



*The Washington Center*  
for Internships and Academic Seminars

Reference Guide  
For Agency Supervisors

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**Internship:** *Any carefully monitored work or service experience in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he/she is learning throughout the experience. Ordinarily internships are taken as part of a formal academic curriculum. (National Society for Experiential Education).*

## Executive Summary ■

Organizations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area seeking qualified undergraduate interns have used The Washington Center as a primary resource for almost 30 years. Interns receive academic credit from their home institutions for professional employment within the framework created by The Washington Center's program of classes, meetings, seminars, and events.

In order to receive applications for intern positions, we ask agencies to complete an internship request form. This form will help us get an accurate picture of your needs and enable us to make a good match. You can return this document and fax it to your contact at The Washington Center, or to Jennifer Clinton at (202) 336-7609. For more information, please call us at (202) 336-7600 to discuss the specifics of affiliation with The Washington Center. The request form is found at the end of this guide and it is available on our website at [www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu).

### Agencies with whom we work agree to :

- provide an internship in which the work assigned is at least 80% substantive (non-clerical);
- assign a supervisor who will evaluate, manage, and train the intern;
- participate in one site visit per term from the professional intern management staff of The Washington Center.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to provide financial assistance to the interns through The Washington Center to help offset program, housing, board, and transportation costs; doing so will help attract more students to your organization.

This document is a quick guide for organizations seeking an intern through The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. More detailed information about the program is available at <http://www.twc.edu>.

## What is The Washington Center? ■

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars is a nonprofit, educational organization that provides full-time academic internships and short-term academic seminars in Washington, D.C. for students from colleges and universities across the country and around the world. Since 1975, over 30,000 students from over 1,000 colleges and universities have participated in Washington Center programs.

The Washington Center is incorporated under the nonprofit corporation act of the District of Columbia and is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an organization within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code.

The mission of The Washington Center is to utilize the resources of the nation's capital to provide participatory learning experiences in order to enhance students' academic, civic, and professional development. In this way, The Washington Center seeks to promote future leadership for the public, private, and nonprofit sectors of our society.

## What is The Washington Center Organization? ■

As a nonprofit organization, The Washington Center is governed by a board of directors chaired by the Honorable Alan J. Blinken, former U.S. ambassador to Belgium. The president and founder of The Washington Center is **William M. Burke**. **Michael B. Smith**, our senior vice president, is responsible for institutional relations with colleges and universities. **Dr. Eugene J. Alpert**, vice president for academic affairs, oversees all of our academic programs. Dr. Alpert is also responsible for student services, housing, and enrollment management.

## How Does The Washington Center Internship Program Work? ■

The Washington Center provides a service to colleges and universities by working with campus representatives (called campus liaisons) to enable college students to come to Washington and receive academic credit for their internship. In addition, The Washington Center adds value to Washington, D.C.-based organizations to attract specific majors, technical knowledge and skill-set needs to help fill mission-critical jobs. In addition, because the Washington Center has a strong commitment to diversity, we can help agencies achieve their goal of ensuring their workplaces represent the rich diversity of the nation. The fact that many Washington Center interns are hired on by their internship sites upon graduation is a testament to the quality and diversity of the students we attract.

The Washington Center charges a program fee and a housing fee to the student. The Washington Center works diligently to help students off-set these expenses through private sector donors, state scholarships and through partnerships with internship sites that provide financial assistance to the intern. Essentially, we are a "one-stop shop" for internship placement, removing much of the risk and uncertainty associated with obtaining an internship that is indeed worthy of academic credit on a student's home campus. Unlike with other programs, or students coming to Washington on their own, The Washington Center provides extracurricular programming and supervision for students, which enhances their experience in Washington and helps to ensure that there is a good balance between the achievement of academic goals and contributions to the organization where they have been placed.

