

The Internship

An internship places you in a professional environment where you learn new practical skills and more fully explore career options. Whether you plan to work in a public agency, legislative affairs, or even in the private and non-profit sectors, a well-planned internship can become your singularly most valuable learning experience at WSU.

There is no typical internship. Each experience is tailored to your interests and abilities. In concert with the suggestions of your faculty advisor, you must prepare a basic internship plan that includes your goals and preferred activities in an internship. As a student in either of the political science options (A or B) or in public administration, you would normally prepare an internship plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following types of activities

Managing government functions

- Budgeting
- Campaigning
- personnel management
- legislative analysis
- constituent service
- city administration
- policy development;

Applying learned technical proficiencies

- interpretation of election statistics
- program evaluation techniques
- public finance strategies to appropriate working environments

Strengthening professional and collegial working relationships.

Initiating and maintaining records of your professional growth.

Prepare Early

Since your internship can become a very formative part of your career, it is important to devote serious thought to your career goals, and more importantly, to how these goals can be served by your academic preparation in political science and public administration. Frequent meetings with your faculty advisor and others in the field can help you become aware of your options, but of course only you can chart your own career path.

Every student approaches this process differently. For a small number of students, this is an easy decision. For others, it can be a very difficult search taking several semesters or even years before a manageable number of goals can be identified. If you think you are among the latter, rest assured that you are not alone, but you should start planning now.

Several courses are designed to help you identify your interests; however you should also consider contacting alumni working in the field, attending career workshops, reviewing professional and academic journals, volunteering in community projects and/or political campaigns, or even getting active in student clubs and the WSU Student Senate. Most students have begun to develop a manageable number of goals by their junior or senior years. That means you should start now.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are all students required to complete an internship? No. The only students required to complete an internship are those majoring in Public Administration. The internship is entirely optional for those with minors in Public Administration or majors or minors in Political Science Options A or B. If you are not a Public Administration major and you do complete an internship pursuant to the department guidelines, the internship credits would apply toward elective credit but it would not replace existing program requirements.

How are the internships graded? Internships for more than 3 semester credits are graded on a pass/no pass basis. A 3 credit internship may be taken on a letter grade basis. Your work is evaluated by an assigned site supervisor and then appropriate recommendations are made to your faculty advisor. Your faculty advisor assigns a grade based on the quality of your work, and then submits that grade to the Registrar.

How is the number of credits for an internship determined? Normally, the number of credits is approximately equal to 30 percent of the number of hours worked per week for 15 weeks. Up to 12 semester credits may be taken in a full time (40 hr./wk) internship. Determining how many credits are assigned for less than full time internships is ultimately left to the discretion of the faculty advisor. However, past practice within the department follows a 30 percent rule of proportionality such that credits assigned should be approximately 30 percent of the number of hours worked per week for a fifteen week semester, see Table below. Since summer sessions are too brief to allow students to complete a maximum 600 hrs. of internship contact time (15 wks @ 40 hrs/wk), students normally do not enroll for more than 6 semester credits per summer session. Students are not prohibited from enrolling in fewer credits than that prescribed by the 30 percent rule.

Estimated Hrs. Per Wk.	Semester Credits
40	12
36.67	11
33.34	10
30	9
26.67	8
23.34	7
20	6
16.67	5
13.34	4
10	3

Who can enroll in an internship? Junior and Senior level students with a University GPA of 2.0 or higher may enroll in an internship. Under University rules, you can enroll in an internship only after you have completed 64 semester credits. Further, you may not enroll in more than 12 semester credits of internship per semester and you cannot apply more than 16 semester credits toward a degree program unless requirements for your major and minor combination require additional internship credits. In this case, a maximum of 21 credits may be applied toward graduation.

