

Pathways Internships

A. The Learning Agreement

Prior to the beginning of an internship and in consultation with the internship coordinator and site supervisor, students develop a learning agreement incorporating program learning outcomes as well as individualized learning outcomes as appropriate to the student's learning goals. These outcomes focus on applying academic knowledge, achieving personal/professional growth, and understanding this activity/issue in relation to the greater community. This intentionality represents the purposefulness that transforms the experience into meaningful learning. The learning agreement also serves to set boundaries, roles, and expectations, and ensures that both student and business partner enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. At the same time, the agreement should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds. The main point here is that students should go into the internship understanding its purpose and knowing the learning goals associated with the experience.

B. Ongoing Guided Reflection

From the initial stages of planning the internship to a post-experience public showcasing, students should engage in ongoing guided reflection, that is, the productive interplay of reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation that is at the heart of experiential learning. This guided process helps students find meaning in their experiences and achieve growth in all three areas of development (academic content, personal/professional development, and societal engagement). Students must be prompted to reflect in each of these three categories, examining their experience to enhance their knowledge and articulate their learning. Therefore, reflection should be:

- **Continuous:** Reflection needs to be an ongoing part of the experiential-learning experience for the student taking place before, during, and after an experience.
- **Connected:** Reflection is the tool that allows students to make the connection between their "internship" and the academic "learning" in the classroom.
- **Challenging:** Internship Coordinators must be willing to pose questions or ideas that could prove uncomfortable to students but should be done in a respectful manner.
- **Contextualized:** Internship Coordinator must ensure that all reflection activities are set within a context that will make it meaningful in relation to the experiences of the students.

The DEAL Model¹ for critical reflection provides a detailed method for critical reflection which ensures the quality of the reflections and the means to assess learning outcomes. Critical guided reflection can be facilitated through various types/modes of writing.

A final reflection paper must be turned in at the end of the semester and should serve as a culmination of the experience. Please submit this reflection to the Director of Experiential learning in .docx or .pdf format (not scanned pdf) so that student learning can be assessed.

C. e-Portfolio

It is recommended that students "post" their documents to an e-portfolio (Digication) so that it can be used to assess the Pathways program. Ideally, students will use this system to develop a 21st century resume which could be viewed by potential employers or graduate schools. Note: This is not a requirement; however, some coordinators are using this system and find it to be very helpful in managing their internship program.

D. Showcasing Event

An important step in the process of experiential learning is articulating the meaning(s) derived from an experience to a broader community. This public showcasing allows students to draw together their reflections throughout an experience and to talk about the ways in which that experience has transformed them on multiple levels. Interns are required to develop a poster and participate in the on-campus showcasing event.

¹Ash, S.L. & Clayton, P.H. (2009). Generating, Deepening, and Documenting Learning: The Power of Critical Reflection in Applied Learning. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education*. 1(1).

E. The Cohort Model

Students will meet both individually with the internship coordinator and with the cohort of interns to be guided through the stages of pre-experience preparation and planning, ongoing guided reflection, and post-experience public showcasing.

- Three meetings per semester seems appropriate.
- Take advantage of what the Office of Career Services offers.

F. Other Required Elements

- At the end of the internship students must complete an evaluation of the internship. An example of this form can be provided.
- At the end of the internship, the site supervisor must complete an evaluation of the intern. An example of this form can be provided.

G. Program Support

Internship Coordinators are responsible for maintaining and creating positive contacts with potential internship sites in the local area. For this purpose a modest budget will be given to each Internship Coordinator. In addition, coordinators will be compensated with either reassigned time or a stipend based on the number of interns supervised and in consultation with the Director of Experiential Learning and the Dean of the College.

H. Student Support

Students in internships can apply for funds to offset the costs associated with their internship (e.g., gas money). This pool of money will not be unlimited; awards will not be guaranteed; merit, financial need, and timeliness of application will be important criteria for success. (Students should keep receipts and submit them to the Director of Experiential Learning for reimbursement.)

I. Student Learning Outcomes

Students participating in the Pathways Program will:

1. Critically reflect on experience from academic, personal/professional, and civic perspectives.
2. Articulate learning gained through experience.
3. Demonstrate effective reasoning or problem solving skills.
4. Collaborate effectively.
5. Synthesize knowledge in a final project or showcase.

Intended student learning outcomes for the internship program build upon the dimensions outlined in the CAS Standards: Knowledge acquisition, cognitive complexity, intrapersonal development, interpersonal competence, humanitarianism/civic engagement, and practical competence. Interns may use the following outcomes as guidelines and refine them to reflect their specific internship experiences. The intern's learning outcomes will be included in his/her internship *Learning Agreement*.

1. TSW demonstrate increased disciplinary learning and apply the learning in an authentic work setting. (Knowledge acquisition)
2. TSW demonstrate effective reasoning and problem solving. (Cognitive complexity)
3. TSW reflect upon and appraise his/her work performance realistically. (Intrapersonal development)
4. TSW collaborate effectively with others as they carry out work responsibilities. (Interpersonal competence)
5. TSW demonstrate a commitment to ethics, integrity and responsibility. (Humanitarianism/civic engagement)
6. TSW demonstrate increased practical competence and skill. (Practical competence)