

... internships

What is an internship?

An internship is a structured learning experience for students outside the classroom setting. Students take on the role of responsible workers in an organization and observe and reflect on what happens while they are there. Internships provide new opportunities for students to develop competencies and acquire knowledge and skills by successfully meeting new interpersonal and intellectual challenges, applying theories, investigating work roles and career possibilities, and in some cases providing community service.

Why does NCC require students to complete experiential learning, such as internships?

New Century College (NCC) believes in the power of experiential learning to transform any student's educational experience by moving knowledge out of the classroom and into the world of action where ideas can be tested and workplace skills can be developed. Through cooperative placement and partnerships with private, non-profit, and public organizations, NCC engages students in a classroom outside of the traditional university environment—any workplace can serve as a classroom and the community shares the teaching role. These immediate, concrete experiences become the basis for "learning by doing".

Who should participate?

All NCC Integrative Studies students are required to complete no less than 12 credit hours and no more than 24 credit hours of experiential learning to earn their BA or BS degrees in Integrative Studies. In most cases, students should begin internships no earlier than their sophomore year. Other experiential learning opportunities include experiential learning classes, Alternative Spring Break, Study Abroad, field study classes, and some Learning Communities. Students from other GMU Academic Programs such as Conflict Analysis & Resolution (CAR) are also welcome to enroll for Internships through NCC.

How many credits can I earn for each internship?

Each semester, students may earn from 1 to 6 credit hours, depending on other class and work commitments. Typically, students enroll for 1 to 3 credits for a single internship placement. To enroll in an internship for academic credit, students must have the approval of the faculty member coordinating NCC's internship program, prior to beginning the work. Many factors are weighed in approving an internship, including the student's preparation, learning objectives, and the appropriateness of the particular site. In addition, to be sure that a student has enough time to meet his or her learning objectives, NCC requires a minimum of 45 hours of structured work at the internship site for every internship credit hour earned, over a substantial period of time such as a full semester or its equivalent.

How will my internship performance be assessed?

You will be assessed on the progress you make toward your learning objectives, **not** for your work per se. Multiple methods will be used to assess your performance, including faculty assessment of your reflective writing assignments, a midterm assessment, a final paper, and a formal, written evaluation from your placement supervisor.

How soon should I get started?

Students should begin planning their search for internships no later than the second semester of the sophomore year (i.e., after completion of 45 credit hours). However, keeping your eyes and ears open for opportunities is always a

good idea—check bulletin boards, the Internet, and ask friends, family, and employers. Keep in mind that **you should not begin your internship until your application is approved.**

How do I find an internship?

Each student is responsible for finding his or her own internship placement, although NCC will assist our students in their search for an appropriate placement. The keys are to be creative and to plan ahead— internships are available in almost any type of organization. Many internships are structured, competitive programs, requiring a formal application process (e.g., the U.S. State Department requires applications to be completed as much as one full year in advance of the anticipated start date). However, if you want an internship at a particular company or agency that does not have internships, make a proposal to them— most workplaces would be pleased to have an intern. Internship announcements are posted on NCC Connector (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ncc/connector.html>) and a list of organizations where students have had internships can be located on NCC's Internship website page (<http://ncc.gmu.edu/exlearn/internships/companies.html>). Also check out GMU's Office of Career Services (<http://careers.gmu.edu/>) for possibilities.

Can I use my current job as an internship?

No. The purpose of an internship is to seek and accept new challenges and experiences. Students should establish specific learning objectives and identify those organizations or projects that can provide structured opportunities for achieving their goals. While many GMU students are doing meaningful, important work with good organizations, the expectations in an established employer-employee are different from the spirit and requirements of an internship.

How do I enroll in an internship?

To enroll in an internship for academic credit through New Century College, you **must** have the approval of the NCC Internship Coordinator in that semester. Your application for an internship will be assessed individually to determine how the placement fits into your academic and career goals. You may register for an internship during Fall, Spring, or Summer terms.

Any other tips?

Start by analyzing your skills and interests, academic and career goals. Draft your resume and ask friends and family or an advisor to critique it for you.

Think about what kind of experiences you want. What kinds of organizations sound intriguing? What are your constraints—how many hours? When can you begin and end? Any geographical limitations? Do you want a paid or unpaid internship?

Gather information. Be especially alert for the serendipitous opportunities that come your way.

Narrow your search to a manageable number of organizations, and rank them according to some criteria (e.g., your favorite, ideal locations, stipend available, etc.). Try to get complete information on what each agency does, whether or not they have a formal internship program, and any application requirements.

