

TOURISM AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT

Internship Manual

Fieldwork Coordinator

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**SCHOOL OF SPORT, RECREATION,
AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT**
George Mason University®

TEM Internship Manual

This manual is designed to provide an overview of the internship experience in the Tourism and Events Management (TEM) program. The following sections outline the purpose, requirements and responsibilities of all parties involved with the internship experience.

1. Purpose, Objectives and Definitions

The Tourism and Events Management (TEM) internship provides practical experience in an approved, student-selected volunteer or paid setting. The internship is a general education capstone course, which provides students practical opportunities to apply what has been learned during their undergraduate career. This 12-credit course includes 400 hours of supervised practical experience. The internship is usually completed as the last course in the TEM program.

The internship is a structured and supervised, work experience that may be paid or voluntary and takes place at a variety of public, private, semi-private, or not-for-profit agencies. It involves a three-way partnership agreement among Mason, an approved site, and the student.

During the internship, the student receives professional preparation coordinated by a university (faculty) supervisor in addition to direction from a qualified site supervisor. The internship provides industry specific opportunities for student participation, organization, and administration.

By the end of the internship students should be able to:

1. Apply, in an appropriate and professional work setting, theories, concepts, and philosophies learned through previous academic and other experiences;
2. Demonstrate skills and competencies in routine business administration (e.g., accounting and record keeping, planning, public relations, assessments, and staff relations);
3. Apply decision-making and problem-solving skills through the formulation, evaluation and implementation of alternative solutions to problems and issues;
4. Attend or participate in professional board and committee meetings, conferences, hearings, state meetings, training sessions and workshops in order to acquire practical career enhancing skills;
5. Describe and evaluate the overall agency/company organizational structure and its management philosophy (or corporate culture) and clientele base, as well as the agency's relative position to other local, national and/or global competition in the market place;
6. Assess personal strengths and weaknesses in light of demands and expectations of employment in the various roles and responsibilities assigned in a work setting;
7. Set personal objectives for a career in the hospitality, tourism, and events management field utilizing both personal assessment and evaluation by the academic institution and the internship agency; and
8. Compile a list of industry professionals that can be used when seeking full-time employment.

The following terms describe the parties involved in the internship experience and are used throughout this manual:

- a. Student Intern is the student registered for the capstone course and completing the assignments required.
- b. Fieldwork Coordinator is a designated Mason faculty member that prepares the student for the internship experience, communicates with various sites seeking Mason student interns, and coordinates with University (Faculty) supervisor to monitor student intern's progress during the internship.
- c. University (Faculty) Supervisor is a Mason faculty member designated as the instructor of record for the internship course. This person is responsible for remotely monitoring student progress during the internship, conducting a site visit, and submitting the final grade, among other roles.

- d. *Site Supervisor* is the individual at the approved internship location responsible for monitoring and supervising the student intern throughout the program. This person may offer advice, instruction, and supervision, typical of that provided for a young professional in the industry. This person will also assess the student intern's competencies at the mid-point and conclusion of the experience that will inform the final grade.

2. Benefits

Student interns benefit from the internship experience by having the opportunity to synthesize their classroom knowledge into real world experiences. This experiential learning allows the student to be better prepared and more marketable for the current job market demands. They have support from their fieldwork coordinator, university and site supervisors to learn how to negotiate the challenges faced by young professionals. This experience affords students the opportunity to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and assess their future employment aspirations.

The Mason TEM program recognizes the benefits of an academically sound internship program, and thus focuses on the provision and utilization of feedback from the site supervisor and the student intern in the continuing evaluation of the TEM curriculum. The program aims to produce well prepared students by integrating the theoretical and practical experiences of their given industry of choice.

Sites that provide internship opportunities benefit from the partnership with Mason to develop our future professionals. These student interns can integrate with professional staff to promote the overall learning experience, as they (the student interns) bring a different set of skills, knowledge base, and perspective to the job. It also provides site personnel the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of their in-house training programs or other services based on feedback from student interns. Student interns become familiar with an organization's culture and work, and establish close working relationships with current employees. This makes them ideal candidates for any future job vacancies.

