



**Northern Vermont University-Johnson  
Internship Program  
Frequently Asked Questions  
FAQ's**

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### **THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START AN INTERNSHIP**

#### **What is an Internship?**

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths, and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

#### **CRITERIA FOR AN EXPERIENCE TO BE DEFINED AS AN INTERNSHIP**

For an internship to be eligible and considered a legitimate internship, NVU uses the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) definition, and the internship must meet the all the following criteria:

#### **CRITERIA FOR AN EXPERIENCE TO BE DEFINED AS AN INTERNSHIP**

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
5. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
6. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
7. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

*(Article retrieved from <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/advocacy/position-statements/position-statement-us-internships/>)*

## Why Intern?

Experience is an excellent teacher, and internships are one way to help you explore possible career paths and to gain valuable experience in your field of study. Northern Vermont University-Johnson students have interned at the Union Bank in Morrisville, Laraway Youth and Family Services in Johnson, the Vermont Statehouse, throughout Vermont, all over the country (from Walt Disney World in Florida to Adaptive Sports Center in Colorado to Senator Patrick Leahy's office in Washington, D.C.), as well as internationally (Tanzania, Spain and Costa Rica).

Internships are a great way to learn. They provide a short-term, supervised opportunity to work in a particular field. Some are paid by the hour or paid with a stipend; others are unpaid and all offer academic credit. They have structured learning goals, provide you with regular mentorship and can strengthen your resume, giving you a real advantage when you're ready to look for a full-time job.

Many employers use internships as extended tryouts for full-time positions; they are an important pipeline to the most coveted jobs. Securing an internship should be near the top of every undergraduate's plan of action. You can become a competitive internship candidate by taking in-depth courses early in your undergraduate program. Consider your internship opportunities and contact the internship faculty supervisor in your academic department. In an internship, students are carefully supervised by on-site professionals in cooperation with a member of the Northern Vermont University faculty. Variable academic credits may be earned up to the maximum of twelve credit hours per semester (45 hours on-site per academic credit). Most students tend to pursue 3-6 credits, or 135-270 hours per semester.

## Am I Required to Take an Internship?

Most departments require an internship, yet not all. Please check in with your academic advisor to confirm this is a requirement. Even if you are not required to take an internship, consider one as an elective. It allows you to integrate knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields for career paths and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. Internships are resume builders and often leads to jobs.

## Where Do I Find the Internship Forms (contract, timesheet, evaluation, reflection guidelines, bi-weekly report forms, etc.)?

One-stop-shopping can be found on the NVU website at <https://www.northernvermont.edu/academics/careers-and-internships/nvu-johnson-internships>.

## Where Can I Find Extensive Internship Resources?

The "Internship Resources" section of the NVU website can offer some new ways to think about the important search process including:

- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook](#): a guide to career information about hundreds of occupations.

- [Work Values Sorter](#): students can complete an activity where a list of occupations will be offered that align with your values. Learn about pay scale, professional associations, outlook, and educational requirements (Click on Choices Planner)
- [Internship Predictor](#): Take an assessment to find out what internship might be a good fit for you
- [VBSR Internship Toolbox](#)- this site was created by VT Businesses for Social Responsibility and supports students with resumes, cover letters, ethics 101 for interns, and much more!
- [Interview Tips for Interns](#)
- [Internship Interview](#) – Sample Questions
- [5 Questions You Should Ask](#) in an Interview for an Internship You Really Want
- [Internship Interview Resources](#)
- [How to Get the Most Out of Your Internship](#)
- [International Internships](#) - A site packed with information to support international internships. Intern abroad programs can be searched based on a specific destination, a field of work, a length of stay, or a general region.
- [More Helpful than a Business Degree: A Summer Internship](#) - Real World Experience Pays Dividends (Wall Street Journal, January 15, 2016)

Please visit Internships at Northern Vermont University-Johnson at <https://www.northernvermont.edu/academics/careers-and-internships/nvu-johnson-internships>.

## Can I Take an Internship in the Summer?

Internships can occur during the fall, spring and summer semesters. Fall and spring semester internships are covered under the normal full-time tuition as long as your total credits for the semester do not exceed 18 credits. Additional tuition by the credit (at in-state or out-of-state rates, whichever applies) will be charged for any credits over 18 in these semesters.

Summer internships are the exception to this rule. If you register for an internship during the summer semester, you will be charged for tuition by the credit. The full-time tuition rates that you experience during the fall and spring semesters do not apply to the summer semester. Note: Please check summer credit fees on the NVU website at <https://www.northernvermont.edu/admissions-and-aid/applying-nvu/tuition-and-fees>.

## Paid or Unpaid? What Should I Consider?

Some internships are paid and some are not and you can earn academic credit either way. Explore all of your options before reaching a decision regarding the type of internship best suited to your needs. Some of the best internships are not paid but may provide a rich learning experience. Others may offer a small stipend or an hourly wage. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 32% of interns were paid (offering an average of \$12.93/hour) and another 7% of interns received a stipend (examples include housing, tips, commission, or financial awards of stipend, such as \$10,150 for 672 hours as a wilderness therapy guide, or \$15.10/hour).

Earning academic credits for an internship is dependent upon registering (and paying) for those credits. Academic credit cannot be awarded for work already completed, so be sure to work out credit arrangements in advance of beginning your internship.

Credit-bearing internships have an academic component, so be sure to budget time for the reading and writing that will be part of a credit-bearing internship.

