

# Wilder School Internship Policies and Procedures Guide 2024 - 2025



## Purpose

### [Undergraduate Internship Overview](#)

[General steps for internship review and approval](#)

### [Graduate Program Internship Overview](#)

[General steps for internship review and approval](#)

[Master of Public Administration requirements](#)

[Master of Urban and Regional Planning requirements](#)

### [Title IX](#)

### [Forms](#)

# Purpose

The Wilder School Office of Student Success (OSS) encourages students to participate in structured and supervised internships with government, nonprofit and business organizations. The purpose of the internship is to provide students with experience in a professional setting outside the classroom and to enrich the learning process by supplementing theory with practice.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students clarity on the requirements to earn academic credit and/or meet their Wilder School program internship requirements. The Wilder School Office of Student Success is available to answer any questions you may have regarding your search and completion of an internship as a Wilder School student.

## **Contact Information:**

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# Undergraduate Internship Overview

Undergraduate students are highly encouraged to complete internship experience during their academic career. The internship experience allows students to gain useful exposure and experience that better prepares them to enter the workforce upon graduation. The Office of Student Success coordinates promotion of internship opportunities, assists with registration for internship courses, and provides guidance and structure for the internship experience and expectations for host agencies.

## **Eligibility to earn academic credit**

In order to earn academic credit for an internship experience, undergraduate students must

- Be a junior or senior
- Have at least 9 credit hours completed in his/her/their major or minor
- Have at least a 2.7 GPA in your major/minor coursework

Approval of eligibility for students who do not meet these listed criteria will be reviewed upon submission.

General steps for internship review and approval

## **Step 1:**

### **What and Where? Find an internship position**

Students are encouraged to visit the Wilder School Office of Student Success to explore the many available resources for local, state, and federal internships. Students should identify opportunities of interest and contact the organization to begin the application process for positions that interest them.

Opportunities shared by employers and partnering organizations are disseminated to students by email via eNewsletter and posted on [Handshake](#), the university's job/internship portal. Students may also find positions on their own; the position must be approved by the Office of Student Success in order to count for academic credit.

## Helpful Resources/tips for your search:

Below are helpful tips for seeking internship opportunities

- Meet 1-on-1 with an OSS team member: learn strategies for searching and securing internships that you can implement and learn the process required to earn academic credit in the Wilder School.
  - Appointments can be scheduled by emailing [wsinternship@vcu.edu](mailto:wsinternship@vcu.edu)
- Visit [VCU Career Services](#) to assist in developing a strong resume, which will be used when applying for internships in most organizations and for enhancing your interview skills.
- Monitor the OSS eNewsletters for recently promoted internships. Archived emails are housed on the [Wilder School Student Resource webpage](#).
- Network- using identified contacts (personal, professional org., employer speakers, etc.) — Cold email/call to ask agencies/employers if internship opportunities with their agency/organization exist. Have your resume ready to provide.
- Explore Agency specific job board/websites (see [VCU Career Services list](#))

\*Students are responsible for researching and securing internship opportunities. The Wilder School Office of Student Success (OSS) provides support and guidance for the research and application process. OSS does not place students in internships.

## Step 2:

### I've accepted an internship offer, how do I get academic credit? Approval Process

You must complete and submit the Office of Student Success [GVPA Experience Application](#).

The Office of Student Success will send a confirmation email upon receipt of your completed application and will review for approval. The internship must be directly related to your program of study/field of study for academic credit approval.

Once approved, you will receive an override to register for the undergraduate internship course (GVPA 493).

### When is the approval deadline?

Applications are accepted and reviewed for approval on a rolling basis. The deadline for earning academic credit for internships will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Success based on the internship timeline and semester calendar. Students are highly encouraged to submit their application for approval prior to the start of the academic semester they plan to intern.

\*Students are not able to be late added into the internship course after the withdrawal deadline of that semester (see [academic calendar](#))

### **Can I earn credit for an Internship done in the past?**

No; Students are not eligible to earn retroactive credits for previously completed internship hours. The completion of internship hours and enrollment in the internship course must be concurrent in order to earn academic credit.

