



INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK
Department of Sociology

TM

SOCI 4379
Internship in Applied Sociology

2017-2018

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
A Member of the Texas State University System

1. Sociology Internship (SOCI 4379) Overview¹

1.1 Use of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information regarding SOCI 4379: Internship in Applied Sociology for students majoring or minoring in sociology at Sam Houston State University. The contents of the Handbook constitute terms of agreement with the student, internship agency and the Department of Sociology. Its intended readers include sociology faculty and staff, students, and internship agency personnel acting as on-site supervisors. The handbook also serves as a reference to students, departmental administrators and agency personnel on procedures, role expectations, requirements and forms of assessment for internship completion.

1.2 Sociology Internship/Applied Sociology Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes

An Internship in Applied Sociology is designed to give students a supervised pre-professional experience applying sociological knowledge and research methods in a community-based, government agency or for-profit organizational setting. To that end, students will carry out “applied sociology” projects in the field. Applied sociology can be defined as “the use of sociological theories to address social problems and the needs of social groups” (Steele and Price, 2008).

Students will apply sociological skills through on-site projects. They will critically analyze and assess problems and solutions in organizational settings. They will gain experience navigating a bureaucratic workplace setting. The internship experience will also assist students as they identify career goals, improve skills necessary for a professional setting and develop a social network of professional peers and mentors.

Upon successful completion of this course student should be able to:

- Demonstrate substantive and detailed information of the organization and the work environment in relation to social, cultural and the technologies of service provision;
- Evaluate the work experience in a reflexive manner as a developmental process with reference to sociological concepts, debates and conventions;
- Perform effectively as a beginning professional in the workplace as demonstrated through reliability, creativity, self-direction, the ability to function as a working member of a diverse workplace team, and engage in reflective sensitivity to ethical issues in applied and collaborative settings;
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess and identify organizational strengths and weaknesses and offer constructive suggestions for improvement; and
- Write a report that demonstrates competence in communicating and formulating arguments and/or alternatives/solutions informed by the sociological literature in response to the issues identified.

¹ This handbook was adapted from “Sociology Internship Handbook: SYA4943” produced by the University of North Florida’s Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work.

1.3 Requirements for Enrolling in the Sociology Internship

Prerequisites: Students may enroll in the Sociology Internship during their junior or senior year of study. Sophomores may enroll with permission. Students must obtain Internship Director approval prior to registration (see Internship Process below).

Transportation: Student interns must provide their own transportation to and from the internship site and to possible activities associated with the internship project.

Background Checks: Some agencies may require a criminal history background check. If a check is required, students are responsible for any associated fees. If you have concerns about completing a background check, please discuss these with the Internship Instructor prior to enrolling in the course. Obtain more information regarding background checks at <https://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/Forms/CR-63.pdf> or a local police department.

1.4 Internship Process

Enrollment, registration, and completion of the Sociology Internship requires the following:

1st Step: Complete Application and Placement Preference Sheet. If the student meets the above requirements, the first step in the process is to complete the Sociology Internship Application and Placement Preference Sheet. The application should be submitted to the Department of Sociology no later than eight weeks prior to the start of the semester in which they will be participating in the Sociology Internship.

2nd Step: Schedule Interview with Internship Coordinator. After the application has been received, students will schedule an informal interview with Internship Instructor to discuss student skills, internship goals and professional development objectives.

3rd Step: Receive Referral and/or Contact an Agency. Students will receive an agency assignment from the Internship Instructor. Students will arrange meetings with the designated contact personnel at the agency selected. Students will coordinate an interview with agency hiring staff.

4th Step: Complete Placement Forms. Students will formalize the internship placement with the completion of the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook Form and the Sociology Internship Placement Confirmation form. The completed forms must be submitted to the Internship Instructor Internship Instructor prior to the start of the internship.

5th Step: Register for SOCI 4379. Once the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook and the Sociology Internship Placement Confirmation forms have been received, the student will be notified that they have been cleared to register for the Sociology Internship.

