



MPA INTERNSHIPS INTERNSHIP GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Overview

Experiential Learning: Where Theory Meets Practice

The USF MPA internship program is part of an ongoing commitment to adding hands on experience to the portfolio of career competencies we provide our graduates. It gives them the opportunity to experience the challenges of public and community service first hand, and to see theory actually put into practice. Students may work for any public/ non-profit organization where they get to opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in their program of study.

All pre-service students, defined as those students who are not currently employed in or do not have at least 5 years past experience in a relevant professional post, must complete a three-credit hour internship. This course requirement consists of the completion of 150 hours interning at a public/ non-profit organization and submission of a summary report at the end of the semester. The internship experience must be professional and/or administrative in nature as opposed to a clerical-level position. Students must consult with the program director at least one semester in advance of their internship placement. All placements must be approved by the director.

In-service students may request a waiver of this requirement. All internship waivers must be approved by the program director at least one semester prior to graduation.

Learning Outcomes

During and upon completion of the MPA Internship Program, students should be able to:

- Observe and learn from seasoned public administrators in action
- Demonstrate and practice universal required and associated program-specific competencies;
- Develop and/or refine the skills needed for employability in the profession
- Inform their own choices with regard to their “Pathways to Serve”

Students should also demonstrate proficiency in the following NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration) Core Competencies:

- To lead and manage in public governance/nonprofit systems
- To participate in and contribute to the policy process
- To think critically, solve problems, and make decisions
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry



Pre-service Students

Pre-service students will be required to define their area of career interest as well as their preferred internship experience in their first semester in the program. This will be done through a face-to-face meeting with the internship coordinators as well as via a career interest survey. The student will then register for **PAD 6946**, which is a 3-credit hour internship course requiring pre-service students to work at least 150 hours in a government and/or non-profit organization.

Less Experienced In-service Students

Less experienced in-service students who are precluded from interning at another organization because of work obligations will be required to register for an **Independent Study Course**. This course requires students to complete a substantial at-work project and paper that takes their current position into account but provides them with a career-broadening experience comparable to an internship. The nature and scope of that project and paper will be negotiated between the student, their organization, and the Program's Intern Coordinator, and will be designed to meet the above Learning Outcomes.

Senior In-service Students

Senior in-service students, defined as those having 2 or more years of senior executive experience in the public or non-profit sectors, may request a waiver on the internship or project/paper requirement. This can be done by submitting a letter of request to the Program's Internship Coordinator, along with a letter of recommendation from a peer-practitioner justifying why the waiver should be granted. Students with managerial experience that is not at executive level will be required to have 5 years of experience in order to be granted a waiver of the internship.

Past Internship Placements

In the past, our MPA students have had the opportunity to intern at local agencies, getting the chance to develop their professional networks and gain firsthand experience in applying their knowledge in the real world. Some of these include:

- A1 Marketing Concepts
- American Diabetes Association
- Citizenship Initiative
- City of Largo, Office of Management & Budget
- City of Oldsmar, Administrative Services
- CDC of Tampa, Inc.
- Dream Center of Tampa Bay
- ECHO of Brandon
- Hillsborough County Public Schools
- Lake Wales Care Center
- Ovation School for the Arts
- Pasco County, Office of Management & Budget
- Pasco County, Utilities & Administration
- Pinellas County, Emergency Management
- Tampa General Hospital
- United Cerebral Palsy of NYC
- USF Government Relations
- Voices for Children of Tampa Bay
- World Upside Down, Inc.

Additional Support

To provide students with the support necessary to maximize the success of their internship, we provide workshops and other guidance to students on such subjects as creating an effective resume and short biography as part of a pre-internship orientation workshop. These workshops will be held each October, March and July beginning in Fall 2018 and are open to all MPA students.