



GUIDELINES FOR

INTERNSHIP

During your studies at Gallatin, you have an opportunity to engage in an internship: a creditbearing work experience in a non-classroom environment. You might tutor elementary school children in a settlement house after-school program; or design Web pages for a start-up Internet company; or conduct a survey on housing conditions for a local community organization; or lead tours at a famous art museum; or assist a strategic planning committee in a major corporation. The possibilities are endless.

Whether you are just deciding to sign up for an internship or you have already registered for one, there are certain procedures and guidelines that you need to be aware of. This manual makes some suggestions about things you can do to prepare for the internship, to get it underway, and to make it a positive experience. We encourage you to do whatever it takes to make your work as educationally meaningful as it can be.

What follows walks you through several phases of the internship process: deciding why you want to do one; choosing one and setting it up; conducting one, learning from it and satisfying Gallatin's requirements. Along the way, some key terms will be defined and explained, and you will discover what you need to do get the credit and a grade—and, more important, to benefit from the experience. For more information about internships and to download internship-related forms, please visit our website:

<http://www.nyu.edu/gallatin/current/ba/courses-individualized-internship.html>

TIMELINE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

What needs to be done and when:

Proposal: Before the semester begins.

Journal: Kept from the beginning of the internship and submitted to the adviser periodically during the semester

Learning Contract: Due by the end of the second week of classes.

Progress Report: Due mid-semester.

Final Paper: End of the semester (due date is set by the adviser)

GETTING STARTED

THE PURPOSES OF THE INTERNSHIP

Students do internships for a number of valid reasons. Some are interested in career exploration: that is, getting some direct experience in a field where they might want to work after graduation, finding longer-term employment, or strengthening their resumes. Many use the experience to enhance personal growth: to discover their strengths and weaknesses in a variety of settings, to grapple with the kinds of ethical issues they face in their work lives, to build a professional identity. Still others provide community service to people and organizations. These are perfectly legitimate goals.

The Gallatin faculty, however, sees the internship primarily as a learning experience -- that is why we give academic credit for it. Learning can happen in a number of ways, of course. One form is skills development, acquiring or expanding the ability to perform certain technical or professional acts: e.g., doing sound engineering, leading business meetings, teaching reading, applying accounting methods. Some of these skills may be related to things you are studying in school; others may not. A broader form of learning might be called intellectual growth. You may want to think more concretely and expansively about issues raised in your courses, to apply academic theories to real-world situations and see whether they adequately explain what's going on: e.g., to use concepts of social class to analyze conditions in the Lower East Side, or to explore theories of organizational change in a huge telecommunications firm. You may want to engage in new ways of thinking, going beyond the kind of inquiry you encounter in classrooms: how architects reason about various design issues, or how journalists conceptualize stories, or how business executives make complex financial decisions. These advanced forms of practical intelligence are not generally available in school classes, but represent important and respected modes of thought.

INTERNSHIP CONTACT

The person primarily responsible for the internship process in Gallatin is Faith Stangler, the director of external programs. She can work with you on choosing a site, getting registered, and dealing with problems; she runs the workshops and solicits the supervisor evaluations. Please feel free to contact her at any time during the semester.

Faith Stangler
Director of External Programs
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
715 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10003

phone: (212) 998-7376
email: faith.stangler@nyu.edu
fax: (212) 995-4150

In any case, you need to think carefully and expansively about your learning goals for the internship. Don't be satisfied with merely getting your foot in the door. And don't limit your learning to the specifics of your work; although that's an important place to start, newcomers like interns don't usually take on hugely complex responsibilities, so the scope of that learning is limited. Instead, take the whole environment as your curriculum: Get the big picture; find out what people in the setting are doing, how they think through problems, how they collaborate to accomplish their collective goals; ask questions, dig up information, observe as many different events and processes as you can. Be ready for surprises, for perplexities, for confusion and discomfort—it's through these kinds of experiences that you are most likely to learn.

THE SEQUENCE OF PROCEDURES

Doing an internship involves a number of steps, beginning long before the semester when you do the placement and ending with the final days in the work site and the submission of the final paper. What follows are brief guidelines and suggestions for handling each phase.

CHOOSING THE INTERNSHIP SITE

You may select a placement site in a number of ways. Think first about the kind of work you want to do and the kinds of things you want to learn. Then talk with Faith Stangler, the internship program director; she has extensive catalogs of sites that have been used by Gallatin students before, along with possible job responsibilities and contacts, and can advise you on your selection. You should also meet with your adviser, who can help you think through your options and strategies. Alternatively, you can locate a placement site on your own, and propose it to Gallatin. Finally, you might choose to turn your paid employment into an internship if you plan to do something above and beyond your normal responsibilities.

