

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### Handbook of Policies and Procedures, 2005-2006

#### 1. Introduction

Because academic education in public affairs is enhanced through field experience and practice in public service, the LBJ School curriculum includes a required internship. Each student in the full-time option or in a dual-degree program may meet the internship requirement by taking an appropriately supervised internship for no credit; opting to take a three-semester internship course as an elective; or waiving the requirement by documenting suitable prior public service employment and/or internship experience.

The standard internship is a supervised, paid, full-time work assignment, lasting for a minimum of 10-12 weeks. Students usually complete the internship during the summer semester between the first and second years of the degree program.

The internship enables students to participate in and observe daily policy-related activities of public or private sector entities concerned with public policy. Internships should be structured learning experiences in which interns and agency supervisors interact with each other and with other agency personnel. The internship allows students to use the skills and experience gained during the first-year academic program in ways mutually beneficial to them and to their agencies.

#### 2. Faculty Oversight

The Associate Dean advises the Dean on matters related to internship procedures. In conjunction with the Graduate Adviser and the Internship Coordinator, the Associate Dean develops policies governing the internship activities of the School. The Associate Dean and the Internship Coordinator administer the program by reviewing and approving all internship requests and by certifying that students have met all academic requirements prior to beginning their internship assignments.

Decisions and policy statements are open records for LBJ School faculty and students. Individual student records or draft policy documents are confidential.

#### 3. Examples of Internships

**Regular /Domestic:** A public sector agency, non-profit or private entity may communicate to the Coordinator an interest in hiring appropriately qualified LBJ School students and may select those interns from a pool of in-house applicants. Internships may be advertised nationally by employers; LBJ School students must compete with outside candidates for such positions.

Special internships may also be sponsored by elective bodies or officials or by individuals. Examples of such internships sponsored by the LBJ School are: the Pickle Fellowship (for students who have secured unpaid federal internships); the

Goff Fellowship (\$3,600 for one student to intern in the Office of the Texas Governor); the Blodgett Fellowship in Urban Management (\$6,000 for one student to intern with a local government); and the Spinner Fellowship in Workforce Development (\$2,500 for one student to intern with any workforce development-related organization.)

International: The LBJ School offers some internships in foreign countries with public, non-profit, or private agencies.

Self-Initiated: An LBJ School student may design his or her own internship. A student needs the prior approval of the Associate Dean before accepting a self-initiated internship for credit or certification.

#### 4. Internship Requirements

Each student must complete an internship unless he/she receives a waiver from the Associate Dean. Course requirements include finding and serving in an approved internship, registering for the internship course (PA w396K) if taking the internship for credit, and completing and submitting on time all paperwork needed to evaluate the internship and the student's performance. Forms for these purposes include: (1) a request for approval of the internship; (2) a letter of offer from the employer; (3) the student's evaluation of his/her experience; (4) the supervisor's evaluation of the student.

The Associate Dean may permit a student to complete the internship course during a period other than the summer semester on a part-time or full-time basis. He/she will review such requests only when there is a compelling educational opportunity for a student which otherwise would be missed during his or her academic program. A student who is employed may, with permission of the Associate Dean, receive academic credit for work done in his or her normal employment. The Associate Dean will review such requests on a case-by-case basis.

An "out-of-sequence" internship completed during the fall or spring semester also requires supervised, full-time work (40 hours per week or its equivalent) for 10 to 12 weeks, and it must meet all criteria of a summer internship. A student cannot be registered for more than one course in addition to the internship.

Historically, internal funds have been available to assist in providing internship stipends for unpaid or low-paying internships. The amount of the stipend depends on the funding available and the projected need. Students must indicate on the approval request form the support they are receiving from the employer (such support may consist of assistance with housing or maintenance in lieu of financial remuneration) and it must be stated in the offer letter from the employer. The LBJ School will assist students in locating and securing internships. The School cannot, however, assure that all students' financial needs can be met.

## 5. Eligibility and Application Procedures

A student may participate in the internship program if he/she has satisfied the following requirements:

Credit/No-Credit Internship Requirements:

- Completion of one year at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, including three common core courses: Public Financial Management, Introduction to Quantitative Analysis, and Applied Microeconomics for Policy; one of the following flexible core courses: Advanced Management, Advanced Empirical Methods for Policy Analysis, Advanced Policy Economics, and Politics and Process; and the two-semester Policy Research Project
- Consent of the Associate Dean

Most internships require a completed application and a resume. A completed application may include special forms, faculty recommendations, an essay or proposal, and/or a writing sample (e.g. for designated internships). The Associate Dean may set deadlines for submission of these materials. If a student does not include all materials requested in an application or submit the application package on time, he/she may risk elimination from that competition.

