

**Political Science**

**Internship Handbook**

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Dear Students and Site Supervisors,

I want to start by extending my sincere gratitude for your interest and involvement in the Political Science Internship Program, aimed at providing students with an immersive experience in a range of organizations, specializations, and career paths. We are hopeful that the site supervisors will find this collaboration equally rewarding, as they witness the tangible contributions of our students to their practices, while also playing an important role in nurturing the next generation of professionals.

This program is designed to be *mutually beneficial*. Student interns will spend a semester under the mentorship of supervisors, acquiring practical skills essential for success in their future careers, gaining insights into the intricacies of political, organizational and/or policy practices, and expanding their comprehension of the profession's workings. In turn, supervisors will have the opportunity to engage with motivated, innovative individuals who may potentially become future assets to their or similar organizations.

Internships serve as wonderful opportunities for professional growth, where interns not only learn to fulfill organizational responsibilities, make connections to prior studies, and hone their soft skills. By tapping into the site supervisor's expertise, interns not only grasp the "how" of operations, programs and practices, but also the underlying rationale behind their selection and use in the first place.

To facilitate this win-win scenario, we ask that you review these guidelines, and reach to communicate with me if you need assistance at any time throughout the process.

Once again, I extend my appreciation for your participation in this program. I am grateful for your involvement in our program and the positive impact that involvement will inevitably have.

Sincerely,

A signature on a white background

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Eric Austin

Political Science Department Head eric.austin@montana.edu

# Eligible Programs and Terminology

**Undergraduate Academic Degree Programs:**

Students from any undergraduate degree are eligible for participation in the Political Science Internship Program. Typically, students participating will have junior or senior standing and be in the final two-years of their undergraduate degree program, unless given prior approval by the Department Head. Students with less than junior standing should arrange a meeting with the Department Head to discuss their preparedness for the experience. Individual major programs may have internship opportunities that would allow students to earn credits towards their major area of study. Students are encouraged to investigate and select the best Montana State University internship program for their needs. Students participating in this program will be earning credits in PSCI 498. Students from other programs should consult with their major advisors for how these credits will best contribute towards their graduation requirements.

**Terminology:**

The following list defines the internship experience terminology used throughout this handbook:

* Student Intern: An undergraduate student who is participating in an internship experience for course credit that will fulfill the requirements of their degree program or be counted as elective credits toward their major.
* Organizational Partner: The organization, company, or affiliate that the student intern will be working for during the internship experience.
* Site Supervisor: Organizational partners are required to assign a site supervisor to the student intern to support and guide them through the internship experience. The site supervisor is normally the individual that directly oversees the student’s work on a project or is paired with the student based on common career goals or interests. The supervisor will also provide feedback to the Department Head on the student’s progress and contribution twice during the semester.
* Department Head: The Montana State University point of contact for all parties before, during and after the internship process. This person is available to address concerns, questions, or comments about the process, MSU academic degree programs, and the student intern.

Eric Austin eric.austin@montana.edu

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# Internship Structure and Eligibility Policies

**What is an internship?**

An internship offers students firsthand, typically on-site, experience in a workplace aligned with their career interests, exposing them to the skills, duties, and responsibilities typically found in a professional role.

**Where may a student complete an internship?**

Eligible internship sites offer site supervisorship opportunities where students can reflect on and apply their academic training and skills in a real-world setting. Students should align their career goals with their chosen site to ensure a mutually beneficial experience. Final approval of all sites rests with the Department Head and/or Internship Coordinator.

**When is a student eligible to complete an internship?**

To be eligible to complete an internship, students must complete all pre-experience requirements (pages 7-8) and be within the final two years of their undergraduate degree program. Freshmen and sophomores wishing to apply must receive a special exception from the Department Head.

**What type of work will the student intern complete?**

At the start of the internship, an "Internship Contract" will be drafted with the site supervisor to outline the experience's goals and objectives. This agreement must incorporate at least one deliverable for the hosting organizational partner to be completed by the student. For further guidance, please refer to Attachment C.

