WHEN IS THE STUDENT PREPARED TO START THE INTERNSHIP?

The internship may be initiated after the student:

- has completed 100 hours of documented paid or volunteered recreational field work experience at two different agencies
- has entered the senior year
- is in good academic standing (meets minimum GPA requirements, not on probation)
- has the approval of his/her advisor

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Throughout history an apprenticeship within a profession has been a means by which people learn a vocation. Today, practical pre-service experience is not limited, for example, to the professions of medicine and carpentry. Internships are found in almost all of the pragmatic disciplines.

In the field of recreation, the internship is an in-depth supervised field experience where the student can apply her/his classroom learning. Both the field and the classroom phases make up the total academic education curriculum.

The agency must remember that the student is just that a student. S/he comes to the internship with many skills. However, before this student is ready to take her/his first professional job, these skills must be applied and refined. This is the primary objective of the internship.

Above all else, students must understand that they are representing the University of Minnesota and themselves as professionals at all times during the internship and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

WHAT AGENCIES CAN QUALIFY AS INTERNSHIP SITES?

The University will consider any agency that can meet the following criteria:

- be a part of the leisure service delivery system
- demonstrate willingness to provide the supervision and type of experience required by the individual student
- have professional and supervisory staff capable of supervising the intern
- provide adequate access to resources necessary to delivering leisure service
- be capable of providing information required by the student
- be capable of conducting an orientation program for the student
- offer a range of programs and services in relationship to the student’s professional objectives
- demonstrate a willingness of the agency to accommodate the student’s career objectives in setting up the internship experiences
- accept the student as a professional, contributing member of the staff.

It must be remembered that the internship is a student-centered experience; therefore every agency is not appropriate for all students.

RECREATION AGENCIES LOCATIONS

The internship may be taken at agencies within or outside of the metro area. The recreation agencies may also be outside of Minnesota or the U.S.

You may complete your internship with one agency for the entire experience or you may elect to work at two different agencies. It is strongly suggested that students select agencies related to the career path in which they are most interested. This is an excellent opportunity to learn and apply skills that will be relevant for
employment in similar recreation agencies. Networking with professionals in your chosen career path will be very advantageous when seeking employment.

Arrangements for internships take time, therefore, the student must start planning and applying at agencies at least one semester before the internship. The student must be capable of working independently and be persistent in securing the placement. It is the responsibility of the student to select and pursue the placement at the agency or agencies of choice. Once an application has been submitted to an agency, follow-up contact should be done by the student in order to secure the position. Many agencies start the application process months in advance of the start date. For example, summer positions are often posted beginning in January and February of that year.

LENGTH OF THE INTERNSHIP

At the University of Minnesota, the internship hours required:

- 405 hours completed in the field for a total of 9 credits
- You may choose to complete your internship all in one semester or split the credits and the time between two semesters. A minimum of 3 credits will be required in a semester if you are splitting across two, with the balance taken in the second semester. Example: 3/6 or 4/5 or 5/4 or 6/3 or 9 credits.

GOALS OF AN INTERNSHIP

Depending upon the student’s needs and the type of agency, the student together with the assistance of the agency supervisor and the instructor may incorporate the following suggested experiential areas into the student’s individualized internship goals.

- Programming
  - planning
  - operation
  - evaluation

- Facility Design and Development
  - specifications
  - cooperation with other professionals
  - model development innovation

- Agency research
  - design
  - implementation
  - evaluation

- Personnel Practices
  - job description
  - staff evaluation
  - hiring

- Maintenance
  - materials
  - work schedules
  - equipment
  - indoor/outdoor areas and facilities

- Professional Development
  - conferences
  - writing articles
  - advocacy
  - code of ethics
  - meetings

- General Administration
  - financial management
  - budget
  - analysis techniques
  - record keeping

- Planning and Control
  - goal setting
  - policy procedures
  - efficiency measures

- Marketing and Public Relations
  - client involvement
  - publicity (brochures/flyers)
  - speaking

- Leadership
  - program
  - staff
  - community
A combination of these areas should provide the student with a total exposure to all phases of the agency.

Agencies accepting internship responsibilities should fully understand that students are paying for the internship through their tuition as part of their education and have set goals to accomplish during the experience. Using interns as file clerks or unskilled laborers, for example, is not in harmony with the internship agreement.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE STUDENT

The student is responsible for electronically submitting the following papers to the internship supervisor:

PAPER ONE: Due within 2 weeks after beginning the internship.
1. Student should develop a combination of 6-10 goals and objectives that s/he would like to accomplish during the internship. See example below.
2. One-two paragraphs that describes the agency programs, population served and facilities.

PAPER TWO: Due at conclusion of the experience.
1. One-two page summary on whether or not you have met your goals and objectives during the placement.
2. Evaluation of the agency and whether or not you would recommend this location to other students.

Examples of Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives should be specific and measureable. They should be developed with your supervisor so that you have a plan together for the internship. Remember when writing goals and objectives, they need to be measurable, meaning that you know whether or not that goal has been completed. Did you attend a city council meeting, yes or no? This is a specific goal compared to, “To learn a lot about marketing”. How do you measure “a lot”? There should be a total of 6-10 combined goals and objectives written for your experience. (ex. 3 goals with 2-3 objectives each)
Below are some examples of how to write goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Assist in the planning of the summer youth camp program.
   Objective I: Design flyer / brochure for distribution
   Objective II: Attend weekly planning meetings and provide input.
   Objective III: Contact a minimum of three sponsors for donations.

Goal 2: Design an environmental education activity for the summer youth camp.
   Objective I: Attend 2-3 different naturalist programs to obtain ideas for program planning
   Objective II: Present activity plan for approval, by June 30
   Objective III: Develop budget for the activity

Goal 3: Learn how to handle customer service issues.
   Objective I: Attend customer service training.
   Objective II: Observe staff handling both positive and negative exchanges with customers and ask questions after exchange.
Objective III  Work the welcome desk 4 hours per week.

FOR THE AGENCY – At the conclusion of the internship

The agency is responsible for the evaluation of the intern. The evaluation forms should be completed at the end of the experience and submitted to the University within one to two weeks of completion of the internship. An electronic evaluation form is located on the Internship webpage. Students should direct supervisor to the form.

GRADE SUBMITTION

A grade will be submitted once both student papers are received and the supervisor evaluation is completed indicating the completion of the internship.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS

HOW IS THE STUDENT GRADED?

The student is assigned a satisfactory (S) grade or a not satisfactory (N) grade. This grade is based on the agency evaluation and the completion of the required hours and written assignments.

WHAT IF A PROBLEM DOES EXIST?

Problems may develop during the internship. Solving them is part of the learning experience. The intern and supervisor should attempt to solve the problem on their own levels. If this cannot be done, the Internship Supervisor should be contacted immediately.

WILL I HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL EXPENSES DURING MY INTERNSHIP?

Other interns have reported that they have had additional mileage (which may be reimbursed), work attire and occasional lunches or dinners that you will have to eat out or bring. It is important when choosing your internship site to ask about additional expenses you may have if you do your internship at this site.

HOW WILL I KNOW HOW TO DRESS AT MY INTERNSHIP SITE?

A good rule of thumb: dress like your internship supervisor. On the job neatness and effort counts!

WHAT ABOUT PAID INTERNSHIPS?

Students may be paid for an internship experience. Some agencies offer a small salary or stipend. Many do not.