

West Virginia University  
Master of Public Administration  
**MPA Internship Handbook**

Updated February 2016

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## **Part I: Public Service Internship Purpose and Expectations**

The mission of the MPA program is to prepare public service professionals to help fulfill the aspirations of the citizens, communities, and governments of West Virginia and the region. The West Virginia University Department of Public Administration will accomplish this by:

- (1) Preparing professional public service administrators to identify challenges and opportunities and to facilitate positive change;
- (2) Serving the communities of West Virginia and the profession of public administration through expertise and intellectual resources; and
- (3) Advancing the state of knowledge in the field of public administration.

The internship is a critical component of the MPA experience and is required to complete the Master of Public Administration program at West Virginia University. MPA graduate students have been placed in federal, state, local, and nonprofit agencies. While in their internships, MPA students have been involved with human resource management, budgeting and financial management, strategic planning, and policy analysis and evaluation.

The internship program seeks to provide opportunities for WVU MPA students, host organizations, and the WVU Department of Public Administration. For the student, the internship is intended to provide an opportunity to gain practical experience that is necessary to enter the workforce or to enhance career development through participation in public service organizations and activities. For the host organizations, internships can be used to carry out special projects, to provide a means of recruiting new personnel, and to facilitate career development. For the WVU MPA program, internship placements provide an opportunity for the program to strengthen its relationships with a broad range of governmental, nonprofit, and other agencies and organizations. Such arrangements assist the program in carrying out its public service commitment.

At the completion of PUBA 751: Public Service Internships MPA students are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Apply management tools and leadership skills in field-based activities.
- Define democratic values and explain how they frame public service ethics.
- Interpret and apply concepts of multiculturalism, diversity, acculturation, culture, and theories of difference.
- Define, frame, evaluate, and recommend responses to important public issues.
- Formulate, practice, and evaluate public service approaches.

## ***Professional Ethics, Confidentiality, and Disclosure***

As interns, students are both participants and observers of organizational process and action. As participating members of an organization, interns are entrusted with a great deal of responsibility and are called upon to exercise discretion and sensitivity to matters of confidentiality and individual rights and interests. In their placements, students should be guided by standards of professional conduct and ethics. Students should also expect that the organizations in which they serve embrace these standards as well. Interns can seek guidance on issues of professional ethics and standards and related statements (these can be found in the *MPA Handbook*) and through consultation with organizational supervisors and mentors, the internship coordinator, and faculty advisors.

The Department of Public Administration fully supports the University policy on ethics in research. Moreover, the Department of Public Administration further emphasizes that the ethics policy developed for research should carry over into all aspects of the internship experience. The Department ascribes to the code of professional ethics set forth by the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA).

In carrying out research and other projects for host organizations, students should adhere to standards and practices that protect the integrity of research and the rights of individuals and subjects of research. Students are expected to be familiar with appropriate protocols of research, such as human subject review, as provided to them in the methods sequence of the MPA curriculum. Interns should not hesitate to contact the internship coordinator where questions of the appropriateness of research approaches arise.

## **Part II: Placement Options, Structure, and Administration**

### ***Placement Options***

The internship in the Master of Public Administration program is a formal requirement and is satisfied by enrolling and completing the course requirements for *Public Administration 751: Public Service Internship*. Students with substantial professional experience may apply for an internship waiver.

Due to the diverse nature of the student body in terms of work experience, professional goals, and objectives, each internship will vary based on the student's interests and past experiences. In general, there are two placement options: 1) the regular internship placement, and 2) the in-service internship project.

### *The Regular Internship Placement*

- Your internship MUST have a public administration component (cannot be a clerical position). The student will complete 500 hours with their host organization. This roughly translates to approximately 14 weeks of placement at 35 hours per week.
- Internships placements can be completed in one or more semester(s).
- If the internship placements is completed in two or more semester, it must be completed in consecutive semesters.
- All 500 hours of the internship should be completed at one organization and not split between two or more organizations.

### *The In-Service Internship Project*

- For those students already working in public administration, the internship can entail a project for professional development beyond their current job requirements.
- In-service internship projects are tied to a particular initiative or effort, or a temporary reassignment within the organization.
- In-service placements are developed in conjunction with the internship coordinator and the student's employer.

### *The Internship Waiver*

Students with significant experience in the field of public administration, can request a waiver of the internship requirement. To waive the internship requirement, the student must submit a formal memo addressed to their academic advisor requesting a waiver. The memo must include:

- A summary assessment of the student's significant career accomplishments, public administration experience, professional development activities, and future career aspirations.
- A description of current professional responsibilities, including the nature of day-to-day operations particularly as they relate to public administration functions.

The internship waiver request is reviewed by the student's academic advisor and the MPA Internship Coordinator and they recommend the approval or denial of the waiver. The student's academic advisor writes a letter to the Chair of the Department of Public Administration that articulates the approval or denial of the internship waiver request. The Chair approves the internship waiver request. The approval waiver request allows the student to graduate with a Master of Public Administration degree with a minimum of 39 credit hours of approved course work.

