



Public History Internships
History 4486

Information and Guidelines for Undergraduate Internship Sponsors

Thank you for agreeing to sponsor and mentor an undergraduate student intern from the University of West Georgia. We hope that this will be a successful and memorable experience for both you and the student and that the student will make a meaningful contribution to your institution.

Internships at the undergraduate level are designed to introduce students to the field of Public History. They provide an opportunity for students to learn about the practice of public history through a meaningful, hands-on work experience under the mentorship of experienced and knowledgeable public history professionals. No two internships are exactly alike; all internships should be designed to balance the interests and abilities of the student with the partnering sponsor, while still satisfying the UWG internship requirements.

All potential undergraduate interns must meet selection criteria established by the UWG Public History program. Students must have at least a 2.75 GPA, a minimum of four courses in history and/or a related field, and strong faculty recommendations. Most are still trying to decide what they would like to do with their history major, but some may have particular interests that they would like to explore. Some students may have completed a public history course, but many have not. Students may bring a variety of other work and academic experiences to their internship, including courses in related fields such as anthropology, archaeology, or art history and other job skills that may prove useful in a public history setting.

Internships require students to complete 125 hours of work experience for three (3) hours of undergraduate course credit. Some institutions may offer compensation, which may be in the form of a stipend or hourly wage, but this compensation is not required. Because students are earning course credit, internships must be designed with clear educational objectives and rigorous assignments comparable to college-level courses. Work performed by the intern should supplement the existing staff of an institution or provide assistance to institutions that do not have paid staff members. Interns should not be used to replace work normally done by a paid staff member.

Educational objectives of the Public History Internship course:

- 1. *To identify and describe some of the careers available in public history.*** Students will be able to identify and describe some of the types of positions in public history, the work and academic experience needed for these positions, and the types of tasks that these positions perform.
- 2. *To gain knowledge about the practice of public history.*** Students will be able to identify some of the challenges and opportunities in the field in which they are working. In addition, students will be able to identify and discuss some of the ethical issues involved in the field of public history. Students will gain insight into the profession through mentorship by the internship sponsor, other staff in the sponsoring institution, and other public history practitioners with whom they may interact during the internship.
- 3. *To develop skills in the practice of public history.*** Students will engage in at least one major project and/or several smaller projects, activities, or tasks for the sponsoring organization. Through this hands-on experience, students will be able to identify some of the skills needed in public history practice and they will gain experience in developing these skills. These skills will be useful as work experience when

applying for positions in the history field, including not only public history but other history related careers such as social studies education.

4. To demonstrate professional skills in a history related work setting. Students will learn about and be able to describe the professional expectations in a public history work environment. In public history settings, practicing public historians are expected to perform in a collegial and collaborative work environment, often in a team setting, and to act and dress appropriately and ethically. Students are also expected to report to work according to the work schedule established in the Internship Contract and to report absences and communicate changes to his or her schedule to the site supervisor promptly.

Internship sponsor responsibilities

1. Develop the position description for the intern. In some cases, the job description has been developed by the institution in advance of the opening. In other situations, the intern supervisor will develop the description in association with the intern to meet both his or her goals and those of the institution. Students should have the opportunity to produce a significant work product exemplifying their internship experience, but they may also participate in a variety of on-going operations, activities, and tasks at the institution.
2. Sign the Internship Contract before the intern begins but no later than twenty (20) hours into the internship.
3. Supervise the intern during the course of the internship, ensuring that students receive sufficient training to successfully complete their work and that they are exposed to methods and procedures that are consistent with the best practices in the field. Supervisors are encouraged to meet regularly with interns to answer questions, to provide feedback on their work, and to mentor the students.
4. Inform the student of the organizational policies and procedures that govern their work. Additionally, site sponsors should communicate any organizational expectations related to dress, work culture, and ethics.
5. Complete the mid-term and final evaluations for the intern. The UWG faculty advisor will send these evaluation forms by email at the appropriate time in the semester, and intern supervisors may return them by email or by regular mail. The site sponsor is encouraged to review the evaluation with the student and to create a plan to address any problems or concerns.
6. Meet with the student and the UWG faculty sponsor once during the semester at the internship site at a date and time agreed upon by all parties.
7. Communicate with the UWG faculty advisor if there are problems with the intern as soon as possible. Whenever possible, the supervisor should address the concern with the student first.