### **How many credit hours can I earn?**

Undergraduate students have the option to earn between 1 - 6 credit hours. Students must work 50 hours per credit (i.e., a student taking three credits must complete 150 hours of internship work within the semester).

Students are highly encouraged to discuss their individual academic credit needs with their assigned Academic Advisor prior to requesting approval for internship credit.

### **Step 3.**

#### **Course enrollment/Form submission**

Students are responsible for registering for the appropriate internship course once they receive the approved course override. Please contact the Wilder School Office of Student Success ([wsinternship@vcu.edu](mailto:wsinternship@vcu.edu)) if you have trouble with access.

Students are provided the course syllabus which outlines course assignments, forms, and due dates at the start of the semester they are completing their internships. The course is asynchronous and students submit all assignments via Canvas.

See [PDF forms](#) below. The forms will be available via the course Canvas link.

A course grade of “pass” or “fail” is assigned by the Office of Student Success. All required forms must be submitted and hours completed for the credit total selected by the student at the time of registration.

## Tuition & Fees

VCU tuition and fees apply for all registered GVPA/PADM courses. (See [tuition information](#))

## Graduate Program Internship Overview

Graduate students are to follow the specific requirements as outlined by their program. The internship must intentionally focus on program/discipline specific topics and is pending approval by the Program Chair and the Graduate Student Services and Advising department.

Approval must be granted prior to the start date of the internship.

### **Masters Programs:**

**Criminal Justice** – Students may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience. Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete the GVPA 693 course concurrently in order to earn the academic credits.

**Homeland Security** - Students may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience. Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete the GVPA 693 course concurrently in order to earn the academic credits.

**Public Administration** – Students are **required to complete 3 credit hours for internship experience, or seek a waiver from the program chair** (see the [MPA Program requirements](#)). Students must work 300 hours total and successfully complete the PADM 693 course concurrently in order to earn the academic credits.

**Public Policy and Administration (Ph.D.)** – Students must receive program approval to earn academic credit for an internship. This is granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Urban and Regional Planning** – Students are **required to complete an internship** for the graduate degree program. Students are not eligible to enroll in the GVPA 693 course. MURP internships are non-credit bearing. Students must work 120 hours (see the [MURP Program requirements](#))

### **Certificate Programs**

Students enrolled in the **Gender Violence Intervention program are required to complete a 3 credit internship.**

Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete the GVPA 693 course in order to earn the academic credits. All other certificate programs may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience pending Program Approval.

General steps for internship review and approval

### **Step 1:**

#### **What and Where? Find an internship position**

Students are encouraged to visit the Wilder School Office of Student Success to explore the many available resources for local, state, and federal internships. Students should identify opportunities of interest and contact the organization to begin the application process for positions that interest them.

Opportunities shared by employers and partnering organizations are disseminated to students by email and posted on [Handshake](#), the university's job/internship portal. Students may also find positions on their own; the position must be approved by the Office of Student Success in order to count for academic credit.

#### **Helpful Resources/tips for your search:**

Below are helpful tips for seeking internship opportunities:

- Meet 1-on-1 with an OSS team member: learn strategies for searching and securing internships that you can implement and learn the process required to earn academic credit in the Wilder School.
  - Appointments can be scheduled by emailing [wsinternship@vcu.edu](mailto:wsinternship@vcu.edu)
- Visit [VCU Career Services](#) to assist in developing a strong resume, which will be used when applying for internships in most organizations and for enhancing your interview skills.
- Monitor the OSS eNewsletters for recently promoted internships. Archived emails are housed on the [Wilder School Student Resource webpage](#).
- Network- using identified contacts (personal, professional org., employer speakers, etc.) — Cold email/call to ask agencies/employers if internship opportunities with their agency/organization exist. Have your resume ready to provide.
- Explore Agency specific job board/websites (see [VCU Career Services list](#))

*\*Students are responsible for researching and securing internship opportunities. The*



*Wilder School Office of Student Success (OSS) provides support and guidance for the research and application process. OSS does not place students in internships*

## **Step 2:**

### **I've accepted an internship offer, how do I get academic credit? Approval Process**

You must complete the Office of Student Success [GVPA Experience Application Form](#). Please include a copy of your job description along with the contact information from your employer.

