

## **PRE-INTERNSHIP PREPARATION GUIDE**

The information in this packet is intended to guide students in the process of exploring and securing an internship opportunity, and preparing to begin the internship. Each step in this process is described below, including necessary tasks and relevant resources. Refer to the Appendices as indicated for sample scripts and materials. Please review this packet and contact the Sanford School Internship Coordinator with any questions or to schedule a meeting to discuss your specific internship needs.

Additional information may be found on the Sanford School internship website (<https://thesanfordschool.asu.edu/internships>).

### **Overview of the Pre-Internship Process**

These steps are listed in the general order in which they are initiated, but overlap a great deal in timing. Students should consult with the Internship Coordinator for support and guidance throughout this process.

**STEP 1:** Learn about the Sanford School Internship Program.

**STEP 2:** Apply and gain permission to register for the internship course (FAS 484 or SOC 484).

**STEP 3:** Explore internship opportunities.

**STEP 4:** Prepare your resume.

**STEP 5:** Contact prospective internship sites.

**STEP 6:** Apply and interview with internship sites.

**STEP 7:** Accept an internship placement offer.

**STEP 8:** Submit internship placement details to the Internship Coordinator.

**STEP 9:** Complete necessary pre-internship site requirements.

**STEP 10:** Begin your internship and the internship course!

### **STEP 1: Learn about the Sanford School Internship Program**

- Review the *Sanford School Internship Handbook* and the *Sanford School Internship Site List* of potential internship sites, which can be found on the Sanford School internship webpage.

Complete the Online Pre-Internship Orientation, which provides an overview of the internship program. To be enrolled in the Pre-Internship Orientation Canvas page contact the Internship Coordinator.

- Schedule an individual meeting with the Internship Coordinator if you would like to discuss more specific internship needs.



## **STEP 2: Apply and gain permission to register for the internship course.**

- Review the academic requirements listed in the *Handbook* and the *Internship Application*.
- Complete and sign the *Internship Application*, which may be found on the internship website. Make sure to complete all parts of the application, including the typed, brief personal statements.
- Submit your application prior to the stated deadline.
  - The application deadline for internships beginning in the fall semester is May 15. The deadline for internships beginning in the spring semester is November 30. Be aware that some internships may take two months or more to secure and finalize, so plan to begin the process early.
- If your application is approved, you will be given permission to register for the course (FAS 484 or SOC 484) and will receive emailed instructions to do so. Because you have to choose the number of credit hours you wish to earn when you register for the course, you may wish to wait to register until you have secured an internship and discussed the number of hours you will be able to work at the site with your internship supervisor.



## **STEP 3: Explore internship opportunities.**

- Review the *Sanford School Internship Selection Questions* (available on the internship website), which is designed to assist you in considering the types of internship opportunities that may help you meet your educational and professional goals.
- Review the list of potential internship sites (available on the internship website) and select sites that you wish to explore further. Research the sites by visiting their websites, and become familiar with the organization's mission, services, and service-user population.
- Explore additional internship possibilities, if desired.
  - Consult with peers within the Sanford School or other departments to discuss where they are completing or have completed internships.
  - Ask faculty within the Sanford School or other departments for suggestions.

- Network with other contacts you may have, such as family or community members.
- Conduct an Internet search of local organizations or services in your field of interest.
- Review the internship criteria in the *Sanford School Internship Handbook*.
  - Although you may find that different sites use various terms for student positions (e.g., internship, fieldwork, practicum, or even volunteering), it is important to keep in mind the Sanford School internship criteria when researching potential opportunities. Some positions that sites label “volunteering” may be appropriate for this course, whereas other positions that sites call “internships” may actually be no more than volunteer work. Unlike volunteer work, internships are explicitly designed to include activities that will support the intern’s specific learning goals and professional growth, and internships require the participation of a qualified supervisor. Regardless of the title at a specific site, make sure that the position fits the Sanford School internship criteria, and contact the Internship Coordinator if you are unsure.
- Consult with the Internship Coordinator to discuss and refine your internship goals and identify placement sites that may offer appropriate opportunities for educational and professional growth.
  - You may also wish to consult with a Career Advisor to discuss your overall career goals. ASU Career Services offers advising via appointments (<https://career.asu.edu>).
- Narrow your list of potential sites to 3-5 of greatest interest and fit.
- If the internship site list indicates that a site of interest does not have a current Affiliation Agreement with ASU, or if you would like to pursue an internship opportunity not on the site list, you must start the next steps as soon as possible, as it can take up to two months for these agreements to be finalized once you are offered an internship position. You may not begin your internship until this agreement has been finalized by all parties.