**How is a site secured?**

Students may apply for an existing PSCI 498 internship (any organization that seeks to recruit or hire with the aid of the Political Science Department) or seek out their own within the local community – the latter option being the most common. For any existing internships, students are advised to collaborate with the Department Head and submit their applications for existing internships by the designated deadline, which is typically during the semester before the internship period. The Department Head will specify the preferred application process and existing internship sites along with basic duties and hours of the internship. I some cases, the Department Head may do an initial screening of applicants, but the final decision on hiring the intern rests with the Organizational Partner and Site Supervisor. Should a student secure an internship separately from this process that they wish to apply for credit for, they will be responsible for working with the Department Head to determine whether the internship qualifies and the appropriate number of credit hours. In both cases, it is the student's responsibility to complete the intent to enroll form to be enrolled in the PSCI 498 internship course.

**When does the internship start and conclude?**

Per the Montana State University Registrar’s Office and liability insurance regulations, the internship must be completed *within the dates of the semester in which they are enrolled* in the 498 Internship Course.

Please review the start and end dates for the semester in which you intend to participate. Summer session internships are eligible; though students should keep in mind that earning credit during the summer session does require paying tuition in line with credits earned.

**How many credits can a student earn?**

Students may earn a minimum of 3 credits and up to 12 credits. If the internship is completed at one site between two semesters, the student must be able to articulate how their experience/responsibilities are being expanded in the second semester to create ongoing learning opportunities.

Internships require at least 50 contact hours per credit (150 for 3 credits). These contact hours encompass various activities such as trainings, work time, meetings, seminars, conferences, and other tasks related to the internship roles. Students can, with approval, complete multiple internships, not to exceed 12 credits in total.

Approximate Credits/Work Schedule Ratios

3 credits = 10 hours/week

6 credits = 20 hours/week

9 credits = 30 hours/week   
12 credits = 40 hours/week

**Are internships paid?**

Compensation is not a requirement of internships in the Political Science Department. The possibility of payment for internships is determined by the Partner Organization. Typically, compensation is in the form of an hourly wage, though other arrangements, such as a stipend or a contract to complete a specific deliverable, are also possible.

**Can internship credits be earned at my current workplace?**

In rare circumstances, yes. If a prospective intern is already employed with the Organizational Partner, the student must demonstrate how their role and responsibilities have expanded to encompass additional learning opportunities specifically associated with the internship (and must be detailed in the contract). Internships in a student’s current workplace must be approved by the Department Head before registering for PSCI 498 credits and are limited to 3 credits. Here are some additional guidelines to consider:

* A student can earn a maximum of 3 credits while working at their current place of employment with approval of the Department Head.
* Documentation should not exceed 20% over the weekly average number of hours, as the internship experience must align with the duration specified in the internship course and contract.
* If the internship is terminated prematurely, the student cannot complete the internship course, the student must either withdraw from the credits (if the drop/withdrawal deadlines have not passed) or take an “I”/Incomplete grade for the semester. If a student receives an “I”, they must complete any remaining work or requirements to earn a grade within the next semester.

**Can a student intern complete their internship at the same site throughout multiple semesters?**

It depends upon the learning goals, the internship site and Department Head. If a student is approved to complete an internship at the same site for multiple semesters the student must be able to articulate how their learning is new, different or substantially extended as a result of continuing their internship, or how the project or program they are working on serves as a setting to further develop or extend learning objectives in a significant way. Students should discuss this with the Department Head before applying for a second semester. In order to earn the minimum 3 credits, continuing at the same organization will also require working the required 150 hours associated with earning 3 credits.

**Can a study abroad internship count for internship credits?**

In very rare circumstances, study abroad experiences that include a significant professional/experiential component may count towards internship credits. However, it depends upon the structure of the study abroad experience. Students wishing to pursue this option must receive prior approval from the Department Head before establishing an agreement with the host organization or registering for credits.

**How do internship credits apply to the degree and major?**

For Political Science students, 3 credits can be applied to the Upper Division electives requirement of the major. Any additional credits will count toward the 42 UD required for a bachelor’s degree. Students from other majors should consult w their advisor.