## How Can I Assess What Internship Would be a Good Fit for Me?

It is recommended that more than one site is considered for an internship site. Do not pursue the 'easy' or 'easy to find' internship site; challenge yourself to seek sites that align with desired learning objectives and allow you to network with a professional network that will advance your career search. Approximately 50% of Johnson interns are offered a job by the site. Make the choice to find a site where you could see yourself employed.

Ultimately, you'd like to have two, three or four options for a well-suited internship site. Conduct informational interviews to determine what site is the best site. Please see the NVU Career Guide or visit <https://www.northernvermont.edu/networking/informational-interviews-and-job-shadowing> for an overview of how to conduct an informational interview.

## Can I Create My Own Internship?

Yes! Many of the best internships are those you create yourself through active outreach. Consider the type of work you are seeking and identify the organizations that might perform that type of work. Contact the human resources director at the site to explore the possibility of setting up an internship. If the internship site has questions about hosting an intern and supervising an intern, please refer them to the Site Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities found below.

## Who Is My Internship Faculty Supervisor?

Most academic departments have internship coordinators, and all departments have faculty internship supervisors. You can ask your academic advisor or your department's administrative assistant what faculty can supervise your internship.

**DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS:** For questions about internships or how to connect with the faculty supervisor in your area of study, please contact the NVU Online Advising Office at [NVUOnlineAdvising@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:NVUOnlineAdvising@NorthernVermont.edu) or 802.635.1275.

## Is there Financial Assistance for my Internship?

Through a generous donation from Union Bank, mini-grants of up to \$250 are available to help cover internship expenses, such as gas/transportation, internship-related conferences and workshops, and reimbursement for mandatory background checks. Applicants must be undergraduates completing an internship for credit, must have submitted their internship contracts by the due dates, and must have completed the online grant application by its due date to be eligible. Awards may be limited by the funds available. Questions? Contact Director of Career Development, Beth Walsh at [Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu) or 802.635.1377.

# Roles and Responsibilities of NVU, Faculty Supervisor, Cooperating Site, Site Supervisor and Student

The NVU contract has a cooperative education agreement that specifies general responsibilities of the parties involved: Student, Site Supervisor, and University Faculty Supervisor.

## **I. Responsibilities of Northern Vermont University-Johnson:**

1. Establish University policies and standards for the conduct of its co-op/internship program and to make policies and standards available to the Site Sponsor
2. The University will award academic credit
3. Will maintain general liability insurance in an amount not less than one million dollars. The University will provide evidence of such insurance coverage to the Site Sponsor upon request
4. Enforce any additional rules and procedures that are mutually agreed upon in writing between the University and the Site Sponsor

## **II. Responsibilities of Northern Vermont University faculty supervisor:**

1. Assist student in internship site exploration, site selection, and contract negotiation
2. Certify the student's academic eligibility to participate in an internship assignment
3. Discuss appropriate internship conduct with his/her intern
4. Encourage the student's productive contribution to the overall mission of the Site Sponsor
5. Oversee the internship progress which includes scheduling meetings with the student intern, conducting site visits (where appropriate and possible), providing academic supervision of the student, and assessing the student's academic progress
6. Maintain communication with the Site Supervisor and/or Site Agency to ensure that the student is progressing satisfactorily, using the NVU-Johnson Internship Evaluation Form
7. Submit a 'Pass/No Pass' or a letter grade, as per the student's request, at the end of the internship
8. Enforce any additional rules and procedures that are mutually agreed upon in writing, between the University and the Site Sponsor

## **III. Responsibilities of Cooperating Site:**

1. Site Agency will designate the appropriate employee to serve as the student's Site Supervisor
2. Site Agency will make available equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the student to perform his/her duties
3. Site Agency will provide a safe working environment
4. Site Agency will not displace regular workers with students secured through internship referral
5. Site agency will not discriminate in employment policies or practices on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, qualified disability, national or ethnic origin, marital status, religion, age, or veteran's status

## **IV. Responsibilities of Site Supervisor:**

1. Site Supervisor will help the student complete the job-description specifics of the internship contract
2. Will be the principle agent for providing experiential learning
3. Designate an employee to serve as the student's mentor with responsibilities to help orient the student to the site and its cultures, to assist in the development of learning objectives, to confer regularly with the student and their faculty supervisor and to monitor the progress of the student
4. As per the contract, complete bi-weekly reports, and/or a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation of the student's work performance, and will submit these evaluations to the Northern Vermont University faculty supervisor
5. Make available equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the student to perform their duties
6. Provide a safe working environment

7. Site agency will operate with ethical behavior and demonstrate respect for key moral principles that include honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity and individual rights
8. Allow a faculty representative to visit the worksite to confer with the student and their supervisor
9. Will contact the University's faculty supervisor as early as possible if a problem arises during the internship

#### V. Responsibilities of Student Intern

1. Student must submit the completed/signed internship contract to the Provost's Office for final approval before beginning their internship. Once approved, the Provost's Office will forward the internship contract to the Student Administrative Services Office for registration of the internship credits
2. Maintain student status and abide by the regulations, policies, and practices of both the internship site and the University
3. Adhere to the standards of the profession and act accordingly
4. Strive to learn as much as possible from the Site Supervisor regarding job experience, work attitude, and skill development
5. Honor the confidentiality of any information about individuals, students, staff, or internship site
6. Utilize supervision and be open to direction and constructive criticism
7. Take responsibility for their own preparation and readiness to contribute effectively to assigned tasks
8. Contact the Faculty Supervisor if there are questions or concerns related to the internship
9. Maintain personal health, accident, disability, and hospitalization insurance coverage, as well as professional liability insurance if applicable
10. Complete a mid-term evaluation and final self-evaluation, or other pre-determined evaluation criteria
11. Complete all academic requirements agreed upon and as outlined within the internship contract

## Is There a Deadline for the Internship Contract?

Contracts are due by the last day of classes of the preceding semester (last day of spring semester for summer and fall internships; last day of fall semester for spring internships). Extensions may be given and the student is responsible for requesting the extension to the internship faculty supervisor.

