

Applied Social and Community Psychology Program Internship Requirements

Overview

Students are required to complete a 3-credit internship that involves the application of psychological knowledge in a “real world” setting. The student should work in consultation with his/her Committee Chair in designing an experience that provides skills and expertise beyond the student’s current repertoire. The Committee Chair will serve as the instructor of record for this internship.

Rationale

The Applied Social and Community Psychology program emphasizes the application of psychological science to solve real world problems. Given the variety of student interests and aspirations, student learning can often be enhanced by gaining experience in areas not necessarily addressed by Departmental coursework and/or current areas of faculty expertise. PSY 851 is the mechanism by which course credit is awarded for systematically gaining such experience. All students are required to enroll in 3 credits of PSY 851 and complete an internship.

Standards for the Internship

In consultation with his/her Chair, the student will select an area of professional development that is not addressed by current coursework, current employment activity, and/or NCSU faculty mentorship. This could involve exposure to a particular statistical or research methodology, an intervention approach, exposure to a particular type of setting or population, and so on. The student must be able to articulate how such an internship experience would complement and advance his/her training goals. The purpose of the internship is to provide the student with an experience that is not within the scope of his/her current activities. The Chair will help identify specific opportunities or organizations in which such an experience could be successfully obtained.

There is wide latitude in what the Chair and the student can arrange for an internship. Students have worked in a variety of settings, such as nonprofits addressing intimate partner violence, city planning offices addressing neighborhood development, health planning agencies, research organizations, and so on. The range of student activities has similarly been varied, including grant writing, curriculum development, developing evaluation systems, research projects, and so on. However, the internship site must have the professional personnel and expertise to provide supervision in the areas of skill development specified by the student.

Development / Approval of an Internship Contract

In the semester before the student plans to complete his/her internship, the student should work with his/her Committee Chair to develop an internship contract that will be signed by the internship supervisor, the student, and the Committee Chair. This contract must be completed and signed before the start of the semester in which the internship is to occur. Although many attractive opportunities may present themselves, finalization of the contract has sometimes revealed obstacles that made that internship opportunity not workable. Students who have begun the internship without a mutually agreed upon contract have typically had less effective and satisfying experiences. See Appendix A for an internship contract template.

Timing of Internship

The student shall complete the internship at a time determined by the Committee Chair and the student, which will be reflected in his/her Plan of Work.

The internship work must be conducted in the semester in which the student is registered for PSY 851. If during the summer, the student must sign up for PSY 851 in one of the summer sessions.

Grading / Assessment of Student Performance

Ongoing supervision will be provided by the designated professional at the field site, with oversight provided by the Committee Chair.

The Committee Chair will contact the supervisor before semester grades are due, and request a judgment as to whether the internship activities were completed successfully (see Appendix B) and more comprehensive evaluative comments (see Appendix C).

A judgment of satisfactory by the field supervisor is generally expected as a criteria for passing PSY 851. If there are concerns expressed by the site supervisor about intern performance, the Committee Chair will explore these concerns and try to facilitate an appropriate resolution.

The Committee Chair will make the ultimate determination and submit a grade of S or U.

Appendix A: Internship Contract Template

The elements below should be contained in the Internship Contract that you develop, and that is signed by your site supervisor and Committee Chair. Comments in *italics* indicate the reasons for the requested information.

Intern Name

Please provide your basic contact information.

Internship Organization

Please provide basic contact information for your internship organization and supervisor.

Educational Objectives

Please describe what you hope to gain as a result of the experience.

This information is important because you want to remind people that this is an educational experience, and that you have certain goals that you want to achieve.

Primary Activities

Please describe the primary activities in which you would be engaged, preferably listed in order of the ones in which you would spend the most time.

An organization may propose a number of possible activities in which you might become involved. It's very useful to understand at the very beginning what expectations your supervisor has regarding which activities are most important. You want to make sure you are on the same page regarding how you will be spending your time.

Project(s), Product(s), or Deliverable(s)

Please describe a project, product, or deliverable for which you would be taking significant responsibility.