**Are background checks required?**

It depends upon the site. If a background check is required, the student intern is responsible for completing it, including payment.

*All polices are subject to change based upon requirements of sites and faculty.*

# Identifying, Arranging and Preparing for your Internship: Student Interns

**Your Opportunity**

Your internship opportunity provides you with a practical application of what you are learning in an academic setting to real world scenarios. You are challenged to expand your learning beyond the mechanics of the responsibilities to understand the goals, objectives and operations of the organization you are interning with. You must prepare well for this internship to gain maximum value from the experience.

**Identify Prospective Sites**

Generally, students wanting to do an internship should begin the process of identifying and arranging the experience 2-3 months prior to the expected start date (Approximately March 1 for Summer internships, June 1 for Fall internships, and November 1 for Spring internships). If you would like to take part in an internship but do not have a specific organization in mind, reach out to your advisor or the Department Head and initiate a discussion about options. The faculty are well-connected to potential host organizations and can help identify possibilities, and may be able to refer or introduce you to possible site supervisors. The Department is also frequently approached by organizations seeking to recruit interns. These opportunities and any available information about the positions and application processes are sent out in the Department’s weekly Hotline email.

If an internship opportunity presents itself to a student closer to the start of the planned semester/start date, we will make every effort to facilitate all of the pre-experience requirements as quickly as possible, but cannot guarantee an expedited timeline. It is the student’s responsibility to plan ahead as much as possible.

As you consider possible host organizations, consider your passion and the type of experience and skills you want to gain from your internship. You may apply for an internship at one of our established sites or identify one of your own. Identify the types of activities you will be completing and ensure they are a good fit for your skills and desired experience. When identifying your own site, review this handbook with the Organizational Partner to ensure they can fulfill the requirements and identify a site supervisor.

**Search and Contract Timeline**

* Fall: Search – Ideally, around May 15 (no later than June 1)

Enrolled and contract complete – No later than August 1

* Spring: Search - approximately Nov 1

Enrolled and contract complete – No later than January 10

* Summer: Search - approximately March 1

Enrolled and contract complete – No later than May 1

Internship hours may only be earned the dates of the semester which the student is enrolled in the internship course.

**Organizational Partner Interviews**

If an interview is required, dress professionally and be prepared to answer questions about your experience level, what you are looking for in an internship, your work ethic and why you are well suited for the position. Create a current resume and cover letter. For assistance, schedule an appointment with the Department Head or visit Career Services.

**Finalize Arrangements**

Once your internship has been secured and your contract is established, you need to finalize your internship

* Complete any required training or background checks as per Organizational Partner
* Schedule your start date (within the guidelines)
* Create a schedule
* Enroll in the 498 Internship Course

As a reflective academic experience, internship hours must be completed the same semester in which the student intern is enrolled in the Internship Course: PSCI 498. Enrollment in the 498 course is ‘consent of instructor’. Typically, consent or approval to enroll is dependent on having completed the internship contract. However, because registration often takes place prior to contracts being finalized, consent to register will be granted based on evidence (e.g. an email conversation with the host organization/site supervisor) that the internship arrangements are well established and unlikely to fall through. Should an internship fall through for whatever reason, it is the student’s responsibility to withdraw from the course and notify the Department Head.

**Your Responsibilities During the Internship**

Establish a Learning Agreement (attachment C). The learning agreement will ask you to construct a set of personal goals and objectives for placement, which are designed to be consistent with individual career goals. Such goals should emphasize the integration of discipline specific theories, skills, and practices and include at least one independent project.

