



SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

PSY 4940 INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a psychology internship?

PSY 4940 INTERNSHIP integrates practical experience in the workplace with academic theory. It enables students to participate in a psychological setting in a “hands on” capacity by actually working in that setting. Students apply learned concepts and methods while under the direction of faculty and on-site supervisors. Students explore career options or obtain career-related professional work experience before graduating.

Why is a psychology internship helpful?

An internship provides experiential learning, extending beyond classroom theory and knowledge. It often offers the opportunity to serve the community. It provides invaluable experience for today’s job market, and may help students interested in applying for graduate school to be more competitive candidates. Students also develop confidence in professional interaction. Internships serve as great opportunities to connect with psychology professionals in desired disciplines and network with them. Students can earn credit and fulfill psychology course requirements while on an internship. In some cases, students may even 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 the course, Psychological Disorder. If you are seeking an internship working with children, our courses in Developmental Psychology are highly recommended.

What are the criteria for an internship site?

An internship setting, and the activities students perform, must be psychological in nature. Interns need supervision by an on-site supervisor, with whom the intern meets at least ½ hour per week. These supervisors must have successfully completed graduate training in a relevant psychological field (or they must possess comparable expertise). On-site supervisors must also provide ongoing formative evaluations and a formal final evaluation of your work. Finally, the site must provide at least fifty hours of experiential learning during the quarter.

How many credits can I earn?

Students can take 1-5 credits of psychology internship each quarter, for a maximum of 15 credits overall. Keep in mind that only 3 internships credits are required for psychology majors.

5 hrs/wk (50 total hrs) = 1-2 credits

7.5 hrs/wk (75 total hrs) = 3 credits

10 hrs/wk (100 total hrs) = 4 credits

12.5 hrs/wk (125 total hrs) = 5 credits

SECURING AN INTERNSHIP

When looking for an internship site, plan ahead! Securing an internship takes time. It means updating your resume, investigating potential internship sites, contacting those sites, and allowing sites the time they need to get back to you, interview you, and work with you to complete the necessary paperwork. So, start looking for internships in advance (at least 2-3 months prior to your desired internship quarter). Here are some other guidelines for securing an internship:

1. Review this Internship Handbook and follow the guidelines given. Read through the list of sites where students have found internships in previous quarters. If you would like to do an internship at a site not on the current list, see the guidelines in this Handbook, and contact the Director of Internship for approval.
2. Connect to the link to the PSY Learning Contract and review it in entirety. Consider what you would like to learn (Learning Objectives) and do (Learning Activities) at your site. Please note that the PSY Learning Contract for internships differs from internship learning contracts for other departments. This is because of the unique aspects of some psychology internship sites. Only use the PSY Learning Contract for PSY Internships.
3. Contact potential sites for an internship. In your emails and phone calls, be professional and enthusiastic. Let potential sites know who you are, your academic year, and your major in psychology. Tell sites that why you are interested in particular in working with them. Ask if you may meet with someone who can help you secure an internship and work with you as a supervisor.
4. When you meet with a potential supervisor, talk about why you want to do an internship at that site, and why you believe you would be a good fit for the site. Review the Learning Contract together, and complete each section of the Contract. Include information about the training of the supervisor, the number of internship hours per week, the amount of supervision per week, the number of credits sought, the learning objectives, and the learning activities. Ensure that the supervisor can meet with you every week for at least ½ hour for supervision.
5. The PSY Learning Contract will be reviewed by the PSY Director of Internships, and if approved, the Director will then help you to register for the course.

COMPLETING THE PSY LEARNING CONTRACT

Below you will find information about how to complete specific sections of the PSY Learning Contract. Please be sure to use only the PSY Learning Contract, and not internship contracts for other departments.

I. Learning Objectives

Here you describe what you hope to learn from this internship—the skills you hope to acquire and the knowledge base you hope to build during your experience. Your objectives should build on your knowledge of psychology and be discussed with your on-site supervisor. Some examples of appropriate internship objectives may be:

- to obtain a basic understanding of the role of a case worker in a homeless shelter;
- to gain a sense of whether a career in school counseling is a good fit for your strengths;
- to observe and support the treatment of children in a psychiatric ward;
- to develop communication skills in a clinic setting; or
- to learn how a non-profit organization functions and serves its community, to understand how HR departments serve organizations, etc.