Develop a plan for contacting each agency, either by phone or letter. Review your resume to be sure it "speaks" to the agency or the internship requirements.

Follow-up!! Remember that you have something valuable to offer.

Questions??? Contact Karen Misencik at kmisenci@gmu.edu

...Internship Policies & Procedures

Policies

1. Students may not register for an internship if they have a previous internship still in progress (this includes hours left on site and/or incomplete assignments.) or if their GPA is below 2.0.
2. An internship can be taken during any academic term after the student's freshman year.
3. Students may register for a total of 1-6 credits for any individual internship
4. Students are required to accumulate a minimum of 45 hours of on-site learning per credit hour received. Additional hours may be required depending on the individual's responsibilities.
5. Students may not use current work assignments as internships.
6. Internships are generally considered to be off-campus experiences.
7. Internships may be repeated at the same workplace only if a student is completing different work under a different supervisor.
8. All interns must have an instructor from the NCC faculty. This will be assigned by the Internship Coordinator.
9. All internships must have clear learning objectives. These learning objectives and assessment methods for the internship must be agreed upon by both the faculty sponsor and the student before the internship begins.
10. All students receiving internship credit must complete reflective writing assignments and complete a final portfolio to receive full credit.

Procedures

1. Read through this internship packet carefully.
2. Fill-out the form as carefully and accurately as possible. Be sure to calculate your total hours (45 hours x #of credits).
3. Make sure that your internship site supervisor has signed the proper pages.
4. Make sure that your application is complete. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
5. Submit your complete form to the Internship Coordinator on or before the deadline. It takes 5-10 working days for application forms to be processed.

Is This An Internship???

If you answer yes to the following questions, this opportunity will most likely count as a New Century College Internship.

- Is this a NEW learning experience? Is this different from my primary employment?
- Am I working enough hours to receive appropriate credit? (As a national standard, internships require a minimum of 45 hours per credit.) Do I have an on-site supervisor/mentor?
- Are my learning objectives tied to my professional and career goals?

... guidelines for the Internship Contract

Structured appropriately, internships provide an exceptional opportunity for what John Dewey calls “learning by doing”.¹ Students are expected to take an active role in establishing structure by developing a learning plan with the faculty sponsor and the internship site supervisor. This learning plan—which becomes a formal **Internship Contract** after being approved and signed by the student, the faculty sponsor, site supervisor and Internship Coordinator—should describe your academic objectives for the internship and the strategies or methods for accomplishing the objectives.

The Internship Contract is the most important document for your internship. It is your plan of action and your reference point for assessing how you are learning and growing during the internship. Thoughtful development of objectives forces you to think about why you have chosen this internship and what you hope or expect to learn. You will go to the internship with ideas, theories and plans, giving you a template against which to compare what actually happens.

Once the internship is underway, students often find that their objectives are changing—new tasks and unexpected opportunities often require adjustments or refinements to the objectives. That’s okay. This revision process is part of the learning cycle and you can document the changes through your journal entries and other documents in your portfolio. Thus, even though you may have some uncertainty about exactly what objectives would be best for a site, go ahead and develop a plan to prepare yourself intellectually for the experiential learning ahead.

What are some examples of learning objectives and strategies?

Objectives should describe what you will learn, *not* what you will do. As you prepare your objectives, think about the reasons why you are doing the internship and what you want to gain from it intellectually and personally. Try to use concise, measurable words to describe these goals, e.g., *identify, improve, define, compare, understand, apply, solve, write, contrast, initiate, develop*, etc. Be creative in thinking about your own learning objectives for the internship. Think about theories or texts you have covered in courses, specific career or professional information you have been wanting to acquire, or ask during your preliminary site interviews about what learning opportunities the organization can provide. In addition, it may be helpful to think about the NCC Competencies and how they relate to your area of concentration.

Strategies should describe the specific processes or tasks that will help you meet your objectives. Will you undergo orientation or training of any kind? Will you have responsibility for a specific task or project? Will you attend any meetings? Can you interview professionals at the internship site? What kinds of daily tasks will you undertake? Will you do any professional reading at the site?

