

ARE YOU CONSIDERING AN INTERNSHIP IN SOCIOLOGY?

A Guide to Planning and Obtaining an Internship



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So you're considering an internship in sociology

We're pleased you're thinking about completing an internship in sociology! The internship in sociology provides you with structured work experience related to the field of sociology. To complete the internship, you fulfill a time commitment in the work setting, compile field notes recording your experiences, and complete several brief writing assignments in which you systematically analyze that setting and your experiences. The assignments are designed to merge what you've learned in the classroom with the work you're completing on the internship. Most students find this experience invaluable for testing (and sometimes revising) their career goals and for establishing credentials and contacts that aid in finding a permanent position after graduation. The internship is highly recommended for all Sociology majors, regardless of their long-term career goals. This document provides all of the information needed to arrange and to complete the internship, such as requirements, deadlines, how to find a placement, and how to write a résumé and cover letter.

The objectives of the sociology internship are:

- to give students the opportunity to apply classroom learning in an organization;
- to encourage the development of a professional identity and appropriate professional skills;
- to give students the opportunity to develop networking skills.

Students majoring in Sociology may choose from a variety of internship settings. Students should be able to apply sociological theories, principles, and concepts learned in the classroom to their internship site.

Eligibility and Admission to the Internship

Any Sociology student may apply for an internship, providing that he/she can fulfill the following criteria:

- Students applying for an internship must be in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or better).
- All students taking an internship must have earned at least a C in SOC 207. Students who take 207 prior to their scheduled internship and do not earn a C or above must retake this course before they may enroll for internship credit.
- Students must obtain formal approval from the internship coordinator(s) prior to registering for the internship. This approval will only be granted after a personal advising session between the student and the internship coordinator(s). Students must have completed and submitted necessary internship forms by the end of the semester preceding the scheduled internship. Students who begin actual internship work without meeting this requirement may not be allowed to receive credit for their experience.

Finding an Internship

You are free to select your own internship; however, you do not have to go through the process alone. The advisers in the Sociology major are available to assist you in locating internships and in negotiating with prospective supervisors. Internship lists with contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers are available outside 316 Oswald Tower and in the advising offices. Internship postings are also posted on the bulletin boards outside the advising offices. To learn more about potential sites, you can read through intern newsletters posted on the bulletin boards or on the internship Web site at <http://www.sociology.psu.edu/undergraduate/internships.shtml>.

You can also consult internship directories. Some are very specialized either by geography or by field of interest, and are available as a reference to use on campus. You may prefer to buy your own internship directory, either for these reasons or because you have a preference for a certain title. Most of these cost between \$15 and \$30.

Here is a brief sample of the types of internship directories that are available for purchase:

Oldman, Mark. *The Internship Bible, 10th Edition*. Princeton Review, 2005.

Oldman, Mark. *The Best 109 Internships, 9th Edition*. Princeton Review, 2003.

Rubinstein, Ellen. *Scoring a Great Internship (Students Helping Students)*. Natavi Guides, 2002.

You may also be interested in the Penn State Washington internship program. The Washington internship program helps students in finding meaningful internships appropriate to their career interests and career goals. In the past, students have worked with environmental groups, congressional committees, and other special interest groups. The program also provides housing, special events, and helps students who are interested in credit for their internship.

For more information, visit their Web site at: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/comm/wash/>.

Career Services offers information about how to find internships and various internship opportunities. Visit their Web site for helpful information: <http://www.sa.psu.edu/career/exp.shtml>.

Procedures for Finding an Internship

Planning for your internship should begin early in the semester prior to the one in which you plan to intern.

