

POLITICAL SCIENCE INTERNSHIPS

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About Internships

The Department of Political Science encourages qualified students to participate in internships to enhance their educational experience. Ideally, internships should be planned for the second semester junior year, first semester senior year, or the summer in between. The department will work with you to arrange an internship in the Western Massachusetts area or in Washington, D.C. through the Washington Center Program.

Included in this internship manual is all the information you need to begin planning for an internship, from eligibility and requirements, to ideas for placements, to criteria for evaluation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the department chair.

What an Internship can do for you

College and university students across the country are finding that internships give them a competitive advantage in both the job market and admission to graduate school. Internships provide one of the best ways to use what you have learned in your courses, and to determine how to launch your life after college. Internships can introduce you to a variety of professional roles and a variety of workplace environments in agencies related to Political Science. You can gain practical work experience while earning course credit and contacts in your field.

The Department of Political Science offers a wide range of internships from three to 15 credits designed to appeal to students in all of our areas of concentration. Placements are available with federal, state and local governments, political campaigns, and non-profit agencies. Internships are offered during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. The department also participates in the Washington Center internship program, which provides placements during the semester or summer in Washington, D.C. Students who are Massachusetts residents with a grade point average of 3.0 or better may qualify for scholarships to intern in Washington, housing aid from the Washington Center, as well as a waiver of state university tuition and fees.

To insure the best placement, meet with the department chair as early as possible during the semester prior to the one during which you plan to undertake an internship. Please note that some deadlines for the Washington Center, especially those requiring security clearances, are as much as a year before the start of the internship.

Eligibility and Procedures

1. Students must have earned a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 to participate in an internship through the Department of Political Science. Students with at least a 3.0 GPA are eligible for a combination of scholarships and waivers to intern in Washington D.C. which make the cost of that internship for Massachusetts residents comparable to a semester at WSU. For details on deadlines, scholarships and placements offerings see the Washington Center website at www.twc.edu and the WSU Career Center.
2. Students planning internships must complete an application form, available in the department and in this manual, and file it with the department chair. You should attach a current resume and current transcript (unofficial copy is acceptable).
3. In consultation with the department chair, determine what type of internship would be best for you, and when the best time to participate in an internship would be.
4. In consultation with the department chair, choose a faculty member in the department who is best suited to your choice of internship placement to supervise. Meet with that faculty member, and secure his/her agreement to work with you.
5. In consultation with your faculty advisor, apply to the internship site, and complete a contract outlining hours of work and job description and duties with the supervisor at the site. The contract is available in the department and in this manual.

Requirements

1. Students **work at the internship site**, according to the agreement with the site supervisor. In a typical 16-week semester:

3-credit internship = 120 hours on site or eight hours/week for 15 weeks;

6-credit internship = 240 hours on site or 16 hours/week for 15 weeks.

The Washington Center provides up to 15 credits, which includes a required 3-credit course.

Up to six internship credits may be applied to the Political Science major; three credits may be applied to the concentration. Up to three internship credits may be applied to the Political Science minor.

2. Students **submit weekly journals** to their faculty supervisor, detailing their activities and their responses to their experiences.
3. Students **complete a research paper** on a topic relevant to their internship placement. The paper topic, format, length and due date should be decided within the first few weeks of start of the internship in consultation with the faculty supervisor.
4. The **site supervisor evaluates and grades the student intern** according to criteria listed on the form included in this manual.
5. When all internship work has been completed, **students submit the Student Internship Evaluation form** to the department chair, with an additional page describing the highlights and challenges of the internship experience.

