

**RECREATION MANAGEMENT AND POLICY
INTERNSHIP
INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It has been said that education is a continuous and lifelong process. It requires not only the acquisition of skills and knowledge gained in the classroom, but practical application as well. Higher education should provide a body of knowledge and develop skills in reasoning; however, both must be tested to be of any benefit—one of these tests is the internship experience.

The internship is a valuable learning experience. It will give the student a chance to experience firsthand what has been studied in readings and the classroom. There is little substitute for a real experience. By getting involved in a “direct experience” and trying things, we can begin to understand what we do or do not know.

It is vital that students and their supervisors understand the purpose of the internship before students engage in the experience. It is equally important that students understand the Internship requirements and expectations before they commit themselves to any internship placement. The purpose of this manual is to explain the Internship program, expectations, and requirements.

The primary purpose of the internship is to bridge the gap between theory and professional practice. It is an opportunity to learn, first-hand, the inner workings of a leisure service and/or health care delivery system and to further develop the competency and self-assurance necessary for a professional career in the recreation, parks, human services and/or tourism fields.

Specifically, the internship allows a student to learn and further develop competencies through direct experience in, or observation of, such areas as: program planning, assessment, treatment planning, leadership/group facilitation, record keeping, team meetings, documentation, administration, business procedures, maintenance, personnel matters, marketing, and public relations. Although a student may not have responsibilities for many different areas on a day to day basis, they should be exposed to, or allowed to explore, all aspects of an organization's operations.

Students enrolled in the Therapeutic Recreation Option must participate in an internship experience that uses the “Therapeutic Recreation process” as defined by the current Job Analysis for NCTRC.

INTERNSHIP POLICY AND PRE-REQUISITES

- Each student graduating from the Department of Recreation Management and Policy must pass the preparatory 2-credit Professional Development and Ethics (RMP 654) course with a grade of C or better AND receive a grade of “credit” for the 14-week internship.
- Internships are available in fall and spring semesters as well as during the summer. Students are encouraged to work with their advisor to determine the most appropriate sequence.

- A minimum of 560 hours over a 14-week period is required. A full time continuous experience is required therefore, interns may not take vacations, or time off with the exception of a documented emergency. The internship experience is supervised by a “qualified professional” (further defined on pgs 5-6 of this manual).
- Because of the demands of the Internship, and to ensure that students get the maximum benefit from the experience, they are not allowed to moonlight (engage in another job) while in the Internship position. In rare cases, an exception to this policy may be granted if the student can obtain written permission from the Internship Agency Supervisor and the Internship Coordinator.
- Students may not enroll in other courses for academic credit during the internship experience. In rare cases, an exception to this policy may be granted if the student can obtain written permission from the Internship Agency Supervisor.
- Students must complete all internship requirements as specified in this manual to obtain credit for their internship experience.

Termination of Internship

Major problems with the internship are rare when the internship is grounded in 1) careful selection of an internship site, 2) a well-written learning agreement with the agency, 3) a job description in which the expectations and responsibilities of all parties are carefully designated, and 4) where there is ongoing contact between the intern and the Internship Coordinator. Every effort is made by both the University Internship Coordinator and the Agency Supervisor to support the internship learning process, but it may on occasion be necessary to either a) terminate a student intern; or b) remove an intern from an agency for reassignment elsewhere. Each case must be considered separate and distinct because of differing agency guidelines and stipulations within the University.

Termination of an Intern

Possible grounds for dismissal of an intern by an Agency may include, but is not restricted to:

- Lack of student responsibility (e.g., being constantly late for work, failing to report absences in advance, misuse of equipment, failure (within reason) to undertake or complete assigned tasks, etc.);
- Engagement by the intern in illegal or unethical behavior
- Violation of employer’s policies (e.g., confidentiality, safety, sexual harassment, racial or religious discrimination);
- Personal problems or emotional problems that hamper an intern’s ability to function in a work place environment; and
- Violation by the intern of any aspect of the UNH Student Rights, Rules and Responsibilities Handbook

The Agency Supervisor must immediately notify the University Internship Coordinator if circumstances arise that could eventuate the dismissal of an intern. Agency personnel guidelines will direct the initial review and all appropriate documentation arising from this process must

then be forwarded to the University Internship Coordinator to initiate an internal academic review process (since the intern is still enrolled as a UNH student even if dismissed). Every effort should be made to reconcile the issues, but it is still possible that an Agency decision to terminate an intern will stand.