The contract beginning date and ending date must align with the academic calendar semester so that the student is supported by the faculty during the duration of the internship. Also, the faculty supervisor must assign a grade at the end the semester which will also be the end of the internship.

Check with your academic advisor to see if an internship makes sense in terms of your overall degree plan and what course requirements, if any, are needed for an internship. Clearly it takes time to locate an internship site, negotiate a contract and secure all signatures; please take action to determine and to secure a site well in advance. All signatures must be obtained before a student can begin an internship; please plan accordingly.

## What is the Internship Process?

**PREPARE →SEARCH →CREATE →INTERN**

### PREPARE

*How do I prepare before seeking an internship?*



1. **Meet with Career & Internship Center staff** (located in Dewey Hall) to develop a strategy for identifying and applying for potential internships.
2. **Attend Career and Internship Fairs** on and off campus (NVU-J hosts Career and Internship Fairs each semester in the SHAPE Center). Each semester other Vermont colleges and universities host Internship and Job Fairs that are open to all students.
3. **Meet with your academic advisor** to indicate that you are ready to pursue your internship. Your advisor will direct you to the faculty supervisor designated for your discipline. Many departments post internships specific to their majors. Investigate possible internship sites with a faculty member, on your own, and/or with the Career & Internship Center.
4. **Prepare a resume.** Contact Beth Walsh, Director of Career Development for support at [Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu). Employers often ask for a resume and it is recommended to have a high-quality resume before you start your search so you can send them your resume quickly. Advice for creating or enhancing your resume can be found in the Career & Internship Center's Career Guide.
5. **Develop Internship Objectives**  
Once you have secured an internship position, begin preparing for your new job. Give thought in advance to what you hope to learn and gain from your internship that will help you make the most of the opportunity.
  - What do you want to experience, with what population do you want to engage?
  - What issues are you passionate about or are you curious to learn more about?
  - What do you want to learn? (skills, knowledge, attitudes)
6. **Prepare for an Interview.** Consider doing a mock interview with Beth Walsh, Director of Career Development). Contact her at [Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu).

## SEARCH

### *How do I search for an internship?*

1. **Search for Internship Sites.** Search opportunities on the NVU internships website. The "Past Internship Sites" link lists all past internships by department over the past five years with internship job titles and hyper-links to all organization and business sites. <https://www.northernvermont.edu/nvu-johnson-internships>

Search College Central Network, our online job and internship portal. Hundreds of employers have posted opportunities and are searching for students who are seeking internships. See this site for more information: <https://www.northernvermont.edu/academics/support/careers-and-internships>

Use your "network" of family, friends, classmates, faculty, former employers, and others to help you with ideas for possible internships. It is recommended that more than one site is considered for an internship site. Do not pursue the 'easy' or 'easy to find' internship site; challenge yourself to seek sites that align with desired learning objectives and allow you to network with a professional network that will advance your career search. 50% of Johnson interns are offered a job by the site and 45% report working at their internship site. Make the choice to find a site where you could see yourself employed.

Ultimately, you'd like to have two, three or four options for a well-suited internship site.



Inquire at potential sites and if they are interested in you and you feel it is a good match, apply to intern. It's a wise practice to conduct informational interviews to determine what site is the best site. See the NVU website to learn more: <https://www.northernvermont.edu/networking/informational-interviews-and-job-shadowing>

2. **Choose Your Site.** Students explore options for internship sites and determine the "best match" in regards to organization mission/programs/services/mentoring potential and the student's desired learning outcomes. The document "How to Determine Where to Intern" can help you determine what sites you might want to explore (found on NVU Internship Resources weblink).

## CREATE

### *How do I create an internship contract?*

Once a site has agreed to host you as an intern, it's time to negotiate the internship contract. as to be typed. The contract is a professional document and must be typed so that it is legible to all parties. Once a site has agreed to provide an internship opportunity, the student takes the lead to create an [Internship Contract](#) . Fill out page one (Student Information, Faculty Information, Site Information, and Contract Information).

### **Complete Job Description Specifics**

The student should meet with the **site supervisor** to complete the **Job Description Specifics** of the Internship Contract including Job Title, Duties and Responsibilities, Special Projects, Supervision, Evaluation Criteria, Job Scope and Collaboration Potential, Experience and/or Education requirements, and Professional Development Opportunities.

### What Makes a Strong Job Title in My Contract?

With your site supervisor, create a job title that is reflective of your work. The title 'INTERN' doesn't tell a prospective employer what you did. For example, did you facilitate programs? If so, "co-facilitator" or "facilitator" may be fitting. Did you work at a bank and work in lending? Perhaps your title could be "mortgage intern." Did you engage in any type of teaching? Then perhaps, "educator" or "trainer" could be appropriate. The point is that you want a job title that gives your reader of your resume an idea of what type of work you engaged in as an intern, rather than that you were an intern. A sample of recent internship job titles include:

Marketing Research Intern	Police Intern	Victim's Advocate
Gallery Assistant	Youth Development Intern	Speech Therapy Assistant
Sports Information and Marketing Intern	Radio Broadcast Intern	Veterinarian Intern
Behavioral Interventionist	Environmental Service Technician	Massage Therapy Intern

Spa Management Assistant & Wellness Coordinator	Tactical Strength & Conditioning Facilitator	After School Program Counselor
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## How Do I Create Strong Learning Objectives?