1. Read through this guide and check to be sure that you meet all requirements.

2. Begin to think realistically about your potential internship position. What are your goals? What kinds of experiences will be most beneficial to you? What do you hope to learn? What do you have to offer a potential sponsor?
3. Meet with the advisers who will answer any questions you have about paperwork and/or the process, work with you on clarifying internship goals and expectations, and assist you in developing an internship search strategy.
4. Prepare a résumé and sample cover letter. Contact Career Services, Bank of America Career Services Center (865-2377) if you need further assistance. The sociology advisers and internship coordinators are also available to assist you with résumé and cover letter preparation. A later section of this guide includes sample résumés and cover letters.
5. Within the first three weeks of the semester prior to the start of the internship, send a letter with résumé to contact persons at three possible internship sites.
6. E-mail the names and addresses of the contact persons at these three sites to the internship coordinator.
7. Register for the internship. **You must contact the internship coordinator(s) in order to register for the internship.** If you do not complete all necessary steps or are unable to obtain an internship position, your name will be dropped from the class list.
8. By the ninth week of the semester finalize your internship site placement and submit completed “orange cards” (cards can be obtained in Room 214 Oswald Tower) with the required information. Our staff will then send a letter to the persons designated at each internship site with our departmental expectations and instructions regarding students’ internship duties/activities.
9. Attend a required seminar at the end of the semester prior to your internship experience. This seminar, facilitated by the internship coordinator(s) and attended by all students enrolled in the internship for the following semester, will cover issues pertaining to organizational entry, socialization, expectations, and course requirements. You will receive an internship handbook prior to the meeting so that you are familiar with the course requirements and expectations. The handbook also includes all the forms needed for the internship.

Academic Credits/Expectations

Credit

Students may enroll in LA 495 for 1 to 6 credits. These credits will be used as elective credits. The number of credit hours earned depends on the number of hours worked.

Students earn 1 credit for each 50 hours they work at their internship. Therefore, students enrolled for 1 credit must arrange to work at least fifty hours; those enrolled for 3 credits must work at least 150 hours; students registered for 6 credits must work a minimum of 300 hours.

Each student must decide whether she/he will do the work associated with a 1-6 credit internship. This decision will determine the number of hours worked weekly, the total number of weeks, and the number of assignments to be written.

Students may arrange to work full-time (forty hours/week) for a shorter time or part-time (e.g., twenty hours/week) for a longer period. Students may not arrange to work less than ten hours per week. You are encouraged to work with your internship supervisor to arrive at a work schedule that best fits your needs and the agency's schedule.

Some model schedules are as follows:

1 credit

10 hours/week for five weeks
20 hours/week for two and a half weeks

3 credits

12.5 hours/week for twelve weeks
18.75 hours/week for eight weeks
37.5 hours/week for four weeks

6 credits

25 hours/week for twelve weeks
37.5 hours/week for eight weeks

To ensure that you are completing your weekly work hour requirements, you will be expected to log the number of hours you work each week. The weekly hour log sheet is included in the internship handbook that you will receive at a later date. Your internship supervisor will sign this form each week and you will return the log sheet to the coordinator(s) at the conclusion of your internship. If you fail to meet your minimum hour requirement, your grade may be lowered based on the number of hours you did not complete.

Assignments

LA 495 has several academic requirements. You will be required to complete weekly logs of your activities and observations on the internship. You will also be required to complete several topic papers; the number of these will depend upon the number of internship credits you are registered for. You may opt to do a research project and write one paper instead of completing the topic papers. If you choose this option, you must submit a proposal to the internship coordinator(s) who will consult with the appropriate faculty member and receive approval before the internship begins.

Grading

Your grade in LA 495 will be determined by your logs, papers, and satisfactory performance on the job, as assessed by your agency supervisor. The following is a breakdown of the grading system for the internship:

Topic Papers	(35%)
Logs (30%)	
Log 1	(10%)
Log 2	(10%)
Log 3	(10%)
Performance Evaluation	(25%)
Intern Newsletter	(5%)
<u>Thank You Letter</u>	<u>(5%)</u>
Total	(100%)

As noted above, failure to complete the required hours will result in grade reductions.

Professionalism

You might wonder what we mean by professionalism and why it's so important. The definition of professionalism means individuals who exhibit professionalism conform to the technical or ethical standards of a profession. This means that your agency will have certain regulations, procedures, and expectations that you need to follow. We expect you to act professionally and to avoid any violations of confidentiality or the misuse of information. Furthermore, you may not misrepresent your identity or level of ability. Examples of misrepresentation would include acting as a counselor with clients without supervision or a situation in which you lead clients to believe you have greater skill in an area than you actually have.

