Section One: Department of Sociology Undergraduate Internship Program

Sociology Internship

Sociology is a liberal arts discipline, requiring students to develop a knowledge and skill base that can be utilized in a variety of settings. The purpose of the Internship Program at UTSA is to provide a learning experience in which concepts and skills gained through academic study can be applied to a work setting. While the internship is an educational experience for the undergraduate student, it also serves as a transition to the professional work world. The basic time period for an internship is one semester of supervised work experience in a public, private for profit or private non-profit organization.

Requirements for Enrollment in the Internship Program

Requirements for enrollment in the Internship Program include:

Completion of prerequisite courses and be in senior standing, designation of Sociology as a major (exceptions are made if this course will support your major), acceptance by an approved internship worksite, and completion of necessary forms (see Internship Coordinator for more information).
Agency Selection

Students are responsible for locating their own internship site. Students will need to be accepted for an internship by an agency and should make an appointment with the appropriate agency representative to interview for available internships. The final decision on placement will involve agreement between the student, the agency, and the Internship Coordinator. The choice should reflect the student’s educational interests and provide the student with a learning experience to enhance those interests. Students may be paid for their internship if the agency provides paid internships.

Internship Requirements

Interns must meet the following requirements to complete a three-credit hour internship (SOC 4933): Students enrolled in the three credit hour course must work a total of 150 hours. Normally this requirement would involve working ten hours per week for fifteen (15) weeks of the semester. Interns enrolled in the six credit hour course (SOC 4936) must work a total of 300 hours. Normally this requirement would involve working twenty (20) hours per week for fifteen weeks of the semester. Students must keep track of their internship hours on the Internship Time Record and turn these worksheets into the Sociology Department (MS 4.02.66) every week.

Paper assignments allow the student to apply sociological knowledge to their workplace setting. Students enrolled in SOC 4933 and SOC 4936 will write one paper (8 – 12 double-spaced typewritten pages for SOC 4933; 16-25 double spaced for SOC 4936) during the semester. The paper requires the intern to apply sociological knowledge of sociological concepts, theories, and research gained in their previous courses to the internship experience. For example, if the student is working with SAPD, utilize concepts and theories learned in deviance or criminology and apply to the organization or their clients. Students are encouraged to meet with the Internship Coordinator to discuss progress in the internship. Grades on all papers should reflect paragraph and sentence structure, grammar, content, and appropriate reference materials utilized. Citations and Bibliography should conform to APA (6th Edition) or ASA (4th Edition) guidelines. All papers will be graded and returned to the student by the Internship Coordinator. The grade will be recorded in the intern’s file by the Internship Coordinator.

The student is required to keep a journal located on Blackboard Learn. These are to be an account of your internship experience, including, but not limited to, duties for the week,
training, personal observations, etc. They are informal, so they can be written in first person. At least one journal entry must be submitted per week at a minimum of 250 words per entry. (Note: multiple entries cannot be added together to reach the word total and multiple entries do not result in more points, i.e. not as extra credit.)

You must submit a journal entry whether you worked that week or not. You may discuss anything that has to do with the internship (i.e. what you anticipate when you go or return to work, reflections on what you had done, etc.).

Interns will be required to attend a resume writing workshop in the Career Center to learn the process of resume writing. At the end of the semester, interns should use the journal and the skills learned in the courses taken throughout the interns academic career to facilitate the writing of a professional resume.

All students receive supervision and evaluation from their supervisor at the internship worksite (the Workplace Supervisor) and the Internship Coordinator, who is responsible for monitoring the student’s overall performance in the internship and assigning a final grade. The intern’s final grade will be a composite of evaluations of workplace performance made by the Workplace Supervisor, verification of completed hours, meetings with the Internship Coordinator, and evaluation of paper assignments made by the Internship Coordinator. Students will also be asked to evaluate their internship placement in terms of its success in their professional development.

**Evaluation Of Student Performance And Grading**

Before a grade is assigned, evaluation of the intern is determined by whether the student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of the internship, i.e. hours and paper assignments and regular meetings with the Internship Coordinator. Evaluation is viewed as a process that is jointly undertaken with the student, workplace supervisor, and Internship Coordinator providing information; however, grades are assigned by the Internship Coordinator. Input is obtained from the agency Workplace Supervisor through completion of the internship evaluation form. Information is provided by the student through completion of the Student Evaluation of the Internship Experience. This survey covers the orientation provided by the agency, work assignments, and the workplace supervisor. This information is used by the Internship Coordinator in making decisions regarding the use of the agency and workplace supervisor in future semesters.
The internship is graded on a letter grade basis, and students must earn a D or better in order to obtain credit for the internship. Grades submitted by the Internship Coordinator should reflect the following weights unless unusual circumstances exist:

Grading Rubric: paper grade (40%), workplace evaluation (30%), resume (20%) and journal entries (10%).