Learning objectives provide the foundation and framework for learning during an internship experience. The learning objectives should be able to answer the question “what will I be able to do as a result of this internship?” What skills and objectives do you want to achieve for your internship? Detail this and state what specific job tasks and responsibilities will allow you to achieve these goals. The student can create draft language of the Learning Objectives and electronically send the contract (in a word.doc so edits can be made, NOT a PDF) to their faculty supervisor. The student and the faculty supervisor will edit and complete the learning objectives and academic requirements section of the contract.

When formulating your learning objectives, think about these questions:

- Do I want to connect this internship experience to certain course content and theories?
- What skills do I want to develop or enhance? Be aware that work assignments and the internship site will determine the type of skills you want to develop.

Learning objectives could include:

- Focus on the technical aspects and skills related to the discipline
- Attentive to business-related issues and/or organizational functions
- Emphasis on communication skills (internal and external lines of business communications and interpersonal communications)

Hints for developing objective statements:

Start each with an active verb such as:

- Develop
- Enhance
- Expand
- Gain
- Demonstrate
- Strengthen
- Participate
- Create

Click here for a list of [strong action verbs by skills category](https://www.livecareer.com/resources/jobs/search/action-skills)

(<https://www.livecareer.com/resources/jobs/search/action-skills>)

Describe what it is you want to learn or experience. The following are often helpful in describing objectives:

- Experience
- Ability
- Knowledge
- Understand
- Insight (specific skills)

Examples of internship learning objectives:

- Gain experience in creating website designs for clientele
- Enhance skills to support youth who have experienced trauma
- Gain knowledge of local resources to support youth who have experienced trauma
- Analyze political theories used in campaign planning
- Develop training facilitation skills for youth development programs
- Expand plant identification skills

- Enhance effective communication skills and strategies (listening, open ended questions, effective feedback)
- Develop strategies for self-care and decompression
- Gain an understanding of the inventory control process
- Strengthen interpersonal communication skills with customers

## How Do I Create Academic Requirements?

Work with your internship faculty supervisor to complete the Academic Requirements section of the contract. This could include a research paper/writing assignment, progress reports, portfolio of work examples, oral presentations, evaluations, final reflection synthesis paper, timesheet, and book reviews.

## How Do I Determine a Research Paper Topic?

If your faculty supervisor has required you to complete a research paper connected to your internship, the topic/s should mirror one of your desired learning objectives. Which of the learning objectives is most important to you? The research paper is an opportunity to step away from your internship site, conduct research that will enhance your understanding of a theory, current topic in your field, and enhance your efficacy in the field. What research topic would help to support your learning in the field? Choose a topic that interests you and challenges you. Take a look at your learning objectives that you have created and determine which one would be a good topic to delve into. What could you research that would allow you to further understand what you are doing at your internship? It could be about a particular concept or theory that you learned in a course and that is 'coming to life' at your internship site. It could be about best practices, or specific research that brings together your learning objective and the tasks you are performing on-site, or it could be a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

The best research paper is a topic that is focused on a narrow issue and allows you to dive into the topic and increases your understanding and efficacy as an intern. Consider asking your site supervisor or workplace colleagues for research suggestions or best practices that align with your internship. Work in consultation with your faculty supervisor to determine a topic that will enhance the overall internship experience.

A few weeks into your internship you may discover something that really excites you that you want to research further. Your topic of the paper can change, with approval from your faculty supervisor. This is the power of an internship; the student is taking the lead on creating and pursuing desired learning objectives, with support from both site and faculty supervisors.

## Other Academic Requirements

Your faculty supervisor will establish the academic requirements for your internship. The experience on-site is invaluable, and the academic requirements further the learning and support on-going evaluation. Information of reflection is located on the internship website, as well as bi-weekly report forms, timesheets and evaluation forms.

## Seek Signatures

The student intern is responsible for securing all signatures. These signatures are required so that all parties are aware of the job description specifics, the learning objectives and the academic requirements.

Signatures required include:

- Student
- Site Supervisor
- Academic Advisor (recommended)
- Faculty Supervisor
- Department Chairperson

Once all these signatures are obtained, the contract is delivered to the Provost’s office in Martinetti Hall for review and final approval. Once approved, the contract is forwarded to the Registrar’s Office and the student is registered for the academic internship credits. These credits are added to the student’s schedule. Scanned PDF copies of the contract (with a PDF version of the [NVU Internship Guide](#)) are emailed to the student, site supervisor, and faculty supervisor.

Students must have an approved internship contract on file with the Registrar’s Office before beginning their internship and to be registered for the internship credits.

Do not start your internship before the contract has been approved by the Provost’s Office. Occasionally contracts are denied; if you have spent time on site, those hours may be “lost”.

- Students are responsible for all academic requirements as agreed upon in the internship contract (reflective journals, bi-weekly reports, research paper, oral presentation, final synthesis paper, etc.). All academic work is given to the faculty supervisor for review and grading.
- Students must keep a timesheet that is signed off by the site supervisor. Submit this timesheet to your faculty supervisor.
- Students and the site supervisor must complete evaluations at mid-term and end of term.
- The faculty supervisor meets with the students over the course of the semester, via email, telephone calls, meetings, and a potential site visit.

## DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP

### What Makes a High-Quality Intern?

Make the most of your internship. Know the dress code and dress for success. Know the protocol for cell phone use, ask your supervisor the best way to communicate with staff or clients, be positive and proactive. Review this list of positive and negative intern traits provided by employers as reported in *Internship Success: Real-World, Step-by-Step Advice on Getting the Most Out of Internships* by M.E. Green (NTC/ Contemporary Publishing Co., Chicago, 1997). Model the positive traits to the best of your ability!

Positive Traits of Interns	Negative Traits of Interns
Asks a lot of questions	Fails to ask relevant questions
Follows directions well	Follows own agenda
Understands some “go-fer” work is a part of the job	Objects to routine work

Displays enthusiasm	Lacks energy and enthusiasm
Actively looks for things to do	Fails to display initiative
Follows rules and regulations	Disregards office rules and policies
Socializes appropriately with staff	Has poor interpersonal skills
Exhibits punctuality and dependability	Displays irresponsibility and lack of punctuality
Works to understand the organization	Jumps in too soon without knowing the organization
Checks out all projects with the supervisor	Fails to keep supervisor informed about activities

## How Do I Reflect on My Internship?

### REFLECTION ♥ journaling<sup>1</sup>

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."

-Anais Nin

**Reflection is** a crucial part of community-based learning, which allows interns/volunteers to look back on, think critically about, and learn from their experience. Reflection may include acknowledging and/or sharing of reactions, feelings, observations, and ideas about anything regarding the activity. Reflection can happen through writing, speaking, listening, reading, drawing, acting, and any other way you can imagine.

*"How much do I write in my journal?"*

There is not a prescribed length of journal submissions. However, it is expected that you introduce the business/organization, mission, products/programs/services, and your role as an intern. Detail your orientation to staff and programs. How are you feeling? What are you learning? What challenges are you experiencing? How are you solving these challenges? What questions do you have? Please use this document to jump start your thinking. You can use the questions in the "What? So What? Now What?" section below to help you write your reflective journal. Ask your faculty supervisor if you can submit a hand-written journal (as long as you write legibly) or if it needs to be typed and sent via email.

#### Weekly Internship Journal Prompts

Keeping a weekly journal will help you see your growth in knowledge and skills of leadership, problem solving and decision-making. There are no set questions to answer in your journaling, but suggestions that follow may help guide

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<sup>1</sup> Source - Northwest Service Academy, Metro Center, Portland, OR

your thinking. Be sure to start each entry with the date, time spent at the site, and the activities you performed. Please do not rush through this process; it's important to give careful thought and reflection to your experience.

Journals are due as per your internship contract. While there is no defined expectation for length, we seek quality reflections that convey your experiences and your learning. Hand these in to your faculty supervisor who will make comments and return to you.

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**Why Reflect?** We do not learn from doing, we learn from thinking about what we do. Research shows that reflection has *some* positive impact on the attitudes of the interns regarding service.<sup>i</sup> However, the lack of reflection has a **STRONG NEGATIVE** impact on the intern's attitudes about service and the service activity.

## Benefits of Reflection<sup>ii</sup>

- Gives meaning to the experience (was goal accomplished, how did we do, how is community served by this, how is this part of a larger effort, etc.)
- Provides an opportunity to establish expectations (individually, team)
- Can help interns understand the limitations and opportunities of the organization/business
- Relieves tension and provides re-energizing and renewal (especially important when the work is emotionally challenging)
- Can create a sense of accomplishment that is crucial, especially where there are limited external rewards
- Can create a habit of appreciating ourselves
- Improves performance – As interns examine the effects of their behavior, they discover ways to improve the quality and quantity of their work
- Can create a sense of closure, especially important after a long service period, project, or emotional experience
- Enhances personal and team development
- Fosters life-long learning skills– develops an ability to learn from positive and negative experiences
- “Reality Check” – guards against reinforcing inaccurate perceptions/biases
- Personal problem solving increases personal empowerment, confidence
- Clarifies values as interns confront new situations
- Provides practice clarifying goals and making choices to accomplish these goals
- Encourages interns to do higher level thinking, as they look for root causes of complex issues
- Acknowledges gained skills gained builds confidence

*“A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.”*

*– Oliver Wendall Holmes*

## The Reflective Process:

**What? So What? Now What?** This is a well-used and successful model to assist you in designing the reflection activities. Focusing on all three aspects will provide broader insights and keep you from getting stuck on only the facts or just the feelings.

1. **What?** (Reporting what happened, objectively). Without judgment or interpretation, describe in detail the facts and event(s) of your service experience.

Questions that you can respond to include:

*What happened? What did you observe? What issue is being addressed or population is being served? What were the results of the project? What events or “critical incidents” occurred? What was of particular notice? How did you feel about that? Let’s hear from someone who had a different reaction?*

“No gem can be polished without friction, nor human perfected without trial.”

Confucius

2. **So What?** (What did you learn? What difference did the event make?) Discuss your feelings, ideas, and analysis of the service experience. Questions can also be focused on the meaning or importance of the activity to:

- **The Participant (the intern):** *Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest? Did you hear, smell, feel anything that surprised you? What feelings or thoughts seem most strong today? How is your experience different from what you expected? What struck you about that? How was that significant? What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?) What do the critical incidents mean to you? How did you respond to them? What did you like/dislike about the experience?*
- **The Recipient:** *Did the “service” empower the recipient to become more self-sufficient? What did you learn about the people/community that we served? What might impact the recipient’s views or experience of the project?*
- **The Community:** *What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community? How does this project address those needs? How, specifically, has the community benefited? What is the least impact you can imagine for the project? With unlimited creativity, what is the most impact on the community that you can imagine?*
- **The Group** (group projects): *In what ways did the group work well together? What does that suggest to you about the group? How might the group have accomplished its task more effectively? In what ways did others help you today? (and vice versa) How were decisions made? Were everybody’s ideas listened to?*

“Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts”

- Albert Einstein

3. **Now What?** (How will you think or act in the future as a result of this experience?) Consider broader implications of the service experience and demonstrate what you have learned. Some questions that you can respond to include:

*What seems to be the root causes of the issue/problem addressed? What kinds of activities are currently taking place in the community related to this project? What contributes to the success of projects like this? What hinders success? What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning? What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue? What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties? What information can you share with your peers or community volunteers? If you were in charge of the project, what would you do to improve it? If you could do the project again, what would you do differently? What would “complete” the service?*



**Yet More Weekly Internship Journal Prompts** that may help guide your thinking and writing (*adapted in part from “Weekly Internship Journal Blog Prompts” by the Chicago Programs*). Use these questions as a springboard to your journaling.

### **Environment**

**Office Politics:** What have you experienced with respect to the written or unwritten rules regarding protocol, hierarchy, and/or communication at your internship site?

**Space Design & Layout:** How does the physical space (aesthetics, layout, decorations, furniture, cubicles/doors/windows, etc.) impact the day-to-day operation?

**Dress:** How do different people at your site or involved with your site (i.e., clients/customers, etc.) dress and what deeper conclusions can you draw from this? Does this impact personal interactions? In what ways?

**Diversity:** What types of diversity do you see in the personnel and the client base? How have you observed/experienced individuals from different demographic groups (gender, different ages, sexual orientation, race, etc.) interacting with each other?

**Social Conscience:** How well do you believe your site is demonstrating a strong commitment to improve the world (i.e., environment, community, education, youth, etc.)? Explain.

**Funding:** What different sources of funding does the organization utilize to maintain operations? (Tip – you may need to interview someone for this answer). In your opinion, are there ample resources to fund future projects and is there a plan to secure these funds?

**Evaluation:** How is performance evaluated?

**Location:** How does the location of your internship site (e.g., neighborhood, surrounding businesses, access to food, etc.) impact its operation?

**Community:** Does the organization seem to be an active member of the community (however this is defined)? If so, how? If not, should it be and how could this be accomplished?

**Events:** How do the events either supported or put on directly by your internship site relate to the purpose of the organization?

**Sector:** Depending on the sector (for-profit, non-profit, or governmental) your internship is in, how does the structure impact the ability of the organization to accomplish its goals? (Consider layers of management, board of directors, volunteers, etc.) Explain.

**Size:** How many individuals do you work with, either directly or indirectly, at your internship site? How do you believe the size of the organization relates to their ability to succeed?

**Mission:** Compare and contrast the mission statement of the organization with what you observe in the day-to-day operations. Do they actually accomplish their mission?

## **Interpersonal**

Culture/Collegiality: How would you describe the culture within your organization (ways in which co-workers interact or don't interact) and how does this fit with your "ideal" employer? What insights have you gained about the people you work with?

Building your Network: How have you or others in this organization effectively utilized relationship building/networking? In what ways can you build a strong network with those you work with for future benefit?

Collaboration: Describe the way in which the organization collaborates with other groups in the area. Tell about a person who is interesting or challenging to work with. Explain why.

Mentoring: In what ways have you experienced or witnessed either informal or formal mentoring taking place within the organization?

**"If you want to build a ship, don't drum to the women and men to gather wood, and divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."**

**Antoine De Saint-Exupery, *The Wisdom of the Sands***

## **Tasks**

Time: How structured/guided is your time? How effective/ineffective does that make you?

Career Path: If you wanted to follow in the career path of someone at your internship site, what would you need to do to make this happen? (Tip – ask the person for advice and use this in your response.) Ask if you can conduct an informational interview and ask questions. What is the process for gaining employment in this organization? How often are opportunities available? What is the salary range? What are advancement opportunities? Is this type of organization or type of work something that you enjoy? Consider why this organization meets or fails to meet your career objectives.

Workload: How does the organization distribute the level of work among the staff? How equitable do you believe the distribution is?

Tasks: What types of tasks are you discovering that you enjoy or excel at completing? Which ones are less attractive or fulfilling?

Looking Back: How has your experience at Northern Vermont University prepared you for your internship? How have you used your liberal arts education in your internship?

## **Overall Experience**

Tell about the best thing that happened: something said or done, a feeling, an insight, a goal accomplished. What is the easiest or most difficult part of your work? What do you feel is your main contribution?

Venting: What about your internship do you absolutely despise or that leaves a bad taste in your mouth? (use this opportunity to vent privately).

CEO or Executive Director for a Day: If you were running this organization, what would you change and why?

Surprise: What about your internship is the most surprising to you (i.e., what did you least expect going into the experience) and what lesson(s) can you draw from this?

*"I was taught that the world had a lot of problems; that I could struggle and change them; that intellectual and material gifts brought the privilege and responsibility of sharing with others less fortunate; and that service is the rent each of us pay for a living . . . the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals."* Marian Wright Edelman

## How Do I Evaluate My Internship?

Evaluation is a critical part of the internship process. Not only does it give you the chance to reflect on your internship experience, but it also gives you the opportunity to help improve the experience for future interns and the site supervisors who host them. These forms are found at <https://www.northernvermont.edu/academics/careers-and-internships-nvu/internships/nvu-johnson-internships>

Students are asked to complete three forms during the course of their internship.