We fully expect that our student interns will follow professional standards of conduct. Accordingly, your supervisor will assess your demonstrated ability to act professionally. Specifically, your attendance, punctuality, dependability, work habits and attitudes, ability to build effective relationships with staff and clients, ability to learn, and to accept constructive criticism will all be evaluated. All students must sign a form indicating their understanding of what is deemed professional behavior and the consequences of failing to meet those standards before they will be permitted to complete their internship. Anyone who acts inappropriately (including unethical conduct or breaches of departmental expectations) may be asked to leave by the agency or by the department and receive a withdraw failing grade. More detailed information about professionalism will be discussed at the **mandatory** seminar held the semester prior to your internship.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What resources are available to help students find an appropriate site?

The Sociology major offers a variety of resources to aid students in selecting a practicum site suited to their needs. Internship placement lists are available outside 316 Oswald Tower, from the advising offices and on the departmental Web site at <http://www.sociology.psu.edu/undergraduate/internships.shtml>. New internship opportunities are regularly posted on the bulletin board outside 316 Oswald and on the student list-serv. To learn more about potential internship sites, you may read through intern newsletters which include detailed information on a typical day on the departmental Web site. The Sociology advisers may also have suggestions on possible practicum sites and can help direct students in their search process. Through discussions with faculty members, students can also learn about additional practicum opportunities and widen their network of potential contacts.

2. Why must I plan my internship a semester in advance?

Most internship programs, including sociology, at Penn State require you to plan ahead in order to complete an internship for credit. There are several reasons for advance planning on your part. Although not all students who indicate their intent to complete an internship actually participate we need your cooperation in meeting your internship deadlines to ensure that all students are properly supervised and to make sure we have enough instructors available. It's easier to remove your name from the list than to add it on at the last minute! Second, many agencies require prospective interns to complete applications and interview for positions, and some conduct background investigations on prospective interns. All these steps take time. If you wait until the last minute to look for an internship, you may find that agencies will not be able to process your information for the next semester and/or will have already filled any available positions with interns from other programs and universities who applied earlier. Some federal agencies require prospective interns to apply almost a year before they plan to intern. Not only do agencies have a great deal of paperwork to complete, but the Sociology program does as well. We need to have enough time to send information regarding the internship to prospective agencies and to deal with questions and student paperwork before the internship begins.

3. How long does the internship last?

The internship length ranges from 50 to 300 hours, depending upon the number of credits for which you register. You must notify your agency supervisor in advance as to the number of hours you plan to work. You and your supervisor should work out a schedule that is mutually agreeable so that you may complete the hour requirement for the internship. You may work full-time or part-time to complete the internship; however, you may not work less than ten hours per week.

4. What should I do if I have questions about the practicum, or if problems arise during the internship?

You should contact your Penn State supervisor and/or the internship coordinator(s).

5. Are interns typically paid?

We believe interns provide meaningful service to their supervising agencies. However, many organizations view the time and effort they devote to training interns as compensation for the learning opportunities gained by the students.

If your organization is unwilling to provide a salary, consider exploring other creative options: tuition reimbursement at the end of the internship, a stipend, parking, conference registration and travel, lodging, etc. It is frequently easier to tap into a fund for some small compensation than it is to put someone on salary. You need to understand, however, that any decision to compensate you is at the discretion of your supervising agency.

6. If I become sick or injured while on my internship, who will pay my medical bills?

This is a complicated question. Some interns become employees of their agency and, therefore, by law may be covered under Worker's Compensation laws for the state in which they are interning. If, however, your internship is sponsored through the volunteer office or is unpaid by either salary or wages, you may be responsible for your own medical bills, even if you are injured during the course of your responsibilities.

You should try to maintain your regular medical and dental coverage through your parents' health insurance policies (or your own, if you are an independent student), if this is what you use during the regular academic year. If you have been enrolled full time during the spring and fall semesters, most companies maintain that coverage during the summer. You might want to check with your insurance company in advance, especially if you intend to intern during the fall or spring semesters.