Once the RMP department is informed of the dismissal or pending dismissal of an intern (and termination of letter of agreement), the following general guidelines are to be adhered to:

- The University Internship Coordinator continues to maintain direct and open communication with both the intern and Agency Supervisor.
- The Department Chair and the student's Academic Advisor will be immediately notified of the dismissal or pending dismissal proceedings against the intern
- The Department Chair will make a determination about notifying the College of HHS' Dean's Office.
- Findings related to the review of proceedings may be referred to the broader faculty for further consideration
- A final recommendation on the student's academic status is made.

Removal of an Intern from an Agency Site

Circumstances may arise where it is necessary or prudent for the University Internship Coordinator to remove an intern from a particular agency, and relocate them at another field placement site. These circumstances include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Excessive work of a trivial nature (e.g., stapling, copying, etc); some is to be expected but this should not be the focus of the internship placement as stipulated in the letter of agreement and job description;
- Other significant violations of terms of engagement on the part of the Agency (e.g., employment duration);
- Evidence of conflict either between the Agency Supervisor and the intern or the intern and other colleagues;
- Unsafe working environment
- Strike action, lockouts, or other labor-related disruptions experienced at the Agency;
- Agency bankruptcy or financial exigency resulting in the inability to retain an intern.
- Interruption of a Therapeutic Recreation intern's field placement due to termination of CTRS supervisor. In this event, TR students must immediately contact the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification for guidelines of an alternative field proposal; and
- Sexual or other harassment of the intern in a work place setting.

In more serious situations, as for example where an intern may be a target of sexual harassment, immediate intervention by the University Internship Coordinator is appropriate, and it may be advisable to remove and terminate the internship immediately if the problem is not clearly and decisively resolved at the time the problem becomes apparent. Serious problems of this nature may have legal ramifications, and the University Internship Coordinator should therefore also consult with University Legal Counsel personnel without delay.

PRE-REQUISITE COURSEWORK

To be eligible for the Internship, all students must have completed the following major courses with a grade of C or better:

RMP	490	Recreation and Leisure in Society
RMP	501	Recreation Services for Individuals with Disabilities
RMP	557	Recreation Services Program Design and Planning
RMP	563	Practicum
RMP	654	Professional Development and Ethics
Other		Basic First Aid and infant, child, adult CPR (or equivalent cert)

Additionally, students will have completed the following courses with a C- or better based upon his/her chosen option:

Program & Event Management

RMP	661	Program Supervision and Leadership
RMP	663	Management and Policy in Leisure Services
RMP	665	Applied Marketing and Communications in Recreation Services
RMP	770	Management and Design of Recreation & Park Facilities
RMP	Elective	511, 554, 560, 600, 668, 680, 711, 730, 760, 775, 593 or 793 (must complete <u>one</u> of three electives)

Therapeutic Recreation

RMP	502	Foundations of Therapeutic Recreation
RMP	503	Therapeutic Recreation Rehabilitation Principles & Interventions
RMP	504	Therapeutic Recreation Mental Health Principles & Interventions
RMP	612	Therapeutic Communication & Facilitation Techniques in TR
RMP	613	Interventions & Documentation in TR
RMP	614	Assessment & Treatment Planning in Therapeutic Recreation
RMP	615	Clinical Treatment Lab II
HDFS	525	Human Development
PSYC	561	Abnormal Behavior
BMS	507/508	Human Anatomy and Physiology
KIN	652/3	Clinical Kinesiology

THE INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT

The placement search is ultimately the student's responsibility; the Department will assist as much as possible. Students should look for placements that require initiative and responsibility, and will give them the broadest possible experience. Students should ask themselves the following questions: Is the placement going to give me the broad experiences that I am seeking? Will there be learning opportunities available to me that enhance my competencies and self-assurance? Will I be able to attend meetings, review materials, manuals, reports and files, and discuss topics with persons responsible for the areas essential to my Internship? Is the placement consistent with my professional career goals? Will I have regular and ongoing supervision from a qualified professional? The student may need to work after regular hours and on days off in order to fulfill the requirements of the Internship.

