EXEMPLARY OPPORTUNITY

Getting the chance to work in a criminal justice agency prior to seeking full-time employment is really a great opportunity and you need to take advantage of it. This may be the single most important thing you can do to improve your chances of being hired in this or another criminal justice agency.

Agencies get a large number of applicants with impressive credentials and sometimes related experience. However, if you have been working in an agency and they know you, you have shown them your willingness to work and made a great impression that may be the edge that you need to get hired.

This is also an excellent opportunity for you to determine your career goals. Many former interns have made career decisions based on their internship experience.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation can sometimes mean the difference between getting a job or not getting a job. Some interns have been hired by agencies where they interned. Agencies won’t necessarily have a job opening at the time you are interning but a job opening may arise later or a letter of recommendation from an agency supervisor to another agency can be very beneficial. Many of you may not have other criminal justice related job experience so this might be the only criminal justice agency reference that you have.

The job market is very competitive, particularly in certain areas, so it’s really important to take the internship seriously and make a great impression so that you could receive an outstanding reference from your agency supervisor. Show enthusiasm and willingness to learn, initiative and good judgment.

EVALUATIONS

You will be evaluated by your agency supervisor. The evaluation will become part of your permanent School of Criminology academic record. Please take a minute to review the evaluation form below so that you are aware of the areas in which you will be evaluated.
**INTERN EVALUATION FORM**

Please either email this completed evaluation back to the Internship Coordinator, Dr. Robert Meier (rmeier@unomaha.edu) or mail a hard copy to him at the address noted below. If there are any questions or concerns, please call him at 402-689-4584. Thank you for working with our students as interns in your agency.

Dr. Robert Meier  
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Omaha, NE  68182

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intern's Name: ______________________________</th>
<th>Agency: __________________________</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agency Evaluator: __________________________</td>
<td>Date: ___________________________</td>
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Please Circle (10 being highest)

1. Willingness to perform job function .................. 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
2. Interaction with agency personnel ..................... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
3. Rapport with outside agencies and professionals .... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
4. Student handles oneself in a professional manner .... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
5. Executes work duties efficiently ........................ 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
6. Adapts to rules and procedures of the agency ......... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
7. Follows instructions of supervisors ..................... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
8. Ability to relate to clients ............................. 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
9. Verbal communication ....................................... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
10. Ability to learn responsibilities and job duties ....... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
11. Quality of written work .................................... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
12. Skill in integrating education knowledge with practical application ........................................ 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
13. Student self-reliance and use of initiative ............. 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
14. Personal confidence ........................................ 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
15. Students ability to make decisions and judgments ... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
16. Attitude—application to work ........................... 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
17. Quality of work ................................................. 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A
18. Student's areas of strength:

19. Any areas needing improvement:
DESIRE CHARACTERISTICS

The Western College Placement Association recently surveyed employers regarding the top ten characteristics desired in an employee. This is valuable information for you to consider as an intern as well as a future employee. It is not surprising that intern evaluations I receive from agencies often focus on these same characteristics.

Characteristics Desired in an Employee

(1) Integrity
(2) The ability to think logically
(3) Enthusiasm
(4) Dependability
(5) The ability to communicate
(6) Emotional Stability
(7) The ability to get along with others
(8) Good judgment
(9) The ability to make decisions
(10) Interest in the career rather than merely in the job or salary

TYPES OF GOALS

What do you hope to accomplish with this internship? Maybe you have given it a lot of thought and maybe you haven’t. Initially it will be helpful for you to (1) Obtain an understanding of the overall structure and function(s) of your agency. (2) If you are assigned to a particular division within the agency, understand how the functions of this division fit into the overall operation of the agency. (3) Understand the importance of the individual tasks you are being assigned and their importance to the overall function of the agency.

Try to get the most out of your internship by establishing some specific goals. Following are some specific types of goals you may consider:

- Acquisition of Knowledge
  It is almost a given that you will want to acquire knowledge about the agency and the type of work involved in the agency. But you may want to jot down some of the specific things you hope to learn.

  Examples:
  1. I want to understand the function of the state probation system and the specific duties of an adult probation officer.
  2. I want to gain a better understanding of the overall operations of the state patrol. I also want to learn about the specific duties of an officer in the drug investigations unit.
Personal Growth
The internship offers a tremendous opportunity to grow and develop as a person and also an opportunity for you to assess your strengths and weaknesses.

Examples:
1. I want to become more organized and self-disciplined.
2. I want to develop stronger communication skills and be able to communicate more clearly and accurately.
3. I want to become more open-minded and reduce stereo-typing of people who are different from me.

Professional Development
Your internship experience may help you identify your career goals, reinforce your desire to work in a particular agency, or help you recognize what is not for you.

YOUR ROLE AS AN INTERN
If you have not previously done an internship, you may not know what to expect initially. While no two internships are alike, most will involve similar phases that you might expect to go through.