II. Learning Activities

Here you 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 activities. One of these activities must be a weekly supervision meeting (1/2 hour per week) with your on-site supervisor.

III. Course Grade Evaluation

This final section of the Contract includes prescribed activities required of you for the on-campus portion of your internship. This section is already completed for you. The Director of PSY Internships will describe these activities in detail during the first on-campus supervision meeting, and in the PSY 4940 Internship Syllabus (which you will receive after PSY 4940 course registration).

SUPERVISION

PSY 4940 interns work with on-site supervisors who have earned at least a Master's degree in psychology or a related field (social work, education, etc.) or who have comparable work experience in their field. Supervisors must be on-site so they are available to interns as needed, and supervisors must meet with interns for at least ½ hour weekly during the internship quarter. As PSY 4940 Interns, it is expected that students 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 may result in the loss of the internship placement or a reduction in PSY 4940 course grade. Interns are also expected to maintain the community expectations and behavioral standards of SPU while working at an internship site. These are described in the Seattle Pacific University Student Handbook.

Interns also meet on campus as a group with the Director of PSY Internships approximately every other week throughout the quarter. After you are enrolled for the PSY Internship course, you will receive information about meeting times and places for this on-campus course experience, but generally these meetings occur on Tuesdays at 3 pm, with the first meeting during the second week of the quarter.

The Director of PSY Internships wants to support PSY interns, and ensure that interns have rich and rewarding learning experiences. If interns have concerns or questions about their internships between their normally scheduled meetings, they are encouraged to contact the Director of PSY Internships as soon as possible. If, for any reason, interns believe they are receiving inadequate, unethical, or non-professional treatment at their internship sites, they are expected to report this immediately to the Director of PSY Internships. The Director can meet with interns individually, as needed, to assist interns with these concerns.

A FEW SAFETY AND ETHICAL PRECAUTIONS

Seattle Pacific University is not responsible for the conditions or the events that occur at various sites, and we do not influence the training or experiences students have while working as interns. Students may not hold SPU liable for events occurring at, or as a result of working at, internship sites.

However, we want students to understand that they are not required to participate in activities at sites that are dangerous in order to internship credit. If students are asked by sites to perform duties which seem risky or inappropriate, they may choose not to complete those requirements without suffering grade or credit losses in the course. Instead, interns are required to inform the Director of PSY Internship of these situations as soon as possible.

Consider the following *safety and ethical precautions* when securing an internship site:

- Internship sites must meet minimum requirements for the type of work conducted and for supervision. Beyond these requirements, however, the selection of sites is at the discretion of the intern. As an intern, you may want to consider safety issues regarding the locale of your site. Interns are not required to select sites that are in high-crime neighborhoods or that feel risky for other reasons. Be aware of the parking and lighting around your site and take any precautions you need to make regarding parking. You may also want to restrict your work to times when more staff are available at your site or during daylight hours.
- While at an internship site, keep in mind that clients, due to a variety of factors, may behave in ways that are unexpected or even aggressive. Be alert, and ask your supervisor whether this situation may occur and how to respond. (*Clients* are defined here as persons who are receiving services from an internship site. In some cases, clients may also refer to the parents, relatives, or others associated with those who are receiving services from the site.)
- Interns are advised not to use client names or identifying information outside of the site, or with persons not authorized by the site to have this identifying information. Interns are advised instead to discuss issues related to client confidentiality with supervisors at the beginning of their internships.
- Interns are advised not to visit client residences without the presence of staff members or outside the context of official site business.
- While at the internship site, interns are advised not to meet with clients, or family members of clients, for any other reason than to conduct intern responsibilities.
- Interns are advised not to transport clients in their cars to any location.

- Interns are advised not to be at clinics or agencies without the presence of staff members.
- Interns are advised not to give their personal contact information to clients at intern sites (including last names, home addresses, email addresses, social media account information, etc.) Interns may want to change their privacy settings for social media accounts prior to starting their internships. Interns are also advised to discuss these matters with on-site supervisors.
- Interns are advised not to meet with staff off-site or for any reason other than intern responsibilities.

This list is not exhaustive of the types of situations that may require interns to take safety or ethical precautions. If your site supervisor, or any other site staff, is concerned about your unwillingness to participate in certain activities due to safety or ethical concerns, or if you suffer some harm at your site, please let the Director of Internships know immediately. The Director of PSY Internships is willing to be an advocate for you and to problem-solve with you around these issues.