## What is the Advantage of Working With The Washington Center? ■

The Washington Center carefully places students in responsible and substantive full-time internship positions, year-round, in the Washington, D.C. area. Our students are more likely to be highly motivated, more self-directed, and better prepared to take their responsibilities seriously than students who are unsure about credit arrangements, work with programs that have lower standards, or participate in programs in which they only work a few days a week.

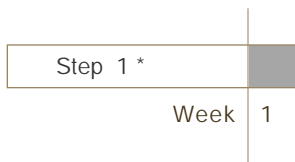
Students who take part in The Washington Center internship program are required to receive academic credit. Therefore, there is a strong link between the college, the intern, The Washington Center, and the placement agency. This increases the likelihood of a successful experience for all involved.

The Washington Center is staffed by over 50 professionals who provide a variety of services and support for our students. This staff includes over 15 full-time program supervisors, responsible for placing the students and monitoring their progress at their placement site, and over 10 resident assistants on the Student Services staff, who oversee student housing and special activities during the students' stay in Washington. If the student or agency has concerns, The Washington Center is available to provide assistance.

## How Does the Placement Process Work? ■

The Washington Center, which uses a rolling acceptance system, receives student applications at least six to eight weeks prior to the beginning of an academic term. Once accepted into the program, the students' applications are referred to the program supervisor with expertise in a student's area of interest. Each student's application is matched with approximately four to six (or more if appropriate) potential internship placement sites.

A typical timetable is as follows:



**Agency supervisors** review applications sent by The Washington Center Program Supervisor to assess the skills and interests of the internship candidates.



**Prospective agency supervisors** contact students by telephone to conduct interviews with candidates.



**Prospective agency supervisors** notify The Washington Center program supervisors about their decision, and who then notify the students directly. When considering more than one candidate, it is helpful to rank them in order of preference.

Washington Center Program Supervisors inform intern candidates of all potential placement offers. Prospective interns may accept an offer at this point, or request their application be sent to additional placement sites.



**Second round of application evaluations** by agency supervisors (if applicable) and telephone interviews with prospective interns.



**Students select** their preferred internship placement.

Ideally, this process takes about eight weeks. Most students are placed two to three weeks prior to their arrival in D.C., or, in rare circumstances, shortly after check-in. Placement sites that offer substantive, responsible positions may still stand a chance to compete for interns at the last minute, especially if financial assistance is available. It is also possible to obtain an intern after the term begins, when a change in placement needs to be made as a result of a poor fit between the intern and the placement site.

### What are the Responsibilities of the Agency Supervisor? ■

Washington Center interns are pre-screened by their campus liaison and Washington Center program supervisors. An agency supervisor can expect a serious student who is interested in the best possible experience while in the nation's capital. It is therefore important for an agency supervisor to carefully plan and pace the intern's learning and work experience in order to achieve their mutual goals.

The Washington Center expects an agency supervisor to:

- provide an orientation that includes the history, mission, goals, organizational structure, objectives, policies, and procedures of the organization as well as training on the use of office equipment and other relevant technology;
- provide work responsibilities that meet both the needs of the organization and the academic learning goals of the intern;
- assist the intern in the preparation of a learning objective statement that outlines what the student expects to learn from the internship and contribute to the organization, and how this will be achieved and evaluated;
- meet with the intern periodically (if not regularly) to provide additional instruction, feedback, and suggestions for improvement;
- participate in an on-site visit scheduled for approximately 2-3 weeks after the beginning of the internship;
- accommodate the intern's academic program schedule arranged by The Washington Center (this usually consists of a four- or four-and-a-half-day work week, attendance at two Capitol Hill breakfast meetings and a few other planned activities);
- provide two written evaluations of the student (one midterm, one final), along with a final grade recommendation for the internship (the exact dates will be provided by TWC program supervisor);
- ensure that interns are not assigned clerical duties more than 20% of their time during the internship; and
- contact The Washington Center program supervisor if any concerns arise.

## What are the Responsibilities of the Intern? ■

The intern is obligated to adhere to academic and professional standards.