Examples of Past Placements*

Massachusetts Attorney General's Office
 Western Massachusetts Office of the Governor
 Boston City Hall
 Mayor's Offices in Springfield, Holyoke, Westfield
 Chicopee District Court
 Massachusetts Housing Court
 Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
 Offices of State Senators and State Representatives
 Regional Offices of U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives
 Campaign Staffs of various state and local political candidates
 Law Offices in Springfield and Northampton
 YWCA of Western Massachusetts
 Channel 57, WGBY, Springfield
 Springfield Armory National Historic Site
 World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts
 Womanshelter Campaneras, Holyoke
 U.S. Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security
 Federal Trade Commission
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 National Women's Political Caucus
 U.S. Attorneys Office, D.C. Public Defenders Office
 Feminist Majority
 Children's Rights Council
 Circle of Friends for Homeless Veterans

** This list is not comprehensive but offers examples only.*

Student Responses to Internships

“It was one of the best experiences I had in college. It gave me a preview of what it was going to be like when I graduated and went out into the real world. Once you graduate you don't really have the option of relocating for a few months just to try something out. You pick up a lot of skills you can't learn in a classroom that you will use for the rest of your life.” *Crystal Fraser, 2007*

“The classroom is a great environment to prepare you for the critical thinking necessary to succeed, but nothing shy of practical experience can prepare you for the demands or the rewards of public service.” *Stephen T. Cole, 2005*

“I have learned more about the law and being an attorney than I ever imagined. I also learned more about myself than I ever thought. This experience has helped me grow as a person as well as a student. Thank you for this opportunity.” *Meghan Roche, 2000*

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**Westfield State University
Department of Political Science**

Internship Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Political Science Concentration _____

Second Major _____ Minor _____

Overall GPA _____

Type of Internship

Washington Center Semester _____ Year _____ Credits _____

Local Semester _____ Year _____ Credits _____

Preferred Internship Site _____

Signatures

Student _____ Date _____

Faculty Advisor _____ Date _____

Department Chair _____ Date _____

ATTACHMENTS: Transcript (can be unofficial) and Resumé

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**Westfield State University
Department of Political Science**

Internship Job Description

Please complete the following job description form for _____, who will be doing a _____ credit internship at your site during the spring/summer/fall semester, 20____. Interns must complete 40 hours on site for each internship credit.

1. If the position the intern will be filling has a title, please indicate that:

2. What tasks/functions will the intern be expected to perform?

3. Will the intern’s supervisor be present during the times the intern is at the site?

Yes _____ No _____

If no, to whom can the intern turn for assistance in the absence of the intern’s supervisor? Please provide name, title, and contact information of that person.

4. How will the intern’s performance be evaluated?

If you have a written job description for the position please feel free to attach it to this form. Thank you for your cooperation. Please return this form to Department Chair, Political Science Westfield State University, 577 Western Avenue, Westfield, MA 01086.

Signatures

Internship Site Supervisor _____ Date _____

Faculty Advisor _____ Date _____

Department Chair _____ Date _____

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Evaluation of Intern by Site Supervisor

_____, a student intern referred to this office by the Department of Political Science at Westfield State University, has completed the following assignment under my supervision:

The student made the following contribution to our programs or objectives:

The student advanced individual learning objectives as follows:

I would indicate dissatisfaction with the student's performance as follows:

- () Attendance below agreed number of hours per week
 () Attitude not fully cooperative
 () Work performed without proper care
 () Lack of understanding of agency needs or operations
 () Other: please explain _____

I would report the following as marks of distinction of this student:

- () Marked and definite progress in knowledge and ability during internship
 () Unusual dedication to our needs or operations
 () Completion of a challenging project calling for considerable initiative
 () Teamwork and cooperativeness
 () Ability to express ideas orally and in writing
 () Willingness to adapt to supervision
 () Other: please explain _____

Based on the above I recommend that the student receive a grade as follows:

() A () A- () B+ () B () B- () C+ () C () Less than a C

Name _____

Signature _____

Position and Agency _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

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**Westfield State University
Department of Political Science**

Student Internship Evaluation

Name _____ Dates of Internship _____

Agency _____ Site Supervisor _____

Faculty Advisor _____

Job Title _____

Job Description _____

| | Outstanding | Very Good | Good | Poor |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Opportunity to use academic knowledge in practical way | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Provided useful information about a job or career | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Opportunity to demonstrate initiative and ability | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Duties and responsibilities clearly defined | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Site supervisor provided direction and support | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Overall evaluation | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Please describe on back side the highlights and challenges of your internship experience.

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