Ideally, your choice of an internship should be consistent with your Gallatin Plan of Study. That is, you should be able to justify it in terms of the goals and objectives you have identified with your adviser for your overall college career. Many students choose a placement that is clearly and directly related to their concentrations, and that's perfectly sensible – but not a requirement. You can also opt to think of the internship as an elective, an exploratory experience useful for engaging new ideas, practices and problems. One way or another, though, you should be able to articulate an educational rationale for doing this non-classroom learning.

Note: It helps to start this process early in the semester before you plan to do the internship. Give yourself time to explore alternative placement sites, to negotiate details of the arrangement, and to work out agreements with your adviser and supervisor.

Once you have chosen a possible site, you should call the contact person there for an appointment to discuss the details of the arrangement: job description; hours; supervision; learning goals, etc. Many internships are selective, so this interview and your resume are important; prepare seriously and carefully.

When you reach agreement with the placement contact person, you will write two documents:

- **The Internship Proposal describes the logistics and details of the internship arrangement; among other things, it states the number of credits you will earn for the internship (typically 4 for 12-16 hours/week of on-site work); the proposal is submitted to Faith Stangler with your adviser's signature.**

- **The Learning Contract is a more extensive statement of your goals and activities, supervision and evaluation procedures, and other aspects of the internship; it is the product of a negotiation among you, your adviser and your supervisor (all three keep copies), and can be used to remind everyone of the details of what you're doing, what your supervisor and advisor expect of you, and what you can expect of them.**

Ideally, the finished Proposal should be submitted before the placement term actually starts; it is a required step in your registration for these credits; Faith Stangler will issue your access code after approving your proposal. The Learning Contract ought to be done no later than two weeks into the semester; you and your supervisor may need a little time to determine just what the details of the placement will be.

THE JOURNAL

As soon as you start work, you will begin to keep a journal. Students develop their own styles in writing these documents, but it is important that you take it seriously and write in it regularly (after every visit is best, but every week is minimally acceptable). The journal is more than a sketchy log of activities ("made phone calls, taught class"). Rather, it describes your activities in some depth, as if you were an ethnographer writing field notes on your own experience. Moreover, it reflects on those activities: It identifies themes, questions and problems, tries to explain events and dynamics, and makes connections with theories and academic literatures. You should submit your journal to your adviser periodically, so that s/he is up to date on your progress and your issues.

MEETING WITH YOUR ADVISER

During the internship term, you and your adviser should meet periodically to discuss your work and learning. How often that happens is up to your adviser, but it ought to be at least several times spread across the semester. You need to report on what you've been doing (submitting your current journal before the sessions is a good way to get the conversation started), how you are progressing toward your learning goals (remember to check the Learning Contract), what problems have arisen, and so on. Your adviser will help you connect your experience to academic and professional concepts, and may suggest supplementary readings that will help you reflect on the work.

THE WORKSHOPS

Twice during the internship semester you will attend workshops which will help you maximize your learning and meet the requirements. The first one, a couple of weeks into the term, orients you to the process and constructs a framework for understanding the kinds of things you will

THE SEQUENCE OF PROCEDURES

be doing and learning in the placement site. The second one helps you think about the form and content of the final paper (see examples later in this manual). These workshops are required; several sessions of each one are scheduled to accommodate your time needs.

THE PROGRESS REPORT

Sometime in the middle of the semester (the date will be announced), you will submit a progress report about your internship to your adviser and Faith Stangler. This form will alert the school to any problems that need to be addressed. (Forms are available in the Gallatin office and on the school website.)

THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A few weeks before the end of the term, Faith Stangler will send your supervisor an evaluation form. S/he will complete the form and return it to Ms. Stangler, who will forward it to your adviser. This performance evaluation plays an important role in your adviser's determination of your grade for the internship. You should check to make sure your supervisor has received and returned the form. You may also be asked to fill out a student evaluation of the experience, including your supervision, your advisement, the work and learning that you did.