- 1) **[Student Self Evaluation Internship Form](#)**: Students should complete this form at the mid-point of their internship and near the completion of the internship. Aside from a few small details, it is exactly the same form that your internship site supervisor will be filling out. You will be asked to evaluate yourself based on the same questions your site supervisor will evaluate you upon. This form also allows you to evaluate your site and your site supervisor.
- 2) **[Faculty Supervisor Evaluation Form](#)**: Students should complete this form at mid-point of their internship and near the completion of the internship. Your feedback on the quality of the supervision you received from your NVU-Johnson faculty supervisor will provide important feedback for your faculty supervisor. The information is confidential and will not be seen by your faculty supervisor. Please email this form to Susan Nichols at [Susan.Nichols@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Susan.Nichols@NorthernVermont.edu).
- 3) **[Site Supervisor Evaluation of Student Intern](#)**: This form should be sent to the site supervisor at mid-point of the internship and near the completion of the internship. Their feedback on the quality of the work you're offered is important feedback for the intern and the faculty supervisor. The completed form should be sent to the faculty supervisor.

## How Do I Keep Track of My Internship Hours?

Use the Internship Timesheet Form (<https://www.northernvermont.edu/nvu-johnson-internships>) to log all hours. Hours that can be included are orientation, trainings, conferences, direct service work, supervisory meetings, and travel IF your internship includes transporting people. Your supervisor will be initialing these timesheets, so it's best to place both the hours of the day, i.e. 9-1 and the total, 4 hours. PLEASE total your timesheet before you send to your faculty supervisor (due dates of your timesheet are detailed in your contract). The intern is responsible to track hours and to monitor that you are in the "right amount of time" for this time into the semester. For example, if it is the fifth week of the semester, you should be approximately 1/3 of the way to your target hours. A three credit, 135-hour internship should be at ~ 33% complete, or ~ 45 hours. Plan accordingly with your site supervisor. A note about the supervisor signature: have them simply initial the page for verification of hours (they don't need to initial every time entry).

## **The NVU-J Internship Timesheet has a PROJECT section, what am I supposed to put there?**

Please detail what you worked on during those hours; it may be direct service, a training, conference, etc. If you are basically doing the same tasks every week, simply leave PROJECT section blank.

**Does the time I spend researching my topic for the paper or writing reflective journals count as internship hours? NO**

## **I Am Having Challenges on My Internship Site. What Should I Do?**

Many obstacles can present themselves during the internship. Remember, this is a testing ground for you and will allow you to learn to navigate the workplace. Often, you can address the issue at hand by adjusting behaviors or being direct with your new colleagues. Sometimes, the issues can be more challenging and extreme professional tact must be used. Internships are great, yet challenges can arise.

Issues can vary from 'not what you expected' to you feel you are 'not learning as much as you thought you would'. The response is not clearly defined, yet ideas to rectify are abundant. For example:

### **What if My Internship is Not What I Expected?**

#### **1. Assess the Situation**

As soon as you realize that your internship is not going in the right direction, take a step back and think about what is happening. Why did you expect it to be different? Were you promised a lot more than you are being given? Are you not getting the hourly pay or stipend that was listed on the job posting? Did you think you were going to get hands-on public relations experience, but you actually spend most of your time cleaning and taking out the garbage?

Make a list of what you feel is wrong. Writing it on paper will help you organize your thoughts and concerns. You might realize that some of those "problems" aren't as bad as you originally thought, or maybe there really is something suspicious going on here.

#### **2. Ask Around to Other Interns**

If there are other interns in your office or building, you should definitely reach out to them or observe what they're up to. If they seem to be having the same experience as you, maybe you can go through the rest of these steps together. However, if they are having a positive experience, you should find out what they are doing differently. Maybe they are taking more initiative or being more social. If you change those little things while you're on the job, there is a good chance that your experience might change for the better. Your fellow interns can help make your internship better, and now you might have a new friend too!

#### **3. Make the Most Out of Your Time**

Everyone hates hearing this, but maybe it's you that needs to change, not the internship. If you act like you're not happy to be there, then you will probably never be truly happy. Try your best to be motivated, and act like you want this job. Staying on top of your assignments is so important, but interns are often left with extra time. Ask for extra work (most supervisors would love to have more help), and request time to take employees to coffee to learn more about them, their roles, and their career paths. Refer to this site for more information: <https://www.northernvermont.edu/networking/informational-interviews-and-job-shadowing>

#### 4. *Talk to Your Supervisor*

If you feel that you are not learning the skills that you had hoped, your supervisor might be able help. While you might not want to flat-out say that you aren't happy with your internship, talk to them about what you were expecting to learn. Your boss might be able to find responsibilities that are in line with what you're looking for. If you have any other questions or concerns, make sure to bring them up! If your boss isn't open to allowing you to do other work, at least you will realize what kind of internship you want (and don't want).

#### 5. *Network with Employees*

Networking is a huge part of getting new jobs and opportunities. At every internship you get, make sure to stop in and say hello to all of the employees. Since they have actual positions at the company, find out how they got there. They might even have suggestions for you. Even if your experience at the internship is not the greatest, at least you will leave knowing that you made as many connections as possible. While it is definitely unfortunate if your internship is not what you expected, following these five steps will help you make the most of it.