6th Step: Complete the Pre-service Learning Modules. The first two weeks of each internship semester will include pre-service instruction available on Blackboard. Students are required to complete the pre-service learning modules successfully, prior to beginning work on-site (unless otherwise stated in the course syllabus or work plan). More details will be provided

about pre-service instruction in the SOCI 4379 course syllabus. Summer schedules will differ from Fall and Spring internship instruction in terms of pre-service instruction deadlines.

7th Step: Start Internship. Begin internship (typically during the third week of the semester), attend Internship class meetings online as scheduled, and complete weekly assignments as per the course syllabus.

8th Step: Complete Course Requirements. Students will continue to complete assignments and readings as per the syllabus in order to fulfill the internship course requirements. Assignments must be completed thoroughly and in a timely manner.

9th Step: Mid-term Evaluation. Near mid-term, the internship instructor will conduct an on-site visit. As part of that visit, the instructor will meet with the student mentor/supervisor and the student. The On-Site Supervisor will complete an On-Site Supervisor Feedback on Student Performance Form. Students will complete a site and work assessments as per the syllabus.

10th Step: Complete Final Internship Reports and Reflection Modules. No later than the last day of classes for the semester students will submit the Final Internship Reports to the designated Internship Director. This will include an Internship Agency Feedback Form. Students will also be required to complete a post-service reflection module on Blackboard.

11th Step: Submission of Final Site Supervisor Assessment. The student's On-Site Supervisor will complete the final On-Site Supervisor Feedback on Student Performance and returns this to the Internship Instructor no later than the last day of the term.

1.5 Length of the Internship

The internship provides students with real life working experience using their sociological knowledge in an organizational setting. The total number of hours required for the internship is 120 hours. It is anticipated that students will work on-site for 10-12 weeks during the Fall and Spring semesters. Students should anticipate working 10-12 hours per week. During the summer session, student should anticipate a more intensive schedule, working 8 weeks on-site for 15 hours per week. The internship days of service, and hours per day, will be arranged in consultation with the on-site supervisor. Internship hours should be completed on-site. In rare instances, students may complete up to 20% of their hours virtually. "Virtual" internship hours can be completed only with permission from the site supervisor and the Internship Director.

Students will also be required to attend an on-site meeting with the Internship Instructor and attend periodic virtual class sessions with other student interns during the semester.

1.6 Assessments and Evaluation

Students will engage in not only assessments of on-site performance but also in reflective and professional skill developing exercises as part of the internship process. Student performance will be evaluated based on several types of indicators. A list of potential indicators is provided

below. See the course syllabus for the weights of specific activities used in performance assessment.

- Successful completion of the Pre-service Learning Module
- Completion of course readings and assignments
- On-site supervisor and Internship Instructor assessments of performance
- Successful completion of organizational essay related to service site
- Successful completion of final internship reflection essay and agency assessment form

Completion of the Pre-Service Learning Module. Prior to beginning work on-site, students will complete two to three learning modules. The modules will contain lessons related to professional skills, general work expectations and professional presentation. Completion of the modules is required prior to all work on-site.

Completion of Course Readings and Assignments. SOCI 4379: Internship in Applied Sociology is available to students on Blackboard. Students will complete periodic assignments on the Blackboard platform. The completion of online assignments is critical to the success of the internship experience. Students will identify significant experiences or challenges that have impacted their learning and understanding. They will describe how they have grown and developed over the internship period. They will also apply course content related to professional development and human service organizations to their on-site work. Although students will not meet face to face, the course may allow students to interact with one another to provide support, and peer instruction.

On-site Supervisor and Internship Instructor Assessments. Each intern is assigned an individual on-site supervisor who will coordinate the work, look after the welfare, and monitor the performance of the student intern. Evaluation by the supervisor will be given to the intern throughout the period and will include formal reports at the mid-term and end of the semester. The Internship Instructor will also conduct student evaluations. They will include an on-site visit, grades assigned to course work, and virtual course participation.