* Students are expected to complete all responsibilities assigned by the site supervisor within the specified time frame.
* Students are expected to complete all responsibilities assigned by the host site and Department Head (how serves as the instructor of record) per the 498 course within the specified time frame. Unless otherwise negotiated or specified with the Department Head, all interns will complete and submit four reflection essays in which the student systematically examines an experience, work project or other topic in relation to the skills developed/demonstrated and links to a course topic or concept of their choosing.
* Students are expected to follow organizational policies and procedures regarding work responsibilities and activities. Policies and standards should be followed regarding dress, work hours, holidays, and attendance. Should personal illness or unforeseen circumstances prohibit the performance of internship duties, the site supervisor and faculty advisor should be informed. Any lost hours should be made upon a time agreed upon by the site supervisor.
* Students are expected to exhibit professional ethical behavior, attitudes, and confidentiality. When the student is unclear what professional behavior or attitudes entail, the Site Supervisor or Department Head should be contacted. Should misconduct occur, the student could be asked by the agency to leave the organization and students will be at risk of failing the internship. Student Code of Conduct applies.
* Students are expected to provide for all personal expenses connected with the internship including transportation, housing, personal, and professional needs.
* The student is expected to accept responsibility for providing liability, health, and accident insurance.

**Tracking Time and Effort - Frequently Asked Questions:**

***Do I have to track my hours using the paper/pencil or electronic calendar?***

* Yes. On occasion, it may be necessary to provide documentation of hours worked to your host organization, the Department or the University. Having a record of your hours paper pencil allows you to track your hours earned, provides documentation should that become necessary. Ideally, you should indicate not only your hours per day but a brief description of your activities.

***Does my supervisor have to sign-off on my timesheet?***

* No. *However*, your supervisor may be asked at any time to verify the hours earned.

***How many hours must be earned?***

* You must earn a minimum of 50 hours per credit. You can complete more. However, you *cannot complete fewer hours* than the minimum to earn a passing grade for the number of credits you are enrolled in the internship!

*If your agency is closed for holidays, such as Thanksgiving or you get sick, it is important that you proactively make a plan with your agency site supervisor for when any missed time may be made up. It is highly advised that students work an hour or two more per week early in the semester to provide flexibility around the holidays or for sick days to prevent needing to earn extra hours at the end of the semester.*

***Should I have a weekly schedule?***

* YES! In advance of the internship starting, a schedule should be developed to meet the needs of the organizational partner and the intern. It is highly recommended that a consistent schedule be set for the internship. If the schedule is flexible, proactively discuss how hours will be earned to ensure ongoing attainment of minimum requirements and professionally managed expectations.

***What if the office is closed for a holiday, do I need to make that time up?***

* Yes, the minimum number of hours per credit are required for the semester; regardless of the schedule.

***Do my hours have to be consistent each week?***

* It depends on your agency. You must have a set schedule with hours that your site supervisor has agreed upon and knows when to expect you. However, depending on the needs of the agency you may have some weeks where you log very few hours and other weeks when you log several hours. You are responsible for diligently tracking your hours to ensure the minimum number of hours have been earned during the semester of your internship.

***What dates are eligible for me to earn my hours?***

* 100% of hours required (as determined by the number of credits) must be earned within the semester in which you are enrolled in the course. If project, workplace or personal factors potentially impact your ability to meet this requirement, contact the Department Head as soon as possible to determine a course of action.

***Can internship hours be earned when I am not at my site?***

* This is at the discretion of your agency site supervisor. If he/she allows you to work on projects independently, that is permissible. When doing so, ensure that you are actively engaging with your site site supervisor regarding expectations and managing your time efficiently. However, you should keep in mind that part of the intent of an internship is for you to gain direct experience of and familiarity with the culture and informal aspects of the organization. Doing so requires a sufficient degree of immersion, which you cannot accomplish to the same degree working remotely.

***Can I complete assignments for the 498-internship course during my internship hours?***

* No, student interns should not be completing internship assignments (primarily your reflection essays) during their scheduled internship time.

***If my hours have been earned before the end of the semester, can I conclude my internship early?***

* It depends. You have committed to the agency for the length of the semester. If additional hours are being earned each week, proactively visit with your agency site supervisor about your schedule to devise a mutually beneficial plan. Internships may only be concluded early if the hours have been earned with a positive evaluation form the site site supervisor and the site site supervisor, student intern and faculty site supervisor all agree that that the goals and objectives outlined in the learning agreement have been achieved.