Specifically, at the placement site, the intern is expected to:

- work the equivalent of 4 ½ days a week (minimum 35 hours) in a professional capacity (students accepted in special Washington Center programs work 4 days a week);
- develop, in consultation with the agency supervisor, a learning objective statement that lists the academic, professional, civic responsibility and personal goals the intern would like to achieve during the internship;
- be familiar with the professional expectations of the placement organization as well as its regular operating procedures;
- seek ongoing evaluative feedback and incorporate suggestions for improvement into ongoing assignments and projects;
- ensure that agency supervisors are kept apprised of the intern's Washington Center programming and academic obligations to avoid scheduling conflicts, work "overload," and over-reliance upon the intern for clerical duties (interns should not be assigned clerical duties more than 20% of their time);
- notify the agency supervisor (or their The Washington Center program supervisor if necessary) if they have a concern with substantive work issues; and
- dress in appropriate business attire and follow professional protocols and etiquette for employees at the work site.

## What are the Responsibilities of The Washington Center Program Supervisor? ■

The Washington Center program supervisor (PS) is the person responsible for placement, supervision, and evaluation of each intern. Each PS is responsible for up to 30 interns per academic term. The PS guides the intern during the placement process and stays in communication with the intern throughout the internship. The PS is available to assist as a facilitator, counselor, and resource person. It is the PS's responsibility to ensure that the internship provides a reasonable balance between the intern's opportunity to learn and to contribute to the placement organization.

Specifically, the program supervisor is responsible for the following:

### (prior to the student's arrival in Washington)

- determining where a student's application will be sent for placement;
- communicating with the student and the agency supervisor on the status of the student's application for internship placement;
- seeking, when possible, a choice of placements for the student that includes at least one placement option providing financial assistance to help offset the cost of the program, housing and living expenses.

### (after the student's arrival in Washington)

- orienting and instructing the student regarding Washington Center academic program requirements, professional behavior, and evaluation procedures;

- holding two formal, small group meetings with interns to discuss internship and academic requirement issues (these are held the first week after start of the internship and at the mid-point of the internship) and other periodic, meetings with the students;
- visiting the intern's placement during the term to evaluate the student's adjustment and ensure the success of the internship;
- being available to the site supervisor on a formal or informal basis to facilitate the progress of the intern at the placement site;
- arranging for Washington Forum activities (such as Presidential Lectures and other relevant programming) to take place on Mondays;
- providing evaluation materials to the student's campus liaison; and
- providing a written evaluation of the student, encompassing the overall internship experience, including an assessment of the student's academic portfolio, agency supervisor evaluations, and participation in Washington Forum activities.

## Financial Assistance ■

For most college students, the cost of living in Washington is higher than remaining on campus, especially if they were saving money by living at home. The Washington Center makes a concerted effort to raise scholarships so any student, regardless of economic background, can participate in our programs. Our primary goal is to assist students with financial aid so that the cost of an internship in Washington is at least equal to the cost of remaining on campus. To that end, we devote a considerable portion of our time to raising funds from a variety of sources.

To assist with this effort, we strongly encourage placement agencies to provide students with funds to help cover their expenses. We request that you consider providing financial assistance of between \$100 and \$500 per week. Providing financial assistance would enable our students to more easily meet their obligations to The Washington Center and would enable The Washington Center to make our program available to more potential interns. The Washington Center's program and housing fees for a 15-week term amount to over \$8,000.

To make arrangements to **award financial assistance**, please contact a Washington Center program supervisor for details, or call Jennifer Clinton at (202) 336-7569.