#### **STEP 4: Prepare your resume.**

- Prepare and polish your resume. Guidance on resume content and formatting may be found through the ASU Career Services website (<https://career.asu.edu/resumes-and-application-materials>).
- ASU Career Services offers a resume Dropbox service (<https://career.asu.edu/resumes-and-application-materials>). You may upload your resume (or other employment or graduate school documents) for review and feedback, which is provided within approximately 5 business days.

#### **STEP 5: Contact prospective internship sites.**

- Prepare a list of questions about the organization and/or internship position. It is important to be familiar with the organization and its mission and services, and to be able to convey this.
- Contact sites of interest via email, phone, or in person in order to learn more about the organization and inquire about internship opportunities. Be mindful of professional etiquette—first impressions are important!
  - Ensure that you are speaking with the appropriate person (e.g., internship supervisor, volunteer coordinator, human resources director). If it is difficult to make contact with that person, be graciously persistent as internship/volunteer coordinators are often very busy.
  - Briefly describe your background and relevant qualifications. Make sure to mention your major, so that sites do not assume that you are inquiring about a social work or education internship (which have more structured supervision requirements).
  - In your initial conversations, focus on why you are interested in the organization and in *supporting* their mission and work, rather than on what you want *from* the organization.
  - Practicing what you will say will help you communicate more effectively. A sample email (which can be adapted for a phone call) can be found in [Appendix A](#).
- If a site is not yet considering intern positions for the upcoming semester, you may wish to ask if you might visit and tour the facility. Inquire when the site might begin accepting applications or conducting interviews for internship positions.

## **STEP 6: Apply and interview with internship sites.**

- Some sites may simply invite you for an interview, whereas others may have additional application procedures and deadlines.
- Remember that you are interviewing the site as much as the site is interviewing you! Plan to visit and/or interview with more than one site. You want to ensure that you find an internship position that will be a good fit and will meet your needs. See [Appendix B](#) for sample questions to ask during an interview.
- Internship positions can be competitive, with students from other fields pursuing the same positions. Selection for an internship will depend on how well your qualifications and interests fit the needs of the site, as well as how you present yourself during the initial contacts and interview. Please review the guidelines available through ASU Career Services (<https://career.asu.edu/interviewing>) and consider the following interview tips:
  - Review the organization's website. Make sure that you fully understand its mission, services, and service users so that you can speak to your potential for contributing to the organization. Hosting interns requires substantial time and energy, and you want to convey how you can benefit the organization.

- Review the *Sanford School Internship Handbook*, so that you can answer questions about the internship program.
- Prepare and practice a list of “talking points” about yourself and questions about the organization. Practice a “mock interview” with peers, family, or a career advisor.
- Dress professionally, bring a pen and notepad, and arrive 15 minutes early.
- Bring a copy of your resume to share.
- During the interview, be confident in sharing about your accomplishments and skills, and what you can offer the organization and how you can support their mission and services. Balance this with expressing your enthusiasm about the work of the organization, and what you hope to learn through an internship with them.
- If you discuss potential work schedules, keep in mind that you must attend the biweekly integrative seminar during your first semester of interning, so make sure that your internship hours will not conflict with the scheduled class time.
- If the site has questions about Sanford School internships that you cannot answer, let them know that the Internship Coordinator will contact them to discuss this further. As soon as possible after the interview, send the Internship Coordinator the nature of the questions and the contact information for the relevant site staff.
- Ask the interviewer when you should call back to follow up with them. If the interviewer does not give you a firm answer, wait a week to call back, if you have not heard from them.
- Send a thank you note immediately to your interviewer and to any site staff who assisted you in the application process.