3. Expectations of Internship Program Experience

Students should examine the internship course syllabus for specific requirements. In general, each student intern is required to work full-time at an approved internship site averaging 30-40 hours per week (for the Fall and Spring semesters) and 40 hours per week only (during the Summer semester), for a minimum of 400 total hours of professional practice over a period of 10 to 14 weeks (10 weeks only in the Summer). By the end of their internship experience students should have a better understanding and appreciation of the role, duties, and responsibilities of a professional in their chosen field.

The student intern is expected to assume a wide range of responsibilities:

- **Participation** – A student intern should be given the opportunity to observe the intricacies of the internal and external working relationships of the site. In addition, student interns should be allowed to participate in site committee meetings, conferences, and workshops to gain a better understanding of their chosen concentration.
- **Organization** – The student intern should participate in any appropriate experiences relevant to the site; such as organizing events, evaluation of programs, and analysis of data. The site supervisor is encouraged to assign the student intern an active leadership role in special projects. Usually, the student intern observes and assists until he or she is acquainted with the staff, clientele, policies and procedures, organizational patterns, facilities and equipment, and rules and regulations. The student intern should gradually assume increasing responsibility and eventually be solely responsible for his/her own special project.
- **Administration** – The site should provide the student intern with practical experience employing routine administrative skills, techniques, and practices. Student interns should gain experience in a variety of site operations (e.g., accounting and record-keeping, event management, facility operation, maintenance procedures, planning, program development, public relations, research, marketing, risk management, and human resources) as appropriate.

4. Student Eligibility

To register for the internship course (TOUR 490), students must:

- 1) Be declared TEM majors,
- 2) Have completed 90 credits, and passed TOUR 241, TOUR 340, TOUR 470, and PRLS 410
- 3) Complete the mandatory pre-experience orientation session.

These pre-requisites are listed in the Registrar's Office Catalog Description. All prospective student interns should review this internship manual and refer to the Instructions (Appx.1). This form provides student interns with step-by-step directions on what they will need to do to fulfill all the course requirements associated with the internship experience.

It is recommended that students schedule the internship experience as the last course of their academic program. This ensures eligibility and qualifies this course as a capstone experience. Prospective student interns must confirm their eligibility by completing the *Eligibility Form* (Appx. 2), which requires approval from the fieldwork coordinator. Because the internship is a controlled course, students will not be permitted to register until all required paperwork (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) has been submitted and approved. An override will be granted to allow students to register for the course.

Since the student intern will be working full-time at the approved internship site, he or she will be limited to taking no more than one course (of up to 3 credits) concurrently with the internship. However, this must be approved by the fieldwork coordinator before the internship is initiated, and will be addressed on a strictly case-by-case basis. The internship course is designed to be taken last and independently so the student is able to make the most of this learning experience. Placing the internship last, and by itself, also allows students to travel and complete the internship experience anywhere in the world.

Start and End Dates

The internship begins on the first day of classes of each semester and **must be completed** by the End Date (the last possible date to complete the internship) provided by the fieldwork coordinator, before the date(s) of the Mandatory Final Internship Presentations. Complete descriptions of all relevant dates are available at the following link (<http://rht.gmu.edu/assets/docs/rht/tem/Important%20Dates.pdf>).

- Note: The *Experiential Learning Agreement* must be signed by the Dean's Office **before** the internship can begin – the fieldwork coordinator or university supervisor will notify students once agreements have been signed (all paperwork must be submitted to the Fieldwork Coordinator ONLY).
- Rare exceptions to the start date will be granted on a strictly case-by-case basis (appropriate documentation from the student **and** site will be required). However, even when an exception is granted, the earliest the internship can begin will be two weeks before the first day of classes for the Fall and Spring semesters only (**this exception does not apply to the Summer semester**); and this is subject to approval by the fieldwork coordinator.