# Internship Guidelines: Site Supervisor/Organizational Partners

**Role**

An effective site supervisor and site supervisor in the field is someone dedicated, skilled, and able to guide the internship experience and give constructive feedback to the Student Intern. A great site supervisor will engage with the intern to facilitate learning from their expertise. It's also your responsibility to effectively communicate and demonstrate the organization's core values and objectives to the intern**.**

**Activities**

The challenge for the site supervisor is to provide a well-rounded, productive experience that supports the student intern with gaining professional competence and confidence in today’s workplace. While we anticipate and expect that student interns will often engage in a variety of administrative tasks at the location site, please consider incorporating the following activities into the experience as appropriate:

* Provide a wide variety of meaningful and challenging projects;
* If the organization has multiple locations, allow the student to visit another job site;
* Have the student intern attend a conference, seminar, client, court, team meetings or Board of Directors meetings;
* Encourage the student to network with colleagues to learn about other jobs, experiences, and perspectives within the industry.

**Requirements**

Site supervisors are asked to complete the following requirements:

1. Provide the intern with an orientation to the workplace.
   1. Tour the facilities and explain how the office functions.
   2. Introduce the student intern to the people they will be working with.
   3. Discuss workplace expectations including, but not limited to: dress, schedule, contact information and communication procedures in case of an unexpected absence.
   4. Provide necessary resources for students to perform their responsibilities (computer access, activity supplies, office space, etc.).
   5. Explain the activities involved in the experience including where to find information, who to go to for questions and policies and procedures for completing tasks, assessing productivity and quality assurance.
2. Coordinate with the student to develop the specifics of the Internship Contract (attachment B), particularly the deliverables or other responsibilities of the student, and the learning objectives the student wants to accomplish. Once these details, as well as other administrative or operational elements of the contract are complete (e.g. work schedules, workspace, IT needs, trainings, etc.), sign the finalized contract (digital signatures and circulation will be done via DocuSign).
3. Arrange a suitable time for regular meetings with the intern to allow for site mentoring and discussion regarding his/her progress throughout the internship. In addition to any regularly scheduled operational or project meetings, we encourage site supervisors to plan for at least two “performance feedback” meetings (see attachments F and G as templates or for guidance). The first should take place at roughly the mid-point of the internship, and the second at the end of the internship. These meetings are intended, in part, for student interns to get a sense of the performance expectations and performance management systems of your organizations. Further, these meetings should be a formative or developmental conversation with the student about the strengths and opportunities in their skills and performance, and for the student to ask questions.
4. Confer with the Department Head if any challenges are occurring.

# Attachment A: Internship Contract

(NOTE: This is a template of the internship contract and NOT the document you will discuss and fill out with your site supervisor. Once you have established preliminary agreement with your host site/supervisor, send the name and email address of that individual to Dr. Austin ([eric.austin@montana.edu](mailto:eric.austin@montana.edu)) and Madison Gordon-Mora ([madison.gordonmora@montana.edu](mailto:madison.gordonmora@montana.edu)). Madison will set up a digital version of the contract and circulate it for completion and signatures using DocuSign.)

**Internship Learning Contract for PSCI 498**

**Department of Political Science**

P.O. Box 172240 Bozeman, MT 59717-2240

Tel: (406) 994-4141

The purpose of this Learning Contract is to serve as a formal agreement between the Student Intern, the Organization, and the Political Science Department.

Please provide all information in boxes below.

**STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Student Name:

Last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_First\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MI\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student ID #: -\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Address:

Street \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ST\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Minor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Credits Earned (including current semester) : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Overall GPA:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:**

Name of Organization/ Business:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Work Site Address:

Street \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Site Supervisor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address of Site Supervisor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**INTERNSHIP INFORMATION:**

Expected Start date\_\_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_\_

The intern will be expected to work \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hours per week.

