



Sport Management Internship Manual

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Recognizing that internships are a key initial step in beginning a career in the highly competitive sport industry, all sport management majors are required to undergo a full-time internship experience. This manual has been developed to outline policies and procedures for completing the program's internship requirement. It is through the internship that students make the transition from student to professional while honing their skills and building their network. It is also an opportunity for students to gain practical application of theory and skills learned in coursework. The successful internship will benefit the student, the site, and the University. The purpose of the Sport Management Internship Manual is to provide information to students, faculty, and sites regarding the Sport Management Internship Program at the University of West Georgia.

Sport Management Mission Statement

The University of West Georgia Sport Management program is designed to serve society by developing responsible leaders for the world of sport business. It is our goal to be recognized for our:

- **Action-oriented curriculum** in which the students learn by practicing and performing those tasks they will be expected to do in their professional positions;
- **Student-centered teaching** that is the product of the faculty's commitment to the holistic development of our students;
- **Market-driven instruction** that is cutting edge and ensures that the knowledge bases, skills, and competencies we seek to instill in our students are those that are demanded by industry employers;
- **Applied research** that is used to improve decision making and assists in overcoming organizational challenges;
- **Mutually beneficial partnerships** with sport properties that are developed to further solidify the bond between industry and the University.

Recognizing that the sport industry is ever-changing, we are committed to being sensitive to those dynamics that could affect the relevance of our instruction. In summary, the faculty is committed to the advancement of knowledge and practice in the sport industry through the creation and delivery of relevant educational programs, conducting and disseminating research, and working collaboratively with industry organizations.

Sport Management Curriculum

The Sport Management Curriculum at the University of West Georgia is an academically rigorous program geared to develop leaders for today's sport industry. Further, the curriculum is designed to reflect the priorities outlined in the mission statement and to align the program with the guidelines and competency areas established by Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA).

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia requires 60 credit hours of professional content to earn a Bachelor's of Science. The UWG Sport Management Program has elected to require students to earn 12 of the 60 credit hours in an approved full-time internship experience. The internship experience is substituted for classroom instruction because it is considered essential for the graduates of the Sport Management Program to gain knowledge through professional experience.

Sport Management Internship

In accordance with COSMA Guidelines, the internship should consist of in-depth practical experience(s) before entering the sport industry. These experiences help students bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical application in port settings. The internship allows students to transition from student to professional, gain further experience in an extremely competitive industry, explore career options, confirm career choices, gain a greater understanding of the industry, and develop their network for future employment and professional development.

The internship takes place after the student has completed all coursework for the major so that sites can be assume students have internalized the concepts, principles, and theories learned in their classes and are prepared to apply these to real-world situations. In addition, should an intern be offered a full-time position with the site, he/she will have completed all coursework and is prepared to begin working (Cuneen & Sidwell, 2003).

Because interns have made a full-time commitment to the site, they need to evaluate their continued involvement in extra-curricular activities and outside work in order to be fully committed to their internship experience (Cuneen & Sidwell, 2003). Students are advised to not have additional employment during their internship experience.

Internship Definition

"An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent" (NACE, 2010).

Terms

Agency – The company, organization, or site at which the intern will perform his/her duties.

Agency Supervisor - The person at the internship site who will be supervising, mentoring, evaluating, assigning tasks to the intern. This person will work with the intern in completing internship paperwork (objectives, evaluations, time sheets) and may delegate other supervisors to manage the activities of the intern.

Intern – Noun: A person who works as an apprentice or trainee in an occupation or profession to gain practical experience, and sometimes also to satisfy legal or other requirements for being licensed or accepted professionally (www.dictionary.com) Verb: to be or perform the duties of an intern (www.dictionary.com)

Internship - The period during which a person serves as an intern; any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession; a position as a participant in such a program (www.dictionary.com)

Internship Instructor - The instructor of record for SPMG 4686 at UWG during the student's internship semester. This person will ensure all procedures are followed and the internship experience selected meets program requirements to issue a final grade. The instructor also mentors the intern and provides professional development support during the internship experience.