A student should develop a learning objective for each credit he or she is planning to take. The following examples are provided to spark, rather than limit your thinking:

Sample Objectives	Proposed Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe how public policy is developed and enacted in the state legislature • To develop a preliminary network with public relations professionals • To improve my theoretical and practical understanding of group communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By following legislation, researching legislative histories, reviewing public policy text and articles, interviewing Assembly staff and lobbyists, observation in daily/weekly meetings • Develop data file of new contacts, conduct informational interviews with agency professionals and clients, attend professional conference, write follow-up thank-you letters • Observe interaction in project meetings for leadership styles; roles; critical and creative thinking techniques; decision making techniques; nonverbal communication; and kinds of group tasks

You may want to prepare a draft to take with you when discussing the Internship Contract with your supervisor. Asking for his or her assistance in finalizing your objectives gives you the opportunity to clarify what your goals are for the internship and to receive feedback from the site supervisor about how realistic you are being. Such a discussion may help your supervisor think of additional possibilities for you in terms of projects, meetings, conferences, training, etc.

The Internship Contract is a key document for assessing your learning. You should keep your copy to refer to throughout the internship and, ultimately, to place in the Internship Portfolio.

... guidelines for Internship Assignments

Towards the beginning of the semester, and once approved, your internship faculty sponsor will send out a syllabus that will outline each of the assignments required. It is your responsibility to read the syllabus, ask questions about it, and understand when all the assignments are due.

Reflective Writing Assignments

The reflective writing assignments are a way for students to reflect on topics that might come up during the internship experience (i.e. diversity in workplace, workplace values, connection to academic work, challenges, good / bad learning experiences). It should contain a self-evaluation of both intellectual and personal growth. Your essays should provide a good beginning for thinking about your learning. These essays should not be a narrative of what you did, but should focus on something you learned about one of the topics that is outlined in the internship syllabus given to you by your internship instructor. Also, refer to the “Guide to Reflective Writing” on the next page (p. 8) for guidance.

Midterm Learning Objectives Assessment and Final Site Assessment

Midway through your internship, you will have the opportunity to revise your learning objectives and will provide an assessment of your objectives to date. At the end of the semester, you will provide a final site assessment based on the guidelines outlined on page 8 of this packet. For the final assessment, you should fax page 8 and your signed timesheet to your faculty sponsor.

Internship Portfolio Assignment (Final Paper)

As the final aspect of this internship, you will have to provide a final paper that assesses your overall learning. Instead of writing a full portfolio, this essay will integrate multiple aspects of a portfolio assignment into one assignment that can be recalled when working on your Senior Portfolio. This assignment is used:

- To assess your learning;
- To connect your work experiences with your knowledge base;
- To encourage reflection on personal and academic goals;
- To provide evidence of performance;
- To document acquisition of specific skills or knowledge;
- To record your intellectual and personal growth; and
- To prepare yourself for the next learning step

The Rough Guide to Reflection¹

New Century College

Steps	What? →	So What? →	Now What?
Outline of the process	Here you are observing, narrating, or describing a particular situation or text(s). Concentrate on describing the specific and the particular, and explain the evidence that you have chosen to include.	Here you are working to analyze the how and why through interpretation, analysis, and making a judgment . That is, what did this experience or text mean to you? You need to "make sense" of your learning experience, in both its positive and negative aspects.	Here you are looking forward to work out how you might apply your learning from the experience or text to new or unfamiliar situations. You want to think about how what you have learned can assist you in looking to the future .
Ways of exploring the process	<p>Think about questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experience am I thinking about and how did this experience come about? • What exactly happened? • What did I see, do, or read? • Who or what helped me and how? • What part was the most challenging? Surprising? Satisfying? • What is my response to this text or experience? • What roles did I find myself playing/experiencing? • What of myself did I share with others? 	<p>Think about questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did this experience or text mean to me? • What values and assumptions influenced my actions or response? • What did I understand (or understand more fully) about myself as a result? • What did I do that was effective? Why was it effective? • What did I do that seems to have been ineffective? How could I have done it differently? • What am I learning about myself and others? • How open was I to new ideas, unexpected learning, challenging perspectives, and so on? • What values, opinions, decisions have changed or developed through this experience? 	<p>Think about questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have I changed through this experience or considering the ideas in this text? • What knowledge have I gained? How am I thinking differently now? • How can I apply what I have learned to other areas of my life (academic work, on-campus activities, my community, my personal life)? • How will I apply what I learned from this experience or text in new situations? • How will I share what I learned with others in the future? • At the conclusion of this reflection, what goals will I now set for myself, and who or what will help me achieve them?

¹ Adapted from a similar handout created for *The Lives We Lead* E-portfolio Project by Professor Lesley Smith.