Below is a list of frequently asked questions we receive from internship supervisors. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the student's Program Supervisor

**Where do TWC interns live while in DC?**

The Washington Center provides housing accommodations to all students who request them. Some students choose to find their own housing accommodations, some live with friends or relatives in the area. Our housing accommodations offer shared facilities in apartment buildings in Northern Virginia. They are located in well-lit, high traffic areas that provide secure and comfortable surroundings. The apartments are fully furnished, and provide local telephone and basic cable service, 24-hour front desk, and laundry facilities. Each building is assigned at least one Resident Assistant who is on duty each evening from 7:30 pm to 7:00 am. The Resident Assistant serves as an advisor to students and is available to answer questions as well as to help in the event of an emergency. Students have an emergency pager number to call in the event of an emergency. This number is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.

**How is transportation handled?**

The Washington Center provides a detailed orientation to students of the DC Metro system. The apartment facilities are all within walking distance to the Metro. It is ideal that the workplace is Metro or bus accessible. However, some placements do require that students have a car. If this is the case, please communicate this to the TWC Program Supervisor early on. Most of the housing facilities have parking spaces available for TWC interns. They are assigned on a first-come first-serve basis. Students are responsible for covering the cost of their transportation. Some internship placement sites do choose to provide a transportation allowance to the student.

**What do I do in the event a student has a medical emergency at the workplace?**

In an extreme emergency, where a student's health or safety are at risk, students or their agency supervisor should request ambulance service by dialing "911." If it is not an emergency, but the student still needs medical attention, The Washington Center has provided a list of medical clinics to students upon their arrival in Washington, DC. For liability reasons, TWC cannot recommend physicians or clinics, nor can a TWC representative accompany an intern student to a medical facility. In light of the new privacy laws, TWC or anyone working with the interns are prohibited from contacting friends or family members with information about the medical situation. Students must give permission in writing before this information can be released. Students are required to have their own health insurance. TWC does not provide insurance to students.

**What do I do if a student requests vacation time?**

Interns are expected to work four or four and a half days a week for fifteen weeks during the fall and spring semesters and ten weeks during the summer term. Students are not eligible for any vacation with the exception of holidays recognized by the placement site. If there is a special circumstance and the student needs to be absent from work, the student must discuss the situation in advance with both the internship supervisor and The Washington Center Program Supervisor.

**Are students required to submit time sheets?**

The Washington Center defers to the internship placement site's policy of time keeping. Some agencies do require interns to keep track of their time worked, others do not.

**Can my intern participate in an out-of-town assignment?**

Students are allowed to participate in out-of-town assignments. It is important that the intern communicate to his/her TWC Program Supervisor and the campus liaison, the days in which he/she will be out of town. The internship placement site is responsible for covering the students' travel expenses.

**What do I do if my student wants to leave the internship early?**

All interns are expected to be at their internship site placement until the last day of The Washington Center internship program. Permission to leave early must be obtained from the intern's campus/faculty liaison in consultation with the intern's Program Supervisor. The internship site supervisor must also approve any early departure.

**Can my intern work with confidential information?**

Interns who will be handling confidential or sensitive information should be briefed by their internship supervisor carefully on the aspect of their work and told how to handle it. Many government agencies require students to obtain a security clearance. TWC can help facilitate the security clearance process, but cannot conduct security clearances.

**What is TWC's dress code?**

TWC strongly emphasizes to students that Washington, DC is a very professional environment and students should dress accordingly. We suggest that students wear a suit during the first week of work and then get a sense of each organization's dress policy or culture and make adjustments accordingly.

**What do I do if I am unhappy with my intern's performance?**

If an internship supervisor is unhappy with the performance of a student at any time, it is important to discuss this with the intern in a professional manner. We encourage the internship supervisor to also contact the TWC Program Supervisor to discuss the situation. It may be necessary to arrange a special meeting of the three parties to resolve the problem. It may be the case that after several attempts to resolve the situation, the supervisor student is just not a good fit for the position. In this case, please notify the TWC Program Supervisor and we will work to place the student in another internship. As the internship program is short, it is important that problems are addressed early on to make sure the 10 or 15-week program is valuable for both the student and the supervisor. For many students, this internship is their first professional work experience and he/she may not have a clear understanding of office protocol and the relationship between manager and employee. Supervisors should take this into consideration when communicating expectations.

