



Internship Handbook

Master of Science
in Psychology

Summer 2023



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1 – Master of Science in Psychology Internship Overview

Department of Psychology Mission

The mission of the National University Master of Science in Psychology Program is to prepare competent, ethical, culturally sensitive, and experienced master's level psychologists. Students seeking a master's degree in psychology may opt to complete their degree by completing an internship in their area of specialization or the Capstone course. During the 100-hour internship experience, students will develop an understanding of their area of focus and work in the field of psychology. Internship experiences are designed to guide candidates through specific standard-aligned experiences with resulting growth in competencies demonstrated through application in practice. Core Faculty and Faculty Mentors engage students in a one-on-one process that invites students to grow both professionally and personally through the development of critical thinking skills, information literacy, an appreciation of research, valuing of diversity, and a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

Program Learning Outcomes

The Internship program at NU has been built around outcomes, which operationalize the program mission. Some courses and assignments focus specifically on one learning outcome. Internship courses at NU include assignments and evaluation measures that relate to each of the four program learning outcomes:

1. Develop competence in working with diverse populations.
2. Investigate psychology principles in real life context.
3. Determine ethical considerations in psychology.
4. Explain theoretical applications of psychology using a variety of communication tools.

Students are expected to develop and demonstrate competence in applying theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate competence in applying the APA Code of Ethics to situations.



Introduction to Internship Training

Welcome to MS of Psychology Internship Training. This will be an opportunity for you to get some experience and meet individuals working in your field of study.

The purpose of Internship Training is to provide structured experiences for students to practice applying knowledge they have gained from their program to a real-world context, and thus grow in their professional skills and identity.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it handy for ready reference. It is your best source of help to successfully set up and complete your internship training. Be sure you also give a printed or digital copy of this document to your site supervisor.

Time Frame

The MS of Psychology Internship Training at National University (NU) consists of a minimum of 100 hours over a 12-week course, which equates to an experience of 8-10 clock hours per week.

- Students must enroll in the Internship Course during this time.
- Students are encouraged to start looking for internship sites at least six months in advance.
- Students are encouraged to begin looking for an internship site as soon as they know they want to complete an internship as their capstone, as sites must be vetted and approved no later than the 8th course. Students with a vetted and approved site may begin their internships any time after completing their 6th course in the program. Students must be enrolled in the internship course before they can start their internship.

Internship Preparation

Students must complete the Internship Preparation Tasks and be approved by the Internship Coordinator in order to be eligible for enrollment in the Internship course.

NU has Internship Coordinators that support students in their search for an appropriate internship site.

For some students, finding an appropriate training site and Site Supervisor is the most difficult part of the internship preparation process. Start looking early in your program. It is the responsibility of NU students to find an internship site. NU makes no guarantee that every student will be able to find an appropriate site in their area; thus, you should start early and work diligently in your search. As indicated, it is the responsibility of the student to identify an internship, although student situations will vary widely based on their location and opportunities in their area. NU Internship Coordinators are available to provide assistance and support through this process and help find possible sites or begin the process of setting up the site. If you are unable to find a site, you can complete the Capstone course to complete the degree requirements.

MS Internship Requirements

100 hours of time engaged in activities at the internship site

This may include observation, training, work related to your internship project, assisting your site supervisor in tasks related to the position, working with consumers in a non-clinical format, etc.

Students will NOT complete clinical work during this internship, though they may observe clinical work if that is allowed within the approved internship setting.



Supervision

You are required to participate in supervision over the course of your internship. This will occur in multiple ways. As this is not a clinical program, there is not a required number of supervision hours, but supervision is key to your learning and will take place on a weekly basis.

Direct supervision will occur via your site supervisor. Your NU faculty will also provide guidance throughout the internship course.

You are required to participate in individual supervision with your site supervisor at least one time per week. This is mandatory. In the supervision sessions, you will discuss specific projects, cases, assessments, and/or other experiences and information relevant to the field of psychology as applicable within your site.

In addition, you will be guided by your NU faculty. This will be in the form of weekly written assignments for which you will receive feedback, or synchronous meetings with your faculty. To do this, you will need to meet certain technology standards (such as a webcam and a microphone), and you will also want to be sure to be aware of e-professionalism. These standards and a review of e-professionalism will be part of your preparation for internship.

Critical Considerations: When can I start?

1. Students only have permission to start earning hours at their internship site after completing 6 prerequisite courses in their program.
2. Students must also have completed all Internship Preparation Tasks in Tevera.
 - These include both tasks you must complete and documents to review. In order to get access to the formal approval process, you will need to reach out to your Internship Coordinator when you find a viable site and supervisor.
 - Within Tevera, you will complete the following forms:
 - Agency & Supervisor Vetting Information
 - Background Check
 - Supervisor Credentials/Documentation of Education/ Training
 - Meeting with Internship Coordinator and Site Supervisor
 - Four-Way Agreement with Site, Supervisor, Student, and NU
3. Once you have completed all tasks in Tevera satisfactorily, your Internship Coordinator will let your advisor know you are taking the Internship Course instead of the Capstone course, and this change will be reflected in your Course Plan.

Students may NOT participate at a site that has not been fully approved by your NU Internship Coordinator.