## *MPA/MSW Internships Requirements*

The MPA and MSW degree programs require students to complete a public service internship and an advanced field placement. Students enrolled in the dual degree with MPA and MSW programs are required to complete only one internship/field placement to meet both degree requirements.

MPA/MSW students should consult with the MSW Field Placement Coordinator to identify appropriate placement MSW sites and confirm with the MPA Internship Coordinator that the advanced field placement meets the student learning outcomes for *PUBA 751: Public Service Internship*. The specific internship/field placement requirements apply in the following ways:

- **MPA/MSW COSA Track and MPA/MSW Advanced Standing COSA track:** MPA/MSW students enroll in 6 credit hours of MSW 682 Advanced Field Placement and complete the full PUBA 751: Public Service Internship course requirements, including internship proposal, mid-term report, timesheets, and poster presentation. Students must complete 600 contact hours for MSW 682. In lieu of the PUBA 751 course, students must complete 6 credit hours of MPA-approved electives as a replacement.
- **MPA/MSW Direct Practice and MPA/MSW Advance Standing Direct Practice:** Students can request to waive 3 credit hours of PUBA 751 Public Service Internship. If the waiver is approved, MPA/MSW students must enroll in 6 credit hours of MSW 682 Advanced Field Placement and 3 credit hours of PUBA 751: Public Service Internship. Students must complete PUBA 751 course requirements, including internship proposal, mid-term report, timesheets, and poster presentation. Students must complete 800 contact hours for the combined MSW 682 and PUBA 751 Advanced Field Placement/Public Service Internship. In lieu of the waiving 3 credit hours of PUBA 751 course, students must complete 3 credit hours of MPA-approved electives as a replacement.

## *International Internships*

For students seeking internships that will allow them to travel overseas, they must obtain approval from the University through the Office of International Programs. Students should plan to meet with the Internship Coordinator at least two semesters prior to the semester s/he would like to be enrolled in PA 751. Approval by the University is dependent upon evaluation of the proposed host organization and conditions abroad that may affect safety and security.

## *Funding for Internship*

Some interns receive monetary payment for their placement, in the form of a stipend or wage. The financial support paid are subject to negotiation by the intern with the prospective host organization with the advice and consent from the internship coordinator.

## *Steps of the Internship Process*

The steps to completing the PUBA 751 Internship requirements are summarized in the following table. You can use this table to help you keep track of your responsibilities in the internship process.

√	<b>Step</b>	<b>Details</b>
	1. Meet with your faculty advisor	Students should discuss with their academic advisor their internship plans, goals, and placement options during advising sessions.
	2. Identify the internship placement	Locating an internship is the responsibility of the student. The internship coordinator is available to assist students in finding appropriate internship opportunities.
	3. Develop the internship proposal	The internship coordinator is available to provide guidance in preparing the internship proposal.
	4. Register for PUBA 751	Register for the correct amount of credit hours in the semester the internship placement occurs.
	5. Begin internship	Contact supervisor at least one week prior to first day to discuss start time, dress code, and other work place issues.
	6. Submit mid-semester and final timesheets to internship coordinator	Timesheets will be submitted via eCampus with the midterm report and final poster.
	7. Submit midterm report to internship coordinator	Midterm reports are due the last Friday of October (Fall), March (Spring) June (Summer) and are submitted via eCampus.
	8. Schedule internship site visit	Students work with the internship coordinator to schedule a date/time that works for the site.
	9. Submit poster to internship coordinator, present poster at Internship Showcase.	Poster is to be submitted via eCampus to Internship Coordinator prior to Internship Showcase. Due date will be announced on the syllabus. The department will retain the posters.
	10. Assigned a grade.	Internships are graded as P (pass) or F (fail).

## *Registering for PUBA 751: Public Service Internship*

### *Enrollment and Credit Hours*

While there are no prerequisites for the internship courses, it is recommended that students take their internships after having at least two semesters of course work. The academic credit hours can be taken in one semester or can be spread over more than one term. Students must be completing actual internship work in the semester(s) registered for credit hours.

### *Internship Proposal*

To ensure the internship placement meets the degree requirements, an internship proposal is developed and agreed to by all parties. It is the student's responsibility to develop the written proposal with input from the internship coordinator and host organization. A description of the expected contents of the proposal can be found [INSERT LINK HERE](#).

Prior to registering for PUBA 751: Public Service Internship, students must complete and submit a written internship proposal. The proposal is developed with input from the internship coordinator and host organization. All internship proposals must be approved by the Internship Coordinator. **Do not get signatures on the proposal until the internship coordinator has reviewed the proposal. Your internship may not start until the signed proposal is submitted to, and approved by the internship supervisor and the Internship Coordinator.** Failure to do so may result in removal from PUBA 751.