Expected total number of credits (50 hours/credit; 3 credits *min* to 12 credits *max*):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Semester to Register for Internship Credit: Fall/Spring/Summer 20\_\_\_\_\_

Will the internship be paid (including stipends)? Yes/No

Please specify any other forms of compensation that will be made by the organization to the intern (i.e. rent, car allowance, travel reimbursement, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Training & Onsite Supervision (Who will provide it? How frequently will it occur? What methods will be used?)

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Eric Austin Title: Professor and Department Head

Phone Number: (406)994-4141 Email: politicalscienceinternships@montana.edu

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Please list the expected learning outcomes (skills, competencies, experiences) for the internship.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please state the student’s primary duties, projects or deliverables for the internship.

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In addition to the student’s primary duties/projects with the organization, the student will complete and submit 4 reflection essays via the Canvas assignment Dropbox (or email if approved in advance).

*In addition to completing this contract, the student and site supervisor have also read the Internship Handbook, are willing and able to fulfill their responsibilities and have developed a Learning Agreement.*

**SIGNATURES:**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Site Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Attachment B: Reflection Essay

As an academic experience, during the internship process, students are required to reflect on their internship experience and how it has influenced their professional growth.

For this assignment, you will write four critical reflection essays, each of which should be three to four double-spaced pages in length. These essays are an opportunity for you to reflect on key experiences from your internship, and link them to material covered in your coursework. The intent of these essays is to apply concepts from your coursework to your experience in order to both understand the dynamics of your experience and to consider how those concepts can inform action.

Potential topics for these essays might include (though are not limited to): Onboarding and training, Organizational culture/climate, Organizational processes/policies/procedures, Leadership, Management functions (decision-making, supervision, performance management), Program operations, Interactions with citizens/clients/customers.

The following format should be used for each essay:

**Introduction:**

Briefly introduce and explain the topic of your essay. This section should be very brief, and provide just enough context so that the reader knows what the essay is about.

**Objective review**: What are the main elements or attributes of the experience. What elements do you believe are important to understanding what occurred (questions like who, what, when, where… Not why and how).

**Reaction:** What was your emotional or intuitive reaction to the events? How did it make you feel?

The point of this section is to recognize that our emotions can color our interpretation. If those emotional reactions are identified and acknowledged, then they are less likely to have unrecognized or unacknowledged impacts on your understandings and actions.

(Note: These first two sections should be as short and concise as possible – ideally, no more than a page to page-and-a-half in length)

**Interpretation:** This is where you begin your intellectual or academic analysis of the experience and not before. Draw explicitly and directly on resources (readings, concepts and theories) from specific courses to answer questions such as: How does the experience reflect the theory and literature you’ve studied? Why, in relation to the theory/literature, do you think the situation played out as it did? How do you make sense of what you saw – relative to your experience, prior studies, etc? What are the possible alternate interpretations?

**Decision:** In this last section, you are to determine the implications of your analysis for action. What did you learn about the organization, the world or yourself that will affect you and how you choose to operate in the future? Based on your interpretation, what would you do similarly or differently in the future?

While the ORID essay should contain your personal reflections on the experience, it is still a formal assignment and should reflect appropriate grammatical, mechanical and logical rigor. You don’t need to include a full reference list, but should use in-text, parenthetical citations to indicate the source of the ideas you’re referring to.

**Deadlines**

Because these essays are intended to be an opportunity to reflect on and write about experiences that you find interesting or important, and which are unlikely to occur in line with a pre-established schedule, there are no hard or formal deadlines for submission. However, the intent is to spread these reflections throughout the internship experience. You should strive for roughly the following schedule.

* Essay 1 – Week 4
* Essay 2 – Week 8
* Essay 3 – Week 12
* Essay 4 – No later than Wednesday of Finals Week (This final essay can either focus on an event or task, following the model of the first three essays or alternatively can be a summary reflection on your entire internship experience.)

It is important for you to be aware that since there are no hard or formal deadlines for these essays, you are solely and entirely responsible for making sure that the essays are complete and submitted. The Department Head/Internship Coordinator will not check on or remind you of the requirement. If you forget or fail to submit any or all of these essays, there is allowance for late submissions or extra credit. Your grade will simply reflect your failure to complete the required academic component of the course.