The Office of Student Success will send a confirmation email upon receipt of your completed application and reach out to the Program Chair for approval on your behalf.

Once approved, you will receive an override to register for the appropriate internship course (GVPA 693 or PADM 693) for your program.

\*MURP students do not register for academic credit (see [MURP Program requirements](#))

### **When is the approval deadline?**

Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Deadline for earning academic credit for internships will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Success based on the internship timeline and semester calendar. Students are highly encouraged to submit their application for approval prior to the start of the academic semester they plan to intern.

### **Can I earn credit for an Internship done in the past?**

No; Students are not eligible to earn retroactive credits for previously completed internship hours. The completion of internship hours and enrollment in the internship course must be concurrent in order to earn academic credit.

## **Step 3.**

### **Course enrollment/Form submission**

Students are provided the course syllabus which outlines course assignments, forms, and due dates at the start of the semester they are completing their internships. The course is asynchronous and students submit all assignments via Canvas.

See [PDF forms](#) below. The forms will be available via the course Canvas link. A course grade of “pass” or “fail” is assigned by the Office of Student Success. All required forms must be submitted and hours completed for the credit total selected by the student at the time of registration.

## **Tuition & Fees**

VCU tuition and fees apply for all registered GVPA/PADM courses. (See [tuition information](#))

### Master of Public Administration requirements

M.P.A. Students who do not have at least one year of professional level experience in the public sector or in a nonprofit agency are required to complete PADM 693: Public Administration Practicum (3 credit hours). The determination of whether a student must complete the internship should begin with a discussion between the student and the program chair. Based on this discussion, a student should either decide to take an internship or request a waiver.

## **Purpose**

The public service internship provides the student with work experience and a realistic exposure to an organizational-bureaucratic environment. This experience should develop the student’s awareness of the internal dynamics of an organization and of the value and attitudes of public employees to both their clientele and their administrative-political superiors. The internship should give the student the opportunity to become aware of their obligations as a professional and to the public. The internship will address the experiential needs of the pre- service student by providing: (1) a laboratory for students to integrate classroom knowledge with specific job situations and apply this knowledge to organizational problems; (2) an environment in which the student can learn how to engage effectively with others in mutual goal-directed activities; and (3) a means for students to understand the work processes common in public and nonprofit agencies. The student should gain experience coping with organizational routines, potentially observe mediation in conflict situations, and observe the complexity and ambiguity common to professional organizational life. The internship may be one of the few opportunities the pre-service student has to test the skills and attitudes development discussed in the academic program.

Because of the individual focus of the internship, each student’s experience is unique. Work assignments have varied from narrow research projects to general involvement in a wide range of agency policy and management decisions, depending upon the needs of the agencies and the degree of involvement by the agency internship supervisor.

All internships are intended to be at the beginning professional level in an agency. If a student has special skills and abilities, the internship could be at a higher level. To the extent possible, students secure internships in agencies of their choosing, ensuring that the first taste of public or nonprofit experience is in an area of interest to the student. Although the intern should handle real work assignments, it should be remembered by all supervisory personnel - both on the job and academic - that the major reason for the internship is to provide a learning experience. The internship should be carefully integrated into the student's overall academic program.

### **Arranging the Internship**

To request approval for an internship, contact the Wilder School's Office of Student Success. Please note, proposals for internships are due the semester before the internship will begin.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The deadline for earned academic credit for internships will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Success based on the internship timeline and semester calendar.

For more information about application proposals and internships, visit

<https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/internships/>.

The program chair will approve all internship placements after consulting with the Internship Coordinator. If the student identifies their own internship, they must request approval for the placement in advance, provide a job description and the contact information for their supervisor on the application.