Initial Entry
This includes becoming acquainted with staff and their duties. Get yourself oriented to your position and understand the structure and function of the agency. Some type of training may be involved. Training may be formal, informal (given a training manual to read), or you may learn by observation or on the job/assignment of tasks.

Probationary Period
You may continue to observe situations and/or attend meetings with other professionals. You will be assigned tasks and your performance will be carefully monitored. It will be important to do a great job on the initial tasks so your supervisor will develop confidence and trust in your performance. It is only then that your supervisor will feel comfortable assigning more demanding tasks. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and take initiative during this phase.

Productive Worker
Having proven your abilities, you may be asked to perform the same tasks as other agency staff. Depending on your agency, you may or may not reach this stage. If you do not reach this phase, it may not be a reflection of your job performance. Some agencies have policies which limit the type of work an intern can be assigned.
Completion
You will want to reflect on the experience and assess yourself and your performance. You may want to ask about letters of recommendation, particularly if the internship went well.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

With regard to schedule, it is important to take your internship seriously and treat the internship as a job not just a volunteer position. Agencies are flexible and recognize you are a student and will work around your schedule but you need to set up a schedule to work and stick with it so they can depend on you. If you are sick during your scheduled work hours, call in and let them know as you would for any job, don't just space it off.

Be very accurate in documenting the hours you work. An agency would not look favorably on falsifying even an hour and a mistake could hurt you in any future career with the agency. Your agency supervisor will expect you to be responsible in documenting hours. Interns have been terminated because of discrepancy in hours, so make sure you are accurate so there is never a question or discrepancy in the number of hours worked.

Concerning appropriate dress, that may vary depending on which agency you are working with. Your supervisor will likely discuss with you what is considered appropriate. You may be expected to meet the dress code of other staff. The way you dress may not seem like a big deal to you but if its not the type of dress expected in the agency they may consider it poor judgment on your part. If it’s not made clear, you may want to ask your supervisor before you begin working.

PROBLEMS/CONFLICTS

Student interns provide a service to agencies but in many ways the agencies are providing an even bigger service. It takes a lot of work for them to set up, coordinate and train student interns so we need to make it worthwhile for them by providing assistance. Sometimes there may be some mundane things like filing, typing or copying included in your internship experience but you can actually learn a lot about the agency and how things are done while performing these duties. You also become aware of just how much paperwork is involved in most jobs. If in your case, however, all you are being asked to do is file or make copies and you feel that the experience is not a learning experience, you may want to take the initiative to talk with your agency supervisor. You will want to be very tactful in your approach. For instance, you might indicate that you are pretty much caught up on photocopying and then ask if there might be some other things you can assist with, showing enthusiasm and indicating that you want to learn as much as possible.

Major problems seldom occur because agency personnel are generally very pleasant to
work with and really want to provide interns with a good experience. But if you find yourself in a situation where there is a serious personality conflict or other type of major problem, you should call or come in and see me regarding the situation.

**PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

A major issue in the criminal justice field is professional responsibility. You need to be very careful regarding privacy and confidentiality of records. You may often be asked to deal with very sensitive information that is not publicly available. Improperly obtaining or divulging confidential information would be considered a very serious matter in these agencies. Sometimes, something that doesn’t seem like a big deal to you would be an important ethical issue in the field. So if you are uncertain about the confidentiality of certain information, ask your supervisor. Or if in doubt, keep the information private, because there could be drastic repercussions both for the agency and for your own future. If you make a big mistake you won’t be working in that agency or possibly other related agencies. Most agencies will probably discuss with you the requirements for confidentiality of information so take that very seriously. Misjudgment regarding confidentiality of records could be grounds for dismissal from an internship, so I can’t stress enough the importance of keeping non-public information confidential.

**LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

As you complete your internships, you will all have very different experiences. No matter what type of work you do during the internship, remember that the experience is really invaluable in many ways.

1. You will have the opportunity to understand the structure and major functions of the agency and how it operates. You will also want to observe the inter-relationships with other criminal justice agencies.
2. You will work with a lot of individuals who are already working in the field and make a lot of additional contacts in the field. Good connections make a difference when you are looking for a job.
3. You will have the opportunity to enhance your organizational, interpersonal and communication skills by working in the field.
4. You may have a chance to get a strong recommendation from your supervisor.
5. You can determine if this type of agency fits into your career plans.

Work hard, make the most of your internship opportunities, and GOOD LUCK!

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**YOU ARE REQUIRED TO:**

1. Respond by e-mail that you have read the Syllabus and Internship Manual.
2. Confirm the agency you will intern with and the date you will begin.

You may e-mail me at rmeier@unomaha.edu. Please give me a call (402-689-4584) if
you have any questions regarding your internship or the requirements for academic credit.