

**SYLLABUS**  
**Public Administration**  
**PUAD 6960 – Internship**

Class: Face-to-face meeting TBD; Online D2L with appointments  
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**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to promote professional development; expose students to a day-to-day work environment; provide challenging and valuable work experience within an environment conducive to learning; and prepare students for future careers in public service (government, non-profit, and private). This course provides the student an opportunity to integrate classroom theory and knowledge with the practices of public service.

Student internship duties and responsibilities vary. According to the work activities, student experiences may meet one or several competencies including:

- To lead and manage in public governance
- To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Internships may be called Student Volunteer Programs, Student Fellowships, or Student Internships. As the field of public administration matured, the use of the term “intern” was often utilized instead of other terms such as “apprentice” to enhance the prestige of a person interested in learning about the practice of politics and government. Whatever the term, the range of volunteer possibilities is astounding. You could be involved in professional projects or other work activities related to the public administration degree. The actual work assignments performed is determined by the host organization.

In 1970, Bernard Hennessey, one of the first political scientists to write about the theory of government internships, identified three critical elements in the definition of an internship:

- 1) a real work situation, not a “simulation,”
- 2) an opportunity to participate on the same basis as other workers,
- 3) an opportunity for systematic and continuous evaluation of the experience in order to develop some generalizations about politics.

All three must be present in order for an experience to be considered a true internship.

Student internship placements include various positions such as with agriculture commissions, correctional facilities (public and private), court systems, law enforcement, legislative departments, parks & recreation departments, probation agencies, and many others.

Recent internship placements include the Colorado State Legislature (Fall 2021).

**COURSE POLICIES:** Student interns do not attend classroom lectures but are expected to attend their work location as expressed by their work supervisor. All interns are expected to read and comply with the personnel manual of their work organization. Student interns should expect to receive feedback on their performance on a periodic bases from the work-place supervisor. A exit performance evaluation will be accomplished by the work-place supervisor which may become part of the student's record. A grade of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) will be based on the supervisor's evaluation of the student intern's work performance.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS and IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Step One: Planning for Internship and Internship Site Location**

Students should begin to search internship positions and the type of public service work they desire during their first

semester. The selection period for many of the quality internships are over six months. Students should apply early. Students should meet with the Internship Coordinator and/or a faculty member for public career advice. Also, students should meet with the Career Center Internship Coordinator. (*See Internship Links below*)

### **Step Two: Internship Site Selection and Intern Ready Program**

The Internship Site should provide the student with a public sector work environment similar to the career goals of the student. The sponsoring organization agrees to provide an internship supervisor to oversee the student's internship. This person will have expertise in the internship area, experience and status within the organization, and an interest in supervising and mentoring the intern.

The projects assigned to the intern should aid the organization in meeting goals as well as provide for the student's learning objectives. An ideal project will incorporate classroom knowledge, teamwork, experience working with other disciplines and the opportunity to display creative abilities. The intern should be provided frequent feedback on strengths and areas of improvement in order to promote student professional development.

All students should participate in the Career Center's Intern Ready Program. The Intern Ready program prepares students to locate internships, communicate with employers, interview successfully, and make the most of the experience. The Intern Ready Requirements include:

- Register in Career Connection
- Participate in a resume review appointment
- Upload updated resume in Career Connection and upload at least one resume to [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)
- Attend an internship search workshop
- Attend an Intern 101 session on professionalism
- Participate in a career fair and network with employers
- Participate in a mock interview appointment

### **Step Three: Internship Agreement and Course Registration**

The student should register for the internship course during the semester that the internship experience will be completed. Ordinarily this means registering for the internship course just prior to beginning the actual internship employment. Once the student has met with the Internship Coordinator, the course registration can be processed. The Career Center staff and the MPA Internship Coordinator will assist with the Internship Agreement. The agreement should include several internship goals and/or learning objectives that are expected to be accomplished.

### **Step Four: Program Requirements**

Students are expected to:

- a) Contribute to the management of the internship experience
- b) Provide professional level work
- c) Comply with rules and regulations of the agency
- d) Take initiative in assigned duties
- e) Complete academic and work related assignments.

Students are required to work a minimum of 40 hours per academic credit for a total of 3 academic course credits. The job duties must provide the student with a rigorous, hands-on working experience that enables to student to apply academic learnings in a real, live work situation.

Internships entirely clerical/administrative in nature will not fulfill the course requirements.

Students should keep a journal with regular entries and email the MPA Internship Coordinator with updates. This activity will assist communicating to the MPA department how well the intern is completing the required work

hours. Also, the intern shall write a reflection paper summarizing the internship experience. The paper will be judged on quality not quantity but should contain four to six pages. Items previous students have noted are:

- 1) A statement of the student's goals at the beginning of the internship program and how the internship assisted in meeting the goals.
- 2) Discussion of the knowledge, skills and abilities learned or enhanced during the internship experience.
- 3) A brief discussion of the organization.
- 4) Explanation of the student's role in the organization.
- 5) An assessment of the internship, in terms of, the student's needs and expectations.
- 6) A comparison of MPA coursework with the practical experiences of the internship.
- 7) Insights about the impact of the internship on the student's knowledge, skills, work style, values, and beliefs.
- 8) Supporting material that demonstrates the level of work the student accomplished.

The Internship paper should be submitted with the Career Center's student evaluation forms and send a copy to the MPA Internship Coordinator.

### **Step Five: Exit Interview**

Students should schedule an exit interview the MPA Coordinator to discuss the internship accomplishments. Students should contact the coordinator early in the semester. It is a good idea to bring a copy of the Internship Goals, Work Journal with hours worked, Reflection Paper, and Resume to the exit interview.

Student Internship links:

GCSU Career Center:

[Career Center](#)

ICMA Internships ([www.ICMA.org](http://www.ICMA.org)):

[ICMA Internships and Jobs](#)

State and Local Government Internships ([www.glga.org](http://www.glga.org)):

[Georgia Marketplace](#)

Federal Internships ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)):

<https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>

General Internet links:

<http://college.monster.com/education>

<http://www.internships.com>

<http://www.idealists.org>

<http://www.experience.com/entry-level-jobs/>

<https://www.mediabistro.com>