



AGENCY GUIDE FOR INTERNSHIPS IN RECREATION AND PARKS MANAGEMENT

Recreation and
Parks Management
Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland

INTERNSHIP GUIDE FOR AGENCIES AND THE AGENCY SUPERVISOR OF STUDENT INTERNS

The internship experience is an integral part of a student's total educational preparation for a career in Parks and Recreation. At Frostburg State University (FSU), the internship is a capstone experience that is intended to synthesize a student's course work, service learning, and volunteer experiences. This experience provides the student an opportunity for professional and personal growth through a supervised, on-the-job experiences in the recreation field. This internship guide is designed to assist the student, faculty advisor, and agency supervisor in preparing and providing an internship experience for an undergraduate student.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined to provide consistency in interpretation of the enclosed information:

1. **Internship** or fieldwork refers to the primary opportunity for the student to experience the professional world as part of their educational process.
2. The **Agency** refers to one of a variety of organizations or an institution that offers programs and facilities to meet various recreation and/or leisure needs.
3. The **Agency Supervisor** (or Site Supervisor) is the specific staff member designated by the agency to provide direct supervision, orientation, guidance, and direction to the intern at that agency.
4. The **Faculty Supervisor** is the FSU faculty member who is assigned to the specific internship student. He/she approves the internship site and monitors the entire internship process in order to provide guidance and support to the student and the agency. He/she will also grade the final notebook and projects submitted by the intern.
5. **PRRM** is the parks and recreation resource management program at FSU.

GOALS OF THE INERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:

The value of the internship experience is directly related to the overall goals of the internship program. The student, educator, and professional work together to provide a diversified and developmental experience for the student that also benefits the agency and aids in evaluating the preparation of the student for the experience.

GOALS FOR THE STUDENT INTERN:

The internship should allow the student to:

1. engage in on-the-job applications of the PRRM program content under a supervised and developmental environment at the agency.
2. plan, organize, manage and lead recreation and/or leisure programs and/or services at the agency.
3. identify their professional strengths and weaknesses.
4. interact with professionals in the student's area of interest and/or expertise.
5. participate in and/or be exposed to administrative and supervisory tasks (i.e. budgeting, finances, personnel processes)

INTERNSHIP GOALS RELATED TO THE FSU PRRM PROGRAM:

The internship experience should:

1. serves as a capstone experience in which the course work completed by a student is synthesized and applied in a "real world" experience.
2. assist in developing a cooperative working relationship between educators and practitioners.
3. provide the faculty with up-to-date information and issues related to parks and recreation field.
4. provide a means to evaluate the students' academic preparation for the experience.

INTERNSHIP GOALS RELATED TO THE AGENCY:

The internship experience should:

1. provide the agency an opportunity to evaluate prospective employees.
2. provide the agency additional resources to serve the agency's constituency through the contributions of the student intern.
3. provide a means for feedback concerning the student's preparation for the internship and the demands of the experience.
4. allow professionals to share their expertise through mentoring a student intern.

INTERNSHIP DURATION AND ELIGIBILITY

All interns have completed a minimum of 90 semester hours of their total 120-semester hour program. For many of the interns, the internship is the last requirement that needs to be completed prior to graduation. The internship for all but therapeutic recreation majors is 450 hours over a minimum of 10 consecutive weeks and 480 hours over a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks for Therapeutic Recreation internship. Therapeutic Recreation interns must satisfy this guideline to meet one of the requirements to qualify for the National Therapeutic Recreation Certification exam.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The internship program represents the collaborative efforts of the student, the university, and the agency. To foster communication and cooperation, the responsibilities of each party are described in the following section.

During the internship the student should:

1. exhibit profession behavior as a member of the agency and perform within the agency's policies and the agency's expectations of the agency.
2. keep in close contact with the agency supervisor for decisions and actions relating to agency operations.
3. select a special project (with the guidance of the agency supervisor) to complete for the agency.
4. submit daily journal sheets each week by e-mail or mail in the approved format to faculty internship supervisor.
5. coordinate an on-site visit for the faculty supervisor within the specified time frame.

During the internship, the faculty supervisor should:

1. provide the agency with the "Agency Internship Guidelines" to assist in planning for the internship.
2. contact the agency supervisor during the internship and conduct an on-site visit if the internship is within the State of Maryland.
3. maintain communication with the agency supervisor via e-mail, phone, or mail.

4. confer with the student during the internship to review their experience.
5. submit the grades for the internship and internship project.

During the internship, the agency should: assign a person to supervise the student intern through their experience who has the interest, desire, and time for the additional responsibilities. The intern supervisor:

1. will design a learning experience with the student intern with agreed upon goals, objectives, job duties and responsibilities, projects, and experiences that are challenging and professionally developmental in nature for the student.
2. will confer with the intern on a periodic bases to provide consistent and frequent feedback to the student intern regarding the agency's expectations and the student's performance.
3. will provide the student intern with an agency orientation.
4. will provide the student the opportunity to:
 - a. participate and/or observe the policies and practices of the agency, such as, legal policies and legislative policies , board relations, financial management and budgeting, record keeping procedures, personnel practices, and customer service.
 - b. help with and/or assume a role in planning and implementing a broad range of activities and services of the agency.
 - c. gain theoretical and practical experience in physical facility planning and daily operations such as maintenance, manager on duty, front desk, registration, equipment procurement etc.
 - d. provide an opportunity for the student intern to practice methods and techniques of direct leadership.