Eligibility

SPMG 4584 Pre-Internship Seminar in Sport Management

Students should take SPMG 4584 Pre-Internship Seminar in Sport Management in the semester preceding the internship. Prior to the start of this class, a degree audit must be conducted to confirm that the student will complete all coursework prior to the student's internship semester. Students who are not in the last semester of their course work while enrolled in SPMG 4584 will be dropped.

SPMG 4584 Course Description

This course is designed to prepare the student to make the transition from student to professional in Sport Management. Topics for discussion will include the following: internship selection, application materials, interviewing skills, job search, salary negotiation, and other professional issues. The course will also include a speaker's series for students to receive firsthand advice from professionals working in the industry. Mentoring during the internship search process will be provided.

SPMG 4686 Internship in Sport Management

SPMG 4686 is a 12-credit course that the intern will enroll in while participating in an approved internship experience. To be eligible for this course, the student must secure a qualified internship opportunity before the Add/Drop deadline or the student will be dropped from the course. The student must have completed all required courses (professional content, related content, and approved electives) and may not be enrolled in other courses during the internship experience without the internship instructor's approval.

SPMG 4686 Course Description

Field experiences yield the necessity of receiving direction, undertaking responsibility, and demonstrating competence by applying theory learned from course work. The internship allows students to complete a partial fulfillment in their degree program and will help them discover career options and confirm career choices. Students will perform substantive duties at an approved agency while receiving support from the internship instructor. Students will also be responsible for submitting the paperwork, reflection assignments, evaluations, and timesheet in order to meet the program requirements.

Site Selection

Students are responsible for securing their own internship sites. Support and guidance for securing an internship will be provided during the SPMG 4584 Pre-Internship Seminar. Students must locate appropriate internship experiences, submit application materials, interview with the site, and accept an internship offered by an approved site. When selecting an internship site, students should keep in mind their professional goals, the experiences available during the internship, and whether the site meets program requirements.

All sites must be approved by the internship instructor before a student will be allowed to complete his/her internship there. The approval process is two pronged: 1) the site must be appropriate, and 2) the activities must be appropriate. Both criteria must be met in order for a site to be approved. For a site to be approved, it must be a sport property or have significant involvement in sport and its related activities (e.g., sponsorships, etc.). Internship activities must be correlative to the UWG Sport Management curriculum and COSMA guidelines. Further, students need to make sure that the experience will provide the hours required.

Steps to Site Approval

1. Make initial contact with the site (phone call, email, respond to a posted position)
2. Interview with the site and discuss the opportunities for internships.
3. Complete the Application for Internship Approval Form.
4. Submit the signed form to the instructor. If your site is selected during the term in which you are enrolled in SPMG 4584, the SPMG 4584 instructor must approve your site. If your site is selected after the completion of SPMG 4584, your site must be approved by the instructor of SPMG 4686. If no instructor is listed for SPMG 4686 between terms, the site must be approved by the SPMG department chair.
5. The instructor will evaluate the site and the activities to determine whether the placement will provide the student with an appropriate experience.
6. The instructor will either sign the form indicating the site is approved or contact the student to inform him/her that the site or duties are not eligible. Students should allow one week for a site to be approved/rejected. In the event a site is rejected, the instructor will provide a reason why the site does not meet the criteria and will provide the site and the student an opportunity to amend the job description. If the site is not open to amending the experience to comply with program requirements, the student must select a different site.

Site Confirmation

1. Once the Application for Internship Approval Form is signed, the internship site is approved. The student may accept an offer to intern at the site if one is extended or continue interviewing for other opportunities.
2. Once the student is ready to accept an offer, they must confirm the internship they have selected. In order to confirm the internship, the student must complete the Agency Acceptance Form and submit it to the instructor. This form binds the student to that site for the internship, and, therefore, it should not be completed until the student is sure he/she wants to complete his/her internship with that particular site.
3. The SPMG 4584 instructor will provide copies of these forms to the student for his/her records. Once the Application for Internship Approval and the Agency Acceptance Forms are complete, the site is confirmed and the student is committed to that internship site.
4. After confirming an internship, students must stop soliciting other internship opportunities. Continued solicitation is unethical, unprofessional, and reflects negatively on the student, the Program, the College, and the University. The instructor will not approve another internship site once the Application for Approval form is submitted unless there are extenuating circumstances that make it necessary for the student to withdraw (i.e. site changed internship terms and no longer meets requirements, internship no longer available, etc.)