... guidelines for the Internship Application

A few things to remember:

1. The earlier you submit the application, the better. Once approved you will receive an email from the Internship Coordinator with registration instructions.
2. You will need to have a site supervisor who is willing to evaluate and grade you.
3. 45 hours of work = 1 credit = 1 Learning Objective
4. Make sure you complete all the forms and submit a complete application. Incomplete paperwork will not be reviewed.
5. Your Internship Application should include:
 - Internship Application Form clearly stating your # of Expected Credit Hours and your Estimated Start and Finish Dates.
 - Internship Contract with appropriate Learning Objectives and Proposed Strategies, a brief description of Internship duties and reasons for participating at your particular internship site, Total Number of Internship Hours, and must be signed by you and your site supervisor.
 - Internship Agreement signed by you and your internship agency.
 - GMU Consent and Release form signed by you.
 - Make sure you keep a copy of all these forms for yourself, including your learning objectives and proposed strategies, as you will need to refer to some of these forms throughout your internship.

New Century College
George Mason University

INTERNSHIP SITE APPLICATION

Please return a copy of this application to Prof. Karen Misencik, New Century College, George Mason University (5D3), 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444, or fax a copy to 703-993-1439.

Students MUST return this application prior to the semester deadline set by the Internship Coordinator. See NCLC list-serve for details.

Student Information (Print Clearly)

Student Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Student ID# _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Class Standing: FR SO JR SR NCC Concentration: _____ *or* GMU Major: _____

Internship Information

Agency Name: _____

Agency Contact: _____

Type of Work: _____

Anticipated Semester of Enrollment: _____ Expected # of Credit Hours: _____

Estimated Start and Finish Dates: _____

How did you learn about this internship?

*Please attach any information you may have about the organization or the internship program.

INTERNSHIP CONTRACT

Please return a copy of this contract to Prof. Karen Misencik, New Century College, George Mason University (5D3), 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444, or fax a copy to 703-993-1439.

Student Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Mailing Address: _____

Agency City/State/Zip Code: _____

Agency Contact/Position: _____ Phone#: _____

Contact E-mail Address: _____ Website: _____

On separate typed pages, please complete the following information:

- Student Learning Objectives and Strategies (1 objective and set of strategies per 1 credit)
 - Please see pages 4 and 5 of the internship packet for guidelines

- A brief paragraph discussing what you will be doing at the internship site and the reasons for wanting this internship (no more than 1 page).

TOTAL INTERNSHIP HOURS AT THE HOST AGENCY: _____

Signing this form affirms that the learning objectives, activities, and hours listed above are acceptable to the host agency and meet the student's educational goals.

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

Agency Supervisor _____ Date: _____

Internship Coordinator _____ Date: _____

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY -- NEW CENTURY COLLEGE
INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT ("Agreement"), is by and among _____, hereinafter "Student," _____, hereinafter "Agency," and George Mason University, hereinafter "University." The term of this Agreement shall extend from the _____ day of _____, 200_ to the _____ day of _____, 200_.

1. Purpose.

The purpose of this Agreement is to place Student in a work assignment with the Agency as part of an Experiential Learning Program offered by the University for academic credit or required by course of study. In consideration of the mutual provisions herein, the parties hereby agree as follows:

2. Agency Obligations and Responsibilities.

2.1 The Agency shall provide the Student with an Agency mentor. The Agency mentor shall monitor and supervise the Student throughout the experiential learning program.

2.2 Advertising. The Agency shall not use, in its external advertising, marketing programs or promotional efforts, any data, pictures or other representation of the University except on the specific written authorization in advance by the University. The University shall not unreasonably withhold consent.

2.3 Agency Insurance. The Agency shall maintain in force during the term of this Agreement general liability insurance, insuring itself and its agents and employees for their acts, failures to act or negligence. If requested, Agency will supply a Certificate of Coverage. Agency agrees to keep George Mason University advised of any changes in this policy.

2.4 In the event that the Student is injured or becomes ill during the course of the experiential learning program, the Agency shall provide medical assistance and first aid to the Student as appropriate.

2.5 The Agency shall be in compliance with all Federal and State regulations where the Student is involved.

2.6 Please see Attachment for Agency obligations specific to this experiential learning program.

4. University Obligations and Responsibilities.

4.1 The University shall assign a Faculty Advisor to the Student. The Faculty Advisor shall monitor the Student throughout the experiential learning program.

4.2 University Insurance. As a state agency, the University is self-insured under the Commonwealth of Virginia Risk Management Plan. As an agent of the University, the Student is covered by the Plan for simple negligent acts and omissions related to the experiential learning program. This insurance does not cover the operation of Agency vehicles. A certificate of insurance is available upon request.