Students are required to secure an Internship placement with a leisure, recreation, health care or tourism agency that is approved by the student's Academic Advisor and the Internship Coordinator.

THE AGENCY

The following criteria will be considered when approving an agency as an appropriate placement for the student:

1. The placement site must be compatible with the student's career goals and academic preparation. The agency must be willing to make a commitment to the internship as an educational experience for the student.
2. The placement should provide the student with a broad and varied exposure to the overall agency/program operation.
3. The student's professional and personal internship objectives (developed in cooperation with the Internship Coordinator and shared with the Agency Supervisor) should be compatible with the Internship position.
4. The agency must be willing to collaborate with the designated University representative from the Department of Recreation Management and Policy during the internship experience.

THE SUPERVISOR

The following supervisor criteria will be considered in determining an acceptable placement:

1. The supervisor has at least one degree in leisure services (recreation parks, therapeutic recreation and/or tourism), and a minimum of two years full-time experience in a supervisory and/or administrative position.

OR

The supervisor has a minimum of four years of full-time supervisory and/or administrative experience in the specific area(s) in which the student plans to study and work.

2. For students in the Program & Event Management option, it is highly desirable, but not yet mandatory, for the supervisor to be professionally certified at the state or national level through an NRPA/NCB approved plan as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP).
3. For Therapeutic Recreation placements, the supervisor **must** be a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) recognized at the Professional Level by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC). The supervisor must hold the CTRS credential for a minimum of **one year**. The CTRS must be employed **full time** at the agency (minimum of 32 hours per week).
4. If a TR student is interning in the State of New Hampshire, the TR supervisor must also hold a current RT license from the NH Office of Allied Health Professionals.
5. Therapeutic Recreation placements **must** also have a minimum of 2 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists on staff. A rare exception to this criteria may be granted with the permission of the student's Academic Advisor and the completion of a written waiver.
6. The supervisor can and is willing to work with the student in order to make the Internship a learning experience. The supervisor can meet with the student a minimum of once a week (for at least one hour) to answer questions, provide feedback and supervision, analyze strengths and weaknesses, etc.
7. The supervisor can assist the student with identifying resources and learning opportunities to address the internship objectives (learning contract).
8. The supervisor can assist the student in gathering information and developing a broad perspective of the organization (via discussion sessions, agency meetings, review of agency materials/files, etc.).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY SUPERVISOR:

The Department expects the following responsibilities to be accepted by the student's supervisor.

1. To complete, in cooperation with the student, the Internship Agreement and submit it to the University Internship Coordinator before the start of the Internship.
2. To work with the student to precisely define the student's work assignments based upon mutually determined goals and objectives.
3. To help the student gain exposure to total operation of the organization through appropriate means (meetings, discussion, readings, work assignments, etc.).
4. To meet with the student frequently, preferably a minimum of once a week, to discuss his/her performance and Internship requirements.

5. To meet with the University representative during the scheduled site/phone visitation to discuss the student's responsibilities and performance (scheduled in advance).
6. To provide the University representative with a written mid-term and final evaluation of the student's performance (evaluations provided by university via electronic survey).
7. To communicate immediately with the University representative in the event of any emergency or failure of the student to perform adequately.

THE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT

The Department of Recreation Management and Policy has three general roles: 1) as administrator of the program; 2) as a facilitator for the student and agency; and 3) as final evaluator of the student's performance. Responsibilities of the University Department:

1. To verify that the student has met all academic pre-requisites described in this Manual prior to engaging in the Internship experience.
2. To prepare students for the Internship experience through academic advising, a pre-Internship course (Professional Development and Ethics RMP 654) and written information.
3. To review and approve the Internship setting chosen by the student.
4. To assure that the student and agency receive information necessary to successfully complete the Internship experience.
5. To schedule one site or phone visitation with each student and agency supervisor. Each visitation will result in a report concerning the student's experience and progress including suggestions for improvement. There will be additional follow-up when necessary. To keep appropriate administrative records, including a file on each individual student, which will be accessible to them throughout the Internship experience.
6. To conduct a final evaluation concerning the student's internship experience, including a recommendation/determination as to whether academic credit should be granted or not.