

INTERNSHIP MANUAL

Recreation Therapy



SACRAMENTO
STATE

**Department of Recreation, Parks &
Tourism Administration**

**College of Health & Human
Services**

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“WHAT I NEED TO GIVE TO GERALDINE” CHECKLIST -

- **Read** this internship manual and discuss any questions you have with your faculty advisor.
- **Attend** the mandatory internship meeting during the semester before you plan to do your internship.

Geraldine Nicholson must enroll you in the internship course (RPTA B, C or D³). However, if any of the information below is missing, you will not be allowed to register for your internship.

Before you visit her office, make sure you have the following forms (found on the RPTA website under “Forms”) with the required signatures:

<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM A (Pre-internship hours)	300 of the 600 hours required must be Rec Therapy related. Faculty Advisor signature required
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM B (Intent to Intern)	Faculty advisor signature required. Must be submitted: Fall – by May 1; Spring – by October 1; Summer – by March 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	FORM D (Internship Agreement)	Faculty advisor, site supervisor signatures required. Documentation of supervisor’s CPRS certification must be attached.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Goals & Objectives ²	Must be approved by site supervisor and faculty advisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm with Geraldine that CSUS has a contract with the agency	

Main reasons student paperwork is returned/not approved:

- Agency address/phone numbers are missing
- Site supervisor and/or faculty advisor signatures are missing
- Goals and objectives are missing²
- Weeks/hours-per-week calculations are missing or incorrect
- Total units for internship is incorrect (typically, 1 unit=40 hours work, thus 12 units = 560 hours of internship for Recreation Therapy internships)
- Obtaining signatures can take time. Be sure to allow for this as you prepare to register for your internship.

¹Form C is required only if a student is attempting an internship before completing all core courses. Form C petitions must be approved by the faculty advisor and the department chair. Petitions are approved on an individual basis, and depending on circumstances, exceptions may not be granted.

²RPM and RT students have different requirements for their goals and objectives. Please carefully read Form D and the Internship Manual before completing these.

³RPTA 195 (B, C or D) is a course. You must be registered in and pay for this class.

Please note that there are several additional forms related to your internship that are available on the department website. You must use these forms in association with your internship.

1. INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNSHIP

The aim of the internship program is to provide the student (future professional) with a comprehensive practical experience in a setting where learning is the primary objective of the experience. To this end, the overall purposes of the internship are:

- ☐ FOR THE STUDENT: to complete his/her professional preparation program in a controlled and supervised experience in the field.
- ☐ FOR THE AGENCY: to provide professional guidance throughout the experience.
- ☐ FOR THE UNIVERSITY: to sponsor the student and monitor the progress of completed assignments. The faculty member at the university will also help the student integrate their classroom learning with their internship experience.

The purpose of the program is to structure an individualized educational experience that is planned and implemented cooperatively and collaboratively between the student, cooperating agency and university. The internship experience is a planned transition from the formal classroom to a professional recreation, park or leisure service setting within which the student's strengths, weaknesses and suitability for the field can be realistically assessed.

1.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The success of the Internship Program is dependent upon the cooperation and involvement of the three parties concerned in the design and implementation of any experience. The student must realize the responsibilities involved in preparation for an accomplishment of an experience and must strive to be accountable to the agency with which he or she is affiliated. The cooperating agency must be sensitive to the purpose of the program and seek to continually create opportunities for the student to observe or perform various functions within the recreation, park or leisure service delivery system. The university, through RPTA Department faculty, will oversee the student's academic performance during the internship (e.g. completion of reports and a final project).

The degree of cooperation required can be achieved through acceptance and observation of the basic guidelines contained in this manual and constant communication and evaluation.

1.3 COMPLIANCE WITH CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

This internship is designed to meet Sac State requirements for graduation, and NCTRC requirements for certification as a Certified Recreation Therapist (CTRS). Visit www.nctrc.org frequently to remain up to date on certification standards. A few things to remember for your internship:

Your supervisor must:

- Be a certified CTRS for at least one year prior to the start of your internship.
- Be a full-time employee of the agency, working there at least 32 hours a week.
- At least 50% of their job duties must be within recreation therapy service.
- They must sign all official documentation of your internship (This includes the midterm and final evaluation and NCTRC field placement verification form).

Your hours and experience:

- You must work between 20 and 45 hours each week.
- Your internship must last at least 14 continuous weeks. (You can't take a week off)
- You must work at least 560 hours.
- Your internship must take place at one agency.

- You must have exposure to all areas of the current NCTRC National Job Analysis.
- You must have just one supervisor
- You cannot split your internship between different agencies.

