

**Radford University  
Department of  
Political Science  
Internship Manual  
  
2025-2026**

**Internship Coordinator:**

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# POLITICAL SCIENCE INTERNSHIP MANUAL

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## I. Philosophy and Objectives

The Political Science internship allows students to integrate concepts developed in the classroom with practice in public, non-profit, and private sector organizations. Participation in a Political Science internship will help students build their work experience and make connections that may lead to jobs in the future.

The major goals of the internship are for students to:

- Apply the theory and methods learned in their courses to the organization in which they work and make contributions to that organization;
- Develop their skills, where applicable, in critical thinking, oral and written communications, collaboration, understanding of diversity and global issues, problem solving, information literacy, and ethical citizenship;
- Enhance their professionalism and network.

## II. Credit Hours and Work Hour Requirements

The credit hours for the internship will range from three (3) to a maximum of 15 hours credit. No more than 3 hours may be applied to the requirements for the major or minor.

Credit hours depend on the needs of the student and the organization. Internships may be paid or unpaid.

<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>CONTACT HOURS</b>
3	120
6	240
9	360
12	480
15	600

## III. Minimum Academic Requirements

In order to participate in the program you must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. 2.5 overall GPA;
- B. 2.5 average in political science;
- C. junior or senior standing.

## IV. Professional Performance Criteria

In order to receive departmental approval to take POSC 485 you must demonstrate behavior that reflects responsible human relations skills, personal characteristics related to good job performance, and ability to function well without supervision.

## V. Getting an Internship

Students should begin the process of setting up an internship in the semester prior to the semester in which you want to intern. Internships in federal agencies in summer often have application deadlines of October of the previous year. So, start early.

Step one is to think about your career goals or area of interest and about the type of agency (public or private, federal or state and local) in which you wish to work.

Next, you need to consider whether you wish to undertake an internship in another geographic area or remain in the Radford area. Some students choose to remain at school. Others prefer to seek an internship in their hometown or some other location. The Department's website has information on internships. Find the Internship spreadsheet for a large selection of potential internship locales. Radford University's Handshake also has internship announcements from organizations specifically seeking Radford students.

Third, you should meet with the department's internship coordinator (His/her office hours are available on the POSC website).

The following is excerpted from the website of Radford University Career Services. The Department of Political Science's definition of a legitimate internship is the same.

Radford University Career Services supports the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition and criteria of an Internship.

### **NACE recommends the following 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."*

*Criteria for an Experience to Be Defined as an Internship according to NACE:*

- 1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.*
- 2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.*
- 3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.*
- 4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.*
- 5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.*
- 6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.*
- 7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.*

*If these criteria are followed, it is the opinion of NACE that the experience can be considered a legitimate internship."*

## VI. A Handy Checklist

Checklist to assist you in finding and setting up an internship:

- Get information on potential internship sites and application procedures from the department website, Handshake, your personal network, or your own research.
- Discuss potential internship site/s with the department's internship coordinator to make sure the location will provide a suitable internship.
- Apply for the internship according to required procedures. Develop a resume. Get help from the department's internship coordinator AND the Career Center in readying your application materials, if needed.
- As you begin conversations with the organization about your internship, dress professionally. Dark, conservative colors are best. Remember to thank the potential sponsor for his/her time. Work with the sponsor/organization to develop a job description for your internship.
- Work with the internship coordinator to write an academic plan that incorporates your learning objectives and the job description. See instructions on the POSC website.
- To get the internship class to show up on your schedule, you must register through Handshake at this link: <https://radford.joinhandshake.com/stu/experiences/new>. Your supervisor, the faculty advisor, and the department chair will have to approve as well.
- When POSC 485 shows up in

your class schedule, pay your tuition as per normal.

## VII. Some Possible Research Projects

Some possible research projects for the internship include building your knowledge in the area of politics concerned with the internships. So, a student working for banking lobbying organization might study interest groups in US politics. A student working in a Commonwealth's Attorney's office might study problems in the criminal justice system to augment the perspective gained in the internship placement. Another type of project is to complete work the agency has wanted to do but hasn't had the time or resources to perform.

## VIII. Assignments and Evaluations

The student will complete assignments in keeping with the syllabus designed with the Internship Coordinator. The student will also be evaluated twice by the internship placement supervisor.

**Students who do not receive an average agency evaluation of acceptable or better will not receive credit for the internship.**

The faculty coordinator will use both the final agency evaluation and the student's grade on the academic part of the internship plan to determine the grade for the course.