## **STEP 7: Accept an internship placement offer.**

- Graciously accept an internship offer. If you are offered multiple placements, make sure to contact the other sites to let them know that you have accepted another internship and to thank them for their time. If you are not offered a position at a particular site, make sure to respond and express appreciation for the interviewer's time and consideration.
- If you have not secured a placement by the second week of the semester, you will need to drop the internship course.

## **STEP 8: Submit internship details to the Internship Coordinator.**

- Send site information to the Internship Coordinator, including your placement details and the name and contact information for your site supervisor.
  - The Internship Coordinator will contact your site supervisor to express appreciation for accepting you as an intern, to share internship program information, and, if necessary, to work with the site to secure an Affiliation Agreement.

## **STEP 9: Complete necessary pre-internship site requirements.**

Consult with your site supervisor in order to complete any site-specific internship requirements, such as obtaining a fingerprint clearance card, taking a TB test, or completing specialized training.

- Some internship positions that involve direct work with service users, particularly children, may require you to submit to a criminal background check and obtain a fingerprint clearance card. If a fingerprint clearance card is required, this process may take 1-2 months, and you typically may not begin your internship (or in some cases, even apply for internship positions at certain sites) until you have obtained this card. General information about fingerprint clearance cards and the application can be found on the website of the Arizona Department of Public Safety (<https://www.azdps.gov/services/public/fingerprint>).
- Some internship positions may require you to show proof of a negative TB test, a physical examination, or current vaccinations.
- Some sites may have formal training requirements, whereas others will train interns during everyday work. It is possible that some formal trainings will only be available prior to the beginning of the semester. It is the intern's responsibility to be available to complete all trainings required by the hosting site.
- Set your work schedule in collaboration with your Site Supervisor. Flexible availability may allow you to take advantage of more varied or advanced learning opportunities at your site.
- Discuss any practical questions about the site or internship position with your Site Supervisor, including questions about dress code, schedules, and other policies and procedures.

## **STEP 10: Begin your internship!**

- You may begin your internship the first week of classes (as long as there is a current, fully executed Affiliation Agreement on file).
- Make sure that you have registered for FAS 484 or SOC 484 for the desired number of credits.

- Consult the class schedule for details about the time and location of the internship seminar.
- Review the syllabus and other documents posted on the internship course Canvas site for information about assignments, internship-related documents, and submission deadlines.
- Make the most of your internship experience! Learn and experience as much as you can, and look to your Site Supervisor, site staff, peer interns, and the Internship Coordinator for guidance, feedback, and support throughout the semester.

## APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INITIAL SITE CONTACT

To: [janessmith@internshipsite.org](mailto:janessmith@internshipsite.org)

Subject: ASU Sanford School Undergraduate Internship (**STUDENT NAME**)

Ms. Smith,

My name is [**NAME**], and I am an undergraduate student at Arizona State University, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in [**DEGREE PROGRAM**]. As part of my degree program, I will be completing an internship within the local community. I am very impressed with the work of [**ORGANIZATION NAME**], and would like to discuss the possibility of completing an internship with you.

My studies focus on [**GENERAL TOPIC, ISSUE, AND/OR POPULATION OF PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC INTEREST**] and, in the future, I am hoping to work in this field as [**GENERAL POSITION OR CONTEXT**]. My prior experiences include [**RELEVANT WORK OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES**]. As such, I am particularly excited about the opportunity to learn more about [**SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OR SERVICES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION**].

I am very interested in exploring opportunities to intern at your organization, and I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss these possibilities. I have attached my resume for your review.

I am available [**DAYS AND TIMES OF AVAILABILITY**], and would love the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

[**NAME**]

[email@asu.edu](mailto:email@asu.edu)

555-555-5555



## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions may be useful to inquire about and consider as you select a site where you would like to complete your internship:

- What are the specific activities and responsibilities of the internship position?
- Will there be opportunities to work directly with [SERVICE USERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, POPULATIONS OF INTEREST]?
- Will there be opportunities to collaborate with other professionals within the site or at other community organizations?
- What is the climate or culture of this organization?
- Does the internship position require any particular knowledge, skills, or training?
- What training or orientation will be provided? What will be learned during this training?
- Who will be the supervisor, and what is the nature (e.g., frequency, context) of supervision at this site?
- What degree of independence characterizes the internship position?
- What time commitment is expected?