Kinesiology Internship Manual

Kinesiology Internship Program, School of Kinesiology, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University

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This manual is designed to provide an overview of the internship experience in the Kinesiology program. The following sections outline the purpose, requirements, and responsibilities of all parties involved with the internship experience.

1. Purpose, Objectives and Definitions

Kinesiology students complete three required internship classes totaling 700 hours as part of the program's comprehensive approach to the study of human movement. Internships provide KINE students with the opportunity to apply evidence-based knowledge in general fitness, clinical, and sports performance settings. Approved sites are designed to provide an environment in which students can foster their development as research-savvy practitioners, demonstrate skills, and transition into chosen careers through guided experiential learning. The final internship (KINE 490: Internship III) is a Mason Core Synthesis course which provides students practical opportunities to apply what has been learned during their undergraduate career. This capstone course also meets major requirements in the Kinesiology program. This 400-hour final internship is a 12-credit-hour semester-long course (KINE 490) in the following BS degree program:

- Bachelor of Science: Kinesiology

The internship is a structured and supervised, work experience that may be paid or voluntary and takes place at a variety of public, private, semi-private or commercial agencies. The internship is a three-way partnership agreement between Mason, an approved site, and the intern.

During the internship, the student receives professional preparation coordinated by a faculty supervisor in addition to direction from a qualified site supervisor. The internship provides industry-specific opportunities for student participation, organization, and administration.

The following terms describe the parties involved in the internship experience and are used throughout this manual:

- **Intern** is the student registered for the internship course and completing the assignments required.
- **Internship Coordinator** is a Mason faculty member that prepares the student for the internship experience and helps place the student at their site. This person also communicates with various agencies seeking Mason interns. This Internship Coordinator may also monitor student progress during the internship or coordinate other faculty members that monitor student progress.
- **Faculty supervisor** is a Mason faculty member designated as the instructor-of-record for the internship course. This person is responsible for remotely-monitoring student progress during the internship and submitting the final grade.
- **Site supervisor** is the individual at the internship location responsible for monitoring and supervising the student throughout the program. This person may offer advice, instruction, and supervision typical of that provided for a newer professional in the industry. This person will also assess student competencies at the mid-point and conclusion of the experience that will inform the final grade.
2. Benefits

Students benefit from the internship experience by having the opportunity to synthesize their classroom knowledge into real world experiences. This experiential learning allows the student to be better prepared and more marketable for the current job market demands. They have support from both their Faculty and Site Supervisor to learn how to negotiate the challenges faced by newer professionals. This experience affords students the opportunity to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and assess their future employment aspirations.

The Kinesiology program recognizes the benefits of an academically-sound internship program, which includes the provision and utilization of feedback from the site supervisor and the student in the continuing evaluation of the Kinesiology curriculum. The program aims to produce well-prepared students by integrating the theoretical and practical experiences of their given industry, while also teaching and improving general professionalism skills (i.e. communication, etiquette, interviewing, networking).

Agencies that provide internship opportunities benefit from the partnership with Mason by helping to develop our future professionals. These students can integrate with professional staff to promote the overall learning experience, as interns bring a different set of skills, knowledge base, and perspective to the job. It also provides site personnel the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of their in-house training programs or other services based on feedback from interns. Finally, the internship affords an opportunity to screen for prospective employees. Interns become familiar with an organization’s culture/work and establish close working relationships with current employees. This makes them ideal candidates for job vacancies.

3. Expectations of Internship Program Experience

Each student is required to work an average of 10-15 hours/week (KINE 341 & 441) for a minimum of 150 hours per class/semester, at a site which is predetermined by the Internship Coordinator, and then 30-40 hours/week (KINE 490) at an approved internship site for a minimum of 400 hours in a given semester. By the end of their 700-hour internship experience, students should have a better understanding and appreciation of the role, duties, and responsibilities of a professional in their chosen field.

