in and complete the Online Internship Agreement Form. If you do not see your major listed, please contact your academic department for information on obtaining internship credit specific to your major.

Please note that this form is to be completed AFTER you have secured an internship. Please ensure all information is correct before submission, as this information will be submitted to the Career Center as well as your employer. If you have questions about course requirements, number of credits, etc. please refer to your academic department's website or contact faculty internship coordinator, Quincy Williams williamsq@gvsu.edu.

You are expected to maintain contact throughout the internship with your internship coordinator and complete assignments on time so that the progress of your work may be evaluated.

You must evaluate the internship experience on the official evaluation forms or in a format approved by your internship coordinator. Completing the Student Evaluations will help you to review your internship experience, evaluate your most significant accomplishments, and focus on areas in which you need improvement or additional experience.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

Any extra travel or work-related expenses are the student's responsibility. Some student interns may be paid a salary or stipend by their host organization; other internships are unpaid.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Most internships obtained by our students are local. However, internship opportunities exist in other areas of Michigan as well as in other states in the United States.

There are also increasing numbers of students who are choosing to do an international internship. International internships are available in a variety of countries.

TIMELINES

Students should begin exploring internship placements no later than one semester preceding their intended internship. (Some very competitive internships have application deadlines of six to eight months prior to the start of the internship.)

ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT

The intern should complete the Online Internship Agreement Form which defines the nature of the work experience, the learning objectives, and academic expectations. Though this agreement form is developed collaboratively with the internship coordinator and the work supervisor, the student needs to reflectively plan for the internship since it represents another aspect of his/her/their academic program. It should reflect a level of academic rigor similar to that encountered in the classroom.

INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR

Mr. Quincy Williams serves as a mentor and facilitator to the student during the internship experience. The internship coordinator should meet periodically with the student at arranged times throughout the internship period to evaluate progress and give advice when needed.

The internship coordinator will make contact(s) with the work supervisor during the student's internship. He will monitor the progress of the internship from a variety of viewpoints and to maintain close relationships with all participants. While working closely with the individual student, Mr. Williams can observe the practices and activities of the employment setting.

The internship coordinator will try to make at least two phone contacts with the work supervisor over the course of the internship. An initial contact at the outset and a second call within week eight or week nine of the semester. He will make onsite visits whenever feasible.

Mr. Williams is responsible for confirming that the student completes all coursework and paperwork prior to submitting a grade for the internship.

WORK SITE SUPERVISOR

Your willingness to provide an opportunity for a Grand Valley State University student to expand his/ her/their education beyond the classroom is deeply appreciated. Student interns have the potential to provide your organization with genuine assistance, as well as a fresh perspective and new energy and enthusiasm.

As supervisor for a Grand Valley State University intern, you are responsible for the intern's work activity and schedule. You will facilitate the transition between academic studies and the work of the workplace. You can be especially helpful to the student in developing realistic goals and providing suggestions for possible activities, tasks, and projects to accomplish these goals.

The site supervisor should take an active role in mentoring and be available for meetings or conversations with both the student and the internship coordinator.

The site supervisor should complete the evaluation forms in a timely fashion and return them to Mr. Williams.

During The Internship

GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK SITE SUPERVISOR

ORIENTATION

Listed below are some guidelines for helping the student adjust to the work setting.

1. Since the student is with you for such a brief time, it is recommended that your organization literature be shared with the student in advance to save time. This material will help the student understand where his or her position fits in the “big picture.”
2. Please make whatever physical arrangements are necessary regarding workspace and equipment. Provide other appropriate materials, as necessary.
3. You and the student should agree about reporting time and place, hours, dress, degree of independence, on the job supervision, and confidentiality before the first scheduled workday.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

During times of inclement weather, interns should contact their site supervisor for information on whether the site will be open, delayed, or closed and adjust their schedule accordingly.