Students will be notified of the **deadline for paperwork submission** by the fieldwork coordinator during the **mandatory** pre-experience information sessions.

- Students who do not submit their initial paperwork (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) by the deadline for paperwork submission, provided by the fieldwork coordinator, will not be able to complete their internship in the applicable semester.

All summer internships must start on the first day of classes for Session A, and must be completed in, **no more or no less than**, 10 weeks (students must complete 40 hours/week). Students will have to complete their initial paperwork (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) by the deadline set by the fieldwork coordinator, in order to be able to start on the first day (students who fail to meet the set deadline will not be able to complete their internship during the specific summer semester).

*****Students must complete all 400 hours during the semester in which they register for the course.**

Mandatory Pre-Experience Orientation Session

- Attend **mandatory** pre-experience orientation session before registering for TOUR 490. The sessions can be attended either in person (**only if** enrolled in TOUR 470 the semester before the student's eligibility as outlined in the deadlines below), **OR** online through the Tourism and Events Management **Blackboard** Organization by the deadlines outlined below. For more details, click [here](#).
- **Note:** Failure to complete the **mandatory** pre-experience orientation session will make students ineligible to complete their internship during the applicable semester. Details for the sessions, are announced through the TEM listserv. If you do not receive the listserv emails, contact us at srht@gmu.edu.

Deadlines

- **Spring Internship:** You must attend the pre-experience orientation session in the preceding **Fall** semester.
- **Summer Internship:** You must attend the pre-experience orientation session in the preceding **Spring** semester.
- **Fall Semester:** You must attend the pre-experience orientation session in the preceding **Spring** semester.

5. Site Selection

Although the fieldwork coordinator and/or faculty mentors may offer advice, guidance, or placement suggestions, students are responsible for seeking out their own internship positions. Students should begin searching for possible internships several months prior to their chosen internship semester. This allows ample time for the application/interview process, and a thoughtful selection.

The site selection process typically entails:

- Searching for prospective sites using all available resources (e.g.: fieldwork coordinator, faculty mentors, MasonHire, TEM News Listserv).
- Following the application and interview processes specified by individual sites. It is typical for a student to apply to 3-6 different sites.
- Obtaining the fieldwork coordinator's approval to apply if student previously worked or interned at the site, and wants to apply this site towards the internship experience. The student must justify in writing how this site can provide further learning opportunities beyond what has already been experienced.
- Submitting official job descriptions from all prospective sites for approval by the fieldwork coordinator, before any offer is accepted by student.

Official Job Description

An official job description needs to be submitted to the fieldwork coordinator for approval **before** any internship offer is accepted by a student, AND **before** any paperwork will be accepted by the fieldwork coordinator. Information on what **must be** included in the official job description may be found at the following link:

<http://rht.gmu.edu/assets/docs/rht/tem/What%20is%20an%20official%20job%20description.pdf>

*Note on Repeat Sites

If students desire to complete their internships at sites where they have previously worked, or are currently working, they must complete the internship in a different department from the one(s) in which they have previously worked (or are currently working); preferably with a different site supervisor. Students must also submit the official job description(s) for the previous (and/or current) position(s), AS WELL AS the official job description for the prospective position, to the fieldwork coordinator for review.

- ❖ Please note that in order for a repeat site to be approved for TOUR 490, there must be **significant and substantive differences between the responsibilities, tasks, activities, and experiences outlined for the prospective positions, compared to those for the previous position(s)**.

- If the repeat site is approved, students will be required to write down, in their own words, how this new position, at the same site, will be beneficial to their skills enhancement, knowledge acquisition, career development, and overall experience.

****Note on 'Hotel' Internships**

Students, who are interested in completing their internship in a hotel/resort/inn, or any such similar site, must complete a rotation among at least three **distinct (and different)** departments within the same site during the period of the internship (*with at least 20% of the 400 hours spent **working** in each department*). This will provide students with a broad and comprehensive understanding of the overall functioning of the site.