There is the expectation that in the internship you would take some major responsibility for some project, product and deliverable, or at least some portion thereof. This is useful for several reasons: developing your skills; having something concrete to list on your resume and to discuss on job interviews; and finally, protecting you from "busy work" at your internship site by having specific work to which you are committed.

At the end of the semester, your Committee Chair will send an email to your supervisor asking whether you had done a satisfactory job in completing the tasks to which you had agreed. You need to get a satisfactory rating in order to get a passing grade. So, promise what is doable in a semester, and if you can accomplish more, great!

Supervisory Arrangements

Please describe with whom you will be meeting with and how often.

It is important that the supervisor commit to providing the supervisory time that will allow you to develop the skills that are the focus of the internship. The contract should explicitly state the frequency of supervision meetings. It's certainly easier raising this issue now, than after you start.)

Dates of Internship

Please list the dates of the internship, as well as your understanding of how you will be putting in your hours (e.g., do you have to be at any particular location at set times).

Sometimes, students are working beyond the end of the semester. On occasion, students are volunteering with an organization for a long-term project, only part of which will count for their internship. In such cases, it's easy for the boundaries to become blurred between what needs to be accomplished for a grade in PSY 851, and what needs to be accomplished to fulfill other commitments. Being clear about the start and end dates for the internship requirement helps reinforce the distinction.

Internship activities must occur at the time at which one is actually registered for the PSY 851.

Signatures

Student, Internship Site Supervisor, and Committee Chair

Appendix B: Internship Evaluation Email to Site Supervisor Template

Dear [insert name of site supervisor],

I appreciate the opportunity that you have provided for [STUDENT] to work with you over the past semester, allowing her to have some very valuable applied experiences. This is an important part of [STUDENT's] experience as a graduate student in the Applied Social and Community Psychology doctoral program in the Department of Psychology at NC State University.

As we have reached the end of the semester, I ask that you provide some feedback to the program regarding how this experience has gone.

[STUDENT] is using his/her work with you to fulfill academic program requirements for an applied internship. In order to assign a Pass/Fail grade to [STUDENT], I need your confirmation that his/her performance has been satisfactory. For the purpose of my assigning a grade, I would appreciate your responding to the following question:

Did the intern satisfactorily complete the agreed upon contract?

- No
- Yes

For our more general information, I would also appreciate your responding to the following question:

What was the intern's overall performance?

- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory
- Good
- Excellent

A quick email response would allow me to give [STUDENT] a grade.

Beyond the minimal requirements of assigning a grade, however, please take the time at your convenience to share your thoughts with [STUDENT] about areas of strength and areas that might be further developed. We would also appreciate a written evaluation, however, that we could place in [STUDENT]'s file. You can use the attached form to provide comments, or provide a letter or narrative of your own. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at [insert your email address and phone number].

On behalf of the Applied Social and Community Psychology program in the Department of Psychology at NC State University, we appreciate your willingness and interest in shaping the interests and skills of one of our students. I hope that this has been a rewarding experience for you and your organization.

Appendix C: Internship Evaluation Form

Name of Student: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Date Form Completed: _____

Please return to: [Insert name of student's committee chair]
 NC State University
 Department of Psychology
 Campus Box 7650
 Raleigh, NC 27695
 Email address of [name of student's committee chair]

Instructions: Please rate this student intern on the following items by circling the appropriate response. If you are returning this form as an attachment, you can highlight your choice with bold or italic font.

PERFORMANCE ITEM	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Student was dependable (e.g., prompt, made appropriate arrangements when unable to work).	1	2	3	4
2. Student was responsible (e.g., completed work assignments appropriately and in a timely manner, worked independently as directed).	1	2	3	4
3. Student worked well with other staff members.	1	2	3	4
4. Student was receptive to supervision, including constructive feedback.	1	2	3	4
5. Student demonstrated professionalism.	1	2	3	4
6. Student demonstrated good communication skills in dealing with staff and others.	1	2	3	4
7. Overall performance.	1	2	3	4

Please provide any other comments that you believe would facilitate this student's professional growth. For example, what would you identify as this student's greatest asset in your setting? What would you identify as the student's most needed area for growth and professional development? We encourage you to review your comments with the intern and, if necessary, discuss strategies for improvement.
