

*Joint Master of Public Administration/Master of Urban Planning
Program*

*School of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville*

Internship/Practicum Handbook

*Guidelines for completing
the requirements for*

PADM 682

Revised: September 2005

Introduction

The professional internship or practicum is an important component of the dual Master of Public Administration/Master of Urban Planning program at the University of Louisville. This learning experience offers the intern or practicum student the opportunity to integrate and test the skills and knowledge accumulated during the academic program of study.

The internship/practicum offers challenging professional work experience that will expose the student to the myriad demands that face public service administrators and managers. Above all, this exposure to a public service organization offers the student significant opportunity to apply the knowledge obtained through course work.

This handbook is designed to answer many of the questions you will undoubtedly have, and assist you in early preparation for the internship/practicum component of your coursework. Read the booklet thoroughly, and direct any questions you may have to the internship/practicum coordinator (the student advisor) or to the director of your degree program. A list of important phone numbers is included later in this booklet.

Internship or Practicum?

MPA/MUP dual degree students who choose the internship/practicum option (instead of the thesis option) are expected to complete 6 semester hours of either an Internship or Practicum. MPA/MUP students will also enroll in a 3-credit-hour capstone studio that will allow them to gain real-world work experience. Those students who are defined as in-service (individuals who are currently employed in a responsible administrative position with a governmental, non-profit, or appropriate private agency and have been employed there for a period of at least one year) are eligible for the practicum option, while those classified as pre-service (those without relevant work experience) must elect the Internship option. A student is required to complete a minimum of 18 credit hours in the program and obtain permission of the student advisor and program director prior to beginning the internship or practicum.

The Practicum

The practicum is an extensive research paper/project pursued at the student's place of employment while under the supervision of an MPA or MUP faculty member. The form and content of the project are not fixed, however the content must be relevant to the student's experience and workplace. The final written product will be evaluated by the faculty supervisor. Criteria for organizations involved in the practicum setting are detailed within this handbook.

The Internship

The internship is normally pursued by pre-service students and is a guided work experience designed to give students a realistic exposure to the public administration and urban planning arena. The internship includes work in an administrative, planning, or policy position in a government, non-profit, or appropriate private sponsoring organization. The internship is carried out under the direction of both an agency mentor and the faculty supervisor assigned by the student advisor. The MPA/MUP internship must include a minimum of 400 hours over a period of not less than one full academic semester. The intern is required to keep a journal and

submit a final research paper at the completion of the internship period. The guidelines for the paper are detailed later in this handbook.

The Application Process

Successfully securing an internship or practicum requires that the student properly complete each step of the application procedure. Specifically:

1. **ONE FULL SEMESTER BEFORE** the anticipated start of the internship or practicum, the student should schedule a planning meeting with the student advisor. At this meeting the student advisor will review the completed application form (a copy is included later in this handbook), resume, and cover letter and discuss the internship requirement.
2. The student advisor will assist the student in identifying appropriate internship opportunities. It is the responsibility of the student to forward a resume and a cover letter to the sponsoring organization for review.
3. Once an internship or practicum opportunity has been approved, an internship agreement form is completed and signed by all parties. A copy of the form is included later in this handbook.

Student Responsibilities

The professional internship/practicum not only provides the student with a valuable learning experience to complement the academic curriculum, but can also play a critical role in the development of career opportunities. Internships and practicum opportunities require both professional conduct and responsibility. The student's performance will be evaluated and it is important to conform to standards of professional behavior including appropriate dress, attitude and punctuality. During the course of the internship/practicum period, the intern is responsible for following the policies and rules of the sponsoring organization. Questions about this should be directed to the sponsoring mentor.

Similarly, the sponsoring agency should meet the same professional standards. If the student should have any concerns, they should be brought to the attention of the student advisor.

Checklist of Student Responsibilities

1. Obtain and review the *Internship/Practicum Handbook*.
2. Complete the internship/practicum application and update resume and cover letter (one full semester prior to beginning the internship).
3. Attend a planning meeting with the student advisor.
4. Confirm internship/practicum responsibilities and complete internship/practicum agreement form with appropriate signatures.

5. Completion of 400 internship/practicum hours for MPA/MUP dual degree students.
6. Satisfactory performance as evaluated on the final evaluation reports by the sponsoring agency.
7. Satisfactory completion of the responsibilities outlined in the internship/practicum agreement form.
8. Satisfactory completion of the final research paper/project and submission of the internship/practicum journal.