The internship proposals are due prior to the semester the student begins the internships based on the following schedule:

<b>To Begin PA 751 in:</b>	<b>Internship Proposal is Due by:</b>
Fall Semester	Last Friday in July
Spring Semester	Last Friday in November
Summer Semester	Last Friday in April

## *Internship Assignments*

### *Time Sheets*

Time sheets will be submitted **twice each semester** (with mid-term report and final poster) via eCampus. The timesheet includes hours completed each week, cumulative hours completed, and summary of internship activities.

### *Midterm Reports*

All students will provide a midterm internship memorandum to the internship coordinator, which summarizes major internship responsibilities, accomplishments lessons learned and cumulative hours completed to date. List the number of internship hours completed to-date, the tasks which you have completed as an intern, and any skills that you have learned up to the date of that report.

### *Site Visit*

A site visit is conducted each semester the student is enrolled in PUBA 751 in order for the student, the host organization supervisor, and the internship coordinator to assess the placement and address any concerns or issues relating to the internship. The student will coordinate date/time with the Internship Coordinator

### *Poster Presentation*

Each intern will prepare a poster for presentation at the Internship Showcase at the end of the final semester of the internship. At the beginning of the semester, the Internship Coordinator will announce submission and presentation dates.



## Appendix A

### INTERNSHIP PROPOSAL AGREEMENT

**Proposed Location:** Name of Organization

**Internship Field Supervisor:**

Name  
Address  
Telephone Number  
E-mail

**Intern:**

Name  
Address  
Telephone Number  
E-mail Address

**Internship Coordinator (MPA Program):**

Carla J. See, Internship Coordinator  
WVU Public Administration  
PO Box 6233, 325 Willey Street  
Morgantown, WV 26506  
304.293.7977  
[carla.see@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:carla.see@mail.wvu.edu)

**Assignment Nature:**

In this section describe the mission of the placement organization, its clients, and its structure. Provide a detailed description of anticipated internship activities, responsibilities, and assignments. This section should be 1-page long.

**Assignment Relevance:**

In this section provide an explanation of how internship placement relates to the field of public administration and the MPA curriculum. This section should be about ½ page long.

**Internship Objectives:**

In this section, explain your goals (personal, academic and professional) for this internship. This section should be about ½ page long.

**PUBA 751 Course Registration:**

I will register for \_\_\_\_ credit hours of PUBA 751 in the following semesters\_\_\_\_\_.

**Time Schedule:**

This assignment would begin \_\_\_\_\_, and extend through \_\_\_\_\_. The intern will work \_\_\_ hours per week during the duration of the placement.

**Internship Mid-Term Report(s), Timesheets, and Poster Presentation**

According to the above time schedule, I will submit \_\_\_ midterm report(s) and timesheets, by the following dates \_\_\_\_\_. I will submit an Internship Poster Presentation by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Intern's Name, Signature and Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Intern Supervisor's Name, Signature and Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Public Administration Internship Coordinator's Name, Signature and Date

## Appendix B

### **Final Project: Poster Presentation**

Students enrolled in PA 751 will be responsible for presenting a poster describing the internship experience. The poster presentation will take place at the end of the final semester of the student's internship placement. The date for the poster session will be announced at the beginning of the semester and invitations to attend will be extended to MPA students, faculty, and internship host organizations. The session will allow students, faculty, and members of host organizations to talk informally with PA 751 students about the internship experience.

Students must submit an electronic copy of their posters along with .jpegs or .tiffs of any photographs used in the poster to the Internship Coordinator prior to the date of the poster presentation.

#### **Poster Objectives:**

Poster presentations should achieve the following objectives:

1. **Briefly describe the organization/agency.** What does the organization/agency do?
2. **Summarize your internship by concisely describing projects and activities in which you were involved.** What did you do?
3. **Describe what you have learned from the internship experience.** How did you apply what you have learned in class to your internship? In what ways did you grow personally from the experience? What surprised you about the experience?
4. **Explain your thoughts on finishing your internship.** How will your work continue after you have completed your experience? In what ways has the experience affected your post-graduation plans?

#### **Poster Design and Layout:**

- A successful poster engages viewers in conversation and articulates the main point(s) to the audience. You should have a brief (no longer than 5 minutes) presentation prepared to effectively describe your poster.
- Posters should be approximately 36"x 42" in size and can be oriented vertically or horizontally.
- The top of the poster should include a banner displaying the name of the internship host organization/agency, the department in which the student worked (if applicable), and the student's name.
- Use a *minimum* font size of 18 points (larger for titles) and keep blocks of text short for readability.
- Make it obvious to the audience how to progressively view the poster. The poster generally should read from left to right, and top to bottom.
- Leave some open space in the design. An open layout is less tiring to the eye and mind.
- **Posters can be printed inexpensively in WVU campus computer labs.** The computer lab charges approximately \$12 to print a 36" x 42" poster versus over \$100 at other printing stores. Please go to <http://oit.wvu.edu/labs/printing/bigprints/> for details on which labs offer this service.