Professional expectations

All interns are informed in the syllabus that they must act professionally and ethically while working at your institution. Interns should consider an internship as they would a job experience. They are expected to abide by the policies and requirements of the sponsoring organization, to report to work according to the schedule specified in the Internship Contract, and to complete the work assigned to them according to the schedule agreed upon in the Contract. Interns must also act collegially, particularly in collaborative, team projects. Students who act unprofessionally or unethically may be removed from their internship at the discretion of the internship sponsor and/or the faculty advisor.

Intern requirements

1. **Complete 125 hours of work experience.** These hours include any activities related to the internship, including writing the internship journal, participating in on-line discussion with fellow interns, meeting with the UWG faculty sponsor, attending required meetings with other interns, preparing the internship evaluations and final portfolio, completing any required readings or research for projects, and other work-related tasks defined in the Contract. All hours must be completed by the last class day of the class for the semester in which the student has enrolled.
2. **Keep a daily journal documenting their internship experience.** Students will write a journal entry for each day worked and record the specific hours worked, the types of work performed, and the student's reflections regarding the experience that day and how that experience relates to the practice of public history.
3. **Participate in weekly on-line discussion about the internship experience through Course Den.** To encourage discussion among interns and the faculty advisors, each student will post at least two comments on Course Den each week. This communication network will allow students to share what they are learning in their experiences and to reflect on how their internship connects to their coursework and to issues of public history theory and practice.
4. **Attend a meeting with all interns at the end of the semester.** All students will meet at the end of the semester to share their experiences. The faculty advisor will schedule a date for this meeting at the beginning of the semester, and all students are expected to arrange their schedule so that they are able to attend.
5. **Participate in a meeting with the internship sponsor and faculty advisor.** All students will schedule a meeting for the faculty advisor to come to the internship site and meet there with the internship sponsor and faculty advisor to discuss the intern's work.
6. **Complete a written mid-term evaluation, using the form provided by the UWG faculty advisor.** For the fifteen-week fall and spring semesters, students will submit the midterm evaluation by the eighth week of class. For the summer semester, students will submit the mid-term evaluation when they have completed half (75) of the internship hours. Students must inform the faculty sponsor when they are close to completing half of their hours.
7. **Prepare a portfolio of the internship work, including an essay reflecting on the experience, and submit to the UWG faculty advisor by the date established by your advisor.** The centerpiece of the portfolio is an essay reflecting on the student's internship experience, using the questions provided for the final evaluation. In addition, each student will include the complete internship journal as well as examples of assignments and work projects completed during the course of the internship. Whenever possible, students will include a disk with photographs showing the student at work at the internship site.
8. **Communicate with the UWG faculty advisor when there are problems, to ask questions, or for assistance or guidance on the internship projects.** Internships are most successful with there is regular communication with the faculty advisor.

Internship evaluation

All students will receive a letter grade for the internship. The grades will be assigned based on the following factors:

1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of careers in public history (20% of final grade) through:
 - a. their weekly journal entries posted on Course Den
 - b. their weekly discussion comments posted on Course Den

- c. their midterm evaluation and final evaluative essay in the portfolio
 - d. discussions and meetings with the faculty advisor
- 2. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the practice of public history (*35% of final grade*) through
 - 1. their weekly journal entries and discussion comments posted on Course Den
 - 2. their midterm evaluation and final evaluative essay in the portfolio
 - 3. their meetings and discussions with the faculty advisor
 - 4. the mid-term and final evaluations completed by the internship sponsor
 - 5. the knowledge of the field reflected in their internship projects, documented in the portfolio
- 3. Students will demonstrate their acquisition of public history skills (*35% of final grade*) through:
 - a. their internship projects provided in the internship portfolio
 - b. their final evaluative essay
 - c. the midterm and final evaluations submitted by the internship sponsor
 - d. meetings and discussions with the UWG faculty advisor
- 4. Students will demonstrate the professional skills appropriate to a public history work setting (*10% of final grade*), as demonstrated through:
 - a. the midterm and final evaluations submitted by the internship sponsor
 - b. discussions with the faculty advisor

Last updated 05/02/2010 am