Role of the Student Advisor

The student advisor is responsible for coordinating internships and practicums. The student advisor will assist the student in the placement process, taking into consideration the student's career objectives. The student advisor will assign a faculty supervisor who will serve as the intern's on-campus supervisor for the duration of the internship or practicum. The student advisor will forward a copy of the completed final internship/practicum evaluation form to the intern's faculty supervisor upon receipt from the internship mentor.

Role of the Internship/Practicum Faculty Supervisor

The faculty supervisor will act as a resource for the intern during the internship, and if necessary will act as a liaison between the intern and the sponsoring organization. At the completion of the internship/practicum, the faculty supervisor will grade the paper/project and journal.

Role of the Sponsoring Organization

The sponsoring organization must be legally established and financially sound. A representative of the sponsoring organization must sign the internship/practicum agreement and must assign a member of its staff as an internship/practicum mentor. The mentor should:

1. Discuss the internship responsibilities and be available to answer questions and offer guidance to the intern.
2. When necessary, hold conferences with the intern to discuss the intern's progress in meeting the objectives of the internship.
3. Provide the intern with a suitable work environment.
4. Complete the final evaluation report and return it to the student advisor. The evaluation form will be provided by the student at the beginning of the assignment.

Research Paper Guidelines

The internship/practicum paper is designed to reflect a student's ability to integrate essentially theoretical classroom and research experiences with the body of applied skills attained during the internship/practicum experience. The paper should demonstrate the student's grasp of public administration and urban planning theories, concepts, methods, and issues by relating them to aspects of the administrative context in which the student participated. The purpose of the research paper is *not* to provide a narrative review of the student's day-to-day job duties, nor a sequential course-by-course review of the significance of the student's classroom experience; but rather it is to discern the student's ability to synthesize and apply what is relevant in this broad interdisciplinary field so as to acquire a fuller comprehension of the tasks performed by the intern/practicum student, his or her role in the agency, and the agency's place in the larger organizational context.

The student should demonstrate achievement of program core competencies by linking the internship/practicum experience to the following identified learning outcomes for the MPA/MUP dual degree program:

- 1) Understanding of organizational behavior, human resource development, and management techniques.
- 2) Methodological skills, particularly skills related to basic aspects of demographic analysis, program evaluation, and revenue forecasting.
- 3) In-depth knowledge of government institutions and public policy.
- 4) Experience of applying public administration theories and methods in practice through high quality internship/practicum placements.
- 5) Understanding of urban settlement patterns and the history, theory, administration, law, and politics of planning.
- 6) Knowledge of at least one specialized field within planning.
- 7) Skills in problem solving.
- 8) Appreciation of the role of values in planning.
- 9) Skills for successfully functioning in a professional work environment.

Format

A conventional term paper format should be used. While no explicit length is required, approximately 15 to 20 typed, double-spaced pages should normally suffice. The specific objective and thesis of the paper should be clearly stated. A title page, table of contents, and a list of reference materials consulted should be included. The bibliography should afford fuller documentation of the material cited within the paper. One standard citation style should be used consistently within the paper, preferably with the author's name, date of publication, and page in parentheses directly after the material cited, and an alphabetical list of references at the conclusion of the paper. The organization of the paper should follow the general outline below:

A. *Introduction*

Brief description of the agency, including information on agency function, staff, finances, and relationship with other agencies and a brief description of the intern/practicum student's duties and responsibilities.

B. *Public administration and/or urban planning issues to be examined*

A discussion of the issues, citing appropriate public administration and urban planning literature and an explanation of its relevance to the internship/practicum.

C. *Discussion and analysis*

An examination of the activities and functions of the agency, with reference to the relevant literature. Did the agency act as the literature predicted it would? Why or why not?

D. *Linkage of internship/practicum with stated learning outcomes*

A discussion of how the experience demonstrated the achievement of desired learning outcomes.

E. *Conclusions*

A discussion of insights into the practice of public administration and urban planning gained from this experience. What aspects of the literature were most/least useful in understanding the operation of the agency?

