

# **The Story of Internships**

## **Executive Summary**

Michael J. O'Fallon  
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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The purpose of this project was to take an “inventory” of all internships offered on the James Madison University Campus during the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 academic years. Two academic years were selected for comparison purposes. After completing an initial scan of internship opportunities, it was quickly determined that there are other experiential learning terms that are similar to internships that are offered by various programs/disciplines. Therefore, this project included a detailed review into courses/opportunities related to internships, student teaching experiences, practicums and field experiences. In this report, the combination of these terms was labeled “experience(s)”, unless specified individually. In addition, information was collected pertaining to undergraduate student assistantships, consulting projects, and service-learning experiences.

## Resources

Data was collected from the following:

- Undergraduate and graduate catalogs for the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 academic years.
- Student enrollment database for all “experience” courses offered during the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 academic years.
- Survey distributed to Academic Unit Heads who completed the survey or delegated the survey to another individual in the department to complete.
- Center for Global Engagement.
- Community Service-Learning Department.
- Office of Institutional Research.

## Course Information Results

### *Undergraduate Courses and Enrollment*

- During the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 academic years, there were a total of 144 undergraduate courses (with students enrolled) that were considered an “experience”.
  - 63 (43.75%) were required in the major/program, 62 (43.05%) were offered as an elective, 17 (11.81%) were both required and an elective (depending on the program requirements) and two (2) (1.39%) courses were undetermined.
  - 65 (45.14%) of the courses were categorized as an internship, eight (8) (5.56%) courses as a student teaching experience, and 71 (49.31%) as a practicum/field experience.
  - 5,940 students completed an “experience” during the 2014-2015 academic year, while 5,577 students completed an “experience” during the 2018-2019 academic year.

### *Graduate Courses and Enrollment*

- During the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 academic years, there were a total of 102 graduate courses (with students enrolled) that were considered an “experience”.
  - 78 (76.47%) were required in the program, 13 (12.75%) were offered as an elective, eight (8) (7.84%) were both required and an elective (depending on the program requirements) and three (3) (2.94%) courses were undetermined.
  - 29 (28.43%) of the courses were categorized as an internship, 16 (15.69%) courses as a student teaching experience, and 57 (55.88%) as a practicum/field experience.
  - 2,160 students completed an “experience” during the 2014-2015 academic year, while 2,226 students completed an “experience” during the 2018-2019 academic year.

### *Undergraduate Courses – Credit Hours and Number of Hours Required per Credit (2018-2019 Academic Year)*

- Internship:
  - 55 internship courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from zero (0) – 12.
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was three (3).
  - The number of work hours required to complete the internship ranged from six (6) to 165 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required per credit hour was 60.
- Student Teaching:
  - Eight (8) student teaching courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from one (1) – 12.
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was eight (8).
  - The number of work hours required to complete the student teaching experience ranged from 37.5 to 93.33 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required per credit hour was 40.
- Practicum/Field Experience:
  - 67 practicum/field experience courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from one (1) – eight (8).
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was three (3).
  - The number of work hours required to complete the practicum/field experience ranged from two (2) to 250 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required varied by department and there was not a prevailing number.

## *Graduate Courses – Credit Hours and Number of Hours Required per Credit (2018-2019 Academic Year)*

- Internship:
  - 24 internship courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from one (1) – nine (9).
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was three (3)<sup>1</sup>.
  - The number of work hours required to complete the internship ranged from 15 to 120 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required per credit hour was 80.
- Student Teaching:
  - 14 student teaching courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from two (2) – 12.
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was six (6).
  - The number of work hours required to complete the student teaching experience ranged from 30 to 120 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required varied by department and there was not a prevailing number.
- Practicum/Field Experience:
  - 55 practicum/field experience courses were offered.
  - The number of credit hours varied from one (1) – six (6).
  - The most frequent number of credit hours per course was three (3).
  - The number of work hours required to complete the practicum/field experience ranged from two (2) to 240 per credit hour.
  - The most frequent number of work hours required varied by department and there was not a prevailing number.

## Survey Results

The survey was developed at the end of October, 2019. Once completed, it was reviewed by key stakeholders. In total, 95 individuals, whether it was an Academic Unit Head or another individual in the department (which was labeled “program representative(s)”), completed the survey.

### *Internships<sup>2</sup> – For Course Credit*

- Of the program representatives that reported offering an internship, five (5) reported that the internship is “paid only” (7.8%), 29 said the internship is “unpaid” (30.5%), and 30 reported that the internship can either be “paid or unpaid” (31.6%).

