

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INTERN PROGRAM**

**Professor Shelly Arsneault, Coordinator**

The purpose of the internship program is to provide students who are interested in a career in the public service with an opportunity to examine how theory and practice are related while obtaining on-the-job experience working in a public or nonprofit agency.

MPA students receive three units for their experience; undergraduates may receive six units. The length of the experience varies with students typically spending a minimum of one semester in their placements. Undergraduate students are required to spend a minimum of 120 hours in the workplace; MPA students 300 hours. While some interns volunteer their time, others are paid. The experiences of the students on the job are as varied as the type of placements. They handle caseloads, interview clients, prepare budgets, write grants, conduct research, vet contractors and assist in community event planning, etc. Interns do not perform traditional clerical duties as the major part of their job.

The internship coordinator, Professor Arsneault, has a list of internship contacts and works with students to help them find a suitable position. Agencies interview intern candidates and select the one that fits their needs best. Students may also register with the Internship Center in Langsdorf Hall (LH-209) and follow up on any additional positions that they may have listed. Students may find positions on their own, but all positions must be approved by Dr. Arsneault. The final responsibility for finding a position rests with the student.

At the initiation of the experience, the student, Dr. Arsneault, and the agency representative sign a contract which describes the placement and the responsibilities of each. The agency participant agrees to supervise the student on the job and to provide Dr. Arsneault with a detailed written evaluation at the end of the semester. In addition, throughout the semester Professor Arsneault and the agency supervisor have less formal contacts as needed to discuss the intern's progress.

The internship experience is integrated with other parts of the University's curriculum by the academic component of the course. Students are enrolled in an academic course while they complete their internship. They also compare their experience with insights provided by outside speakers. Thus, on a regular basis the student is examining the relevance of the academic curriculum. In addition, students bring insights from their work experience to their academic classes. Evaluation of the student's log and class participation as well as individual meetings during the semester are essential to an integration of academic and on-the-job experience.

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