Students generally do not need professional liability insurance and Penn State does not provide liability insurance for its students. **If, however, your placement requires students to obtain coverage, you are responsible for obtaining it, and your agency supervisor must notify you of that responsibility.** There are a number of companies that carry student liability coverage.

7. I don't have the finances to register for the internship for the semester. Can I take the internship now and register for it another semester?

This is not an option. Senate policy 34–81 states that students must be registered for the course during the semester in which the course requirements are completed and a grade must be assigned at the end of that semester. The Registrar’s Office will not permit you to take the internship one semester and register for it another.

8. What if I have been unable to find an internship?

If you have been totally unsuccessful in identifying an internship, even with our help, you should think about reorganizing your academic plans. You might want to put off your internship for a semester and replan it for the future. Most of the time this occurs because students have planned poorly and have not been persistent in their searches and follow-up activities. Sometimes it is because they have put all their eggs in one basket by applying to only one or two places. Develop back-up options for yourself, and you should not find yourself in this predicament.

How do I design a résumé?

In the process of selecting an internship site, you must submit a résumé and cover letter to your prospective organizations. A résumé is a summary of your background, experiences, and qualifications. There are many different formats to use; only a few are included here. For more sample formats, stop by Career Services in the Bank of America Career Services Center. You can also check out this Web site for other samples: <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/resume>.

The résumé generally has several sections. The first section includes your complete address and phone number. You should also include your school address and phone number and your e-mail address.

The major portion of your résumé will be your educational experience. This section may be preceded by a brief statement of your professional objectives. In the education section, you should include the name of your school with its city and state, your major, and your expected date of graduation. You may wish to expand this section by including courses you have completed that are relevant to the field site or by listing skills you have. For example, you might want to list computer skills or language skills.

Work experience should appear next. If you have related work experience, you may want to create a separate category titled “Related Work Experience.” If you do not have any related work experience, use the section title “Employment Experience.” List work experiences by month and date in reverse chronological order. Next list the job title, place and address of employment and a brief description of your duties.

Extracurricular activities can include all types of student activities and awards or honors. List any offices you may hold. By listing your extracurricular activities, you show you are a person who gets involved and who may have leadership or administrative potential.

An optional section is “Interests and Hobbies.” You may want to include several hobbies/interests to show that your interests are not limited to sociology. In the “Reference” section, you may choose to list specific references with names, addresses and phone numbers or you may decide to state: “Available upon request.”

On the following pages, you will find several sample résumés.

Jane Howard

555 Locust Lane, Apt. 6
 State College, PA 16801
 814-867-8888
 e-mail address: howard@psu.edu

- Objective:** To obtain an internship in social services
- Education:** B.A. The Pennsylvania State University
 Major: Sociology
 Minor: Information Systems and Statistical Analysis
 Overall GPA: 3.1; Major GPA: 3.5
 Expected Graduation: December 2009
- Relevant Courses:**
- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Social Problems | Family Disorganization |
| Social Stratification | Inequality in America |
| Statistics | Computer Applications |
| Research Methods | Quantitative Methods |
- Computer Skills:** McIntosh, IBM, and Unix Proficiency, Microsoft Excel, Access, Word, WordPerfect, SPSS, SAS
- Experience:**
- Research Assistant, Department of Sociology
 The Pennsylvania State University, January 2007 to May 2007
- Analyzed data using SPSS and SAS.
- Teaching Assistant for Social Problems
 Department of Sociology, The Pennsylvania State University
 August 2006 to December 2006
- Maintained attendance records
 - Graded objective exams
- Hostess
 Perkins Restaurant, State College, PA
 Summer 2005
- Activities:** Amnesty International, Big Brother/Big Sister Volunteer

MARY JAMES

College Address

223 Lang Hall
Baldwin-Wallace College
Berea, OH 44017
216-826-7038

Permanent Address

0000 Parma Park Blvd.
Parma, OH 44130
333-777-9999
E-mail: james@bw.edu

Professional Objective:

To gain an internship in a social sciences setting.