The experience in each department must match the expectations described in Section 3 above, and must result in the learning objectives described in Section 1 above, as well as, the personal learning objectives provided by students on Appendix 2.

An **official** job description with detailed descriptions of the tasks and activities to be completed in **each** department, and a letter from the prospective site supervisor, or HR department of the site, confirming their support of the rotation, must be submitted to the fieldwork coordinator for approval, before any offers are accepted by students.

6. Requirements and Grading

The university supervisor assigns the Pass/Fail grade based on the student intern meeting **all** the following requirements:

- Attending/completing mandatory internship sessions or complying with other arrangements such as telephone conferencing and/or Blackboard conferencing.
- Working full-time at an approved site for a minimum of 400 hours of professional practice over a period of 10 to 14 consecutive weeks—for 30-40 hours weekly, during the Fall and Spring semesters (40 hours weekly **for no more or no less than** 10 weeks in the summer semester).
- Completing *Weekly Progress Reports* (Appx. 7) every Monday, by 11:59 p.m.
- Developing and completing a *Special Project Proposal* (Appx. 8) in cooperation with the Site Supervisor. Signed proposals must be submitted to the university supervisor for approval no later than the 100th hour.
- Submitting signed copies of the *Midpoint Performance Evaluation* (Appx. 9) completed by the Site Supervisor at the mid-point of the internship, immediately after 200 hours have been completed.
- Meeting with the site supervisor and the university supervisor during a mandatory site visit at the internship site. Alternative arrangements will be made for those interns based outside the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The student intern is responsible for scheduling this visit immediately after 200 hours have been completed AND the Mid-point Evaluation has been submitted to the university supervisor.
 - Site visits usually involve:
 - A tour of the site, if applicable;
 - A meeting between the site supervisor and university supervisor;
 - A meeting among the student, site supervisor, and university supervisor; and
 - A meeting between the student and the university supervisor.
 - The order of the meetings is flexible and can be changed as needed.
 - A similar order may be used for conference call for students completing their internship outside the Washington Metropolitan Area.
- Submitting signed copies of the *Final Performance Evaluation* (Appx. 9) completed by the Site Supervisor at the end of the internship, immediately after 400 hours have been completed.
- Presenting an overview of their internship work experience and special project (See *Presentation Guidelines*, Appx. 10) at a mandatory final presentation attended by all of the current interns, the university supervisor, and program faculty. This will occur at the end of the semester. Other arrangements will be made for students completing their internship outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
- Submitting an internship portfolio (See *Portfolio Guidelines* in Appx.12) which encapsulates the experience of the internship.
 - Also included in the portfolio will be the *Student Evaluation* (see Appx. 11) designed to encourage

reflection and assessment of the overall internship experience. This will help TEM faculty evaluate the internship site, supervisors, and the overall internship experience.

7. Academic Policies on Registration and Withdrawing

Students must comply with University *Academic Policies* for registering, attending, dropping, or withdrawing from a course as outlined in the University Catalog.

8. Responsibilities

Student Intern

- **To the university supervisor**
 - Reading and adhering to all policies and procedures in the TEM *Internship Manual*, and the TOUR 490 *syllabus*;
 - Notifying the university supervisor as soon as possible, if he/she is unable to complete the internship program, or with any concerns or questions;
 - Checking his/her Mason e-mail in order to keep abreast with all communication from the university supervisor; and
 - Responding to requests from university supervisor in a timely manner.
- **To the site supervisor**
 - Sharing the Internship Manual with site supervisor;
 - Informing site supervisor of all requirements, as well as student and site supervisor responsibilities;
 - Providing contact information (e.g., address, cell phone);
 - Reporting directly to the site supervisor for instructions and fulfilling his/her duties as stipulated by their supervisor;
 - Familiarizing and abiding by all site policies and procedures applicable to his/her performance, conduct and behavior;
 - Visiting, observing and participating, as appropriate, in all levels of the site's operations, including meetings, programs, projects and training sessions;
 - Setting mutually satisfactory and feasible performance objectives in consultation with the site supervisor since these objectives will constitute a baseline against which the student intern's performance is assessed by the site supervisor;
 - Providing the site with all necessary paperwork to earn academic credit for the internship experience;
 - Seeking further clarification from the site supervisor when encountering tasks or problems that cannot be solved independently;
 - Notifying the site supervisor in advance when it is necessary to be absent from work. The student intern should also inform the site supervisor as soon as possible if they are unable to complete the internship program; and
 - Conforming to the work and holiday schedule of the site at which they are interning.