### **Academic Elements of the Internship**

During the internship period, students are assigned written work by the Office of Student Success, which is to be completed on students' own time. The first assignment outlines the specific work that is being completed and the final assignment is an academic term paper that integrates the theory learned in class work with the on-the-job experience. Additional forms are provided via PADM 693.

Following procedures and using evaluation instruments common to the agency's practice, the intern is evaluated by an immediate supervisor. It is expected that these ratings will be at the satisfactory or higher levels of performance evaluation. The academic papers and the evaluation of the intern become a part of the student's record. A course grade of "pass" or "fail" is assigned by the Office of Student Success. Regardless of whether compensation is involved in the internship, the time applied by the student must equal the 300-hour minimum requirement, the experience must be arranged formally with the Office of Student Success, and all of the written requirements must be satisfied for the student to receive credit for the internship.

## **Waiving the Internship**

If a student would like to request an internship waiver due to work experience that may exempt the student from the internship, the student must submit a formal, written rationale to the M.P.A. Assistant chair by email for consideration. The rationale should address the three purposes of the internship and M.P.A. Student Learning Outcomes, stating specifically how the professional experience directly fulfills (or fulfilled) the purposes of the internship. Students must attach a copy of their resume to the email. The assistant chair will either approve or deny the request for a waiver.

Begin with (1) an introductory paragraph that describes why you are writing and introduce your past employment role and responsibilities. (2) Follow with the three purposes of an internship (integration of knowledge with job situations and application to organizational problems; engaging effectively with others in mutual goal-directed activities; and understanding the work processes common in public and nonprofit agencies) providing for each an explanation of how your work experience applies and would justify an exemption. Include specific examples of how your experience relates to Student Learning Outcomes. (3) Describe and reflect on how you have learned through your work experience.

## **Using a Wilder Fellowship for the M.P.A. Internship**

Students successfully completing at least one year of a Wilder Graduate Scholars' Fellowship will receive credit for their internship only if they register for PADM 693 and visit the Office of Student Success to ensure they comply with all internship requirements.

Master of Urban and Regional Planning requirements

## **Purpose**

The internship is designed to give students practical experience in planning-related activities in an institutional context. Field areas include but are not limited to: Housing, Economic Development, Environmental, Transportation, Community Development, Land Use, Design, etc.

Normally, the internship is taken during the summer between the first and second year or during the second year. Many opportunities for internship positions, as well as part and full-time jobs in planning at all levels of government, exist within the Richmond area. Students are eligible to complete internships within and outside of the Richmond area.

Students are required to complete an internship for the graduate degree program. Students are required to complete at least 120 hours and submit all required documentation by the end of their internship experience.

## Arranging the Internship

Students are responsible for securing a planning-related internship. Please note, the internship must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Success and Program Chair.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

## Steps/Forms to Complete

Students are required to submit the [online Government & Public Affairs \(GVPA\) Experience Application](#) to receive initial program approval. This is to be completed **prior** to the internship start date.

Once approved, students submit these forms at the completion of their internship:

1. [Time log](#)
2. [Supervisor Evaluation](#)
3. [Student Experience Response Essay](#)

\*Students are not required to attend internship orientation or enroll in the GVPA 693 course. The MURP internship requirement is non-credit bearing.

## Waiver

Upon request, the internship requirement may be waived for students with substantial planning-related professional experience. To request a waiver to the requirement, students are encouraged to discuss the option with the Program Chair first. The student must submit a formal [GVPA Experience Application](#) and submit his/her/their resume. These documents will be reviewed by the Office of Student Success and the Program Chair for consideration. If not approved, the student is required to complete the internship requirement in full.

## Title IX

The Wilder School is committed to providing a safe and discrimination-free environment for all students participating in VCU sponsored programs, services and activities including experiential learning opportunities (i.e. internships, fellowships and/or volunteer experiences). It is important that students are aware of the policies, resources and support regarding Title IX.

If you experience sexual or sex/gender-based harassment or any other form of discrimination, please report it immediately to VCU's Equity and Access Services which serves as the Title IX office.