For either internship, failure to complete all the required hours will result in an “F” grade.

Section Two: Internship Roles

The Internship Worksite

A variety of agencies are utilized in the Department of Sociology Internship Program, including public agencies at the federal, state, county, and city level; private non-profit agencies, and private for profit agencies. Agencies utilized for the internship are generally located within San Antonio and surrounding areas to facilitate cooperation between the Internship Coordinator and the agency and keeping commuting for the students to a minimum. Placements outside the San Antonio area are available for students living in other communities.

Criteria for selection of an agency as a setting for student placement include the following:

The agency executive and staff must be willing to support the educational goals of the department through the appointment of a Workplace Supervisor with the education and/or experience to further the student’s education.

The intern must be given meaningful responsibilities within the agency. Clerical and secretarial work is discouraged. The intern may assist with these tasks, but the overall nature of the internship must center more on substantive issues. The Workplace Supervisor should make assignments that will integrate the intern into the regular operations of the office or agency.

The agency must support the Workplace Supervisor by allowing time for student supervision.

The agency/organization cannot engage in discriminatory practices in either the hiring of personnel or the acceptance of students or clientele.

Students should not be left alone in the agency without professional staff. Students, no
matter how competent or skilled, are not prepared to take on unsupervised staff responsibilities.

Stipends for the services of the student are allowed but not required.

The agency should provide the student with materials, space, and equipment needed to complete their assigned tasks.

The agency must provide necessary measures to protect students’ safety. This may minimally include training in: policies and procedures for conducting home visits; interacting with potentially difficult clients; and handling emergencies, as well as appropriate screening of student assignments by Workplace Supervisor.

These criteria represent the basic elements for safeguarding the educational nature of the internship.

**The WORKPLACE SUPERVISOR**

The Workplace Supervisor is key to the quality of the internship for an individual student, and therefore should meet the following requirements:

1. The Workplace Supervisor must be recommended by the agency as capable of student supervision. The Agency must also agree to support the Workplace Supervisor in the educational role.

2. The Workplace Supervisor should be willing to dedicate time to facilitate the student’s learning goals and workplace experience.

3. The Workplace Supervisor is responsible for providing timely feedback to the department on the progress of the individual student through the Internship Coordinator and to identify quickly what problems, if any, exist.

The responsibilities of the Workplace Supervisor are:

1. To orient the student to the setting. This includes all relevant personnel, policies and procedures, and can include meetings, dress code, record keeping and agency documentation, confidentiality and/or HIPPA regulations, transfer and termination procedures, and other information if applicable.
2. To provide the necessary work experiences to meet the educational goals.

3. To provide regularly scheduled supervisory conferences with the student.

4. To serve as an agency role model.

5. To evaluate the performance of the student throughout the semester.

6. To provide necessary training and monitoring of students' compliance with safety policies and procedures.

7. To notify the Internship Coordinator as soon as possible should problems regarding the student arise in the internship setting. If necessary, the Internship Coordinator and Workplace Supervisor might confer and make decisions regarding the student.

The INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR

The Internship Coordinator is responsible for monitoring student progress in the internship and evaluating student performance on written assignments. The Internship Coordinator meets with students on need to basis.

Responsibilities of the Internship Coordinator include the following:

1. Meet with the student on a regular basis to assess the student's learning needs and assign additional academic readings to enhance the intern’s knowledge in the substantive areas associated with the internship.

2. Attempt to identify early possible problem areas with individual students and move in to assist both student and agency to meet educational needs and resolve conflicts.

3. Grade and return papers to students in a timely manner.

4. Assign the final grade for students, reflecting not only evaluation of academic work but workplace performance as well.

The STUDENT
The primary responsibility of the student in field is to meet the educational objectives of the internship as an active adult learner in the applied setting. Students are not expected to already possess a particular knowledge base or skills necessary to the setting, but instead, to take on the responsibility of involving themselves in the learning process in that setting. This includes remaining open to and acting on feedback from the workplace supervisor and agency staff, being willing to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and sharing these strengths and weaknesses, and work toward improvement in their work performance.

Additional student responsibilities include:

Identification of learning needs and objectives.
Fulfillment of learning needs and objectives.
Completion of all educational requirements including submission of workplace hour sheets, papers and meetings with Internship Coordinator on time.
Completion of work activities in compliance with agency policy and practices.
Identification and effort to solve any problems arising out of inadequacies or misunderstandings in the internship.
Contribution to the improvement of ways in which the school functions with respect to internship including suggestions made for new placement sites and policy changes.
Above all behavior that reflects a professional attitude and ethical decision making in the internship setting.

Section Three: Additional Internship Policies

There are several general policies that refer to all students in the internship. These are summarized in the following areas.