If you desire to sit for the State exam to become a **Recreation Therapist Certified (RTC)** you must complete their internship at a site that is state certified, or that is out of state. Visit the California Board of Recreation and Park Certification website for a current list of sites that offer state certification and additional information on state certification requirements. www.cbrpc.org

1.4 INTERNSHIP PLANNING

Students should start financial planning prior to internship because personal finances are often a challenge during the internship. Due to the demands of an internship, students may not be able to work additional hours at another job. Keep in mind that some of the best internships are unpaid. Work for pay must never overshadow the educational and learning aspects of an internship. In summary, the internship can create a financial crunch. Here are some suggestions to avoid money panic and burnout:

- **Plan ahead!** Start saving money or securing a student loan so you will have a smooth transition to the internship.
- **Locate additional financial aid for the internship.** A student loan or temporary help from your family may allow you to have a "normal" life and will often improve the quality of your work during the internship (instead of being exhausted from working 80 hours per week).
- **Do not try to work at another job.** If absolutely necessary, work no more than part time during your internship, otherwise you will burn out and your work quality will suffer.
- **Do not limit your selection of internship sites to just those that pay.** Keep your options open. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IS THE PRIME CONSIDERATION IN SELECTING AN INTERNSHIP SITE. Remember, the internship is critical to your career development and is often the gateway to that important first professional job or professional advancement.
- **Discuss the possibility of some type of "compensation" during your internship with your agency contact person before you sign the contract.** Compensation can take many forms: monthly salary, hourly wage, monthly stipend, conference registration, transportation cost reimbursement, room and board, or half volunteer and half paid worker status. Part time pay for specialized service may be a portion of the internship. Clearly identify compensation in your contract with the agency.

1.5. WAIVERS AND PETITIONS

Interns may submit a typed petition to waive a specific requirement related to internship. The Petition to Waive Requirements form (**Form C**) must be completed and accompanied by strong, clear, and legible supporting materials. Petitions must be approved by the student's academic advisor and submitted prior to the student registering for the internship.

A petition is required in the following circumstances if (but are not limited to):

- The internship is with an agency where the student is currently working or previously has been employed.
- RT students are generally not allowed to take additional coursework when conducting their internship during the academic year or the summer unless he or she petitions their major advisor and chair.

2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- ❖ **Pre Internship hours:** Before the start of your internship you must have completed and verified 600 hours of paid or volunteer recreation work in accordance with RPTA Department policy prior to starting the internship (See Verification of Hours, (**Form A**)). **300 of these hours need to be need to be work directly associated with people with disabilities.** To ensure that the intern has had practical and varied experience prior to the start of internship, the 600 hours of paid or volunteer work experience (called the *pre-internship* experience) will be accepted based on the relationship of the experience to work related aspects of the RPTA curriculum. Acceptance of the 600 hours is contingent on the approval of the student's major advisor. Students should use **Form A** for this requirement. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue some of the 600 hours in their professional area of interest.
- ❖ **Coursework:** RT students must complete all of their coursework, including classes for RT certification before pursuing their internships.
- ❖ **Approval:** Approval of major faculty advisor required.

2.2 AGENCY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

THE AGENCY MUST:

- ❖ Provide professional supervision.
- ❖ Be willing to participate in the intern evaluation processes (mid-term and final), and a midterm meeting (in person or by phone).
- ❖ Complete the NCTRC Field Placement Verification Form at the end of the internship.
- ❖ Write a letter on agency letterhead documenting the internship. It should contain the dates/hours of internship, brief description of duties, and be signed by supervisor with appropriate RT certification numbers.
- ❖ Keep a file at the agency of student internship documentation for use when further requests for certification proofs are needed.
- ❖ If the student is seeking state certification, send the CBRPC RT Internship Confirmation Form to CBRPC.

3. INTERNSHIP PROCEDURES FOR SECURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

3.1 PROCEDURES FOR SECURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Following these procedures in a systematic and timely manner will allow you to successfully negotiate the internship placement process. The process should begin at least one semester, preferably two, before you begin your internship.

DEADLINES WILL BE POSTED SO THAT STUDENTS KNOW WHEN THEY MUST COMPLETE THEIR PAPERWORK AND PAY FOR THE INTERNSHIP. FAILURE TO PAY AND COMPLETE THE PAPERWORK MAY RESULT IN YOU NOT BEING ABLE TO DO YOUR INTERNSHIP.

Prospective Intern Checklist:

1. **Have first appointment with RPTA advisor to confirm:**
 - You have met all RPTA Department requirements.
 - You will have completed all required courses prior to the start of your internship.
 - Your 600 pre-internship hours are completed and comply with RPTA Department policy, and documents verifying your hours are on file in RPTA Department office (**Form A.**)

2. Research potential internship sites - Review internship agency sites on RPTA webpage, and conduct independent research. Learn about the application process for the sites you are interested in.