Completion of Organizational Essay. It is important that interns not only master the job, but also develop a sociological understanding of the challenges of social service provision. This will require a general understanding of organizational and bureaucratic processes. Thus, each intern is required to complete an essay concerning the organizational attributes of the internship agency. The essay may include a discussion of services provided, agency clients, service practices and the challenges to service provision. The specific requirements for this assignment will be outlined in the course syllabus.

Internship Reflection Essay. Student interns are required to reflect upon both the academic value and personal impact of the internship. Students should identify a significant experience or challenge that has impacted their learning and understanding. They should describe how they have grown and developed over the period. The specific requirements for this assignment will be outlined in the course syllabus.

2. Responsibilities & Authority: Internship Instructor, Student and Internship Agency

2.1 Internship Instructor

2.1.1 Responsibilities

- Facilitate the student's internship;
- Refer students to appropriate service agencies;
- Liaise the roles of the student in the agency with the On-site Supervisor or staff member;
- Discuss the student's goals for the internship experience;
- Offer individual supervision during the internship period;
- Discuss and provide support to the student in the progress of the internship;
- Provide at least one site visit at the internship site at the convenience of the On-site Supervisor;
- Facilitate the student's learning through discussion of relevant theories and practical models for conceptualization in the work place and facilitating development of critical thinking and problem solving skills;
- Evaluate the student's performance on required assessment activities as well as performance at the internship agency; this may include consulting agency staff to better understand the student's performance.

2.1.2 Authority

The Internship Instructor has the authority to withdraw a student from an internship experience if the student's performance constitutes a detriment to the On-site Supervisor, staff or clients at the internship site. If such a termination is necessary, it will be done in consultation with the On-site Supervisor. The Internship Instructor provides the final assessment of the intern's work and assigns final grades to students' course assignments.

2.2 Student

2.2.1 Responsibilities

- Be proactive in seeking out new learning opportunities and experiences;
- Seek feedback regarding performance, and accept constructive criticism;
- Adhere to agency policies and procedures;
- Adhere to University regulations and policies, including those contained in the SHSU Student Handbook;
- Adhere to the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics (<http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>);
- Complete required hours, typically 10-12 hours per week for approximately 10-12 weeks, completed within their normal working hours (actual working hours depend on the students' agreement with their placement agency);

- Meet regularly with the On-Site Supervisor, and keep in contact with the Internship Instructor;
- Understand and complete assigned duties and tasks, meet deadlines, and seek direction when needed;
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with agency employees;
- Understand and follow agency security precautions and safety protocols;
- Report supervision issues, ethical violations, and critical incidents (e.g., threats, injuries, accidents) immediately to the On-Site Supervisor and/or the Sociology Internship Instructor;
- If working in a team or in a multi-agency setting, cooperate as a team-member and be responsible for keeping others informed of her/his work;
- Participate actively in the Internship class meetings, and complete all required assignments; and
- Complete and submit all monitoring and evaluation forms.

2.3 Internship Agency

2.3.1 Responsibilities

- Understand the aims and objectives of the Internship course and familiarize themselves with the content of this handbook;
- Orient students to the goals and expectations of the organization, and of the student's specific internship assignment;
- Provide regularly scheduled supervision to students;
- Provide students with adequate workspace and equipment necessary to complete the work assigned;
- Collaborate with students and other agency personnel to create a wide range of learning opportunities appropriate to the student's knowledge and skill level;
- Model professional and ethical behavior;
- Monitor students' progress on an ongoing basis, providing regular feedback and constructive criticism;
- Participate in site visits with students and Internship Instructor;
- Complete required student evaluation in a respectful, fair, and rigorous manner; and
- Immediately report performance issues, ethical violations, and incidents of concern to the practicum supervisor and the Internship Instructor.

3.3.2 Authority

The agency Internship Supervisor may initiate termination of an internship placement at any time during the internship in the event of ongoing performance issues, unethical or unprofessional behavior, or serious risk to the student, agency personnel or clientele.