To make a report online, use the sexual misconduct/violence and sex/gender discrimination incident reporting form located at: <https://equity.vcu.edu/titleix/>. You also can email [titleix@vcu.edu](mailto:titleix@vcu.edu).

You also may report incidents to Shajuana Isom Payne, Assistant Dean of Student Services and to the supervisor or other point of contact at the placement site.

For questions regarding Wilder School experiential learning opportunities, please contact the Office of Student Success at [wsinternship@vcu.edu](mailto:wsinternship@vcu.edu) or 827-2791.

## Forms

Below are the required forms that students complete during his/her/their enrollment in the internship course for academic credit (GVPA 493, GVPA 693, and PADM 693). Students in the MURP program, please see [MURP requirements](#).

Students are able to submit the DocuSign or PDF versions below. Due dates for the forms are provided on the course syllabus each academic semester via Canvas.

In addition to the below forms, students will submit journal assignments and an updated resume as a part of the course as outlined on the course syllabus.

### **DocuSign Forms**

[Preliminary Report](#) [Intermediate Evaluation](#) [Time Log](#)  
[Final Evaluation](#)

### **PDF Forms**



Office of Student Success  
Preliminary Internship Report

<b>Agency Information</b>	
Date: _____	
Field Supervisor Name & Title: _____	Agency: _____
Field Supervisor Phone: _____	
Email: _____	
<b>Student Information</b>	
Name: _____	Email: _____

This report is to be completed and submitted at the start of the internship.

Supervisor Expectations (To be reviewed and understood by supervisor):

- Confirm number of internship hours for the semester.
- Complete Intermediate and final time log.
- Submit Intermediate and Final performance evaluation.

Student Expectations (To be reviewed and understood by student)

- Internship Application & Preliminary Internship Report
- Journals 1 and 2
- Performance Intermediate and Final evaluations
- Time Logs
- Updated resume inclusive of internship experience
- Review the VCU Partner Health & Safety form

Internship Duties:

Work Hours:

Student Signature/Date:

Supervisor Signature/Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_







## Office of Student Success Intermediate Internship Evaluation Form

Instructions: This form is to be completed by the field supervisor to provide feedback to the Office of Student Success regarding the performance of the intern that has been working with you. It is intended to be an opportunity for the student to receive feedback regarding their performance of expected duties assigned, and to provide an opportunity to respond to suggestions for improvement. After review of this evaluation by the Office of Student Success, the student will receive an email informing them of satisfactory performance, or areas needed for improvement and further development.

### Agency Information

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Intern: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Supervisor Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Field Supervisor Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. At this point, how would you rate the overall performance by the intern?

Excellent

Good

Average

Fair

Poor

2. Is the intern performing his/her duties in a responsible manner? (being on time, following instructions, etc.) If there are any problems that need to be addressed at this point, please describe what changes need to be made by the intern in order to improve their performance.

3. Is the intern providing beneficial service to your organization?

4. Are there any specific issues that need to be addressed?

5. Would you like for the Office of Student Success to contact you regarding the intern's performance? If so, please indicate your preferred method of communication.

Field Supervisor's Signature & Date:



## Office of Student Success Final Internship Evaluation Form

Instructions: This form is to be completed by the field supervisor to provide feedback to the Office of Student Success regarding the performance of the intern that has been working with you. We hope that completing this evaluation form will be an opportunity for the supervisor to provide feedback and suggestions to the intern. The intern should submit it to the Office of Student Success. Thank you for your partnership and cooperation.

### Agency Information

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Intern: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Supervisor Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Field Supervisor Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you rate the overall performance by the intern?

Excellent

Good

Average

Fair

Poor

2. Did the intern perform his/her duties in a responsible manner?

3. Did the intern work well with others?

4. Did the intern exhibit an appropriate level of interest in the activities and functions of your organization?

5. In what ways, and to what extent, was the intern beneficial to your organization?

6. What recommendations would you offer the intern for further professional development?

7. Please share any additional comments about the intern's performance.

Field Supervisor's Signature & Date:

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