4.3 Please see Attachment for University obligations specific to this experiential learning program.

5. Student Obligations and Responsibilities.

5.1 Student must register and pay tuition for the experiential learning program prior to the commencement of the program.

5.2 Student Insurance. The University recommends that Student maintain sufficient health, accident, disability and hospitalization insurance for the duration of the internship. Student shall be responsible for any expenses incurred due to injury, illness or damage suffered during the course of the experiential learning program.

5.3 Please see Attachment for Student obligations specific to this experiential learning program.

6. Mutual Obligations and Responsibilities.

6.1 The relationship of the parties to each other is solely that of independent contractors. No party shall be considered an employee, agent, partner or fiduciary of the other except for such purposes as may be specifically enumerated herein, nor shall anything contained in this Agreement be construed to create any partnership or joint venture between the parties.

6.2 To the extent provided by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University shall be responsible for the ordinary negligent acts or omissions of its agents and employees causing injury to another person. The Agency agrees that it shall be responsible for the ordinary negligent acts or omissions of its agents and employees causing injury to another person. Nothing herein shall be deemed a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

6.3 The parties to this Agreement agree to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

6.4 No party shall disclose or use any information of a private, confidential or proprietary nature or any other trade secret without prior written authorization, except as required by law.

6.5 It is understood and agreed that this Agreement may be terminated at any time without cause by the Student, Agency, or the University.

7. General.

7.1 As required by some U.S. Government agencies, the participating student is not to be considered a federal employee for any purpose other than:

(a) of the Federal Tort Claims provisions published in 28 U.S.C. 2671-2680. Claims arising as a result of student participation should be referred to the Department of Justice.

(b) of Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 81, relative to compensation for injuries sustained during the performance of work assignments. Claims related to injuries should be referred to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, U.S. Department of Labor for adjudication.

7.2 No amendment or modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and executed with the same formality as this Agreement by authorized representatives of the parties hereto. Neither the failure of a party to enforce any provision in this Agreement, nor any breach or default hereunder, shall be deemed a waiver of any right herein.

7.3 It is understood and agreed that this Agreement shall be construed, governed and interpreted pursuant to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and if any provisions of this Agreement or parts thereof are held to be invalid under such laws, the other such provisions or parts thereof will nevertheless continue in full force and effect. All disputes arising under this contract shall be brought before a proper state court in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

7.4 No party shall assign or otherwise transfer its rights or delegate its obligations under this Agreement without all parties' prior written consent. Any attempted assignment, transfer, or delegation without such consent is void. All of the terms and provisions of this Agreement are binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties hereto and their successors and assigns.

7.5 The University will not be responsible for any losses resulting from delay or failure in performance resulting from any cause beyond the University's control, including without limitation: war, strikes or labor disputes, civil disturbances, fires, natural disasters, and acts of God.

7.6 This Agreement is the complete and final agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior oral or written agreements with respect to the subject matter herein. No oral or written promises or conditions exist outside this Agreement. This Agreement represents the entire understanding of the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the day and year first above written.

STUDENT

BY: _____

DATE: _____

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

BY: _____

DATE: _____

AGENCY

BY: _____

TITLE: _____

DATE: _____

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY INTERSHIP
CONSENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement is designed to protect all participants in George Mason University's internship/externship programs, including but not limited to, students, faculty, staff, George Mason University and the agencies and individuals cooperating with the University. The student must sign this Agreement, with parental or guardian approval if the student is under the age of 18, to indicate agreement with the terms and conditions of the Agreement and permission to participate in the designated program.

Name: _____ **- Student ID:** _____

I understand that participation in the George Mason University Internship/Externship Program is voluntary and that any such internship program involves some element of risk. I agree that in consideration of George Mason University sponsoring this activity and allowing my participation, I (including my parents, guardians, and legal representatives) will release, indemnify, and hold harmless George Mason University, and its Trustees, officers, employees, faculty, agents, successors, and assigns from liability for any and all claims, demands rights or causes of action, present or future, resulting from or arising out of any activity or travel conducted by or under the auspices of the George Mason University Internship/Externship Program.

I understand that the University requires that all students be covered by appropriate accident and medical insurance and that the student be financially responsible for such expenses. My signature below verifies that I am covered by such insurance.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE PROVISIONS AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THEM AS INDICATED BY MY SIGNATURE BELOW.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____ Semester/Academic Year _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ (if Student is under the age of 18)