Important Phone Numbers

Student Advisor/Internship Coordinator: Mrs. Teresa Brooks
Urban Studies Institute, Room 111
Phone: 852-8002
Fax: 852-4558
Email: tapres02@gwise.louisville.edu

MPA Program Director: Dr. Steven Koven
Urban Studies Institute, Room 118
Phone: 852-8257
Fax: 852-4558
Email: sgkove01@gwise.louisville.edu

MUP Program Director: Dr. Thomas Lyons
Urban Studies Institute, Room 214
Phone: 852-8256
Fax: 852-4558
Email: tslyon01@louisville.edu

SUPA Program Administrator: Ms. Patricia Sarley
Urban Studies Institute, Room 103
Phone: 852-7914
Fax: 852-4558
Email: plclea01@gwise.louisville.edu

Appendix

Forms Required for Internship/Practicum

***School of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville
Joint MPA/MUP Internship/Practicum
Memorandum of Understanding***

The School of Urban and Public Affairs, University of Louisville, _____,
and _____ agree to the following:
Student Intern
Sponsoring Organization

1. The intern is a graduate student in the MPA/MUP dual degree program at the University of Louisville.
2. The intern will perform the services requested in a fully professional manner.
3. Interns will have a mentor at the organization in which the student interns and a faculty supervisor from the School of Urban and Public Affairs.
4. The internship mentor and the intern will mutually strive to develop an effective working relationship, with the mentor providing an appropriate level of support and encouragement to the intern.
5. The internship mentor will make every effort to insure that the student participates in as many facets as possible of the work within his or her area of responsibility.
6. An intern who does a *practicum*, which is an internship at the student's regular place of work, will be required to engage in a work experience that is significantly different from his or her normal duties.
7. While every position requires some clerical tasks, these tasks should be incidental to the main duties of the internship.
8. When feasible, every attempt will be made to permit the intern to observe or participate in various levels of decision-making in which the supervisor participates.
9. The internship mentor will complete a formal evaluation at the end of the internship and return it to the internship coordinator.
10. The internship will commence on _____ and end on _____, and it will require _____ hours of work per week. The intern's mentor, department, and general responsibilities are as follows:

Mentor and Title _____

Department _____

General Responsibilities _____

Stipend/Compensation (if provided by sponsor) _____

Faculty Supervisor _____

Additional Comments _____

Signed and dated

Intern _____

Internship Mentor _____

Faculty Supervisor _____

Internship Coordinator _____

Program Director _____

**School of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville
MPA/MUP Internship Evaluation**

Name of Student Intern _____

Rating scale: 1: Poor
 2: Below Average
 3: Average
 4: Good
 5: Superior

<u>Ability to Work with Agency/Community</u>		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1.	Understanding of agency purpose/function:	___	___	___	___	___	___
2.	Ability to understand and use agency policies and procedures:	___	___	___	___	___	___
3.	Ability to plan, organize and use time effectively:	___	___	___	___	___	___
4.	Knowledge and use of available resources:	___	___	___	___	___	___
5.	Ability to obtain pertinent information/facts when needed:	___	___	___	___	___	___
6.	Ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant materials:	___	___	___	___	___	___
7.	Ability to plan a course of action:	___	___	___	___	___	___
8.	Written communication skills (memos, reports, briefs):	___	___	___	___	___	___
9.	Presentation skills (meetings, proposals):	___	___	___	___	___	___
10.	Ability to relate/apply theoretical knowledge to a given problem or agency function:	___	___	___	___	___	___
11.	Ability to communicate with staff/others:	___	___	___	___	___	___
12.	Ability to obtain relevant facts from materials:	___	___	___	___	___	___

<u>Professional development</u>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. Integration of theory and practice:	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. Shows pattern of continuous learning:	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. Ability to focus on problems/needs of agency:	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. Attitude towards authority:	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. Attitude toward assuming leadership role/additional responsibilities:	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. Promptness:	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. Dependability:	___	___	___	___	___	___

Additional comments:

Would you feel confident in hiring/recommending this intern for a job?

What suggestions, if any, do you have for the improvement of the MPA/MUP Program?

Additional comments: _____

Signature of Agency Mentor _____
Mentor's Name (printed) _____
Title _____
Name of Agency _____
Date _____

**School of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville
MPA/MUP Practicum Evaluation**

Name of Student Employee _____

Rating Scale: 1: Poor
 2: Below Average
 3: Average
 4: Good
 5: Superior

<u>Ability to work on practicum project:</u>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. Ability to understand and use agency policies and procedures:	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Ability to plan, organize and use time effectively:	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Knowledge and use of available resources:	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Ability to obtain pertinent information/facts when needed:	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant materials:	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. Ability to plan a course of action:	—	—	—	—	—	—
7. Written communication skills (memos, reports, briefs):	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. Presentation skills (meetings, proposals):	—	—	—	—	—	—
9. Ability to relate/apply theoretical knowledge to a given problem or agency function:	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. Ability to communicate with staff/others:	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Ability to obtain relevant facts from materials:	—	—	—	—	—	—