3. Work with Geraldine to determine if CSUS has a contract with the agency. Developing a contract can be a lengthy process, and must be started early.

3. Fill out Form B, Intent to Intern, and attach a copy of your most recent resume. (Sample resumes are in Appendix B)

4. **Have a second meeting with your RPTA Major Advisor to discuss internship.**
 - For this appointment, bring your completed Intent to Intern form (Form B) and any related documents. Your major advisor will not meet with you unless you have all of your materials completed. Obtain your RPTA major advisor's signature on Intent to Intern form (Form B)
 - Discuss the potential internship sites. Your major advisor may require you to select other sites as well.

5. **Attend MANDATORY internship Orientation Meeting**
 - Review Internship Manual prior to attending a meeting. Orientation meetings are held in fall semester for spring internships, and in spring semester for summer and fall internships.

6. **Agency Interviews**

Informational interviews and resume exercises completed in RPTA 30, RPTA 101 and RPTA 105, should be viewed as part of the student's internship position search.

 - Schedule agency interviews only after meeting with and obtaining your major advisor's approval to proceed. Send a cover letter to the agency ahead of time or take it with you to the interviews (See **Appendix C** for guidelines for writing cover letters).
 - Be prepared for interviews and arrive on time. Dress professionally and present yourself in an appropriate manner. This is an opportunity for you to impress the agency staff with your poise and skills as well as to determine if this agency will meet your objectives.
 - Give the agency representative a packet containing your current resume, your internship objectives, and a blank Internship Contract which defines agency responsibilities.
 - Send a thank you letter immediately after your interview.

7. Set up appointment with RPTA major advisor.

- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your major advisor after you have completed all of your interviews.
- Take all materials related to your internship to this appointment. Review your notes with your major advisor to help you determine the most appropriate agency.
- Select internship agency with your major advisor.
- Notify selected internship agency supervisor regarding approval of placement.

8. Finalize Internship contracts and confirmation.

- Take the Internship Contract (Form D) to your agency supervisor, have them sign it, and return it to your major advisor for his/her signature. After all signatures have been obtained, take completed contract to department office administrator to get registered.

3.2 DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Students will work with their academic advisor prior to their internship placement, and will be assigned a faculty Internship supervisor, who may or may not be their academic advisor. RT students will be assigned to a faculty member who is nationally certified.

Please note that there are several forms related to tracking hours, your final project, your mid-term evaluation, etc. that are available on the department website. You must use these forms in association with your internship.

What are my responsibilities during the internship experience? During the internship, the student is expected to observe and participate in administrative/ program/clinical responsibilities such as:

- ✓ Conferences, meetings, and program observations with the agency supervisor
- ✓ Development of programs for the total agency
- ✓ Budget planning and implementation
- ✓ Public relations programs
- ✓ Staff meetings
- ✓ Commission, Council and/or Board meetings when appropriate
- ✓ Skill development workshops
- ✓ Community development programs
- ✓ Clinical RT Process

The student will be expected to identify and summarize experiences with these administrative and program elements as part of his/her reports filed with the faculty internship advisor

- PLAN YOUR REPORTS** – Work with your Faculty Internship Supervisor to establish due dates for your reports. Remember that this is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**. Your Faculty Internship Supervisor will **not** remind you of when these reports are due. Failure to complete these reports may result in you receiving **NO GRADE FOR THE INTERNSHIP**. Refer to **Form E** and your course syllabus for details on these reports and a suggested schedule.
- REVIEW GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** Review the goals and objectives after the first few weeks of the internship to ensure that they are still accurate and if not, make changes in consultation with the faculty internship advisor. Goals and objectives must follow the NCTRC Job Task Analysis.

