



Public Service Internship Guidelines



Department of Public Administration
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PUBA 751

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Introduction

The internship is a critical component of the MPA experience and is a required course in the WVU Master of Public Administration. MPA students completed internship placements with federal, state, and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations that contribute to public administration. The public service internship provides MPA students with experience in the practice of public administration, career development, and connection to the context of implementing public policy and programs. The WVU MPA Internship Handbook details the purpose and expectations of the internship and resources for selecting and successfully completing the public service internship.

MPA Program Mission and Internship

The public service internship reflects the mission of the WVU MPA program. The mission of the WVU Master of Public Administration Program is to prepare recent college graduates and new professionals to make a difference through careers in public service in a wide array of settings. The West Virginia University Department of Public Administration will accomplish this by:

- Orienting individuals to the profession of public service through engaged and applied curriculum that reflects the diversity of public service.
- Serving the communities of West Virginia and the profession of public administration through complementary initiatives.
- Advancing the state of knowledge in the field of public administration through scholarly productivity, governance in professional associations, and applied research.

Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes

This supervised field experience prepares recent college graduates and new professionals for public service through the application of theory and practice of skills, abilities, and attitudes learned in coursework.

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

- Apply practices to lead and manage in the public interest.
- Implement practices to support evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.
- Apply administrative practices that contribute to the policy process.
- Articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective relevant to their chosen field.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate and interact productively and in a culturally responsive way with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

Course Registration

PUBA 751 Public Service Internship is a 3-credit hour course requirement in the MPA program of study. While there are no prerequisites for the internship courses, it is recommended that students begin their internship after completing at least two semesters of MPA coursework. Students must register for PUBA 751 in the semester(s) the internship work is taking place. Students may register for and complete the internship in one semester by enrolling in 3 credit hours or over multiple consecutive semesters by enrolling in 1 or 2 credit hours each semester to meet the total of 3 credit hours required.

Contact Hours

To ensure that students have a comprehensive and cumulative experience in the practice of public administration and meet the 3-credit hour requirement for PUBA 751, students are expected to complete 360 hours of work directly related to the internship placement. The contact hours are documented by the student through timesheets and activity logs.

Professional Expectations and Ethics

MPA students are preparing for the profession of public administration. The internship experience is a supervised professional experience in the field of public administration. As such, MPA students should be guided by standards of professional expectations and ethics during the internship placement that include:

- Maintain expectations of confidentiality as defined by organization's policies, laws, and other relevant authorizations.
- Meet the expected work schedule as set by the internship supervisor;
- Use appropriate written and verbal communication with internship stakeholders;
- Participate in required orientations or trainings as directed by internship supervisor;
- Observe all policies of the internship site;
- Adhere to standards and practices that protect the integrity of research and the rights of individuals and subjects of research.
- Abide by [American Society of Public Administration Code of Ethics](#)

Internship Placements

Due to the diverse nature of the public administration opportunities, MPA students are encouraged to seek out internship placements that advance their work experience, professional goals, and career objectives. Students will consult with their MPA faculty advisor and MPA Internship Coordinator to identify an appropriate internship placement.

Students who are employed in a public or nonprofit organization during the MPA program may use their place of employment to complete the internship requirement. Students are required to identify a distinct project separate from their assigned responsibilities that meets the PUBA 751 Public

Service Internship student learning outcomes. The project must be supervised by a higher-level administrator within the organization.

MPA students are not eligible to use their responsibilities as a Graduate Assistant to meet the PUBA 751 Public Service Internship course requirements.

The following steps are helpful in selecting an internship and preparing the proposal:

- Students should discuss their internship goals and placement options during MPA advising sessions with faculty advisors;
- Students are responsible for identifying an internship placements in consultation with the MPA Faculty Advisor and MPA MPA Internship Coordinator
- MPA Internship Coordinator shares resources to potential internship opportunities through the MPA listserv and [MPA website](#).
- Students should research and be aware of deadlines and application requirements for internship opportunities
- Be prepared to have a resume to share with potential internship supervisors
- Students may be expected to interview for internship positions.
- An internship proposal is developed and agreed to by the MPA student, internship supervisor, and MPA Internship Coordinator. It is the student’s responsibility to develop the written proposal with input from the MPA Internship Coordinator and internship supervisor. A description of the expected contents of the proposal are found in Appendix A.
- All internship proposals must be approved by the Internship Coordinator. Do not obtain signatures on the proposal until the internship coordinator has reviewed the proposal.
- The internship may not start until the proposal is submitted and approved by the internship supervisor and the Internship Coordinator. Deadlines for the internship proposal are as follows:

To Begin PUBA 751 in:	Internship Proposal is Due by:
Fall Semester	Last Friday in July
Spring Semester	Last Friday in November
Summer Semester	Third Friday in April

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.

MPA/JD Internship Opportunities

It is possible for an MPA/JD student to complete an MPA internship that has a focus on public administration and includes legal research and writing. The MPA/JD student should meet with the MPA Internship Coordinator when they are admitted to the MPA program to discuss internship opportunities that may meet the qualifications for an MPA internship and provide the student with legal experience.

