

# **THE INTERNSHIP**

Each student is required to do an internship or a thesis. The internship is the appropriate choice in the vast majority of cases.

The internship is generally done at the end of the student's graduate program; during the summer for many students. (NB: a student who begins in the Fall, and continues full-time will need to take another course in addition to the internship in order to have the requisite number of credits for graduation.)

In any case, a student cannot do the internship until s/he has completed at least 12 credits of coursework in the program.

The student signs up for the section of GVT 723 with his or her advisor. The student secures an internship and works on the internship proposal with his or her faculty advisor, and then submits it with the proper form (the internship contract) to the graduate director for approval.

When the student has completed the internship, s/he writes the internship report in consultation with his/her advisor. When they both agree it is ready, the report, along with an internship completion form and request for faculty hearing are submitted to the graduate program director.

The faculty program director sets the schedule for graduate presentations—generally held during one or two weeks at the end of the fall and spring semester and beginning of the fall semester. Faculty sign up for specific time periods, and the faculty secretary coordinates the availability of faculty and graduate students for presentations.

Generally there are 3 faculty members (usually one is the advisor) present for each student's presentation, although it can be done with just two. The faculty who are present fill out the presentation completion form, and the faculty advisor submits the grade for that student (or change of grade form, if appropriate).

All internship-related forms should be placed in the student's faculty file.

Sample forms are included at the end of this section.

## **ISSUES:**

Should students be required to do a lit review in their proposal?

Are students meeting with their advisors?

Are students aware of the requirements?

We should keep a list of student internship placements, to use as referrals for future students. Perhaps an "exit interview" form could ask students about their internship experience (good, bad, etc) and contact information for their supervisor.

# Internship Requirements

The internship is the capstone of the MSPS. As such, it is to be done AFTER at least 12 credits of coursework for the program have been completed. While you are certainly qualified to do an internship before you have completed your coursework, the purpose of this internship is unique. You are expected to use your internship as a research project to apply what you have learned in the program. Thus, you need to draw on your classes to develop your goals and objectives for the internship.

Your internship should be in an organization related to your concentration--Professional Politics or International Relations; for the latter, it must also be related to your focus area. You might work for an international organization, a campaign, an interest group, a nongovernmental organization, a lobbying firm, a legislative office, a governmental agency, in business or journalism relevant to your field of study, or in a variety of other sites.

Your job should be substantive. Secretarial or clerical positions are not acceptable for an internship. Although your job may include some clerical tasks, the primary purpose must be substantive work related to your degree. Your internship should require you to work at least 20 hours per week for at least 10 weeks. You should find an agreeable office environment. Careful choice in the beginning can prevent personality conflicts later.

Your internship should be organized around a goal you have to meet or a problem you have to solve. In other words, your internship should have a *focus*. Examples of appropriate internship goals include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Improving public awareness of human rights issues.
- Working for a lobbying firm, trying to get a particular bill passed.
- Trying to gather a body of knowledge on a particular public policy or international issue.
- Conducting a survey of interest group members to learn their opinions on pending legislation.
- Devising a strategy to raise a candidate's share of the vote.

## **Your Internship Contract**

Once you have decided on an internship, you need to submit, in writing, a contract signed by you and your supervisor. You will submit your internship contract along with your internship proposal. The contract and proposal **MUST BE APPROVED BY YOUR ADVISOR, AND THEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

# Internship Proposal

You must write a proposal describing your intended internship; **the proposal (along with your internship contract) must be approved by your advisor and the graduate program director in order for your internship to begin officially.** Your proposal should develop the goals you have set for yourself in the internship, and include a brief description of what you expect to be the duties of your job. The following is an outline for a proposal. You will submit the proposal, along with your internship contract, to your advisor and then the graduate program director for approval.

Your proposal should be 3-5 pages long.

I. *Title Page* (See Turabian for an example)

II. *Introduction*: gives an overview of the internship project. Describe where you will be working, what your duties will be, briefly summarize your overall goals.

IV. *Internship Goals*: This section of the paper will describe the goals of your internship in detail. For example, your internship may require you to lobby for a bill at the State House. Your goal for the internship would be passage of the legislation. Other internships will have other goals—to register voters, to raise funds, to identify supporters of a candidate, etc. In this section, you should not only describe your goals but also explain how you intend to go about meeting them. ***In particular, please discuss the relevance of your graduate studies to your internship -- how will the findings of political science research help you in meeting them?*** You should have at least 2 or 3 goals for your internship. List each one, and then give some details about you expect it to be accomplished.

V. *Conclusion*: Summarize how you expect the project to relate to what you have learned in your coursework and the literature review.

V. *Bibliography*: You should include a bibliography of 5-7 sources related to your topic. These should be works of political science scholarship: either books or articles in refereed journals. This bibliography will serve as the basis for the literature review section of your internship report.

You should work closely with your advisor in choosing an internship and in writing the proposal.

# The Internship Report

The internship report should be a full presentation of what you learned and accomplished in your internship. **Your internship report will be approved for presentation first by your advisor, then by the Director of Graduate Studies.** Since the internship proposal, which you wrote earlier, describes what you *hoped* to learn and accomplish in the internship, you should use the proposal as a starting point. You may reproduce some or all of the internship proposal in the internship report, but be sure to adjust the language 1) to reflect the fact that the internship is now over (i.e., use the past rather than the future tense) and 2) to account for any new goals or activities that developed as you completed your internship.