THE FINAL PAPER

The major written work for the internship is a final paper, which you will submit to your adviser near the end of the semester (the deadline is up to the adviser). The strategies for writing the paper vary depending on your interests, your adviser's expectations and the nature of the experience. Some options for approaching the assignment are covered in the second required workshop, and advisers often have their own strategies, but in general the paper is a substantial piece of work reflecting not only a report of your activities, but an analysis of issues related to the work, the organization and its environment. Most final papers make reference to some readings as well as to the work activities, and many relate the analysis to academic and theoretical questions and frameworks. For a 4-credit internship, the paper is usually between 15 and 20 pages.

The content of the learning in internships cannot be predicted or controlled the way a professor can design a syllabus for a classroom course. You will learn many different kinds of things, some of which relate to school-based education and some of which do not. Some will surprise you. We encourage you to think about the following themes as ways of organizing and energizing your analysis of the experience. Reflections on these and other issues might appear in your journal as well as in your final paper.

Organizational history: How did your placement organization emerge in its environment? What needs and challenges was it meeting? Who took the initiative in starting it? What form did it take in its early stages? How has it changed over time, and why? How is the organization likely to change in the future?

Organizational structure: How are roles and functions divided up in the organization -- departments, teams, divisions, regions, etc.? What does the organization chart show? Who reports to whom? Who are the clients or customers, and who interacts with them?

Production processes and technologies: How does the work get done? In what order? by whom? using what kinds of knowledge and skills? How do the technologies in the organization shape people's activities, their relations, their status and power?

Workplace culture: What are the belief systems, values and conceptions of the world that people share in this organization? How do they think about issues like power, gender, ethnicity and class? What are the implicit rules and norms that people expect each other to follow? Think about mundane things like dress codes, language and the use of physical space and material objects; think about more subtle things like rituals, initiations, and communities of practice. What do members mean when they refer to "the way we do things around here." How does this organization differ from others in the same industry? in different industries?

Power and Status: Who gets what kinds of power in this organization? How is it maintained or challenged? How is power exercised in various situations? Is it centralized or decentralized, authoritarian or democratic?

Ethics: What values and principles underlie the organization's work and relations? How do people determine what is right and wrong, what is unacceptable behavior and what is permissible? What sorts of ethical dilemmas arise in the workplace? How are they handled, and by whom? How do these issues affect you and your work?

Finances: How is money generated and allocated across the organization? Who makes decisions about finances? What principles, strategies and criteria do they use? What does the allocation of money say about the organization's priorities and values?

The Environment: How do factors external to the organization affect its work activities, strategies and success? These factors might include government regulations, technological changes and the dynamics of the marketplace, as well as public opinion and economic trends.

MAKING THE INTERNSHIP A SUCCESS

THE INTERN'S STRATEGIES

There are many different ways to approach the internship successfully. You will need to develop a strategy that expresses your self, recognizes the constraints and possibilities in the situation, and generates the most effective learning experience. There are several very general strategies, however, that will benefit virtually every intern:

Do the work: Participate as much and as fully as you can in the processes and relations of work in your setting. Go to the meetings, participate in the teams, be productive. Take initiative: Don't always wait for things to happen to you, or for people to give you things to do; instead, make things happen (when it's appropriate and effective). Do your work diligently and with care; ask for direction and help when you need it. Try to become a fullfledged member of the community of practice in the workplace.

Be an investigator: Go beyond the specifics of your work assignment to pursue questions and try to make sense of the big picture in the organization. Whenever you get a chance, observe other people at work (in other units, if that's allowed); try to figure out where your own work fits in the larger scheme of things, but also get to know that whole scheme. Whenever you can (without bothering people), ask them questions: What are they doing? How

do they think through problems, processes, relationships? What do they need to know and be able to do, and how did they learn those things? Collect data: Keep a notebook with flyers, brochures, meeting notes, annual reports, etc., for later analysis.

Reflect on the experience: Keep a good journal; use it to explore complex issues and problems in the workplace. Read related materials, both theoretical and practical, and try to relate them to what you see going on. Ask your adviser for reading suggestions. Try out explanations and hypotheses for perplexing events and personalities, and get feedback on them from your supervisor and adviser. Try to connect your placement with your coursework and with your concentration. Raise issues and report experiences in classes when they are relevant.

Get help: If you are having trouble, or if you are confused, get help from the appropriate person(s). For workplace-related issues, see your supervisor. If you are having trouble with the supervisor, consult with your adviser or Faith Stangler on strategies for resolving the problem. Work with your adviser on school-related issues, or see Faith Stangler. These people are here to help you work out problems, make sense of what's going on, find resources and learn as much as you can.