

Psychology Internship Handbook

Department of Psychology

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Common Questions

What is a psychology internship?

It is a course, PSY 4940 Internship in Psychology, designed to integrate practical experience in the workplace with academic theory. It will enable you to participate in a psychological setting in a “hands on” capacity by actually working in that setting. It will allow you to apply learned concepts and methods while under the direction of faculty and on-site supervisors. It will allow you to explore career options or to obtain career-related professional work experience before graduating.

Why is a psychology internship helpful?

It will provide experiential learning, extending beyond classroom theory and knowledge. It often will offer you the opportunity to serve the community. It will provide you with invaluable experience for today’s job market. It will provide a boost for students interested in applying for graduate school. It will help you develop confidence in professional interaction. It will help you earn credit and help you fulfill psychology course requirements. In some cases it may even allow you to earn money.

When am I eligible for a psychology internship?

You may participate in the internship program as a Junior or Senior Psychology major, after completing at least one quarter (12 credits) as a matriculated student at SPU. However, the internship is designed to be an advanced experience that builds on course preparation in psychology. For example, if you are seeking a placement working with individuals struggling with mental illness, it will help to have successfully completed PSY 4460 Abnormal Behavior. If you are seeking placement in a social service agency, SOC 4310 Foundations for Social Service and SOC 4380 Social Service Organization are highly recommended.

What are the criteria for an internship site?

An internship setting and the activities you perform there must be psychological in nature. Your work must be overseen by an on-site supervisor who has successfully completed graduate training in a relevant psychological field. He or she must agree to provide ongoing formative evaluations and a formal final evaluation of your work. Finally, the site must provide at least five hours of experiential learning per week.

How to Secure an Internship Site

What kinds of psychology internships are available?

There are literally dozens of different “kinds” of internships in psychology. They can be related to counseling or social services, human resource programs in organizations, psychological interventions in educational settings, evaluation research programs, and so on. A listing of several internship sites appears later in this handbook. See the list of previously chosen sites at <http://www.spu.edu/depts/cdc/students/internships/index.asp> (click Psychologist Internship Sites). Others can be found at the Center for Career and Calling. If you do not find one that fits your interests, the Center for Career and Calling and the Department of Psychology will work with you to find one that does. You may intern at a site not previously used by our interns, provided that it meets the requirements specified above.

What if I am already working?

You may be able to turn your present position into a psychology internship experience. Make an appointment with a Career Counselor in the Center for Career and Calling. Please note, however, that you may not receive credit retroactively for work already completed.

Are internship sites competitive?

You may or may not be competing with other students to obtain a position in any particular site. A Career Counselor can assist you in putting together a resume and preparing you for a professional interview.

How many credits may I earn in an internship?

You may earn from 1-5 credits of psychology internship per quarter. Academic expectations and number of on-site hours vary with the number of credits taken; however, the minimum hours at any internship site are five hours per week.

5 hours a week (50 total)	=	1-2 credits
7.5 hours a week (75 total)	=	3 credits
10 hours a week (100 total)	=	4 credits
12.5 hrs a week (125 total)	=	5 credits

1. Discuss the appropriateness of doing an internship with your academic advisor in psychology. If you haven't already secured a site please pick up a list of site possibilities from the table outside Dr. Thane Erickson's office (or see the list posted online on the Center for Career and Calling website under "Internships").
2. Obtain a learning contract from the table outside Dr. Erickson's office (Marston 115), from Dr. Erickson, or the Office of the Registrar. Think about what you would like to learn and experience (see Learning Objectives and Learning Activities on page 3 of this document). You may contact Dr. Erickson with questions about designing your internship experience.
3. You may register for PSY 4940 credits during the regular course registration period (see credits/hours information on this page).*
4. Contact potential sites to apply for an internship position.**
5. Once you have a site, meet with the on-site internship supervisor. At this meeting you and your supervisor should discuss and agree upon your Learning Objectives and Learning Activities, which you will describe in your learning contract. Both you and your on-site supervisor must sign the contract.
6. Submit the Learning Contract to Dr. Erickson for his review and signature.

* If you are unable to secure an internship by the end of the first week of new classes, make sure to drop the PSY 4940 credits (by the 5th day of class to receive full tuition refund).

** If you have contacted several internship sites and are still having difficulty securing an internship you may want to schedule an appointment with a career counselor by calling 206.281.2485.

Completing Your Learning Contract

I. Learning Objectives

Here you will list what you hope to take away from this internship—the skills you hope to acquire and the knowledge base you hope to build during your experience. Consult your on-site supervisor as well as your faculty supervisor to establish these. Specifically, list your overall goals such as “obtaining a basic understanding of the roles of a case worker in a homeless shelter” or “gaining a sense of whether a career in school counseling is a good fit for my strengths,” etc.).