**What if my intern is expressing dissatisfaction with his internship?**

TWC asks supervisors to assign no more than 20% clerical work to students. While we understand that every job requires a certain amount of clerical work, students should also be assigned substantive projects. It may be the case that a student has unreasonably high expectations about his/her role in the organizations. It will be necessary for both the TWC Program Supervisor and the internship supervisor to adjust the student's expectations. TWC encourages students to communicate their concerns to the immediate supervisor about the type of work assigned or a need for more direction or feedback. If necessary, TWC will schedule a site visit with the student, intern supervisor and TWC Program Supervisor to address the problems. A student may request a change of placement only after he/she has been in the internship for at least two weeks; however, students are not allowed to leave a placement without first obtaining permission from their TWC Program Supervisor.

**What if my intern has a disability and needs special workplace accommodations?**

TWC relies on the placement site to provide reasonable accommodations for the student when and if requested. It is up to the student to communicate these needs before arrival in Washington. TWC can help facilitate and/or provide information on different types of accommodations. TWC has a Disabilities Logistics Coordinator on staff to address these issues. You may contact Jennifer Taransky at 202-457-0056 or [jennyt@twc.edu](mailto:jennyt@twc.edu).

**Does TWC arrange for weekend activities or social gatherings for the students?**

TWC provides organized opportunities for students to socialize on the weekends. Students are provided information about various events throughout the course of

the semester. Some examples of activities are: walking tours of Old Town and Georgetown, pancake breakfasts, sports outings, trip to Atlantic City, and volunteer service projects.

**My student is complaining that he/she is unable to balance work and school?**

The Washington Center's program is academic in nature. Students earn college credit for their semester in Washington. In addition to their internship they are required to enroll in one evening course during the semester. The courses typically meet for three hours one night a week. In addition, students are required to attend the Washington Forum, which includes the Presidential Lecture Series, the Congressional Breakfast Series and the Embassy Visits Program. The Presidential Lecture Series and the Embassy Visits Program normally occur on Monday afternoons from 2-3:30 pm. The Congressional Breakfast Series occurs in the morning from 8:30 - 9:30 am. Finally, the student is required to complete a portfolio that documents the knowledge gained during the entire semester in Washington. Should the student communicate difficulty in balancing the academic with the workplace, he/she should contact his TWC Program Supervisor to discuss time management tactics.

**Can my intern work from home?**

Part of the learning experience for students is to interact with other professionals in the work place. Understanding office protocol and the manager-employee relationship is a crucial part of experiential education. There may be some circumstances where it makes sense for students to spend some time working from home, however, working from home on a consistent basis does not achieve the mission of the program.

**What if I am interested in hiring my intern as a full-time employee?**

As many organizations use the Washington Center program as a recruitment tool, it is not unusual for students to be offered full-time employment positions upon completion of the internship. However, organizations have no obligation to hire interns upon completion of the program.

**What is the student evaluation process?**

As students earn academic credit for their internship experience, the internship supervisor's role in the student evaluation is very important. TWC asks supervisor's to complete two evaluations during the course of the semester. The first will be completed at the mid-term and the second during the final week of the internship. TWC has evaluation forms that will be provided by the student to the supervisor. We ask supervisor's to complete and return in a timely manner. In addition, the TWC Program Supervisor will schedule one to two site visits during the course of the semester. This is a brief meeting between TWC Program Supervisor, internship supervisor and the student. The individuals will discuss the goals and objectives of the internship and how the student is progressing in his/her achievement of such goals.