Critical Considerations: Steps for Students

Setting up an internship process can be tricky. Here you will find a general overview of the steps to the process so you understand what needs to happen and when to help facilitate your success in this process.

1. Review your handbook and start looking for sites.
 - a. Within this, please check out the section in the back of this handbook relative to your program. This will give you ideas on how to find sites in your field.



b. General ways to find a site include:

- Network!
 - This can be through personal, professional, or educational channels.
- Join the APA and any division within the APA or other professional organizations within your field of study.
 - Review their web pages for opportunities to network or even their job boards.
 - Participate in the national and local level conferences/ trainings/ meetings
 - Contact the President or Student/Associate Member at your local level.

c. You might also wish to reach out to your Internship Coordinator to see if they have any other guidance for finding a site or a list of potential sites they can offer.

d. Most students do **NOT** work at a formal internship program and instead make up their own. This means you can apply to formal programs typically designed for doctoral or clinical students, but often you can just reach out and craft it to your own needs and timeline and sidestep a formal application process altogether

2. Once you find sites, you will need to find an appropriate supervisor or individual to talk to who might be able to direct you to someone who can supervise a potential internship. To do this:

a. Go to the company or organization's website. Try to find the department where you might intern and find someone you can contact.

- Write down the name, title, phone number and email
- You might also research the company a bit while you in there as you may find multiple options or departments of interest.

3. Once you find potential sites, reach out to them and find out about their application process, already existing intern programs, and if they might have the ability to provide you with an appropriate supervisor. Remember, it can take up to a few months to set up an internship, though sometimes it is faster. Some key points to share with your site include:

a. Explain that you are a master's student and you are seeking an exploratory internship (100 hours over 12 weeks) to understand the field.

b. Let them know you are excited to learn about what they are doing and that you are also required to do a project while on internship that may benefit the supervisor or agency.

c. Also, remember that this is like a job interview, so you will want to proofread any email you send and be prepared to answer questions about your degree and what you might hope to do on internship.

d. At some point in this process, you can give the site an internship information letter that can be provided by your NU internship coordinator (Letter to Potential Sites), which will explain your needs as an intern to the site. You may wish to do this prior to applying to the site, submit it with your application, or review this with them after they indicate interest in bringing you on board.

e. You can send a resume and a more formal cover letter as part of your initial proposal. Be sure that is polished up to really demonstrate your education and work history in a way that presents your professionalism. Please see the Resources section in the handbook for an example and tips.

f. If you reached out to a site and didn't receive a response, you can contact your Internship Coordinator. Sometimes an email from them can facilitate a response when you did not get one on your own.

g. In some cases, an internship site may ask for more information, such as a reference letter or transcript. You can reach out to your Internship Coordinator if you need help.





4. After you find a potential site and supervisor, reach out to your Internship Coordinator to talk about the formal approval process in Tevera.
 - a. Keep in mind that there is an approval process for internship, so you will not be able to start immediately upon finding a site, even if they want to take you on.
5. As an FYI, during the formal approval process, the following things will occur:
 - a. We will need to request verification from your site and supervisor, including copies of your supervisor's credentials and verification from their human resources department, if applicable, that this site and supervisor are viable.
 - b. When all documents are received from your site, verified, and your site and supervisor are approved, the internship coordinator will contact all parties to set up a synchronous Supervisor Check-In Meeting to go over the details of the internship, including establishing a start date.
 - c. After the meeting, all contracts will be signed, and once those are complete, your AFA will be notified of your start date for the internship so you may be enrolled in the accompanying source.
6. Now you are ready for internship!

Critical Considerations: Hours Tracking

Students will use the NU-approved tool in Tevera available upon enrollment in the internship course to electronically submit their internship hours to their site supervisor for approval to track hours each week. A final hour report will need to be completed and signed by the site supervisor at the end of the internship period.

Critical Considerations: Supervision

Supervision: Individual, Site Supervision

Students must meet weekly for individual supervision with the site (approved) supervisor.



What if my supervisor goes on vacation?

If you are planning to meet with anyone for supervision who has not been approved through the Internship Preparation Tasks process, talk with your NU Internship Coordinator to determine an appropriate solution. Alternative arrangements must be made in *advance*, or the hours for that week may not be counted to meet the internship requirements.

If you're with a supervisor who has been approved, and that supervisor will be unavailable for more than two weeks, that supervisor needs to provide you with information about a colleague who can be available for weekly consultation. The new supervisor also needs to be approved by NU.

Critical Considerations: Student Time Off

Weekly participation in internship is a requirement of the training. Students are expected to remain continuously active at their site over the course of 12 weeks. Please select a time to complete your internship when you can do this.

Critical Considerations: Background Check

Students who want to complete an internship instead of a Capstone course will need to complete a background check. Students have the option of completing a background check via NU. Background checks will be completed by www.castlebranch.com. NU will pay for one background check. In many cases, the student's internship site will require a background check; thus students may not need to complete a NU background check. Students that select to complete an NU background check and who have questions about their background check results are encouraged to discuss the results of the background check with the Internship Coordinator.

NU requires all internship sites to complete a background check for internship students before students are placed at the site.* Sites that do not have this process in place may use the NU background check to meet this requirement. Any exceptions must be approved by the Dean or the Dean's designee.

