

Butler University
Department of Sociology
Internship Guidelines

Internship Director: Dr. Ken Colburn

An internship provides the student with the opportunity to move between the academic setting of the classroom and the applied setting of an agency. The internship must provide the student with meaningful opportunities, under the supervision of a representative of the agency, to assist the agency in its mission. The agency has the right to expect serious and conscientious attention by the student intern to work assignments. The agency is encouraged to view the student as pre-professional. Internships in Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice are designed to extend students' learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting. The primary goal is for students to gain hands-on experience in professional work environments related to their academic and career interests. The internship is structured to benefit both the student intern as well as the sponsoring organization. In order to insure that the minimum standards are met to grant academic credit for an internship, the Department of Sociology has established the following evaluation criteria for internship students and their evaluators.

Breadth and Depth of the Experience

The internship needs to provide the student with a broad overview of the organization. In addition, the student should gain a clear understanding of what a particular bachelor degree career field or occupation entails. The student should have the opportunity to engage in projects and activities at a professional level. The focus of the internship is for the student to learn about the organization and develop new skills and knowledge.

Opportunity for Students to Apply Principles Learned in and Outside the Classroom

An internship should provide the student with hands-on experience and a good sense of what an actual job in the organization will be like. The student should be able to relate the internship experience to the knowledge that he or she has gained through college-level classroom instruction.

Opportunity to Observe Professionals in Action

It is important that student interns be able to observe professionals in their particular field to grasp what the occupation will really be like. We encourage interns to participate in staff meetings, attend presentations and meetings with clients when appropriate. Additionally, interns should have the ability to talk to and interact with professionals in the department about their respective jobs and career paths.

Opportunity to Develop Specific Skills

The students should leave the internship with a new set of skills or improvements in their current skill set. We encourage the student to concentrate on the following areas:

- research skills
- writing skills
- technical skills appropriate to the field
- presentation skills

Provisions for Supervision and Processing Time

It is important that the organization provide adequate opportunities for the student to ask questions and receive guidance on assigned projects. Feedback is a critical part of the learning process for the student. The on-site supervisor should be able to meet with the student for short periods each week.

Plans for Evaluation and Feedback to the Student and the Institution

Butler University provides the on-site supervisor with two evaluation forms to complete and return at mid-point and at the end of the internship. We encourage the supervisor to review the evaluations with the student prior to sending them back. Informal feedback is also welcome.

Work Hour Requirements

Students may receive various amounts of credit for their internship, depending on the number of hours they work during the semester at the internship site. Depending on the amount of academic credit students wish to receive, they will need a minimum of 160 hours (some agencies require more hours) of work at the internship site during the course of the semester for SO484; and a minimum of 300 hours for SO485 (some agencies may require more hours). The exact number of hours and how and when these hours are completed should be negotiated up front with the student intern.

Paid Versus Non-Paid Internships

Whether or not interns receive pay for the work they do at their internship site is not a primary consideration when evaluating the internship for academic credit. Although many internship sponsors do provide payment in some form in exchange for the work the interns perform (hourly wages or stipend) this has no bearing on the ability of the internship to earn academic credit. Decisions are to be made on a case by case basis by the Internship Director.

TEXTBOOKS - Students must purchase:

Brian Baird, The Internship Practicum and Field Placement Handbook

Dorothy Taylor, Jumpstarting Your Career