Students are requested to submit copies of their resumes to the Internship Coordinator for retention in the office. File copies of additional materials are also encouraged and will be retained in individual files as requested.

Students interested in applying for the designated internships are urged to seek the assistance of faculty members in the initial stages of application preparation, prior to submission of their completed materials to the Associate Dean. Faculty assistance has proven invaluable to students competing for the Presidential Management Fellowships and should be used by first-year students as well. Faculty advice is particularly useful in the completion of a formal proposal.

The Office of Student and Alumni Programs may send complete application materials to an agency in cases in which the agency selects the intern. OSAP will then notify LBJ School students when they have been nominated or selected.

When an agency offers a student an internship, the student must respond within 72 hours unless the agency agrees on a longer decision period. A student may not accept and then later reject an offer.

## 6. Criteria for Approval of Internship Requests

After a student has received an internship offer, he/she must submit a Request for Approval form to the Associate Dean, who uses the following criteria in approving an internship placement:

- \* The internship must be a full-time, 10 to 12-week assignment;
  - \* The internship should be paid;
  - \* The assignment must have educational value for the student;
  - \* The student will be able to observe and participate in policy-related activities;
- and
- \* The agency will provide an on-site supervisor for the student.

In addition to these criteria, the Associate Dean considers the following when reviewing applications for designated internships:

- \* The academic performance of the student;
- \* The career interest as stated by the student and revealed in the courses selected;
- \* Prior work experience; and
- \* Evidence of leadership potential and a willingness to assume responsibility and to work effectively with others.

The Associate Dean may specify other criteria for an internship assignment. For example, in the case of some international internships, students may be required to demonstrate proficiency in the spoken language of the host country. All criteria will be posted on the initial internship notice.

## 7. Waivers

Automatic waivers are granted to alumni of the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Teach for America, and to active duty military and veterans. To apply for a waiver based on other work experience, the student must complete the waiver request form and turn it in with a resume to the Internship Coordinator. Final approval of the waiver request will be made by the Associate Dean.

A part-time student whose employment meets certain criteria may petition the Associate Dean to waive the internship requirement. The Associate Dean determines if the part-time student's professional employment duties and responsibilities meet the criteria to waive the internship course. Part-time students must also provide a statement of support from their current supervisor.

The Associate Dean uses two criteria when he/she reviews waiver petitions. The first is that the student's job responsibilities and interaction with agency personnel at least equal the scope of duties and responsibilities the Associate Dean would approve as an appropriate internship placement for other students. The second criterion is tenure in the current position: a part-time student must have held the current position for at least six months prior to petitioning for the waiver. A full-time student must have had relevant work experience.

## 8. Appeal Procedure

The internship policies and procedures adopted by the LBJ School accommodate the different academic needs and interests of a diverse group of students. They are designed to move students quickly and efficiently through the internship course, while assuring that each student has acquired the skills and competencies required by the LBJ School and expected by sponsoring agencies. The Associate Dean will strictly, but fairly, administer the policies adopted by the LBJ School faculty.

Most questions about internship policies, procedures, and decisions can be answered by the Associate Dean, the Internship Coordinator or by the Graduate Adviser. If a student feels that the policies and procedures have not been applied fairly in his or her case, the student should contact the Graduate Adviser.

#### 9. Internship Evaluation and Supervision

The Associate Dean supervises interns and evaluates their academic performances and assigns credit upon successful completion of the course. Faculty supervision assures that an internship provides the educational opportunities expected and that students use those opportunities wisely; the evaluation assesses whether a student's work meets the School's standards and merits academic credit.

Supervision is designed to:

- \* Ensure that a faculty member or Internship Coordinator is available to the student and to the agency supervisor to advise on ways to enhance and enrich the internship experience;
- \* Assist in solving problems that jeopardize the quality of the placement;
- \* Determine if a student should receive academic credit for the internship course; and
- \* Evaluate the internship position to determine whether it should be offered again as an internship opportunity.

The supervisor or Internship Coordinator should contact both the student and the agency supervisor several times during the internship to determine whether the intern and supervisor are comfortable with the arrangement. The discussions may also address any problems and enable the faculty supervisor to convey the School's appreciation for the opportunity.

The faculty supervisor and the Internship Coordinator will be asked to respond promptly to private e-mail communication. Telephone interviews and evaluations provide opportunities to discuss intern work and to encourage agency supervisors to complete and submit evaluation forms.

Certification of a successful non-credit internship or course credit for a credit-based internship is based on the intern's performance as evidenced by the initial contact, a mid-summer contact and the evaluation forms.