* Students in the MS I/O program do not have to complete a Background check; unless required by their internship site.





2 – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If I have a history of misdemeanors or felonies, will this impact my ability to get an internship?

Possibly. Some sites, particularly those which are law enforcement oriented, sites that serve children or adolescents, or sites that serve vulnerable populations, may not permit individuals with certain criminal histories to be employed at their site, even as an intern. Being aware of this early on will help you better direct your search for an appropriate internship site.

Q: Can I be paid for internship training?

In most cases, students are not paid for internships, but if this is an option offered by your internship site or if you already work for the agency (either as a volunteer or employee), you can be paid for your internship. For this length of internship, it is unlikely that you will be paid.

Q: How long will it take me to find a site and site supervisor?

Finding an internship may take time. We estimate this may take 4-6 months. Some students may take longer, up to a year. Allow yourself plenty of time to find a site and supervisor. Above all, network, network, network and start this process of looking and networking as soon as possible. Finding a site and site supervisor takes work and persistence on your part. This is the same kind of persistence and networking that you will need to build a successful career after you graduate, so this effort now can pay dividends later.

Q: Can I work at my current place of employment?

Yes. You just need to be doing a new job in your field of study with a different supervisor. You cannot do your regular job with your regular supervisor. You need to be learning new things at an internship.

Q: Can I finish my internship in less than 12 weeks?

No. Students should space their time out over 12 weeks to go along with the course and give you time to complete the internship project.



Q: What hours can I work my internship?

Internship schedules are up to you and your supervisor. This means that nights, weekends, or even remote hours are possible, but they must be approved by your site supervisor. You must coordinate your plan for hours with your site supervisor.

Q: How do I space out my hours?

In general, you will need to do 8-10 hours per week to meet the hour requirements within the 12-week period. Again, when you do these hours is up to you and your supervisor, but you must do hours each week. You can do more than the minimum 100 hours, but you cannot do less.

Q: May I have more than one site at a time?

Maybe. Some students decide to have an additional site in order to get additional hours or to gain experience with a different group. All sites must be vetted and approved by NU. Students may not count hours earned at an unapproved site. Most students will only have one site, but you are permitted to have more than one at the same time. Depending on your Site Supervisor's qualifications and preference, it may be possible to have only one site supervisor sign off on your work at both sites. Your Site Supervisor is legally and ethically responsible for your work, so only your Site Supervisor can decide whether they're comfortable supervising your work at more than one site. If not, you will need to have more than one Site Supervisor if you are going to work at more than one site. The new supervisor also needs to be approved by the process described in this handbook.

Q: What credentials are needed for my site supervisor to be approved?

Your site supervisor should have an advanced degree in the field of study you are pursuing. This may be a master's or doctorate degree. Advanced experience in the field will also be considered as appropriate credentials. Students are ultimately responsible for identifying appropriate sites and supervisors. Once those sites and supervisors have been identified by the students then they are reviewed by the NU internship coordinator. The NU Internship Coordinator makes the final and official approval of the internship setting and supervisor by reviewing the credentials of the proposed supervisor.

Overview: Training Expectations

The Internship class is an academic class. Like any other academic class, there are course requirements. The syllabus for each course lists the specific educational learning activities you will need to complete during the course. There are some general requirements that apply to all internship courses.

Course Requirements – All Students Will:Supervision

- Participate in individual site supervision every week with the Site Supervisor, and participate in weekly NU Internship course requirements.
- If applicable to the internship experience and placement, ensure that students actively protect confidentiality during all supervision and class assignments. This means, among other things, that students have an ethical responsibility to be sure that they maintain the confidentiality of those they may meet or work with at their site.
- Ensure that documents sent to the instructor never contain names (other than the student's name and the supervisor's name) or any other personally identifiable information about individuals who may receive services at your site.
- Track internship and supervision hours. The Site Supervisor will approve all internship and site supervision hours.



Evaluation of Your Training Experience

- Because the focus of your internship is growth in competence and professional identity, formal and informal evaluations are expected and necessary. At the end of the internship course, you will receive a formal evaluation from your Site Supervisor. Your supervisor should discuss this evaluation with you for your continued growth.
- The ability to accurately self-evaluate your work is a vital professional skill that you will want to cultivate during your time at NU.
- Your experience is a critical part of the evaluation process, so you can expect to complete some formal evaluations too. You can expect to submit a formal evaluation of your Site Supervisor and the Site itself. All of these formal evaluations are currently completed online.

Documentation of Your Experience

- NU has an ethical, legal, and moral responsibility to verify that all students have, in fact, completed the required internship training. From the legal perspective, our diploma is a verification that you have met the standards contained in this document.
- The Site Supervisor will verify your hours by approving your hours and supervision online. Additionally, the Site Supervisor submits a formal evaluation of the student's work. The due dates for these assignments are specified in the course syllabus. These two sets of documentation – the evaluation and the hour verification log – complement each other and provide us at NU the confidence that we can indeed certify that our students have met the standards for competence and professional identity.

