THE MA NML INTERNSHIP

Overview

The internship experience is designed to provide supervised opportunities for graduate students to develop skills in specific areas that have been found to characterize effective leaders in nonprofit organizations. These include the applications of theory and research in the nonprofit field to practical issues of planning, fundraising, program implementation, staff and volunteer management, and assessment of programs in nonprofit organizations. The internship allows students to apply skills of formulating goals and mobilizing concerted actions, negotiating and guiding group activities, applying critical thinking skills and knowledge to organizational matters, and communicating effectively with diverse audiences.

These skills are developed and applied in the context of a variety of tasks of program design, management of staff and volunteers, communications with internal and external constituencies, organizational change, program evaluation, resource development and allocation, and other practical tasks. The internship also provides access to issues and subjects for course assignments and independent research projects that can extend knowledge and refine practice effectiveness in this field. Students registering for 3 credit hours of MNML 7055 (Internship) are required to spend 300 hours of time in the field on location at their internship site. This typically works out to 20 hours per week over the course of a 15-week semester (but will require a greater hourly commitment per week if taken during the summer). Most students register for two consecutive semesters of MNML 7055, at the same site or different sites depending on learning needs and goals. In the case where a block placement (6 credit hours in one semester) is warranted, students must obtain permission of the program director and be able to complete the required 600 hours of field work within the semester in which they are register. The same site may be used both semesters or different sites may be selected, depending on the student’s learning needs and goals. A copy of the syllabus for this course may be found here.

Finding an Internship

Students considering internships should talk with the program director about how to identify possible sites and to explore interests. The director can also provide information about students’ previous experiences with some organizations. A list of some possible internship sites can be found in the student handbook, through a search of “Athens, GA” on Guidestar.org, or at www.libs.uga.edu/athens/organizations.html.

When deciding where to intern, students should make sure the internship site offers the following:

- Office space
- Access to staff, programs, and records
An administrative supervisor or mentor
Opportunities to carry out sustained work on issues related to some aspect of the management of the organization’s programs

The student is expected to spend 20 hours per week on field projects over the course of the semester if enrolled in 3 credit hours, and 40 hours per week on field projects if enrolled in 6 credit hours. Students are also encouraged to keep a journal of experiences and learning during each of the semesters, which is for their own reflections, not to be handed in.

**Previous Student Internship Sites**

Students considering internships should talk with the program director about how to identify possible sites and to explore mutual interests. The director can also provide information about previous experiences with some organizations. Following are just some of the nonprofit organizations that our students have interned with. Students are not restricted by this list.

- AIDS Athens, Inc.
- American Cancer Society
- American Museum of Papermaking
- American Red Cross of Central Georgia
- Americorps Hands On Atlanta
- Athens Area Humane Society
- Athens Arts Council
- Athens Grow Green Coalition
- Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation
- AthFest Educates
- Atlanta Contemporary Art Center
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Bike Athens
- Books for Keeps
- Boybutante Aids Foundation
- Camp Hope and kidz2leaders, Inc.
- Camp Twin Lakes-Will-A-Way
- Cancer Foundation of NE GA
- Canopy
- Carter Center
- CASA
- Catholic Social Services
- Chess & Community
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- Cobb Christmas, Inc.
- Community Connection of NE GA
- Athens Community Council on Aging
- Fanning Institute
- Food Bank of N.E. GA
- GA Center for Nonprofits
- Georgia Aquarium
- International Rescue Committee
- Jeanette Rankin Foundation
- Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atl
- Nuçi’s Space
- Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation
- Piedmont Rape Crisis Center
- Planned Parenthood of Atlanta
- Plywood People
- Prevent Child Abuse Athens
- Project Safe
- Redeemer Presbyterian Church
- Sandy Creek Nature Center
- Sexual Assault Center of Athens
- Sierra Club
- St. Mary's Hospital Foundation
- Starlight Children’s Foundation
- Susan G. Komen of Central Georgia
- The ArtReach Foundation
- The Cottage Sexual Assault Center & Children’s Advocacy Center
- Together Georgia
- Town and Gown Drama Theatre
- UGA Athletic Association
- UGA Development Office
- UGA Graduate-Professional Student Association
- United Way of Atlanta
- United Way of Northeast Georgia
- Upper Oconee Watershed Network
- WinShape Foundation
- World Vison
The Internship - 9 Steps

1. Discuss internship goals and options with the program director to identify potential internship sites well before you intend to begin the internship.

2. Contact the organization at which you want to intern (if by e-mail then cc the program director on all initial communications).

3. Get formal approval from the program director.

4. Develop a learning contract with your organizational supervisor.

5. Consult with the program director to make sure the learning contract is appropriate to your learning goals.

6. Begin your internship, updating your learning contract as needed.

7. At the end of the semester, complete your learning contract and deliverables (any “product” of the internship).

8. Submit your learning contract (including project summaries) and deliverables to the program director.

9. Ask your organizational supervisor to send an evaluation letter to the program director that includes the following: confirmation that you completed the required hours (3 credits = 300 hours); an outline of your primary duties; statement of major contributions and accomplishments; and, identification of any areas in need of improvement or suggestions for further professional development.

The Learning Contract

Before beginning the internship the student should begin developing a learning contract that identifies specific projects to be carried out, steps to be taken, and work products to be delivered that will demonstrate gains in each of the skills included in the course objectives. Routine clerical tasks will not be accepted. The on-site internship supervisor will assist the student in identifying and planning projects of importance to the organization, developing plans of action and resources, deliverable products to be completed, time-lines, and criteria for assessing the quality of the products.
The contract will be reviewed and negotiated with the program director and the on-site supervisor before implementation. Within the first two weeks of the internship, students should finalize the learning contract and submit a copy to the program director. The student, the supervisor, and the program director will communicate as needed over the course of the semester to monitor and assess student progress on projects identified in the student’s learning contract.

The contract may be designed in the form of a matrix, with specific projects or activities linked to particular skills to be emphasized by each. Specific deliverable products or reports must be identified in the contract, which will then be submitted to the program director and organizational supervisor by the conclusion of each semester.

The learning contract should be a working document and will necessarily require updates and changes during the course of the internship. Any questions regarding the learning contract or the appropriateness of internship projects should be directed to the program director. A Learning Contract Template is available online on the MA NML website under Internships.