



## **Internship Guidelines**

### **School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)**

All students enrolled in the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) Program at Rutgers University are eligible to register for internship credit under the specific internship course established by the department. The three-credit internship will count as an elective toward the fulfillment of degree requirements. The purpose of the internship program is to afford students an opportunity to translate their academic training into real world practice and to gain an overall perspective and understanding of the public and non-profit sectors.

### **Internship Conditions**

- Students may not receive internship credit for normal duties performed in pre-existing employment. SPAA requires a written contract from the agency describing the intern's duties and responsibilities. These duties are expected to involve the application of knowledge and skills that students have acquired in their formal academic studies.
- Internships may be paid or unpaid, but they must involve at least a 150 hours of internship experience within three months in order to earn three academic credits. Academic credit is awarded on a letter grade basis and will count as an elective. Credit for approved internships will be granted through course number 834:703.
- As an academic course you must identify a faculty member to serve as your faculty supervisor.

### **Application and Approval Process**

- **Contract:** Eligible students and internship sponsors must complete an internship contract.

Part of the contract is completed by the supervisors, describing: 1). the nature and extent of internship responsibilities; 2). dates and hours during which the work is to be performed; 3). what specific results are expected of the intern; 4). professional and other skills the intern is expected to develop; 5). what professional contacts will be available to the intern; and 6). what resources the intern will be able to use.

Another portion of the contract is completed by the student, describing: 1) what the intern expects to learn from the experience; 2) how this experience will relate to the academic study of public administration; 3). how the internship relates to career plans; 4.) resources

the intern expects to use in completing internship and academic responsibilities; and 5). specific written reports (term paper, case study, journal, or similar) the intern will produce.

Completed contracts must be signed by the student, the internship supervisor and the faculty supervisor and submitted to the MPA Director, who must approve the contract before the student is permitted to register for the internship course.

Completed contracts must be submitted for the Director's approval no later than Friday of the first week of classes for the fall and spring semesters. Applications for a summer internship must be submitted before classes begin for the first session of the summer classes.

- **Work Plan**

Within two weeks after beginning an internship, students must submit a work plan to their faculty supervisor and the MPA Director. The plan should describe specific tasks the intern will perform throughout the semester. The work plan must be approved before academic credit can be awarded.

- **Internship Assessment**

The quality of internships – both the degree of professional experience gained by students, and the quality of work they perform – will be assessed at the mid-point and end of each semester. Interns will complete rating forms that document their experience. Internship supervisors will complete forms that rate the intern's performance.

These forms serve two purposes. First, supervisor ratings of interns are considered in the assignment of a grade. Second, intern ratings will guide decisions whether to approve future internship applications with the sponsoring agency.

Interns must submit written evaluations as specified in the internship contract before the end of the semester in which they are enrolled. As the discretion of the MPA Director, an earlier date may be specified. Failure to submit Internship Ratings, Supervisor Evaluations, or other forms of assessment when due will be cause for receiving an "Incomplete" grade.

- **Restrictions**

Internships are expected to integrate professional and academic experiences. Because of this, credit may not be awarded retrospectively. That is, students may not apply for internship credit for work performed at some previous time. For example, a student may not request credit during the fall semester for an internship completed over the previous summer.

Similarly, students may not receive internship credit for normal duties performed through pre-existing employment. Internal internships will be considered by the department but must be discussed with the MPA Director before a contract is executed.

- **Internship Planning**

SPAA maintains a file of potential internship opportunities in the metropolitan area. The Career Development Center (Hill Hall 309/313) maintains extensive files on internship and career opportunities in New Jersey and elsewhere. Students sometimes learn of internship opportunities themselves and should discuss these possibilities with their faculty supervisor and the MPA Director to get approval.

Arranging an internship does require careful planning and work beyond the normal classroom experience. Visit the Career Development Office or the Graduate Department of Public Administration to obtain the necessary forms and additional information.

Enclosed you will find the following materials required for the completion of the SPAA internship:

- Internship Contract
- Work Plan
- Midterm Internship Rating
- Midterm Supervisor Evaluation
- Final Internship Rating
- Final Supervisor Evaluation

- **Reminders**

Internship contracts must be submitted no later than Friday of the first week of classes for the fall and spring semester.

A work plan must be developed within the first two weeks of the internship placement. The plan must be signed by the student, the internship supervisor, the faculty supervisor and submitted to the Director of the MPA Program by the end of the second week of placement. The work plan must be approved before academic credit can be awarded.

Internship ratings and supervisor evaluations must be submitted at the mid-term point of the semester and a second set at the end of the semester.