Completion of Internship

- There are two equally important requirements to mark the completion of Internship. One is the training hour requirement. Your site supervisor is primarily responsible for certifying your completion of this requirement to the standards specified in this handbook. The other is the academic requirement. The internship course is an academic class, just like any other course at NU. You must complete all of the syllabus requirements to pass the course, including your internship project.
- For your signature assignment in the internship course, you will complete a project. This will include a project that you will complete at your internship site and will be a large bulk of your work at your site and for this course. You may consider researching a topic to assist those working at your placement. This could include compiling a brief online resource library, creating or identifying tools for use in your setting, or consulting with an expert and several written sources to learn about a key topic and develop a presentation or workshop for your colleagues at the internship site. Or, perhaps you could create a set of tools that future interns could use to acclimate to work in your setting, thus helping them “jump in with both feet” more quickly than you were able to. This assignment will culminate in a presentation where you will be graded on:
 - Your presentation style and professionalism
 - Use of scholarly resources to influence your work
 - Utility of your project to your internship site
 - Thoroughness of your project

Failure to Meet Standards

- We want all our students to succeed. However, research and experience confirm that a certain percentage of students in internship programs fail to satisfactorily complete their training. This can be for a variety of reasons. Students should refer to the course syllabus and the National University catalog, both available online, for a clear statement of what kinds of behavior might result in a student failing training, and a statement of the procedures that will be followed should that happen. In essence, any serious violation of the NU Code of Conduct or any serious violation of the APA Code of Ethics can result in a failure for your internship. Students are responsible for knowing and following the information in all of these documents. Students must be careful to follow all policies and procedures at their internship site as well in order to successfully complete their responsibilities there and maintain their position there for the duration of



the internship placement. Students should do all they can to complete their internship placements and leave on good terms so as to foster a good experience at that placement site and "leave the door open" for other students who may benefit from a placement there.

- Students who are dismissed from an internship site are automatically referred to the Department Chair for review.

Child and Adolescent Psychology: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What activities will I participate in for this internship?

There are many non-clinical positions or duties to participate in as a child and adolescent psychology intern. These may include:

- Shadowing a principal, school psychologist, child psychologist, counselor, teacher, social worker, or other professional as they work with children or adolescents
- Shadowing someone who works with autistic or special needs children
- Observing a psychometrician
- Attend educational planning meetings for a school or daycare
- Reading and compiling records
- Participating as a Research Assistant in non-clinical aspects of research
- Attend a summer research program in developmental psychology
- Attend consultation meetings
- Attend IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings
- Read books, organize activities, play games, help with homework or other services as requested by a childcare program or school.

Q: Is there anything I will not be permitted to do?

Yes, interns will not do:

- Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Independent Interviews
- Independent supervision of clients
- Supervise other students/staff

Also, all activities which include a client of a clinical practice must be performed with the site supervisor present or with the approval of the site supervisor and another staff member present.

Q: Where can I get an internship?

There are many places to get an internship, which may include one of these options:

- Day Care Centers
- Preschools
- Elementary Schools
- High Schools
- After School Programs
- Programs for At-Risk Youth
- Programs for Children or Adolescents with Special Needs
- Children and Family Services
- Child Development Center
- Children's Hospitals or Health Centers
- University Research Programs



Q: Will I be able to complete an internship if I have a criminal history?

It Depends. Depending on what type of criminal history you have or how long ago you were charged, you may be prevented from working directly with children or adolescents. Thus, you will want to look into this as you consider possible internship sites.

You should expect that at many sites where you will work directly with children, such as daycare centers or schools, a more comprehensive and thorough criminal background check will be completed beyond that which is completed by NU. It will then be up to the site whether to allow you to intern at their facility. If you are concerned that your history may preclude you from this type of placement, you should work with the internship coordinator to find a site that may not have as extensive background check procedures or who may be more willing to work with you. Or you could elect to complete the Capstone course instead.

Educational Psychology: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What activities will I participate in for this internship?

There are many non-clinical positions or duties to participate in as an educational psychology intern. These may include:

- Shadowing a principal, school psychologist, counselor, teacher, or other professional as they work within an educational setting or with educational content
- Shadowing someone who works in curriculum or assessment
- Observing a psychometrician
- Attend educational planning meetings for a school or higher education institution
- Reading and compiling records
- Participating as a Research Assistant in non-clinical aspects of research
- Attend a summer research program in educational psychology
- Attend consultation meetings
- Attend IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings

Q: Is there anything I will not be permitted to do?

Yes, interns will not do:

- Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Independent Interviews
- Independent supervision of clients
- Supervise other students/staff

Also, all activities which include a client of a clinical practice must be performed with the site supervisor present or with the approval of the site supervisor and another staff member present.



Q: Where can I get an internship?

There are many places to get an internship, which may include one of these options:

- Day Care Centers
- Preschools
- Elementary Schools
- High Schools
- Higher Education Institutions
- After School Programs
- Programs for Children or Adolescents with Special Needs
- Programs for gifted children
- Child Development Center
- University Research Programs

Q: Will I be able to complete an internship if I have a criminal history?

It Depends. Depending on what type of criminal history you have, or how long ago you were charged, you may be prevented from working directly with children or adolescents. Thus, you will want to look into this as you consider possible internship sites.

You should expect that at many sites where you will work directly with children, such as daycare centers or schools, a more comprehensive and thorough criminal background check will be completed beyond that which is completed by NU. It will then be up to the site whether to allow you to intern at their facility. If you are concerned that your history may preclude you from this type of placement, you should work with the internship coordinator to find a site that may not have as extensive background check procedures or who may be more willing to work with you. Or you could elect to complete the Capstone course instead.