A "C" grade means that the student fulfilled the minimum requirements for the course by completing all academic assignments and regularly attending work at the internship site. To receive a "B," assignments should demonstrate above average effort, quality and growth on the part of the student. A student can generally expect to receive an "A" grade if his/her work reflects exceptional personal growth, effort, and quality and the work goes beyond the requirements outlined in the internship plan. **Students who receive a grade lower than "C" will not receive credit for the internship.**

## IX. Student Responsibilities

During the course of the internship, the student must:

- Arrange a work schedule with the agency representative and report the work schedule to the faculty coordinator during the first week of the semester;
- Report to the participating agency dressed and groomed in a manner suitable to the job;
- Make sure to include enough time in your schedule to fulfill whatever time commitment you have made to the agency;
- Be punctual and reliable--the agency representative must be contacted if you will be absent or late and all missed time must be made up;
- Complete all work assigned by the agency;
- Complete all course-related assignments in keeping with the course schedule.

In addition, interns **should not**:

- Use profanity under any circumstances,
- Become involved in gossip,
- Allow yourself to be put in a dangerous situation,
- Discuss sensitive information with non- agency people,
- Be argumentative or disrespectful.

Internships may be terminated if the student fails to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

## **X. Department Responsibilities**

The department's faculty coordinator will work with students to find, apply for, and secure internships. S/he will grade the internship based on the professional and academic components. S/he will maintain open communications as necessary with agency sponsors in order to assure a rewarding learning environment for student interns and a successful intern placement for the host organization.

## **XI. Agency Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility of the internship agency is to permit the student to observe the agency's functions. In addition, it should schedule student's work, mentor and evaluate the intern's work, and ensure the intern's experience is productive.

The agency should:

- Provide a formal or informal training program to familiarize the student with the function and operation of the agency;
- Complete the agency section of the agency/student agreement and return it to the faculty coordinator;
- Assign a staff member to supervise the student;
- Determine, through mutual agreement, the number of working hours per week and make sure the student understands sign in and sign out procedures;
- Contact the faculty coordinator if the agency has any problems with the intern's performance
- Complete both a mid- semester and final evaluation of the student's performance and review the contents of the performance evaluation with the intern.

## APPENDIX A

# Radford University POSC Internship Student Performance Evaluation

**Instructions:** This evaluation should be done twice per semester. The first time is roughly at midterms. The second is at the end of the semester.

There are three parts to this evaluation. Part I: Pages 1-4 are completed by the supervisor. Part II: Page 5 is completed by the student. Supervisor and student should then meet to discuss the evaluations/feedback. They should both then sign Part III: Page 6, the signature page. The whole document should be submitted by the student to the Internship D2L under Internship Placement Evaluation (midterm or final, as appropriate). Alternatively, it may be e-mailed to the instructor by the supervisor to [etan3@radford.edu](mailto:etan3@radford.edu).

### Part I: Supervisor Evaluation of Student

Indicate if the evaluation is Mid-semester \_\_\_\_\_ or Final \_\_\_\_\_ (check one).

Intern Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Intern's Major Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency Representative:** Please evaluate the student in each of the following areas with a checkmark in the appropriate box. Upon completion of the evaluation, please **review the results with the student in conference**. The review should emphasize major strengths as well as areas in need of improvement. The discussion area under each section is available to explain individual ratings. Please consider offering explanation for those ratings falling below "Meets Expectations."

Internship Evaluation Categories and Outcomes				
Professional Dispositions				
Performance Domain	Non-performance	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Gets to work on time				
Takes initiative				
Sets realistic goals				
Dependable				
Productive (quantity of work)				
Produces quality work				
Meets deadlines				
Responds well to				

feedback and instruction				
Able to work independently				
Acts ethically				
Collegial				
Has a positive attitude toward work				
Solves problems				
Avoids time wasters like personal social media/phone				
Dresses appropriately for the work setting				
<b>OVERALL EVALUATION IN PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS</b>				

Use this space for explanatory notes; attach additional sheets if necessary.

Communication Skills				
Performance Domain	Non-performance	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Communicates Effectively in <b>oral</b> interactions with supervisors and colleagues				
Communicates Effectively in <b>oral</b> interactions with clients / patrons /students				
Communicates Effectively in <b>written</b> interactions with supervisors and colleagues				
Communicates Effectively in <b>written</b> interactions with clients / patrons /students				
Communicates well with diverse audiences				
Communicates with sensitivity toward the feelings of others				
Additional areas of communication, if applicable (digital or giving presentations, for example)				
<b>OVERALL EVALUATION IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b>				
Use this space for explanatory notes; attach additional sheets if necessary.				



<b>Internship Hours Performance</b>				
Enter Total Number of Internship Hours Completed Here  	Percentage of Contract Hours Completed  (Example: 108 hours completed of 120 contract hours equals 90%.  			

## **Part II: Student Feedback on Internship**

1. Did you receive adequate training and support during your internship?
2. Did you have regular meetings (even on an ad hoc basis) with your supervisor to receive feedback and instruction?
3. How was your relationship with supervisor and co-workers?
4. Did the internship meet your expectations? Why/why not?
5. How can the Agency improve its internship program for future students?
6. What were the key skills/abilities that you feel you developed at this Agency?