3. Policies

3.1 Employment-Based Internships

Students may participate in paid and unpaid internships. Payment is at the discretion of the employer, however job responsibilities must conform to the goals of the internship as defined by the course description. Employment-based placements may be discouraged and in rare cases prohibited by the Sociology Program in the following circumstances:

- The agency focuses primarily on the student's productivity rather than his or her learning and growth.
- Student job duties do not meet the criteria and objectives of the Sociology Internship.
- The student receives inadequate supervision, or is placed in situations that threaten the student's employment status or safety.

3.2 Confidentiality

During their Internship, students may have access to, or be exposed to confidential information regarding the agency's clients or employees. It is the responsibility of Internship students to become familiar with and adhere to all of the confidentiality policies and procedures of the agency in which they complete their Internship. Students who fail to comply with confidentiality protocols within the agency can be terminated following a review by the Internship Instructor.

Student information specific to course performance is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and will not be disclosed by the Department of Sociology or its personnel to parents. Internship performance and assessments will be released to future employers only with a student's consent.

As per FERPA, the University may release information without consent to appropriate authorities under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

3.3 Site Visits

All Internship students are required to schedule and participate in a site visit with their agency Internship supervisor and the Sociology Internship Instructor prior to the administration of the Mid-Term Evaluation. Additional site visits may be scheduled, if necessary, to assist in problem solving. If a problem is noted during the initial site visit, the Sociology Internship Instructor will collaborate with the student and the agency On-site Supervisor to create and implement a corrective action plan.

3.4 Course Completion and University Credit

Students must enroll in SOCI 4379 to participate in the Internship Program. They will receive three credit hours toward the completion of a major or minor in Sociology. The credit hours will be substituted for an elective course as outlined in the major degree plan or minor requirements. Credit will be awarded only in those instances where students have completed 120 on-site work hours and SOCI 4379 course requirements.

3.5 Statement of Risks & Prohibited Activities

During their internship, students may be exposed to risks associated with the types of work undertaken by community agency partners. Examples of such risks might include working with individuals who present unpredictable challenges and/or illnesses. To minimize risk, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their agency's security precautions and safety protocol and to discuss any safety concerns with their On-site Supervisor and/or the Internship Instructor.

Internship students are expressly prohibited from engaging in the following activities:

- Conducting home visits without being accompanied by an authorized agency employee;
- Transporting agency clients in personal vehicles; and,
- Transporting agency clients in agency-owned vehicles without being accompanied by an authorized agency employee.

Students may be asked by the On-site Employer to provide evidence of health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to provide insurance confirmation and documentation. Students are also encouraged to read waivers and releases required by the employer. She or he should refer questions and concerns to the Internship Instructor.

3.6 Termination of a Placement

The student, the Sociology Internship Instructor, or the On-site Supervisor may initiate termination of the internship at any time during the Internship in the event of ongoing performance issues, unethical or unprofessional behavior, or serious risk to the student or agency personnel. The following procedures will guide the termination process:

- The student or On-site Supervisor will notify the Sociology Internship Instructor immediately of issues of concern related to the performance or behavior of the student or the supervisor that cannot be resolved internally.
- The Sociology Internship Instructor will arrange to meet with the student and the On-site Supervisor to assist with problem solving and the development and implementation of a corrective action plan if appropriate.
- If it is determined by the Internship Instructor that it is in the best interests of the student or the agency to terminate the placement, the Instructor will work with the student to make alternative arrangements to complete the Internship elsewhere if possible. If a suitable placement is not found, the Internship Instructor in conjunction with the Chair of the Sociology Department will work to assign alternative duties for internship completion.
- In the event that the placement is terminated, the student and the On-Site Supervisor must complete the Internship Termination Form.
- Students who do not successfully complete the Internship will not earn a passing grade in SOCI 4379. Students who wish to appeal a decision made by the Sociology Internship Instructor should do so in writing to the Chair of the Department of Sociology.



Appendix: Internship Forms and Agreements

Included:

1. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Sociology Internship Handbook
2. Internship Placement Form
3. Student Intern Assumption of Risk Form
4. Internship Work and Learning Plan
5. On-Site Supervisor Review of Student Performance Form (Mid-Term)
6. On-Site Supervisor Review of Student Performance Form (Final)
7. Student On-site Agency Feedback Form