Forensic Psychology: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What activities will I participate in for this internship?

There are many non-clinical positions or duties to participate in as a forensic psychology intern. These may include:

- Observation of Forensic Duties, Clinical or Non-Clinical
- Psychoeducation
- Reading and Compiling Records
- Participating as a Research Assistant in non-clinical aspects of research
- Learn and Complete Forensic Screening or Assessment Instruments
- Learning and Participating in Duties inherent in a forensic position, such as:
 - Learning Emergency/Crisis Procedures
 - Participating in Mock Drills with Staff Supervision
 - Observing standard correctional practices (i.e., shakedown, general observation techniques, interactions with forensic clients, etc.)
- Attending Daily Rounds or Trainings
- Attend Court Hearings
- Attend Consultation Meetings



Q: Is there anything I will not be permitted to do?

Yes, interns will not do:

- Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Independent Interviews
- Independent supervision of forensic clients
- Supervise other students/staff

Also, all activities which include a forensic client must be performed with a staff member present

Q: What do I need to keep in mind regarding the timeframe for the internship placement?

Students should ideally seek to start their internship in September in order to be competitive with other students applying to be in programs that start at that time.

Q: Can I do my internship in a private practice setting rather than an agency?

Yes, though a private practice may not offer you the experience you will want for your internship. Be thoughtful in finding a site that will offer you a diverse set of experiences.

Q: Where can I get an internship?

There are many places to get an internship, which may include one of these options:

- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- State Prisons
- Local County Jails
- Forensic Services
- Transitional Aftercare Programs
- Forensic Hospital
- Forensic Assessment Services
- Probation/Parole Office
- Children and Family Services
- Victim Service Agencies
- University Research Program (Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice)

You can also find locations by checking out job boards. You can use a generic job board like indeed (<https://www.indeed.com/>), but you can also look at your state's government job listings as well as federal jobs via <https://www.usajobs.gov/>. Some position searches you can do include:

- Behavior/ Crime Analyst
- Jury Consultant/ Expert Witness
- Victim Advocate
- Law Enforcement Educator/ Consultant
- Forensic or Correctional Services Administrator/ Supervisor
- Forensic Social Worker
- Correctional Counselor/ Case Manager
- Mental Health Assistant
- Probation Officer/ Supervisor
- Correctional Treatment Specialist
- Social/Human Services Manager



Q: Will I be able to complete a forensic internship if I have a criminal history?

Most Likely. You should expect that at most forensic sites, such as jails and prisons, a more comprehensive and thorough criminal background check will be completed beyond that which is completed by NU. This is generally a requirement to train at a forensic placement such as this. It will then be up to the site whether to allow you to train at their facility. If you are concerned that your history may preclude you from this type of placement, you should work with the internship coordinator to find a site that may not have as extensive background check procedures or who may be more willing to work with you.

Health Psychology: Frequently Asked Questions**Q: What activities will I participate in for this internship?**

There are many non-clinical positions or duties to participate in as a Health psychology intern. These may include:

- Observation of, Clinical or Non- Clinical Duties related to Health Psychology
- Psychoeducation
- Reading and Compiling Records
- Participating as a Research Assistant in non-clinical aspects of research
- Learning and Completing Health Psychology Screening or Assessment Instruments
- Learning and Participating in Duties inherent in a Health Psychology position, such as:
 - Observing interventions that pertain to chronic disease management, relaxation therapy, or stress relief.
 - Researching overall standard practices (i.e., illness development and prevention, pain reduction and recovery factors, and nutrition programs.
 - Attending Consultation Meetings
 - Creating trainings related to Health Psychology

Q: Is there anything I will not be permitted to do?

Yes, interns will not do:

- Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Independent Interviews
- Independent supervision of clients in a Health psychology practice
- Supervision of other students/staff
- Treatment of Clients

Also, all contact with Health psychology clients must be performed with a site supervisor present or with the approval of the site supervisor and another staff member present.

Q: Where can I get an internship?

There are many places to get an internship, which may include one of these options:

- Hospitals & Medical Centers
- Community Health settings e.g., Free Health clinics
- Health Research Units at universities
- Local Government Authorities e.g., Veterans Affairs
- Workplace Wellness Programs
- State and Federal public health departments
- University Departments
- Consultancy companies
- Media services e.g., education programming



Q: Will I be able to complete a health internship if I have a criminal history?

Most Likely. You should expect that at many sites, such as hospitals, and local government authorities, a more comprehensive and thorough criminal background check will be completed beyond that which is completed by NU. This is generally a requirement to train at settings where you have some type of contact with patients. It will then be up to the site whether to allow you to train at their facility. However, other sites where you are involved in consulting or research may have more lenient policies. If you are concerned that your history may preclude you from this type of placement, you should work with the internship coordinator to find a site that may not have as extensive background check procedures or who may be more willing to work with you.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology: Frequently Asked Questions**Q: What activities will I participate in for this internship?**

There are many duties and projects to participate in as an I/O psychology intern. These may include:

- Conducting job analysis
- Developing or refining pre-employment tests
- Conducting validation research on pre-employment tests
- Updating/writing technical reports, manuals, or white papers
- Developing a structured interview
- Developing a legally defensible selection process
- Conducting a training needs assessment
- Designing a training module and/or manual
- Developing, conducting, and analyzing an employee attitude survey
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a performance appraisal process
- Implementing team-building strategies or interventions

Q: Where can I get an internship?