Site Supervisor

- **To the student intern**
 - Developing an internship position description which exemplifies a capstone requirement with mutually beneficial and rewarding learning experiences for both the participating student intern and site;
 - Preparing the site staff for the arrival of the student intern, and orienting the student intern to the site's history (e.g., organizational chart, philosophy, policies and regulations, administration, programs, and facilities);
 - Interpreting and communicating the aims and outcomes of the internship program to other site personnel which allows the student intern to be presented to staff in such a manner to ensure his/her professional status;
 - Allowing the student intern, within reason, to observe and participate in site activities, such as meetings, programs, projects and training opportunities so as to obtain a broad and relevant pre-professional work experience;
 - Providing an opportunity for the student intern to assume an active role by assigning projects or tasks;

- Assigning routine administration and management tasks to the student intern in order for him/her to gain a greater understanding of the organization's operation;
 - Conferring with the student intern to select a mutually beneficial required special project for the student intern to complete as part of their internship requirement (the special project facilitates the student intern's learning experience while making a meaningful contribution to the site);
 - Scheduling regular meetings with the student intern to provide consistent and frequent feedback regarding the site's work expectations and student intern performance;
 - Assessing the student intern's performance by completing two evaluations at the mid-point and final completion of work hours; and
 - Permitting the student intern to attend periodic internship seminars as needed (other arrangements are made for student interns interning outside of the northern VA area).
- **To the university supervisor**
 - Providing resource material describing the internship and site to better inform future student interns about internship opportunities;
 - Submitting signed copies of the performance evaluations after discussion and agreement with the student intern;
 - Providing an opportunity for a site visit near the mid-point of the internship experience; and
 - Communicating, as warranted, regarding any suggestions or concerns about the internship program.

Fieldwork Coordinator/University Supervisor

- **General**
 - Ensuring that the university's agreements are finalized by all parties and the original is kept on file;
 - Ensuring that all non-Mason agreements/contracts involving student intern placements are reviewed by University Counsel before finalization;
 - Checking that each student intern is properly enrolled into an internship course;
 - Marketing the internship program to prospective internship employers and students;
 - Fielding and reviewing queries about the TEM's internship program from the media, current and prospective sites, and students; and
 - Acting as internship program liaison between the TEM program and university administrative units (University Counsel, University Career Services, etc.).
- **To the student intern**
 - Informing students of the advantages of the internship program within their professional field and counseling them on how to best coordinate the program with their academic timetables;
 - Identifying potential internship placement sites along with relevant resource materials and any specifications regarding particular sites;
 - Orienting potential intern students to important aspects of internship program through seminars and academic advising sessions;
 - Helping students to set realistic learning objectives for their internship;
 - Assuring that students understand the requirements of the internship program as detailed in the TEM Internship Manual;
 - Providing students with all the necessary documents and forms necessary for successfully completing the internship;
 - Maintaining regular communication with the student intern during the internship and responding to weekly reports;
 - Conducting a site visit near the midpoint to the site as arranged by the student intern to become better acquainted with the students' internship experience and to discuss with site supervisor student intern progress through the internship program (alternative arrangements are made for student interns based outside the northern VA area);
 - Holding a mandatory on-campus seminar for student interns to give final presentations;
 - Assessing student intern work and assigning a final grade;
 - Reviewing evaluations made by the student intern about the TEM internship program, internship site, site supervision, and overall experience for program improvement purposes; and

- Disengaging the student intern when the university, site and student intern agree that a different placement would be in the best interest of the student intern.
- **To the site supervisor**
 - Assisting the site supervisor to develop an internship job description that is mutually satisfactory to the site, the student intern, and the TEM program;
 - Providing site supervisor with TEM Internship Manual that highlights internship expectations and responsibilities, as needed;
 - Maintaining open communication with the site supervisor concerning student intern's progress through the program; and
 - Conducting a site visit to meet the supervisor and tour the site while reviewing student progress and discussing continued relationship.