International Internships

MPA student are eligible to complete internship placements with non-U.S. based organizations. Students seeking internships that will allow them to travel overseas must obtain approval from WVU Office of Global Affairs.

Funding for Internship

Some students receive monetary compensation for during their internship placement in the form of a stipend or wage. The financial support is negotiated by the student and the prospective host organization with the advice and consent from the internship coordinator.

Background Checks and Immunizations

It is the student's responsibility to obtain a background check if it is a site requirement for you to serve as an intern. Visit <https://www.identogo.com/> to schedule your appointment for a background check. The closest site in the Morgantown area is Pace Enterprises of WV, Inc. located in Mylan Park. Do not go directly to Pace. You must first schedule the appointment online with Identigo. Estimated cost is \$35.00. Please let the Internship Coordinator know if you would like assistance in navigating the Identigo web page to schedule your appointment.

If the internship site requires immunizations, you will need to provide this information. You will not be able to use the information provided to WVU upon admissions. You will need to return to your primary care physician for the immunization records.

The Internship Waiver

Students with significant experience in the field of public administration, can request a waiver for completing PUBA 751 Public Service Internship course requirement. To waive the internship requirement, the student must submit a formal memo addressed to their MPA faculty advisor requesting a waiver. The memo must include a recent resume detailing professional experience and a summary assessment with specific examples of the student's significant professional accomplishments in the field of public administration as they represent the expected PUBA 751 Public Service Internship student learning outcomes that include:

- Apply practices to lead and manage in the public interest.
- Implement practices to support evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.
- Apply administrative practices that contribute to the policy process.

- Articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective relevant to their chosen field.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate and interact productively and in a culturally responsive way with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

The internship waiver request is reviewed and approved by the MPA faculty committee. Students must request an internship waiver in the semester prior to their expected graduation. The Chair of the Department of Public Administration notifies the student of the approval or denial of the internship waiver request and adjusts the MPA program of study in DegreeWorks. Students are required to meet all other MPA degree requirements.

PUBA 751 Public Service Internship Assignments

Internship Proposal

Upload the approved internship proposal to the PUBA 751 eCampus page each semester enrolled in internship. Signatures are not required on this copy but it must be the approved proposal.

Time Sheet/Activity Log

Time sheets are submitted **twice each semester** (with mid-term report and final day of semester) via eCampus. A time sheet/activity log template is available in eCampus. This documents the weekly and cumulative time worked and summary of internship activities completed. To stay on target, you should make weekly entries that describe specific activities and accomplishments. Students are encouraged to use the summary section of the timesheet/activity log to document lessons learned. This is useful when preparing the mid-term report and poster presentation.

Midterm Reports

The Midterm Report summarizes major internship responsibilities, accomplishments, lessons learned, and cumulative hours completed to date. The report should be a minimum of two pages, single-spaced content with double space between sections. The report should use correct grammar and formatting for a professional presentation. Reports that do not meet professional standards will be returned to the student for revision. Use the following headings in the report to provide examples and share details on the

- Internship Responsibilities
- Accomplishments and Skills Acquired
- Lessons Learned
- Cumulative Hours to Date.

Site Visit

A site visit is conducted each semester the student is enrolled in PUBA 751 in order for the student, the internship supervisor, and the MPA 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 and Internship Supervisor.

Poster Presentation

Students will prepare a poster for presentation at the Internship Poster Showcase at the end of the final semester of the internship. Students should submit a draft poster to the MPA Internship Coordinator for review and feedback. The final poster presentation will be submitted to eCampus.

Appendix A: MPA 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, G14 Arnold Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506
304.293.7977
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) by _____ and timesheets by _____. I will submit an Internship Poster Presentation by _____. The poster presentation will be held _____.

Compensation Statement:

Will the student be compensated for the internship, and if yes, at what rate.

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 PUBA 751 are responsible for presenting a poster summarizing 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. Invitations to attend the poster presentation will be extended to MPA students, faculty, and internship supervisors.

Students must submit a PowerPoint slide of their poster along with .jpegs or .tiffs of any photographs used in the poster to the Internship Coordinator prior to the date of the poster presentation. An effective internship poster engages viewers in conversation and summarizes the internship experience. Students will briefly present their internship poster during the internship poster presentation session.

Internship Poster Presentation Objectives:

1. **Briefly describe the organization/agency.** What does the organization/agency do?
2. **Summarize the projects and activities completed during the internship.** What did you do?
3. **Describe lessons 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. **Share a summary perspective on completing the 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:

1. Posters should be approximately **36"x 42"** in size and can be oriented vertically or horizontally.
2. 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.
3. Use a *minimum* font size of 18 points (larger for titles) and keep blocks of text short for readability.
4. 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.
5. Leave some open space in the design. An open layout is less tiring to the eye and mind.
6. **Posters can be printed inexpensively at WVU Libraries.** WVU Libraries charge approximately \$12 to print a 36" x 42" poster versus over \$100 at other printing stores. Please go to <https://lib.wvu.edu/services/printing/poster/> for details on locations/times for this service.