There are many places to get an internship, which may include one of these options:

- Internal (industry) internship opportunities are available with many private sector organizations across various industries.
 - These opportunities typically involve working with or within an organization's Human Resources, Talent Management, or Organizational Development department.
- External internship opportunities are available with:
 - Human capital consulting firms
 - Management consulting firms
- Government internship opportunities are available via the US Federal Government's Pathways for Students and Recent Graduates - Internship Program

You can find locations by checking out job boards. You can use a generic job board like indeed (<https://www.indeed.com/>), or try a more specific site like the Society for I/O Psychology's job network (<https://www.siop.org/Career-Center/Job-Search>).



Q: How will I choose which type of internship is right for me?

A: There are some key considerations to keep in mind when deciding whether to pursue an internal, external, or government-based internship.

- As internal practitioners, I/O psychologists work as part of a larger business enterprise as experts within an organization. In this context, interns may work with I/O psychologists or HR staff on traditional projects ranging from selection to organization development, depending on the supervisor's specialization. Interns working in an internal capacity may engage more in business activities outside the realm of traditional I/O and will be expected to interface with non-I/O psychologist staff members from throughout the organization. Strong communication, interpersonal skills, and presentation skills are highly valued.
- In external consulting, I/O psychologists provide expertise and services to outside organizations. In this context, interns will be provided with an opportunity to experience a variety of projects across different client organizations. Interns working in an external capacity will work with I/O practitioners and their clients. Prioritization and time management skills are essential when balancing work for multiple client projects. Travel may be required.
- In a government setting, internships follow the "Pathways for Students and Recent Graduates: Internship Program", which is designed to provide students with opportunities to explore federal careers. Internship activities will vary depending on the hiring agency. Federal internships may require a more extensive background investigation, and thus more lead time is often needed before students can begin. Presentation skills are highly valued.

Q: What are some typical job titles used by I/O psychologists in the workforce?

Individuals with graduate degrees in I/O psychology work in a variety of organizations and industries under many different job titles. Typical job titles include Consultant, Senior Consultant, Managing Consultant, Behavioral Analyst, Behavioral Scientist, Assessment and Selection Specialist/Manager, Test and Validation Specialist/Manager, Leadership Coach, Executive Coach, Director of Talent Management, Training and Development Manager, HR Practice Leader, Organization Development Manager, and Director of Organization Effectiveness.

Q: Will I be able to complete an I/O internship if I have a criminal history?

Most likely. Please note that some companies require full-time, part-time, and temporary employees to undergo drug tests, submit fingerprints, or receive a medical physical. Also, it is possible to be asked to enter into a non-disclosure agreement. Interns are typically temporary employees, so organizations may put in place measures to protect sensitive information. In particular, if you are involved in sensitive government work (i.e., interning for the government directly; working for an organization that does government work) you may be required to pass a background check in order to obtain a certain level of security clearance (SIOP, 2017).





3 – Resources

Tips for Your Interview and Resume

The Resume

The resume is your first presentation of yourself to a potential employer. As we already noted in this set of tips, you will probably have about 30 seconds to make a good enough first impression that you will get the interview. Attention to detail here is very important.

First, you will want to use a standard resume format. Microsoft Word and Apple Pages, among other word processing programs, have resume templates built in. Use one of those standard templates. Focus your resume on the particular site you are sending it to. In other words, the “Objective” section should fit neatly with the mission of the agency you are applying to. You should be able to easily customize the resume for each interview. This kind of attention to detail will be more than worth the effort in terms of the potentially positive impact it will have on the person reading your resume.

If you are sending the resume electronically, create the resume in your word processor and save it both as a word processing document and as an Adobe Acrobat document (*.pdf). Send the PDF copy to the agency.

Be sure to list the courses in your PSY program you have completed and a brief description of each so the interviewer will have an idea of your educational preparation. In work history, be sure to list relevant work experience. For example, if you are applying to an agency that works primarily with juveniles adjudicated by the juvenile justice system, you might list your experience as a scout leader or director of your church youth group. This demonstrates that you know how to work with adolescents and that your educational background will let you take that experience to the next level. Perhaps you have spent your first career in business. Shape your resume to emphasize your working with other people (e.g., “Manager for Sears Roebuck; responsible for mentoring 12 new employees from hiring to fully functional; responsible for mediating interpersonal conflicts). Obviously, you do not want to say anything that is not true. However, there are different ways to describe any given job, and you want to choose the description that shows the strongest connection with what you are trying to do.

You will probably want to list three references on your resume. The agency may or may not want to check these. Be sure you have the prior approval of each person you list, and make sure that these are people who know you well enough to be both truthful and helpful.



Though this is not part of the resume or initial interview process, if you are hired, the agency may want you to undergo a criminal background check. This will especially be true if you will be working with children or adolescents, or in any law enforcement or forensic environment. Many hospitals also require that you have certain immunizations. If you are offered an internship placement and you are told these are necessary, expect and accept it as a cost of doing business.