The body of the report should be about 15-20 pages long. You may attach materials in an appendix (reports, memos, etc. that you have produced as part of your internship), but such an appendix should supplement, not replace, the material in the body of the report. In other words, attaching documents does not relieve you of the requirement to explain those documents, and what you learned from producing them, in the body of your report.

Please remember to number your pages!

## Outline of the Internship Report

- I. Title Page: Include your name, the date, the semester you are presenting the report, and a title. For an example of a title page, please see Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*.
- II. Table of Contents: Include page numbers for each section. (Also please remember to separate each section of your paper by a title, set off by a line space above.)
- III. Introduction (1/2-2 pp): You should briefly explain what your internship was, what your goals for the internship were and give a brief overview of the report.
- IV. Review of the Literature (3-5 pp): Your literature review should place your internship in the context of political science research. As a candidate for a graduate degree in political science, we ask you to demonstrate your familiarity with the political science literature that is relevant to your experience, and your ability to evaluate that literature critically, and to apply it in the practical circumstances of your internship.. For example, if you worked for an interest group, you would need to discuss the political science literature on interest groups. If your specific task was to lobby for a particular bill, you would need to focus your attention on the literature on lobbying in addition to

the general literature on interest groups. As you are writing your literature review, the following hints may be of help:

1. Move from the broad to the specific (i.e., move from interest groups in general to interest group lobbying to effectiveness of lobbying efforts)
2. Write about general themes/controversies in the literature.
3. Try not to talk about one author at a time: group by topic, rather than by author
4. Read literature reviews in political science journal articles to get an idea of how they are structured.
5. Include *at least* 7-10 sources in your literature review.

These sources may include those listed in the bibliography of your internship proposal, but you are free to adjust that list to reflect what you have learned from your internship experience.

- V. Description of Internship (3-5 pp): Discuss the goals that you had set out for yourself in your internship, perhaps also including a discussion of how/why those goals changed. Describe precisely what your duties were in your internship, what you did on a daily basis and what some of your specific projects were. Give details. Tell stories about interesting things that happened within your job.
- VI. Analysis of Internship (4-6 pp): This is the heart of your paper. Explain what you learned from your internship. Use your report to answer the following questions:
- Did you achieve your goals? Why or why not?
  - Was the internship different from what you had expected? Explain why.
  - What was unusual/interesting/important about your internship?
  - What did you accomplish?
  - Most importantly, what did you learn from your internship? How does it illustrate what you learned in your literature review? Does the literature apply to your internship? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?
  - How does your internship relate to your coursework at Suffolk University? This is the capstone of your program. How did it build on what you learned throughout your time here?
- VII. Conclusion (1-2 pp) : Summarize your report and internship. What conclusions do you draw about the effectiveness of doing the particular internship you chose? Evaluate the experience that you had.
- VIII. Bibliography: Use proper form (see Turabian), and list all sources cited in your literature review (as well as elsewhere in your paper). It is expected that your bibliography would include a minimum of 7-10 references.

- IX. Appendices (optional): Include any information from your internship that you think relevant (i.e, reports produced, letters written, schedules, newspaper articles, etc.)

You should work with your advisor throughout the writing process, asking him/her for advice on relevant literature and any other questions that may come up.

When you have completed your report, turn it in to your advisor, who will work with you to edit the report to its final version. When both you and your advisor are satisfied with your work, you will then submit three copies of the report to the graduate director and request a faculty hearing.

# The Internship Presentation

Length of time: Your internship presentation lasts about an hour altogether. You should count on spending about 10-15 presenting your report; the rest of the time will be filled by faculty questions and discussion among you and your committee.

Content: Plan on presenting the highlights of your report. Specifically, you should be prepared to talk about how the literature and your coursework relates to your internship, and what precisely you accomplished.

Form: Your presentation can be relatively informal; however, note-cards or other aids will help give it a polished appearance. Practice your presentation a few times before the actual date. You may use media in making your presentation (overheads, etc), but you should check with the department beforehand to make sure it can be accommodated. The faculty secretary can photocopy handouts (if any) you would like to present to the committee. Remember, a professional demeanor and attitude will reflect well on your presentation. Please bring your report with you.

Questions: The faculty may jump in with questions during your initial presentation, or they may wait until you have finished. Their questions are designed to get a fuller understanding of what you learned in your internship and how it applies to what you learned in the program. Although it sounds intimidating, most students actually appreciate the focused attention they get from three faculty interested in their work.

Assessment: After the faculty have finished questioning you, you will be dismissed from the room, to give them a chance to evaluate your presentation. They may accept the report or ask for revisions, based on the following criteria:

- Knowledge of the relevant literature
- Ability to connect the internship to political science literature/classes
- Relevance of the internship to the program
- Professionalism of presentation

Once their decision has been made, you will be called back into the room and informed of the outcome. If your report is accepted, you will need to submit an official copy of it to the departmental secretary (you may be asked to make some editing changes before the report becomes official).