Are Public Administration majors and Political Science majors required to complete different types of internships? No, with one exception, Public Administration majors are required to complete an internship under the assumption that the internship would add to and/or compliment their other required courses. Under most situations, this means Public Administration students should be placed in internships dealing with public or non-profit administrative functions. Therefore, campaign work and/or partisan advocacy is typically not appropriate for Public Administration majors. On the other hand, Political Science majors in Options A or B, and Public Administration minors (or even a Public Administration major seeking a second internship) may complete an internship plan in any area approved by the faculty advisor, department chair, and the Dean of Liberal Arts

Are the Internships paid? It depends. Compensation for internships depends entirely on the agency's willingness and ability. Federal government internships usually provide the most generous compensation packages for interns. State agency internships often provide compensation, while state legislative offices are less generous. Local internships are quite variable and are frequently unpredictable on the matter of compensation for interns. Normally, with the exception of larger towns and cities, local governments and non-profits do not budget for undergraduate intern compensation, so sometimes there is some money available and sometimes there is not. On the other hand, local government and non-profit site supervisors are often able to pay an amount equal to the cost of tuition for the internship credits. Housing allowances and moving expenses are also sometimes available depending on the internship program.

How to Apply for an Internship

- Step 1. Read this handbook on internships.
- Step 2. Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to determine whether he/she will serve as your internship advisor or if academic advisor recommends another advisor for the internship.
- Step 3. Meet with your internship advisor to discuss your internship goals.
- Step 4. Complete Internship Plan and submit one copy to your internship advisor and prepare brief Vita for potential interning agencies.
- Step 5. Make contacts with interning agencies and complete applications as appropriate.
- Step 6. Once the internship is secured, complete the Winona State University Internship Application. Note that your internship advisor is required to attach relevant information on the nature of the internship and how it will be evaluated. Your internship advisor may use your Internship Plan for this purpose, subject to department and Dean of Liberal Arts review. Return this form to the College of Liberal Arts Secretary.
- Step 7. Complete the Department of Political Science and Public Administration Internship Contract. Note that this form, unlike the University Internship Application, does require the signature of your site supervisor. Return this form to the Department Secretary.
- Step 8. Complete all assigned work for or associated with the internship.
- Step 9. Turn in all written or other assigned work to your internship advisor prior to the last day of regularly scheduled classes, or on a time and date specified by your internship advisor.
- Step 10. Congratulate yourself on a job well done.

WSU Political Science and Public Administration Internship Plan

Date ____/____/____

Warrior ID: _____

Semester Credits Earned _____

Name (first, middle, last) _____

Major(s)/Minor(s) _____/_____

_____/_____

_____/_____

Explain what you would hope to accomplish in this internship.

List the work related skills that you believe would be most beneficial to your education in political science or public administration.

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

Advisor's signature: _____

Date: _____

WSU Political Science and Public Administration Internship Contract

Student's Name: _____ Warrior ID: _____

Internship Location: _____

Internship Site Supervisor's Name: _____

Telephone Number: ____ (____) _____

Internship Advisor's (Instructor's) Name: _____

Telephone Number: ____ (____) _____

Internship Responsibilities

1. The student will work an average of _____ hours per week during the _____ semester, 20____, in the location and under the supervision as listed above. The student will perform responsibilities as assigned by the supervisor and as mutually agreed to by the site supervisor, the instructor, and the student in keeping with the student's career goals and objectives.
2. The student will do assigned readings as indicated by the supervisor and the instructor, such readings that will enhance the performance of the job responsibilities.
3. The student will keep a journal of daily work done and submit the same to the instructor at the end of the internship for review.
4. The student will submit a final report to the instructor with a copy to the supervisor. This report will analyze and critique the internship experience, and will relate the theoretical and work experience aspects of the internship.
5. The student will hold bi-weekly conferences with the instructor relating the experience and receiving additional assignments and instructions.
6. The instructor will confer with the supervisor on a periodic basis to check on progress made and to offer directions.
7. The supervisor will assign tasks to the student that will meet the student's educational and career objectives, and will offer constructive evaluations to the student as needed.
8. At the end of the internship, the supervisor will send an evaluation report to the instructor. Such report will be used to aid in assigned a grade to the student.
9. The supervisor will give a written evaluation of the student's work which may be placed in the student's reference file.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Intern Advisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Site Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____