Tips for Acing Your Internship Placement Interview

National University's PSY program policy places the responsibility for securing an internship placement site and site supervisor squarely with the individual student. Though you most probably will not be paid, the best way to think about this process is to think like you are applying for a job. Some of you may not have participated in a job interview in quite a while, so this document gives you some tips that we, your program faculty, have found to be helpful both from standard documents in the area of interviewing and from our personal experience.

Before you contact anyone

Before you make the first contact, you will need to prepare your resume. We give tips for doing that later in this document. For now, there are just two things you need to know. First, a resume is focused on the specific job. This is the primary distinction between a resume and a *curriculum vitae* (or CV as it is often called). The CV is a list of all of your experience and may be several pages long. The resume, on the other hand, is very focused on the particular job and will typically be a page or, at most, a page-and-a-half. Second, the resume is your attempt to get your foot in the door. It is the first impression that managers will have of you. Business leadership sources say that managers typically give a resume 30 seconds. You have just 30 seconds to make a good enough first impression that the manager will be willing to give you more time. Make those 30 seconds count. Make sure the resume is attractive, whether you send it via email or print it out. Be very sure there are no grammatical or spelling errors. Ideally, you should have two or three people proofread this document to be sure it is "right." Remember, you have just 30 seconds to make a positive enough impression that the manager will invite you to say more.

Spend time investigating your potential site. For example, the kinds of clients they try to serve, the services they provide, the number and qualifications of the staff, etc. Study the information you discover just as though you were studying for a major exam. In a sense, that is exactly what you are doing, except that this exam will be oral and will not look like a normal academic exam. Some sources of information you will definitely want to look at are the site's website and the site's LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn will give you, at a glance, information about connections you may have with this site, information about recent hires or new programs, related sites in your area you may not have thought of, and other company news that may be useful to you. A bit later, when you find out who your interviewer is going to be, you can return to LinkedIn and find out about your interviewer.

This is a good place to talk about social media. Just as you will be checking LinkedIn on your site, you can be sure that your site may very well check Facebook and LinkedIn on you. Before you make the first contact, now is a good time to make sure that your social media presence reflects the kind of personal and professional presence you want to project. This includes your email address. In the process of preparing this tip sheet, we faculty came up with several actual email addresses that people have used in corresponding with us. These are examples of what you do not want to do:

blairwitch
bartherapy
sexdoc
johnscrotchrocket [this illustration is not the person's real name]
ponytailgunfighter
sexycocodip

As easy as it is to create a new email address, make sure your email looks professional. If you have a more colorful email address for your friends, fine. For your professional work, look professional.



Making the initial contact

Ideally, if you have some contacts at the internship site you are interested in, you can ask your contacts there to help introduce you or at least tell you who you should contact. If you do not have any contacts, you will have to cold-call. Ideally, the best way to do that is to use the site's website to obtain an email address. Send a copy of your resume and cover letter (preferably in PDF format to avoid any potential complications from the site's computer system not being able to read your documents) along with a brief note that you will call in a day or two to request an interview. Be sure to include the NU PSY program's website in your initial email to make it easy for the internship site to verify you are from a legitimate program. If you do not know who else to ask for, ask for the supervisor of the area you might want to work in, such as the site's clinical director. Ideally, if you have done your homework, you will be able to ask for that person by name so that when you call, your first few words might sound like this: "Good morning. I'm Jane Bagodonuts, a student at National University. I would like to speak to Ms. Sarah Goodtherapist about my resume that I sent in on Monday." This clearly lets the person answering the phone know that this is a business call. Since you will be working with everyone at the site if you get a placement there, it is important to make a good impression on everyone right from the start.

When the supervisor answers, introduce yourself again and ask for an appointment for "30 minutes of your valuable time." If the individual you speak with wants longer, she or he can say so. Follow their lead. Suggesting 30 minutes lets them know that you are aware that time is indeed money, and that you are not going to be taking too much of their time. At this point, all you are trying to do is to get the appointment. If at all possible, you do not want to sell the supervisor on giving you a placement by telephone. Tell the supervisor that you are Jane Bagodonuts from National University, a WASC accredited university. Do not at this point mention that we are a distance-learning university. That term has been used very loosely by a lot of different entities, ranging from exceptionally high-quality universities like National to "diploma mills" that are not accredited. You do not want to create any false impressions in your potential supervisor before you even get to first base. State that you want to secure a site where you can do training, and you would like to meet with the supervisor to discuss how you can be mutually beneficial. That last phrase is crucial. You are trying to sell yourself, and that begins with the implicit recognition that they are going to be expecting to receive something for helping train you.

If you get an appointment, great. You are ready for the next steps. If the supervisor is not willing to even give you an interview, thank the supervisor for taking your call something like this: "I understand and I very much appreciate your taking time from your busy schedule to talk with me. Do you know of any agencies in [name of your city] that might need some free help with (insert your field of study here) psychology work?" In other words, you want to network, network, network. Try to leave every interview with at least one or two more leads that you can follow up on. Even if you receive the same leads multiple times, each time thank the supervisor for the information, state you will follow up on those leads, and say goodbye. It is better to receive the same lead four or five times than to risk not receiving the one tip that could be just what you need.