## Designing Your Internship Program : The Internship Proposal ■

Included in this guide is the Internship Proposal Request Form. The proposal calls for a clear articulation of the goals and guidelines for the internship experience at the placement site. To establish an internship program that is academically sound, it is helpful to:

- consult with others who have designed and implemented successful internship programs, especially others in the same organization;
- clarify the responsibilities of the intern and specify the parameters or constraints of these responsibilities (i.e. security clearance; licensing or legal limitations; entry level, intermediate, or advanced; etc.);
- describe the skills needed to fulfill the work responsibilities as well as the skills that can be gained or honed from the internship experience;
- consider whether the arranged internship will create a reasonable balance between an intern's contribution to the organization and the time needed for the intern to satisfy his/her substantive learning goals;
- clarify the reporting structure for the intern, how the intern's work should be prioritized, and how evaluative feedback should be communicated;
- provide resources to facilitate the work of the intern (i.e. office furniture, space, access to computer, telephone, filing cabinets, copier, etc.). Whenever possible, these should be equivalent to those generally available to other staff members;
- consider the standards by which the intern will be evaluated (undergraduate level, graduate level, entry-level professional, etc.);
- consider the benefits that would make the internship attractive to a student (i.e. access to high-level officials; opportunities to attend important meetings, conferences or other special events; possibility of increasing responsibilities as each skill level is achieved; etc.); and
- design work assignments for the intern to:
  - see the "big picture" (i.e. relate assignments to the overall functioning of the organization);
  - create a "product portfolio" to help document their work and to show to future employers as samples of their professional work; and
  - minimize clerical work; job assignments may include the normal amount of copying, typing, filing, etc. that are part of the typical staff person's work, but the intern should not be a substitute for a clerical/paid position (Washington Center Interns should not spend more than 20% limit of their time on purely clerical/non-professional assignments).

**Internship Proposal Request Form** ■

Please fill out and mail or fax this form to The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, 2301 M St., NW, 5th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036; **fax: 202-336-7609**. (If you do not have a specific contact, this form will be given to the Acting Deputy Director of Internships.)

Name of Washington Center Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Responding \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Site Supervisor/Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Internet \_\_\_\_\_

Brief descriptions of organization (attach or include any relevant materials):

Description of potential internship assignments, responsibilities, special opportunities, etc. (please note that Washington Center interns must not be assigned more than 20% clerical responsibilities):

Time period for which intern(s) is needed (check any relevant times or provide specific dates):

Fifteen Week Semesters:

- September through mid-December
- January through early May

Twelve Week Terms:

- January through mid-March
- Mid-March through mid-May

Ten Week Term:

- June through mid-August

Number of interns requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Is a security clearance required? If so, what is the length of time needed to process an applicant?

Do you have any internal deadlines for receiving internship applications?

Please list some characteristics and skills you would prefer your intern to possess.  
(indicate specific computer skills, research, writing, presentation abilities, for instance)

What would you describe as the most attractive part of this internship for a student?  
(interns often have multiple offers; this helps attract interns to your position.)

To help facilitate placement, please circle which phrase best describes the intern's work environment from each of the categories below:

Liberal

Moderate

Conservative

Please list any other characteristics you wish to share concerning your organization's work environment.

### Financial Assistance Packages

The Washington Center is committed to providing leadership opportunities for career-minded students. Part of our goal in attracting top candidates from around the country and providing experiential education (as well as demonstrating career viability in a number of fields) is finding sites that provide financial assistance to help meet the costs of a semester in Washington. Please indicate at which level you can assist:

\_\_\_\_\_ of financial assistance per week

\_\_\_\_\_ of financial assistance per semester

If you are unable to contribute the above amounts, or wish to contribute more, please indicate the level of assistance possible from your organization:

The financial assistance is credited directly to the student's account. Please note that any financial assistance you are able to provide on behalf of the student is considered part of the student's overall Washington Center financial aid package and should not be paid directly to them until TWC costs have been paid in full. If you have any questions, please contact the Jennifer Clinton at (202) 336-7569.

Your organization will be sent an invoice for the amount indicated. Please provide the name of the person to receive this invoice:

Billing Dept. Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_