9. Removal or Dismissal of Student Intern

Every effort should be made by the university supervisor and the site supervisor to support the internship learning process, but on occasion, it may be necessary to either a) remove an student intern from one site for reassignment to another site, or 2) dismiss a student intern from his/her internship. Because of differing site guidelines and stipulations within the university, each student intern case must be considered separately. However, the following paragraphs discuss general guidelines for removal or dismissal.

Removal of a Student Intern by University Supervisor from a Site

Circumstances may arise where it is necessary for the university supervisor to remove a student intern from a particular site, and relocate him/her to another site without academic penalty. These circumstances can include significant violations of terms of engagement on the part of the site, intimations or conflicts between site supervisor/personnel and the student intern, sexual or other harassments, unsafe working environment, labor-related disruptions, and site bankruptcy or financial exigency. Any of these circumstances may require immediate intervention and/or removal of the student intern from the internship.

If a student intern is unable to carry out internship duties due to personal reasons (e.g. medical, emotional), all parties will be notified and any appropriate interventions will be employed. This might necessitate removal of the student intern from the site placement prior to completion of the 400 hour requirement. The university supervisor will convene with the site supervisor to determine a mutually agreed upon course of action that benefits the student's internship experience while also meeting the site's and university's expectations. These situations are rare and shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Student Intern Request for Removal from a Site

Circumstances may arise where a student intern feels compelled to request removal from a site. The student intern cannot initiate any change in internship assignment until the following procedure has been followed:

1. The student intern must provide the university supervisor a written statement outlining reason(s) for removal from the site as soon as possible. The student must meet or phone conference with university supervisor to discuss and confirm removal reasons.
2. Removal decisions rest with the university supervisor and the fieldwork coordinator who should share removal consideration with the site supervisor before making a final decision. If removal is deemed necessary, typically, a two-week resignation notice should be given by the student intern to the site.
3. Because the internship is meant to be a long-term experience with one site, the student will restart his/her hours at the new site.

Re-registration for the course, the repayment of tuition, as well as, meeting all the requirements outlined in the manual, Appendices 1 and 4, and the course syllabus, by the student intern, will be required.

*****Implications for intent to graduate must be considered and addressed by the student intern.**

Dismissal of Student Intern by Site Supervisor

Termination of a student's internship program by a site supervisor is a serious matter and as such, the university expects the site supervisor to make immediate contact with the university supervisor if circumstances arise that could eventually lead to the dismissal of a student intern (documentation highlighting these circumstances must be provided). The reasons for the termination should be discussed and understood by the university supervisor. Possible grounds for dismissal of a student intern by a site (and hence termination of the *Experiential Learning Agreement* between the University and site) can include lack of student intern responsibility, engagement by the student intern in illegal or unethical conduct, and violation of site's policies.

If possible, every effort should be made to reconcile the issues with the understanding that ultimately the site can make the final decision per the *Experiential Learning Agreement*. The university supervisor will discuss the student intern infraction with the site supervisor and the student intern separately to determine any possible resolutions. In light of a dismissal decision the university supervisor will determine if the dismissal merits a failing grade.

Students need to remember that if they are dismissed by their site, they will be required to re-register for the course, and repay the tuition for the course, and meet all the requirements as outlined in Appendices 1 and 4.

Also, students should note that their intent to graduate could be adversely impacted, and it will be up to them to resolve any issues with the Registrar's office.

*****Please contact the Fieldwork Coordinator at (temfield@gmu.edu), with any questions*****