II. Learning Activities

Here you will list the SPECIFIC tasks you will engage in in order to meet your general Learning Objectives. Consult with your on-site supervisor to establish these. One of these activities must be a weekly supervision meeting (30 minutes total per week) with your on-site supervisor. In addition to tasks assigned by your supervisor, you will keep a daily log of your activities for each day you are on-site and do research that will enrich your on-site work experience. Your log and research will be submitted as one notebook/folder to Dr. Erickson. You will also meet with Dr. Erickson roughly 5 times per quarter in group supervision meetings. You will be given more information about these meetings after you secure your internship.

III. Evaluation

Here you will ensure that three items are submitted. (1) A notebook/journal will be submitted to Dr. Erickson during finals week (this assignment is described in the following pages). (2) A completed final evaluation form from your on-site internship supervisor will be mailed to the Career Development Center before the last week of the quarter (the address is on the form). (3) A completed final evaluation form from you will be submitted to the Career Development Center during the test week of the quarter.

Supervision

Every psychology intern is assigned a faculty supervisor, Dr. Erickson. The faculty supervisor is responsible for the overall internship program, the learning contract, and the comprehensive evaluation of each intern’s performance. The faculty supervisor will meet with all interns in group supervision five times per quarter. You will be notified about meeting times and location. The faculty supervisor is also available during posted office hours and by appointment.

Beyond instruction and evaluation, the faculty supervisor is also available to assist in *interpretation* of experience, *expert consultation*, and *advocacy* when necessary. The faculty supervisor’s goal is to ensure that interns have rich and rewarding learning experiences.

The Notebook Assignment

Every psychology intern will complete a notebook with the following sections:

1. Log and Journal

In this section you will log your daily work activities and introspect on your experience. Note the date and time clearly for each entry. You will have one entry for every day on-site. Failure to make systematic and introspective entries into this journal will result in a grade reduction.

Think of this section as a personal record of your intern experience. Record personal reactions, interactions with supervisors and patients/clients, notes, ideas, theories, conflicts, values, changes, challenges, attitudes, problems, thoughts, feelings, questions, and so on. This is an exercise in thinking on paper (without worrying about the mechanics of your writing). Unlike other assignments, the quantity here is as important as the quality. At the conclusion of your journal write a final entry in which you evaluate the experience of keeping a journal. In your table of contents note any entries you feel are especially significant.

2. Article summaries

As part of the internship, you will be required to locate and read/attend **at least 6** articles (hard copy and/or on-line), book chapters, or presentations that pertain to your internship. Articles can be empirical research articles, newspaper articles, magazine articles, but **at least four** should be research articles found on the PsychInfo database. You will include in the journal a one to two page summary of all readings, integrating your understanding of their contents with your experiences as an intern. For example, in your write-up, you should consider the following questions: Did the reading provide any insights into your personal experience or growth as an intern? Did it assist your understanding of human need in the community around you? What specific skills do you think were enhanced?

Students who participate in **multiple quarters of psychology internship** will complete only **one** research Article Summary per internship credit during quarters subsequent to their first internship.

Articles will be selected by the interns on the basis of their relevance to the internship site. For example, students who do a *second* applied internship at a domestic violence shelter may choose to read review articles concerning the impact of domestic violence on child development or factors which contribute to the likelihood of violence in the home. Students who complete research internships in educational environments for learning disabled children may choose to read articles on the etiology of reading disorders or the efficacy of various educational strategies. Each 2-page summary for articles selected must be included in the final notebook attached to a copy of the article itself.

3. Personal Review and Evaluation

In this section you will provide a brief review and evaluation of your internship experience. Did you meet your learning objectives? Did you learn anything unexpected? Did the intern experience give you direction for your future career? Are you glad you did this internship? To what kinds of student would you recommend this site (if any) and why? And so on. This review and evaluation should be typed, single spaced, and about a page in length.

IMPORTANT: Please computer print or type every entry in each section. Please use dividers with tabs to mark clearly these different sections. In addition, your first page of the notebook should be a typed "Table of Contents" indicating (a) all journal entries (highlighting significant journal entries), (b) the book analysis, (c) the research article review(s), and (d) your personal review. Include a table adding up your internship hours.

Understanding Your Role as a Psychology Intern

During your internship experience you will be required to explore several new roles.

Initiator

Takes initiative in seeking learning opportunities and productive tasks in a novel context. Identifies, seeks, finds and secures help and consultation as needed.

Problem Solver and Decision Maker

Functions and makes decisions in an open system, defining and solving problems as they arise in the course of carrying out assignments.

Cultural Analyst and Strategist

Sufficiently understands and effectively functions in the cultural context of the internship placement.

