

## **Community and Regional Planning Internship Guidelines**

### **Department of Geography and Planning Appalachian State University**

Each student working toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Regional Planning must complete an internship of 6 credit-hours minimum (400 hours of work; 10 forty hour weeks). The intent of this experience is to complement academic course work and further prepare the student for professional planning practice. Interns should regard their experience as a valuable contribution to developing professional competence and not just a requirement for graduation purposes.

Internship contacts by departmental faculty with host agencies enable the university to better serve the region. Given the opportunity, interns can produce valuable work for host agencies. Interns' talents and abilities are still being developed, but they are capable of fully applying already acquired skills and knowledge. They are neither novices in their field nor experienced professionals; their abilities are along a continuum between the two extremes. Students generally arrive at the internship stage familiar with a number of planning and geographic techniques, knowledge of how to apply these techniques, and a high degree of enthusiasm.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **1. The host agency**

- a. The internship agreement or contract is between the host agency, faculty supervisor, and the student intern.
- b. Interns are usually paid between \$7-15 per hour by the host agency.
- c. The host agency should expose the intern to as comprehensive an experience as possible. Although intern work is often project oriented, it should also include a wide variety of planning mentoring (e.g., participation in policy meetings, board meetings, hearings, and the like) and acquainting the intern with the complete functions of the agency/office.
- d. One staff member should serve as a point of contact between the host agency and the university. This person should complete the internship evaluation form and return it to the Appalachian faculty internship supervisor so that s/he can assign a grade (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) for the internship. •
- e. The host agency will oversee day-to-day internship work and assure that work quality is to the satisfaction of the host agency. If work quality is not satisfactory, the host agency can terminate the internship but should first notify the Appalachian faculty internship supervisor.

#### **2. The intern**

- a. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the search for a suitable internship. The student can begin the search as early as Fall Semester of their third academic year. Although it is preferable to schedule full-time internships for a 10-12 week period during the summer between the third and fourth academic years, it is possible to schedule both part-time and full-time internships during any semester. A 6 credit hour internship requires a minimum of 400 hours; 10 weeks full-time work or an

equivalent time working at least 15 hours per week part-time will satisfy this requirement.

- b. Each intern must accomplish these requirements:
    - i. Maintain a log or journal of all work-related experience (daily or weekly as arranged with the faculty supervisor).
    - ii. Develop and maintain active, professional contact with other staff members within the host agency in so far as duties and time constraints permit.
    - iii. Participate - at the discretion of the host agency staff member - in organizational and agency-related meetings.
    - iv. Complete a typed, final report to the satisfaction of the faculty supervisor.  
Include:
      1. Description of the host agency: mission, organization, and functions.
      2. Description of work project(s) during the internship; relate purpose, impact, and implications/value of the project(s) to the host agency mission and functions.
      3. Include representative samples of work performed during the internship (e.g., reports, proposals, maps, graphics, surveys, plans, etc.).
      4. Evaluation of the internship experience: challenges, accomplishments, lessons-learned, etc.
  - c. Provide the host agency with a copy of the internship evaluation form, and follow-up to assure it was completed and returned to the faculty supervisor.
  - d. Weekly contact with the faculty supervisor (by either email or telephone).
3. The **faculty supervisor** in the Department of Geography and Planning will:
- a. Provide students with information on potential host agencies.
  - b. Develop and maintain contact with prospective host agencies.
  - c. Appraise in advance both students and host agencies of the requirements for internship experiences as outlined herewith.
  - d. Provide technical advice to the intern (on request).
  - e. Visit the host agency during the internship experience, when logistically feasible, to talk with both the student and host agency contact.
  - f. Evaluate the internship experience through observation, conference with the host agency staff, and assessment of report requirements provided by the intern.