Before you go

Use your research to prepare a list of questions you believe the supervisor, or whoever does the interview, might ask you. Then plan how you can answer those questions. Make sure you frame your answers in terms of what the site does and how you can contribute to that mission. You are applying for an internship site. No one expects you to be an accomplished psychologist. However, NU requires that you have already completed at least six courses before you get to this point, so you do know at least some things. Most likely, you also have some practice functioning as a caring person at church or in a scout group or something similar, so you do have some skills. Frame your answers so that you are letting the interviewer know that you have something to offer – that you plan to benefit them and their mission as much as they will benefit you.



Practice your interview before you go. Ideally, you can have someone you trust to give you good feedback to play the interviewer and you will give your answers. It can also be helpful to practice using a video camera and then review the video. If nothing else is possible, practice in front of a mirror. You want to come across as calm and self-assured, confident in your ability to contribute – but not as arrogant or demanding.

Be sure you have resources with you to answer the interviewer's questions. Though National is a large university with an international reach, it may not be as well-known as some of the local universities. Be ready to discuss the university's accreditation, mission, and vision. Be sure to mention that we do have an international reach, with students in many different states and several foreign countries. You are not in a clinical program but can shadow clinical work and can participate in other non-clinical activities supervised, and you can move to working more independently, though still under supervision, of course. You should know from your research who in this agency could potentially be a supervisor for you and should suggest them by name.

At the interview

If you have prepared well, this should be a relatively comfortable experience. Do what you have prepared for. Bring with you any documents that the interviewer asked for (e.g., your transcripts) and any documents you want to leave with the interviewer that you believe would be beneficial. However, you should be aware that more and more companies are using behavioral interviewing rather than standard interviewing questions. That is, rather than asking questions about you and your background, the interviewer will ask *how you acted in a specific employment-related situation*. One effective way to respond to behavior-based interview questions is to use the Situation/Task, Action, and Result (STAR) approach. To use this approach, consider an experience you had at work that fits the interview question – describe the situation or task you were involved in, the action that you took, and the results/outcomes of your actions. Before your interview, reflect on 2-3 workplace situations and come prepared to discuss those situations using the STAR approach. Alternatively, your interview may provide you with a situation and *ask how you would respond* to that situation. This should be the kind of thing you have done in your coursework, so you should be able to respond to these questions. It does simulate what you will do in actual internship situations.

When the interviewer indicates the interview is at an end, thank the interviewer for their time. If the interviewer does not immediately say what the results of the interview are (i.e., if you got the placement or not), be sure to ask when you might know. If you are turned down, and this will likely happen several times, so prepare yourself for multiple turn-downs, thank the interviewer and ask for leads to other potential sites. Once again, network, network, network.

After the interview, be sure to send an email to the interviewer thanking them for the interview. This will be true whether you receive a placement or not. Remember, eventually you will be a professional colleague with this person, so you want to be building good, mutually supportive relationships now.

Final comments about the interview

There will always be competition from other individuals in most areas of employment. This interview process is no different. Wherever you live, there will likely be other student interns from other universities trying to compete for the limited number of internship placement sites. Without being arrogant or demanding, you want to go into the interview and sell yourself. You must convince your potential site supervisor that you are a better choice for the agency than any of the other student interns competing for the same position. This is the same basic skill you will use as a therapist to "sell" yourself to potential clients. Perfecting your interview skills can serve you well into your future.



Resources - Example Resume

I'm a Student

Summary

I am seeking a position as a student intern. I am a student in the National Master of Science program in Forensic Psychology. I have completed all prerequisite courses and I am ready to secure an internship site and supervisor.

Provide a summary of either
1) your qualifications/skills;
2) your intent

Education

- M. S.** National University, (current student)
Forensic Psychology
- B. S.** Some University, Date
Major:
Minor:

Start with your current degree. Include your others as well, even if they are in different fields.

Professional Affiliations & Credentials

2014-2015: American Psychology-Law Society, Student Member

This would be a place to add additional relevant training or certification (i.e. Substance Abuse Counselor; First Aid/CPR, law enforcement training; etc...)

Employment Experience

Employer Name (date to present)

Position: Manager
As a manager for Employer, I did the following things and gained the following skills...

Employer Name (date to date)

Position: Team Leader
As a Team Lead for Employer, I learned to ...

Put your most recent employment first and work backward. Only include those positions that relate to your current job search. Be prepared to discuss anything you write (in a future interview). Unless it's particularly relevant, don't go back further than 10 years.

Community Service & Related Skills

- Youth Basketball coach (date to present)
I am a volunteer coach for a community league adolescent girls basketball team. In addition to basketball skill development, I help the girls improve communication and relationship skills.
- Language Fluency: English, Spanish

Again, only list those things that relate to this position and demonstrate your skills. Be prepared to discuss these things in your job interview, should you receive one.

Professional Reference

Name, Credential(s)
Contact Info: phone/email

If you can provide at least one reference, that can be helpful. Keep the resume to one or two pages. If your information goes onto a second page, arrange your spacing to use the space. If you only take up a third of the page, the document looks unfinished, like you couldn't think of anything else... try to take up more than half the page. The content should be relevant and the format should look professional.





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