

# **GEOGRAPHIC SCIENCE PROGRAM**

## **GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS** **FOR UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIPS**

**(GEOGRAPHY 495)**

### **TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

To qualify for an internship, you must meet the following requirements:

- (A) Have no less than a 2.0 GPA
- (B) Have enrolled in courses relevant to the desired internship
- (C) Have junior or senior standing
- (D) Have obtained permission of the internship coordinator

Students may attempt a 3-credit internship (minimum 120 work hours) or a 6-credit internship (minimum of 240 work hours). No more than 6 hours of internship may be applied toward earning a degree. A student should not attempt to carry more than 16 credit hours when doing an internship. Internship is offered as a course, and you must register and pay tuition to receive credit.

BEFORE REGISTERING FOR GEOG 495, it is necessary to complete steps 1-5 of the following list. The remaining internship obligations are listed below on page 3 under "Internship Requirements."

### **RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING AN INTERNSHIP**

1. Visit the internship coordinator to discuss your internship interests and possible positions. It is extremely helpful to formulate a list of internship interests. This may facilitate your placement and help you identify more personally relevant and rewarding positions. Internships exist to provide students with experiential learning; therefore, positions that involve purely routine, low-skill clerical work are not acceptable. Internships are seldom paying positions; students trade their labor for the opportunity to learn. Be sure to complete an INTERNSHIP APPLICATION form for the coordinator's file.
2. Each student has the responsibility of locating an office or agency in which to work. The internship coordinator will assist you with placement. If you request it or if the proposed internship is with an office which has never had one of our interns, the internship coordinator will write a letter describing the internship program to the prospective internship provider you have contacted.

3. Contact a potential internship provider and express an interest in the position. Make an appointment for an interview.
4. Prepare a resume. See the suggestions below. Take it and a writing sample to the interview. Also, take a copy of your proposed class schedule, if applicable.
5. At the Interview, offer the interviewer your resume, discuss the nature of the internship, and attempt to ascertain if it is the type of experience you want to have. Be sure to ask questions about the tasks you will be expected to do, and express an interest in getting involved in specific activities which will expand your knowledge and skills. Be sure that the internship is substantive enough to meet the departmental expectations as described to you by the internship coordinator. If the opportunity appears satisfactory, conclude a tentative, verbal agreement with the provider.
6. Create an INTERNSHIP WORK TRAINING AGREEMENT form with the provider. Return it to the internship coordinator no later than the first work week.

### **ON PREPARING A BRIEF RESUME**

Internship providers want to know if you have a background compatible with the work you are about to undertake. They need to judge whether you have some potential for learning from them. They also need some assurance that you will be a responsible, willing worker. A brief resume helps them make these assessments. The Career Planning and Placement Office provides excellent advice on how to construct a resume.

Your resume should be carefully typed and at least include the following:

- (a) A statement of an internship (or career) objective.
- (b) Personal data such as name, age, address (school and permanent), telephone number, class and major(s).
- (c) Work experience, even if it seems irrelevant to the internship. Internship providers like to know if you are industrious and have shown initiative in the job market.
- (d) Academic preparation: major/minor courses by name, other courses that may be relevant to public service, law, political science, planning; your GPA, if it is something to be proud of.
- (e) Extracurricular/organizational activities.
- (f) Career interests.

### **WHAT PROVIDERS EXPECT**

Internship providers expect you to display a high level of interest and initiative, just as you would be expected to display on a new job. They expect an acceptance of the nature of the work situation, whatever it may be. They DO NOT like students who treat the internship as just so many hours a day to be gotten through. Especially disliked are clock watchers!

You will have established a schedule with the provider; he/she will expect you to report to work promptly. You should take care to meet your scheduled commitment. Providers DO NOT like students to put other activities before their internship commitment. Strictly avoid changing your internship schedule to meet other obligations. If it proves to be essential that you alter your regular schedule, DO NOT wait until the last minute or the last day to inform the internship provider.

Providers of internships expect your dress, appearance and behavior on the job to be consistent with the standards (expectations) of the work place. They, their clients and your co-workers will base much of their opinion of you on these three things. In the “work world” appearances are important. Failure to appreciate this fact will give the impression that you are immature and irresponsible.

### **INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

To avoid grade penalties, all of the following must be met:

- (a) Complete the number of work hours required
- (b) Keep a daily log that reports the days and hours worked as well as comments about each day’s activities. Submit this to the internship coordinator at the end of the internship.
- (c) Write an eight- to ten-page paper analyzing your internship experience as a learning experience. Submit your paper to the coordinator at the end of the internship.
- (d) Have your provider mail a completed EVALUATION OF INTERN PERFORMANCE FORM to the coordinator assessing your work.

The address:

Internship Coordinator  
Geographic Science  
James Madison University  
MSC 4302  
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Near the end of the semester/summer session in which you have enrolled, you must begin to concentrate on completing internship requirements so that grades can be awarded. If you want to avoid a grade of incomplete (I) for the internship, you must submit your log and paper to the internship coordinator ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EXAM PERIOD OF THE SESSION. You must complete your work obligation by the end of the session.

### **INTERNSHIP PAPER**

Your paper should be carefully written since it tells the internship coordinator (the grader) not only what you have accomplished in the internship but also your appreciation of the

experience. The report should be eight to ten pages in length and typed. Take care to write your paper in good English—that is, employ good grammar and good logic.

Your report should NOT be simply a description of your on-the-job activities. Rather, it should report the basic facts of your work situation and then proceed to analyze your experience both in professional and personal terms. Attach appendices of any studies, reports or projects which you have prepared or helped to prepare.

Here are some questions that can help you generate ideas for your paper:

- (a) Can you give an overview of your experience as they relate to geography or your career interest?
- (b) Are there specific events in which you participated or were there particular problems that you observed from which lessons can be learned? (Expand on this.)
- (c) Are there things that you have studied as theory that you found confirmed or not confirmed by reality?
- (d) How was the experience valuable to you? How could it have been made more valuable?
- (e) Are there any types of political influence that affect the organization you worked for?
- (f) From your observations of the organization, can you think of any measures that would improve the organization's effectiveness?

### **FINAL GRADE**

Your final grade in the course is based on your internship provider's evaluation of your performance (45 percent), your paper (45 percent) and your meeting various administrative requirements (e.g., deadlines, required forms and information).