- ❑ **TRACKING YOUR HOURS:** You will complete “Intern Student Work Log Sheets” (**Form I**) and your agency supervisor will be asked to sign off on these log sheets. These should be submitted with each report.
- ❑ **PLAN YOUR PROJECT**
 - ❑ Within the first two weeks of your internship, discuss possible final projects with your agency.
 - ❑ The internship project should be an independent effort that you conduct as part of your internship experience that will assist your agency in accomplishing its objectives, and also allows you to learn through the development of a project that involves your professional interests. The internship project will challenge you to consider what the needs of your agency are, and what lasting project could you leave as a contribution from your time as an intern there. Examples of projects include: developing education curricula, staff training manuals, or developing a special event.
 - ❑ By the fourth week of the internship, you and your agency supervisor should agree upon your final project and complete a Final Project Proposal form (**Form F**), which will be submitted to your faculty supervisor.
- ❑ Complete your project and submit to faculty supervisor.
 - If your final project involved conducting a special event, you will be required to create a binder (7 -10 pages) outlining every aspect of how you created that event, from conceptualizing the idea, to explaining how you solicited sponsors to providing a copy of the form you used to evaluate the event. Include flyers, etc., you created related to this event.
 - If your final project involves creating a media item (e.g. a website, a brochure), you will need to create a detailed report (7 -10 pages) about how you created the media item. What marketing strategies did you use to create the item? How did you gather the information for the brochure? How will the trail map be used?
- ❑ **MIDTERM EVALUATION:** Your agency supervisor will need to complete both a midterm and final evaluation of you and your performance. You will not be able to receive credit for the internship until this has been completed. Midway through the internship experience, complete the midterm evaluation and send a copy to your faculty supervisor.
- ❑ **MIDTERM MEETING:** A meeting (either phone or in person) will be scheduled between you, the agency supervisor and the university supervisor.
- ❑ **FINAL EVALUATION:** A meeting (either phone or in person) will be scheduled between you, the agency supervisor and the university supervisor. At the end of your internship, complete the final evaluation and send a copy to your faculty supervisor.

4. INTERNSHIP POLICIES

This final section offers details on the formal policies for your internship experience, including changing or ending your internship, managing conflicts at your internship site, compensation and financial considerations, and planning details that you should consider throughout the process.

4.1 TRANSFERS / TERMINATION

In unusual circumstances, an intern will be allowed to transfer or terminate an internship placement. This action will be taken only with the final approval of the RPTA Department Chair after meeting with the intern, faculty internship advisor, and Agency Supervisor and only after it is agreed that it is in the best interest of all those involved.

4.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is an inevitable part of the workplace and internship sites are no exception. Some conflicts develop because of a misunderstanding regarding expectations, scheduling, philosophies, etc. Generally, most conflicts can be resolved quickly between the student and the agency supervisor. On occasion a more serious conflict may develop (e.g., ethics, professionalism). It is very important that you let your Faculty Internship Supervisor know when a major problem develops so that you and subsequent students at that agency are able to have a positive learning experience. If this happens, these guidelines should help you resolve the conflict.

1. Put the incident into focus by clarifying in writing what you see the conflict to be. Be objective and look at the issue from all sides. Acknowledge any possible contribution you may have made to the problem. This self-evaluation may, in fact, resolve the conflict issue.
2. Ask for a meeting with your supervisor, if necessary, to discuss the concerns you have. When you meet, utilize your written notes which indicate you are seeking a constructive resolution. It is usually to your advantage to ask your supervisor for input with a problem you are experiencing. Even if you perceive your supervisor to be the cause of the conflict, do not verbally attack or accuse your supervisor of being the source of that problem. Remain objective and do not become defensive even if your supervisor becomes accusatory toward you.
3. The meeting may be sufficient to resolve the problem. If so, discuss the problem and its resolution in your periodic report. If the conflict is not resolved or escalates, contact your faculty internship advisor.

Depending on the situation several options for dealing with the conflict are available:

- a) You and the agency supervisor meet again to attempt to resolve the conflict.
 - b) You, the agency supervisor and your Faculty Internship Supervisor meet to attempt to resolve the conflict.
 - c) The agency supervisor and your Faculty Internship Supervisor meet to attempt to resolve the conflict.
4. Occasionally, a student will terminate the experience because of an impasse in resolving the problem. If so, each case such as this will be handled on an individual basis and subsequent arrangements will be worked out. This is a last resort option. Your Faculty Internship Supervisor will not meet with the agency supervisor unless you agree to the meeting. You will not be placed in the middle between the faculty and agency supervisors.

Special Liability Note: For liability reasons, students must not terminate an internship without contacting their Faculty Internship Supervisor and/or the department chair.

4.3 INTERNSHIP COMPENSATION and FINANCING

The Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism Administration allows an intern the opportunity to receive compensation from the agency during internship. Compensation shall be negotiated between the intern and the agency during the contracting stage.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 Financial Aid

1. Financial aid may be available for internships done during the fall, spring or summer, however, students should discuss those options with the Financial Aid Office on campus. The department does not handle financial aid issues.

2. Summer internships are offered through the College of Continuing Education (CCE). For this reason, the costs/payment schedule may be different than the fall or spring semesters.

5.2 Graduation/Commencement

Students are permitted to “walk” (attend commencement) prior to completing their internship if the internship is their final course. However, a student will not actually graduate and receive their diploma and confirmation of their degree until the internship is completed. **Make sure your graduation application lists the semester/year that you complete your internship!**