Amina A. (July 24, 2017). *5 Steps You Can Take if Your Internship Isn't What You Expected*. Retrieved from <https://www.wayup.com/guide/community/contributor-5-steps-you-can-take-if-your-internship-isnt-what-you-expected/>

The value of a well written internship contract is that it provides clarity for the student intern, the site supervisor and the faculty supervisor. If you are being told to do a lot of tasks that seem "off task" and not a part of the contract, ask to meet with your site supervisor and review the contract and ask if tasks can be modified to reflect the contract. **If you are still having concerns, contact your faculty supervisor for support.**

### What if I'm Not Getting Enough Direction?

Ask your supervisor for weekly supervisory meetings. Interns should be treated with the same respect as other employees and in fact, interns require more guidance and check-ins. Ask to create project goals and benchmarks. Use the Bi-Weekly Report Form (<https://www.northernvermont.edu/academics/careers-and-internships/nvu-johnson-internships>) to track progress, set goals, identify challenges, assess learning, and describe professional development opportunities.

## AFTER YOUR INTERNSHIP

### How Can I Capture the Internship on My Resume?

When using a chronological resume, you will list your internship experiences with other Relevant Experiences (if it is relevant to the position to which you are applying) or with Additional Experience. Wherever your internship is located, you will include some descriptive lines that elaborate on the responsibilities, accomplishments and/or skills used during this experience. Think about the transferable skills that you learned and used, the descriptive lines should be concise, with enough detail to paint a clear picture of how your experience makes you uniquely qualified for the position to which you are applying. See the NVU-Johnson Career Guide to help you write these and meet with Beth Walsh, Director of Career Development, to review your resume.

## What Are Some Strong Examples of Internships on Resumes?

**Research Intern, NVU-Johnson Social Interactions Space Lab, Johnson, VT**

Aug 2019 – Present

- Recruit up to 100 participants, manage compensation, and analyze data
- Monitor participation data for abnormalities
- Prepare conditions for upcoming experimental study

**Assistant Manager Intern, Morrisville Tree Farm, Morrisville, VT**

August 2019 – Present

- Plant, cultivate, irrigate and spray over 300 evergreens for ornamental/Christmas trees
- Properly maintain seedling stock to ensure future supplies
- Supervise 20 employees and create additional training opportunities
- Commended for providing a positive work atmosphere, increasing employee motivation and output

**Clinical Intern, Maple Leaf Treatment Center, Underhill, VT**

Aug. – Dec. 2018

- Observed clinical sessions, psychoeducational and process groups, MAT Bridge Program, and admissions
- Engaged in assessment, screening, treatment planning, aftercare referrals, and relapse prevention planning
- Co-facilitated women's process groups (2 groups of 10 to 15 attendees) and psychoeducational skills groups (3 groups of 6)

**Assistant Poetry Editor Intern, Green Mountains Review, NVU-Johnson, Johnson, VT**

Jan. 2019 – Present

- Read through 75 submissions to determine which submissions will appear in the Green Mountains Review
- Send rejection, thank you, and sponsor letters to authors and supporters of Green Mountains Review
- Represent Green Mountains Review and sell books at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference and Book Fair (Seattle, Washington)
- Collaborate with fellow interns to edit Green Mountains Review Books
- Create an Excel spreadsheet to document all published authors in Green Mountains Review

**Family Support Programs Coordinator Intern**

*Prevent Child Abuse Vermont, St. Johnsbury and Morrisville, VT*

Sept. 2018 – Mar. 2019

- Promoted and established Nurturing Parenting Programs
- Responded to diverse needs of participants, including locating information, supports, and community resources
- Facilitated three workshops, with 5 to 10 participants, on relevant family topics
- Planned programs and worked effectively with co-facilitators

## Do Internships Lead to Jobs?

Internships allow students to explore career opportunities, develop new skills, and establish a professional network. Many students report internships as a highlight of their academic experience. For the 2018-19 academic year, there were 169 NVU-Johnson students interning for 906 credits and offering 48,696 hours of work in numerous businesses, nonprofits, community initiatives, and in the governmental sector. These numbers are impressive, and vitally important to these experiential education opportunities is the learning, the networking, and the career exploration.

According to the 2019 NVU-Johnson Graduate Survey:

- 45% of the students who interned are currently employed at the internship/practicum site
- 5% of the students received a job offer at their internship site to continue but declined
- 25% report being hired elsewhere because of internship experience

**Clearly, internships matter!** Seventy-five percent of our graduates who interned feel their internships were crucial in their job search success. We are thankful to the employers who are opening their doors and supporting high-impact learning for interns. We are also impressed and proud of the way our students contribute to Vermont organizations and beyond, as Cindy Wells, a supervisor at Prevent Child Abuse Vermont, reflected, *“I have worked with a number of students and individuals in various kinds of training programs. Some of them have been wonderful and shown much promise, while some unfortunately have not. Certainly, at this point, I would put my (Johnson) intern in the top 10% of those that I have worked with. We need more like her.”*

Thank you to our community partners who host interns, offer professional mentorship and become co-educators for our students.

For more information on internships, please contact:

**NVU-Johnson:**

**Your Faculty Advisor or**

Beth Walsh, M.Ed., Director of Career Development  
802-635-1377, [Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Beth.Walsh@NorthernVermont.edu)  
Career & Internship Center, Dewey Hall  
Northern Vermont University  
Johnson, VT 05656

**NVU-Lyndon:**

Amy Wright, Director of Career Services  
802-626-6441, [Amy.Wright@NorthernVermont.edu](mailto:Amy.Wright@NorthernVermont.edu)  
Career Services, LAC 323  
Northern Vermont University  
Lyndon, VT 05849

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<sup>i</sup> “Key Elements of Service Learning,” Indiana Department of Education, Service Learning Program

<sup>ii</sup> Info taken from “Learning Through Service,” Kate McPherson, Project Service Leadership, and “Possible Outcomes of Service Learning,” National Youth Leadership Council.