Academic Credit

During the internship semester, students will be registered for SPMG 4686 Internship in Sport Management (12 credit hours). Students will earn a letter grade reflecting their performance in this course based on the academic assignments and site supervisor evaluations. It is imperative for students to understand that they are earning academic credit in addition to professional experience. Thus, there are assignments that must be completed in order for a grade to be assigned (see Sample Syllabus & Forms). In order to be eligible for graduation, students must complete the internship with a grade of C or better and meet all other requirements, including minimum GPA.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many hours are required for internships?

- Summer internships require 400 hours over 10 weeks
- Fall/Spring internships require 520 hours spread over 16 weeks

Will I get paid for the internship?

That is determined by the agency. If you limit yourself only to paid internships, you may not find the best experience. You have to examine your situation, and determine what you are able to manage financially. As you have heard repeatedly in your classes, most internship opportunities are not paid because the student is earning academic credit. Because you will be registered as a full-time student during your internship experience, you should still be eligible for financial aid, if you qualify.

What would be the best way to go about getting an interview? How do I go about starting contact with a possible internship site?

Before you begin making initial contact, you need to first make sure you have the appropriate application materials (resume, cover letter). You want to have them ready so that you can return them quickly to the agency. You can contact the agency directly and inquire about internships. You need go to their website and find someone in human resources or in the area you are interested in completing your internship and contact that person by email or phone. You can write a short email introducing yourself and inquiring about internships that might be available. You can also respond to posted positions. For example, there is an internship link on the NCAA website (www.ncaa.org) that lists internships that are available.

What are the limits on choosing an internship? What kinds of jobs/internships will and will not count for credit?

Internships must be completed with an approved sport agency. Further, the activities must be reflective of the UWG Sport Management curriculum and NASSM guidelines. Internships with non-sport agencies will not be approved unless you can demonstrate that you will be spending your time working with sport related issues, e.g., Lowe's and their sport sponsorship division in Charlotte, NC.

What is the right timeline for securing an internship?

It depends. Some students will diligently pursue internship opportunities for the entire semester only to have it confirmed a week before the end of the pre-internship semester. Other students will be able to squeeze the search process into a couple of weeks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Start early—begin looking now at possible sites and initiating contact, look at a wide range of opportunities—you may not realize that you really like something until you really investigate it. Conversely, you may think that you are very well suited for a particular position only to realize that it is not really what you anticipated.
- Be ready to accept the consequences of parameters or limitations you place on your internship search (i.e. paid only, geographic specific, etc.) You need to be VERY INTENTIONAL about this decision. Your internship should springboard your career and it is more important to find an opportunity that will put you in the best position to make the transition to full-time employment.
- Be prepared to make some short-term sacrifices for long-term rewards.
- Summer is the most competitive time for internships because you typically have a large applicant pool. Get started!

What is the best way to maximize my chances of getting the best internship possible?

- Part of this has already taken place—if you have worked hard and performed well in your classes, volunteered and attended events (speaker series, conferences, etc.), you have already laid a strong foundation.
- Begin the process early, be intentional about your decision-making process.
- Assemble strong materials: cover letter, resume, references.
- Research the organizations you are interested in to prepare strong materials.
- Keep up-to-date with what is going on in sport—not just who is in the Super Bowl, but what is happening in sport business (*Sport Business Journal, NCAA News*, etc.)
- Prepare for your interviews: make sure you have a professional attire, research the organization and person/people you will be interviewing with, review potential interview questions, prepare questions to ask the interviewer.
- Ask your professors (and others) for insight as you narrow your choices.

What if there are no internships available or I am unable to find an internship that I am pleased with during the time I plan to complete my internship?

Under the guidance of the sport management faculty, it is your responsibility to secure your internship. Therefore, if you are unable to secure an internship during the time you plan to complete your internship, your graduation will be postponed until you are able to find and complete a suitable internship.

Appendix

Syllabus

Application for Internship Approval
Form Internship Agency Acceptance

Time Sheet

Evaluation Form

Internship Objectives Form