1. All students are required to complete the requisite number of hours of internship. If this is not going to be accomplished within the time frame of a semester, arrangements must be made to make up the time before the start of the new semester. Using the period between semesters, plus holiday time, this can usually be done without undue hardship. Final decisions on whether or not to issue an incomplete grade for the student lies with the Internship Coordinator.
2. If a student must be absent from field, s/he is responsible for calling the Workplace Supervisor. The Workplace Supervisor should inform the Internship Coordinator of any concerns regarding student absence.

3. If a student is absent for a significant period of time, there are three options:
   a. Withdraw from internship, with the consent of the Internship Coordinator;
   b. Take an “incomplete” and finish prior to the beginning of the next semester (see above); or
   c. Earn a failing grade.

**Change of Placement**

The following are policies regarding the change of students from an agency or organization:

1. If the student views the agency match as unworkable:
   a. The student must talk with the Internship Coordinator about the proposed move. The Internship Coordinator, student, and Workplace Supervisor will then discuss the issues involved. If they can be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction and the student decides to remain in the agency, nothing further is done.
   b. Should the student still desire a change, the Internship Coordinator will discuss possible solutions with the student. If the decision is made to move the student, a suitable agency must be contacted and arrangements made for the student to begin study there. Although this must be a thoughtful decision, the sooner it can be finalized, the better. However, all requirements must still be met by the end of the semester at the new agency regardless of when the new placement occurs.

2. Should an agency request the removal of a student, for any reason:
   a. The Internship Coordinator will remove the student within a time frame that is agreeable to the agency.

Either prior to, or after removal of a student from an agency, depending on the urgency of the removal and/or the agency concerns, the Internship Coordinator will discuss the situation that led to the agency request with the student.
Reasons for requested removal may include repeated tardiness or absences, repeated changes in scheduled hours without prior approval, or inappropriate behavior in the context of the agency setting.

Obviously, if it is possible for the student to remain until the end of the semester, it is better for the student. If this is not possible, the final decision regarding removal from internship will be made by the Internship Coordinator, with documentation from the Workplace Supervisor, if available.

The student will be expected to withdraw from the internship or receive an “F” grade.

**Out of Town Field Placements**

For some qualifying students in good standing, moving out of San Antonio may be an option to consider due to financial constraints or family obligations. Students considering an out of town internship will need to:

1. Inform the Internship Coordinator of the necessity for an out of town placement at the beginning of the application process through submission of a letter that includes the preferred geographic location and the reasons for requesting an out of town placement;

2. Understand that placement choices will be limited based on available approved agencies in that location. Placements in some areas may not be feasible due to limited resources and availability of approved agencies;

3. Be available for interviews at those agencies if requested by the agency; and

4. Travel back to San Antonio regularly to meet with the Internship Coordinator as well as complete all class requirements.

**Use of Work Setting for Internship**

With increasing educational costs, the need to utilize the work setting as an internship may become an option to be considered on an individual basis. The criterion for the utilization of the regular work setting as an internship site includes the following:
1. The proposed internship activities must represent new and different experiences for the student and must involve hours worked in addition to normal hours of employment. Changing to a different client population from the work duties and/or changing to a different department within the agency might accomplish this “change” in internship assignments. Differing roles and responsibilities that fulfill the educational objectives must be a part of this change. The intent is to establish a new and unique assignment that would contribute to the student’s learning something new.

2. The agency must be sufficiently large and/or flexible enough to place a student for the required number of internship hours in a sufficiently different section/program other than the current employment.

The student interested in this alternative should submit a written request to the Internship Coordinator at least one full semester before entering the internship, or in the case of a request to use new employment, as soon as possible. The written request must contain the following information: description of present and potential job duties, beginning date of employment with agency, present and potential job supervisor, intended workplace supervisor, description of proposed work assignments, and approvals obtained within the agency to carry out the proposed request; this should include signatures on the proposal of the student, current and future job supervisor, the intended workplace supervisor, and the Internship Coordinator.

EXEMPTION FROM INTERNSHIP

Students who are currently employed full time may be exempted from the internship requirement. To receive an exemption, students must present proof of employment to the internship coordinator in the semester prior to their final semester before graduation. Students exempted from the internship must take a three hour independent study course with a written paper as part of the course assignments.

INTERNSHIP SITES

The following is a sample of internship sites that have been used by students in the past. This is not an exhaustive list and students should not feel limited to these sites.

American Cancer Society
Bexar County District Attorney
Boys and Girls Club of San Antonio
CASA (Child Advocates for San Antonio)
City of San Antonio Housing Authority
El Centro del Barrio
Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc.
Habitat for Humanity
San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries (SAMM) Shelter
Texas Department of Family Protective and Regulatory Services (Formerly CPS)
United States Marshals Service
University of Texas Health Science Center
Youth Against Gang Activity (Y.A.G.A)