Educational Background:

9/05–present Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, OH
Majors: Sociology and Psychology
Minor: Religion
Expected date of graduation: May 2009
Cumulative GPA: 3.8 Major/Minor GPA: 4.00

Related Experience:

- Fall 2006–present *Institutional Research Assistant*, Baldwin-Wallace College
Berea, OH
- Prepare data summaries and predictive reports for college administration and faculty.
 - Utilize SPSS and SAS software to analyze data.
- Fall 2006–present *Course Assistant, Departments of Sociology and Psychology*,
Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, OH
- Guide sociology and psychology students in the use of SPSS software.
 - Grade SPSS assignments.
 - Tutor students individually in SPSS, methods, and statistics.
- September 2004–present *Library Page*, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma Heights
Branch, Parma Hts., OH
- Search and locate materials requested by patrons.
 - Supervise all other pages.
 - Maintain proper placement of library materials.
- Summer 2005 *Student Assistant, Department of Sociology*, Baldwin-Wallace College,
Berea, OH
- Graded objective exams.
 - Used Profile to maintain student data.
- Spring 2005, Fall 2006 *Student Research Assistant*, Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, OH
- Assisted with data entry and analysis for survey conducted by *Northern Ohio Live*.
 - Interviewed course assistants and assisted with coding, entering, and analyzing data for study on Freshmen Experience course.

Professional Involvement:

Sociology/Criminal Justice Club, Baldwin-Wallace College
Co-President (2007–08), treasurer (2006–2007)

- Assisted three students in re-activating the club on campus.
- Planned, organized and publicized events sponsored by the club.

American Sociological Association

- Organized and submitted information on Sociology/Criminal Justice Club for use in a *Teaching Resource Tool Kit* published by ASA, presented the information on a panel at 2007 ASA meetings.
- Attended 2006 and 2007.

North Central Sociological Association

- Attended 2006 and 2007 meetings.

Baldwin-Wallace Psychology Club

Honors:

Dayton C. Miller Honor Society (outstanding academic achievement; about 4 percent of B-W students are inducted each year.)

Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honorary

Alpha Lambda Freshman Honor Society

Deans List (nine out of ten quarters)

Activities:

Kappa Phi Service Organization. Vice-president/

Pledge Coordinator (2006–2007). Responsible for aiding in scheduling and planning programs throughout the year.

Musical group participation

References:

Available upon request.

CHRIS VINCENT
 30 N. Atherton St., #3
 State College, PA 16801
 814-555-4444
 crv@psu.edu

Qualifications Summary

Have worked in progressively challenging assignments throughout college in such areas as data processing, accounting, and network administration and security. Skilled in several computer software packages and speak fluent Spanish.

Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
 Bachelor of Arts; anticipated graduation date: December 2009
 Major: Sociology
 Minor: Information Systems and Statistical Analysis

Specialized Coursework

Social Problems	Computer Science
Statistics	Criminal Law
Accounting (Introductory and Intermediate)	Management Information Systems

Educational Seminars and Training

Computer Fraud in the Twenty-First Century, New York, NY, 2003

Employment

9/05–present	The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA <i>Network and Computer Lab Manager</i> Supervise all student assistants in computer lab. Responsible for network administration, student accounts, virus control, and security.
9/03–8/04	ACME Tax Preparation, 122 Garner Street, State College, PA <i>Tax Preparation Assistant</i> Assisted in the preparation of income tax returns. Under supervision of accounting staff, interviewed clients, prepared computer entries, and reviewed tax codes.
5/02–9/03	Foremost Insurance Company, Boalsburg, PA Entered computer data into company data bank and performed routine data inquiries for several departments. Assigned to data analysis based on supervisor recommendations.

Activities

College Honors Program
 Varsity Lacrosse Team

References

Available upon request.

What is a cover letter and how do I write one?