### *Student Teaching Experiences – For Course Credit*

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<sup>1</sup> Two credit hours was the most frequent with 12 courses. However, 10 of those courses were in the Physician Assistant program. Eight different programs offered the internship as three credit hours. As a result, this is the number reported.

<sup>2</sup> A few individuals reported that they offer an internship, but also reported the same course as either a student teaching experience or practicum/field experience. As a result, these results may be overinflated.

- Of the program representatives that reported offering a student teaching experience, two (2) reported that the experience is “paid only” (7.7%), 18 said the internship is “unpaid” (69.2%), and six (6) reported that the teaching experience can either be “paid or unpaid” (23.1%).

*Practicums/Field Experiences – For Course Credit*

- Of the program representatives that reported offering a practicum/field experience, 38 (84.4%) programs reported that the experience is “unpaid” and seven (7) (15.6%) programs had students complete the experience as “paid or unpaid” (both).

*Departmental/Program Definitions of Internships, Student Teaching Experiences, and Practicums/Field Experiences*

Definitions of each “experience” varied by program. However, common language used across most programs included:

- Internships – The student receives practical experience and the student is expected to combine the work experience with coursework (in most instances – especially when the internship is a required course). In addition, the internship should allow the students to translate knowledge received from the classroom into practical experience. Finally, an internship should enhance a student’s knowledge and skills in their field of study.
- Student Teaching Experiences – In reviewing the definitions from the program representatives, there appears to be two different types of “student teaching”. The first is within the College of Education who views student teaching as a guided and supervised field experience in which students observe in teaching practices under guidance of an experienced classroom teacher. Outside of the College of Education, AUH’s review student teaching primarily as an opportunity to assist a faculty member in a classroom, similar to a teaching assistant position.
- Practicums/Field Experiences – A practicum is viewed as an experience designed for the student to receive practical experience and often times associated with specific objectives in a course. It appears as if field experiences are more tied into a lecture-based course, unlike practicums and internships where a student is working primarily in an organizational setting. In addition, both appear to be taken as part of a course or concurrently with other courses.

*Internships – Student Does Not Receive Course Credit*

- 54 program representatives stated that their students complete an internship and do not receive course credit for the experience.
- Of the 54, 16 (29.6%) reported that they keep track of the student experience.

*Student Teaching Experiences – Student Does Not Receive Course Credit*

- 11 program representatives stated that their students complete a student teaching experience and do not receive course credit for the experience.
- Of the 11, seven (7) (63.6%) reported that they keep track of the student experience.

*Practicums/Field Experiences – Student Does Not Receive Course Credit*

- 23 program representatives stated that their students complete a practicum/field experience and do not receive course credit for the experience.
- Of the 23, seven (7) (30.4%) reported that they keep track of the student experience.

#### *Impact of an “Experience” on the Students Post-Graduation Opportunities*

- 50 of 90 program representatives (55.6%) stated that they see a difference in the number of post-graduation opportunities (e.g., job offers, graduate school acceptance, etc.) for those students that complete an “experience” versus those that do not.
- 50 of 91 program representatives (54.9%) said that the “experience” is very important/critical/significant/essential (or something to that effect) for their students when searching for a job or submitting an application to graduate school. In addition, 27 individuals (29.7%) said that it is important/moderately important (or other similar term).

#### *Undergraduate Student Assistantships*

- 33 program representatives reported offering an undergraduate student assistantship in their program.

#### *Consulting Projects*

- 36 program representatives reported offering a consulting project in their program.
- 26 of the 36 (72.2%) programs that offer a consulting project require the experience as part of a course.

#### *Service-Learning Experiences*

- 49 program representatives reported offering a service-learning experience in their program.
- 32 of the 49 (65.3%) programs that offer a service-learning experience require it as part of a course.

### Other Results

#### *Center for Global Engagement*

- There are 14 recognized areas where students can complete an international internship/practicum.
- 776 students interned abroad between the fall 2014 and summer 2019 terms.

#### *Community Service-Learning Department*

In 2018-2019, there were:

- 77 service-learning courses offered at JMU.
- 2,161 students participated in a service-learning course.
- 42 Alternative Breaks occurred which included 428 student leaders and participants.
- There were approximately 150 unique community partnerships through these programs.

In addition to the aforementioned data, the report includes information pertaining to campus student enrollment, detailed definitions of the “experiences” as given by the program representatives, full descriptions of what the program representatives notice in those students who complete an “experience” versus those that do not, and the list of program representatives who completed the survey.