CONTACT WITH INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR

The internship coordinator will be contacting you as the internship progresses. Some topics that might be appropriate to discuss are:

1. Is the intern performing as expected?
2. Are there major discrepancies between you and the intern's perception?
3. Is the student developing appropriate professional behavior toward both staff and supervisors?
4. Is the student accepting direction, supervision, and constructive criticism?
5. Are there ways the internship could be improved?
6. If there are concerns, please contact the internship coordinator so that problems might be resolved promptly.

EVALUATION

An evaluation form is provided in a separate section on the course Blackboard Ultra webpage that should simplify the written evaluation process. A prompt return of the evaluation to the internship coordinator at the end of the internship will be greatly appreciated. Student interns are encouraged to discuss this evaluation with you to aid in reviewing their experience and clarifying comments made on the evaluation form.

Some topics that might be appropriate to discuss with the student are:

1. Did the intern perform as expected?
2. How did the intern's performance compare with people in comparable positions?
3. What are major problems the student will face as a professional? What sources of information can be used to address these problems?

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Make a good first impression

- Dress professionally.
- Always be prompt.
- Maintain a positive attitude; it is one of your greatest assets.
- Find out about and follow company regulations.
- Respect the time of others

ORIENTATION

1. If there is no formal orientation program for you, try to give yourself one by:

- Reading everything you can about the organization.
- Introducing yourself to your co-workers (keep notes so you can connect names and faces).
- Making lists of questions so that you can use your supervisor's time wisely.

2. Getting the job done

- Schedule your time; keep a to do list.
- Space out your tasks; one big task can be broken down into stages.
- Pace your energy. Too much enthusiasm at first may overwhelm you and leave you burned out at the end.

GATHERING CAREER INFORMATION

An internship is an excellent opportunity to explore a career of your choice. You will be able to gather information, clarify how you feel about specific work environments, and assess your abilities as you learn which skills are essential for various positions. You can also develop professional contacts that can be used once you begin your post-graduation job search.

You will no doubt discover career related information during the hours you work each week. A purposeful effort to obtain information, however, can yield an even more results.

1. Each week, ask co-workers a few questions about their careers and compare answers. You will reap the benefit of learning about a particular career field from different viewpoints.
2. Schedule 20 to 30 minute "information interviews" with selected co-workers throughout the experience.
3. If possible, get involved in company activities, training sessions, or professional development seminars. You may also want to participate in social events planned for employees to learn more about the culture of the organization.
4. Use a scheduled evaluation meeting with a supervisor at the end of the internship to discuss career concerns.

PROBLEMS WITH WORK ASSIGNMENTS

You may encounter some of the following challenges in your internship:

1. **"Busy" work:** As a member of a team, you will want to help with routine tasks occasionally, but you do not want them to become your permanent job. A good learning contract should prevent this problem, but if you feel your work activities are not challenging enough, consult your work supervisor. Make sure if you ask for additional assignments, you have demonstrated your capacity to manage them.
2. **Pressure:** Meeting deadlines is your responsibility, but if the pressure to finish assignments on time begins to overwhelm you, let your supervisor know. The quality of your work is as important as the time element. The best planning can fall through, so do not be afraid to say you cannot finish on time or think that the project is too much for you to handle.
3. **Overtime:** You may be asked, or feel pressured, to work late or on weekends, thinking working extra hours may help you learn more by experiencing roles or situations not otherwise available. Your commitment to your supervisor and your organization may demand that you put in the extra work. However, you are an independent person, and everyone has a personal life to maintain. So, if you feel confused about work hours and time, talk to your supervisor, and negotiate a solution that considers both your needs and those of the organization.
4. **Discrimination or Harassment:** In compliance with federal and state discrimination laws, Grand Valley State University prohibits illegal discrimination or harassment against students and employees. Accordingly, the School of Community Leadership and Development is committed to providing students participating in its Internship Program an educationally enriching experience in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's membership in a protected class that has the purpose or the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

If you feel you are being sexually harassed on the job, contact Mr. Quincy Williams, **immediately** at quincy.williams@gvsu.edu or 616-331-2362.