A cover letter is your introduction to the prospective organization. Always include a cover letter with your résumé. The main guidelines are to be concise, address the letter to a specific person, and to make sure that your letter is free of grammatical and spelling errors. Below is a sample format to follow and sample cover letters. Please remember these are only samples. The Career Services office also provides samples of résumés and cover letters. This Web site may also be helpful:

http://jobsearch.about.com/coverletters/cover_Letters.htm.

If you have not received a response to your inquiry letter after approximately three weeks, call or write the individual to whom you sent the letter and, in a polite manner, introduce yourself and remind him/her of the letter you sent. Ask the status of your request. It may be that your letter was misplaced or that the person has been too busy to respond. You may also be one of several candidates and in this case, the process takes longer. If you are turned down, remember that this is part of the process, so don't be discouraged. Try to have alternative sites in mind.

Cover Letter Format

Date
Your Name
Your Address
Your Telephone Number

Organization Supervisor's Name
Organization Address

Dear _____:

The FIRST PARAGRAPH should include: (1) how you found out about the organization; (2) your year in school (i.e. junior, senior), university name and major; (3) an explanation that you would like to complete an internship experience to enhance your academic experiences; and (4) the fact that no payment or stipend is expected.

The SECOND PARAGRAPH should include: (1) an explanation of why you are interested in working for the organization, (2) a discussion of the activities you would hope to become involved with in the organization, and (3) the semester you would like to intern and the number of hours you plan to work.

The THIRD PARAGRAPH should include: (1) a request for an opportunity to meet with the organization supervisor if his/her schedule permits, (2) an invitation for the organization supervisor to contact you at the indicated address and phone number, and (3)

an indication that additional information about the program can be obtained by contacting the Field Placement Office, Sociology, 211 Oswald Tower, University Park, PA 16802.

The FOURTH PARAGRAPH should include: (1) an indication to the organization of when you might be in the area of the organization, and (2) an expression of appreciation for the organization supervisor's time and consideration.

You should keep in mind that many organizations in Pennsylvania receive letters requesting internships and that it will be the more interesting letters that receive positive responses. Do not contact only one organization; it is better to have too many acceptances than not enough. Try to be interesting and to let your personality come through in your cover letter. Do not put anything in writing that you will not be prepared to cover in an interview. It's a good idea to do some research on the organizations you will be contacting. Some organizations require that a letter of recommendation from the internship coordinator(s) be sent with the student's résumé and cover letter. Check with your organization before sending your letter.

Sue Jones
123 Main Street
State College, PA 16801
July 27, 2009

Ms. Joan Smith
Program Director
The Second Mile
P.O. Box 000
State College, PA 16801

Dear Ms. Smith:

Most job openings today require previous work experience in a related field. Therefore, in an effort to gain the experience required, I am seeking an internship for one semester this fall with The Second Mile. I will be graduating in January from Penn State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. At that time I would like to have a broad knowledge of how a social agency works and how it provides for the needs of the community.

It is my desire to work with children, teenagers, their families and the social issues that surround them in their daily lives. I am particularly interested in teenagers and the issues of sex education, teen pregnancy, and their ability to relate with family members. As stated on the enclosed resume, I have obtained some experience working with children and youth, but recognize my need to broaden my experiences.

I will be a full-time student this fall, but have reserved every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon to work for you. I am offering up to fifteen hours a week in either a paid or unpaid position; however, I would prefer a paid internship. I would also like to earn 2 semester credits through this experience to complete my requirements for graduation.

I trust it is not too late to be considered for an internship for the fall semester and look forward to discussing the possibilities with you soon. If I don't hear from you first, I will give you a call in approximately one week to set up an interview for an internship.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sue Jones

Some final notes

The internship is an important step from academic to occupational success. It tests your ability to apply your skills and observe the daily regime of an agency, firm or organization. The benefits of an internship are often the highlight of a student's academic experience at Penn State, and many of our interns have been offered permanent positions when their internship was completed.

If you have questions about the internship process or need further information, please contact the department advisers at 814-865-2217. You can also check out the internship Web site at <http://www.sociology.psu.edu/undergraduate/internships.shtml>.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. LBA???