Interactor

Relates effectively with faculty sponsor, co-workers, supervisor, and is able to maintain regular communication with them during the internship process. Is able to maintain appropriate social skills amidst potentially challenging interpersonal contexts.

Network Developer

Develops personal information sources instead of relying only on those provided by an instructor.

Ethical Choice Maker

Grapples with the ethical implications of one's work, behaving ethically, and seeking consultation appropriately when ethical conflicts arise.

Professional

Sees self as a professional in training - not simply a person doing volunteer work.

Value Clarifier

Makes value judgments in arriving at workable solutions or decisions which would not be expected in classroom work.

Communicator

Is able to communicate effectively through the spoken and written word. Through listening and reading nonverbal communication is fully present in interpersonal interactions.

Recipient

Is able to receive and utilize feedback openly and constructively.

Internship Policies

Letter grades will be based upon performance and successful completion of the learning contract, log/journal, review of reserve articles/book analysis and discussion, supervisor evaluation (it is your responsibility to insure that your on-site supervisor has returned this form a week before final exams), and timelines in turning in all written material, contracts and evaluation forms.

It is expected that you will follow the rules and regulations of the agency and will report to the internship site at agreed upon times and dates. Failure to adhere to agency policy will result in the loss of the internship placement.

You are expected to maintain the *community* expectations and *behavioral standards* of SPU while working at an internship site. These are delineated in the Seattle Pacific University Student Handbook.

If for any reason you believe you are receiving inadequate, unethical or non professional treatment from your agency, you are expected to report it immediately to your SPU faculty or clinical supervisor.

A Sampling of Psychology Internship Sites

The Department of Psychology will only place psychology students in internships requiring skills commensurate with their coursework preparation. Likewise, on-site supervisors will be advised as to the students' prior training. In most cases, psychology students will not be placed in case management internships. Case management skills are developed through specific academic training. Psychology students interested in case management opportunities are recommended to take SOC 4310 Foundations of Social Service and SOC 4380 Social Service Organization.

Alcohol and Drug 24 Hour Help Line

A confidential, state-wide telephone service providing individual assistance and guidance for people with alcohol and other drug related problems.

Asian Counseling and Referral Service

A bilingual and bicultural outpatient counseling center dedicated to assisting people with cultural difficulties.

Atlantic Street Center

A comprehensive family service to low income and minority students and their families delivered on-site at the B.F. Day School.

Catholic Community Services- King County

The largest private multi-service agency in Washington State providing programs and services including adoption, care for the elderly, and a variety of food and shelter programs.

Catholic Community Services- Snohomish County

A crisis nursery providing self-help respite for parents (of children up to 7 years of age) who are abusing their children. The agency provides counseling, supervision, and education.

Eastside Mental Health

Provides therapy to children with emotional and behavioral disorders through highly structured group activities.

Echo Glen Children's Center

A co-educational juvenile correctional facility assisting with the rehabilitation program of juvenile offenders (ages 10-18).

Experimental Education Unit, Child Development & Mental Retardation Center at the University of Washington

A program of professional training, research, and services to exceptional children and families.

Family Help Line

Provides support for people experiencing stress in parenting through a crisis listening line, referrals, group sessions and training.

Snohomish County Corrections Counseling Division

Provides counseling services to offenders in the custody of Snohomish County Corrections.

What Students Are Saying About Psychology Internships

My internship reinforced my career choice to be a counselor. I worked on the crisis line and directly with abused children. I learned a great deal by observing my supervisor and seeing abusers and the abused actually change. This internship will allow me to speak with “the voice of experience” I need to enter the field.

Laurie Saylor
Family Help Line

My internship was an excellent testing ground to see what I want in a career. It provided me with the skills and knowledge I will need in the future. It also gave me more of an incentive to go on to graduate school. I highly recommend internships to anyone studying psychology.

Rachel Zachariah
Eastside Mental Health

My internship has helped me decide which graduate school program to apply to. Also, my internship is likely to be one of the key reasons I get into graduate school.

Rebecca Keller
Salvation Army
Catherine Booth House

My intern site was better than I could have imagined. My supervisor modeled counseling skills and I learned a lot about myself and what I want from a career. I always thought I would be an individual counselor. My internship changed my whole orientation of how I wanted to help people.

Virginia Washburn
King County Department of Youth Services

I confirmed my plans in the education field and allowed myself room to expand (skills/experience). It was a wonderful opportunity for a great learning experience.

Anecia Eoff
Experimental Education Unit
University of Washington

This internship is a great opportunity to help real people with real problems directly and to increase counseling skills and knowledge of community resources.

Christy Wirth
Parent Trust for WA Children

I feel much stronger about going into teaching as a result of working with the sixth grade students. It is a challenging age, but they need strong role models at this age. It's a great experience for those thinking about the teaching profession - the interaction with the students was great!

Kimberly Brontsema
McClure Middle School