INTERNSHIP PLANNING GUIDE

Prior to the internship, the potential student intern should be interviewed as if the student is applying for a position within the agency. This will give the agency an opportunity to assess the student's strengths and interests and to determine if there is a compatible match between the student and the agency. If the student is selected to complete their internship within the agency, a staff member should be selected to be the student's internship supervisor for the entire duration of the internship.

The **agency intern supervisor** should:

1. meet with the intern and discuss the agency's needs, the intern's interests, past experience and learning outcomes from the experience to develop a 10 or 12-week plan.
2. provide the student intern, in writing, the duties and responsibilities of the student for the internship or a job description.
3. coordinate an orientation of the agency and facility (if applicable) as if the student is a new employee.
4. assist the student in identifying their special project and approve the project. This is the opportunity for the intern to "pay back" the agency for their time invested in the experience.
5. complete mid-term and final evaluations of the student intern.
6. coordinate attendance at staff meeting, headquarter meetings, and board meetings to allow the student to see the different functions of the various administration levels and how they interrelate.
7. coordinate the opportunity for the intern to shadow the director for a day.
8. Therapeutic Recreation interns should be provided a caseload, groups and clients to plan intervention and do all associated assessments, notations, and attend progress meetings such as admissions, discharge, and individual education plan meetings.

The Agency internship supervisor should evaluate the following checklist items and incorporating applicable items into the internship experience.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST:

- Agency orientation within the first 2 weeks as a new employee
- Meet program staff in different sections (outdoor, seniors, TR etc)

- Assign responsibilities to assist the program staff with work assignments within the first 2 weeks and before programs begin such as:
 - contracting instructors,
 - locating instructors, and/or
 - obtaining facility permits

- Provide the student intern with an organizational chart

- Human resources visit to obtain an overview of:
 - various job descriptions, pay scales,
 - reward systems,
 - merit scales,
 - and to create an interview questionnaire for review of question content. The interview questions should be within legal parameters
 - Hiring process and paper work associated with hiring
 - Benefits system
 - Orientation programs for staff
 - On-going training opportunities for staff
 - Professional development – i.e. M.R.P.A.
 - Staff supervision – motivating staff and productivity
 - Staff review systems – and examples of a good review and bad review
 - Payroll

- Fiscal Management:
 - Capital budget
 - Budgeting process for the agency
 - Funding sources for the operation of the agency – revenues, tax base
 - Financial management practices
 - Cost accounting and tracking expenses
 - Procurement procedures-petty cash, credit card use, purchase orders

- Program Area
 - Needs assessment
 - Development of programs
 - Numbers and types of programs for different population segments (i.e. ages, frequency, type, and trends)
 - Evaluation process – internal and external (customers)
 - Job responsibilities
 - ADA and inclusion

- Marketing and promotions
 - Marketing plan
 - Experimental marketing
 - Target marketing
 - Computer programs used for marketing and registration
 - Brochure or booklet timeline
 - Cost analysis for effectiveness and efficiency

- Parks
 - Types and facilities within the parks
 - Natural resources issues and initiatives i.e. frog watch
 - Scholarships
 - Friends of parks groups
 - Safety issues
 - General maintenance
 - POS funding
 - Capital budget items

- Facilities
 - Tours
 - Planning process
 - Program and services
 - Program and service development

- Meetings
 - Advisory board meetings
 - Community meetings
 - Professional meetings – i.e. MRPA or other professional organizations

Lets examine an internship experience at Happy Lands Community Recreation Center:

The student internship duties and responsibilities will be as follows:

1. assist with front desk customer service
2. assist with registration for programs, services and classes
3. to learn and serve as manager on duty, closing, and opening procedures.
4. the student's main job responsibility will be setting up the summer camp adventure, sports, and music day camps. This includes the program plan, supplies and equipment purchasing and development of documentation for the staff
5. the students special project will be to revise the summer day camp staff training, plan, conduct, and evaluate the training.
6. the student will assist in summer staff interviews and selection
7. to compile quarterly facility usage to include number of classes, cancelled classes, fitness pass users, refunds, and party rentals for analysis

Additional experiences that the student will participate in are:

1. assisting with the adaptive aquatics program
2. assisting with the healthy heart promotion
3. learning about the marketing process and time lines of the agency
4. learning about the overall funding of the agency and the facility
5. learning about the human resources process of advertising for a vacancy, application process, interviewing process and hiring process.
6. to attend facility monthly staff meeting
7. to attend board meetings
8. to attend meetings at headquarters when appropriate