The intern is expected to assume a wide range of responsibilities:

- **Participation** – An intern should be given the opportunity to observe the intricacies of the internal and external working relationships of the site. After proper training, the intern should be allowed to interact with site participants in exercise-related activities (i.e. instruction, programming). In addition, interns should be allowed to participate in site committee meetings, conferences, and workshops to gain a better understanding of their chosen concentration.

- **Organization** – The intern should participate in any appropriate experiences relevant to the site; such as organizing events, evaluation of programs, and analysis of data. The site supervisor is encouraged to assign the intern an active leadership role in special projects. Usually, the student observes and assists until he or she is acquainted with the staff, clientele, policies and procedures, organizational patterns, facilities and equipment, and rules and regulations. The student should gradually assume increasing responsibility and eventually be solely responsible for her/his own special project.

- **Administration** – The site should provide the intern with practical experience employing routine administrative skills, techniques and practices. Interns should gain experience in a variety of site operations (e.g., accounting and record-keeping, event management, facility operation, maintenance procedures, planning, program development, public relations, research, marketing, risk management, and human resources) as appropriate.
4. Student Eligibility

To register for each internship course, students must meet all of the pre-requisites listed on Patriot web. All prospective interns should review the Kinesiology Internship Manual. Students are eligible to start the internship experience when they are registered for the appropriate internship class, placed into a site by the Internship Coordinator (and hired by that site), the required agreements are signed, and current CPR/First-Aid certification proof has been submitted. Students must be registered for the internship course during the semester that they complete their hours of experience. The internship typically begins on the first day of classes of the semester and finishes before the last day of classes. Any exception to this start date and end date must be cleared by the Internship Coordinator, the Faculty Supervisor, and the Site Supervisor.

5. Site Selection

For KINE 341/441, all students will be placed into sites by the Internship Coordinator. Although the Internship Coordinator may offer advice, guidance, or placement suggestions, students are responsible for seeking out their own internship positions for KINE 490. Students should begin searching for possible internships several months prior to their chosen internship semester. This allows ample time for the application/interview process and a thoughtful selection. NOTE: Do NOT contact sites without permission from the Internship Coordinator; when you have found a prospective site, send an email to the Internship Coordinator before contacting that site.

6. Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be determine based on the following (all necessary documents will be provided via Blackboard):

- Submitting all required paperwork before the start of the internship
- Attending mandatory internship meetings
- Working part-time (~10-15 hours/week) at an assigned site for a minimum of 150 hours of professional practice over a period of 10 to 14 consecutive weeks (KINE 341/441 only)
- Working full-time (~30-40 hours/week) at an approved site for a minimum of 400 hours of professional practice over a period of 10 to 14 consecutive weeks (KINE 490 only)
- Completing/submitting Weekly Progress Reports before each weekly deadline
- Submitting signed copies of the Supervisor Evaluations completed by the Site Supervisor at the mid-point and completion of the internship hours.
- Submitting an Internship Report designed to encourage reflection and assessment of the overall internship experience
- Developing and completing a Special Project in cooperation with the Site Supervisor (KINE 490 only)
- Presenting an overview of their internship work experience and special project at a mandatory final presentation (KINE 490 only)
- Submitting proof that one has registered for either the NSCA-CSCS exam or the ACSM-EP exam and, after completion of the exam, submitting the score report from that exam (KINE 490 only)
- Submission of the Senior Survey: This online survey will be distributed near the end of the internship experience and will help the Kinesiology faculty gather important data regarding the Kinesiology program. (KINE 490 only)
- Completing/submitting various additional assignments throughout the semester before each deadline (KINE 341/441 only)
**Internship Obligations (from Kinesiology Organization page on Blackboard)**

- I am bound by everything stated in the Mason Kinesiology Internship Manual and all of the materials posted on the Mason Kinesiology Blackboard Organization page.
- I must not contact a site without permission from the Internship Coordinator.
- I may not change sites without prior permission from the Internship Coordinator and without serious/legitimate concern (which must be expressed in writing).
- I must “CC” the Internship Coordinator on every email regarding site placement.
- Every internship site will be Kinesiology-related, regardless of my desire to do something unrelated to Kinesiology after I graduate.
- I must contact the Internship Coordinator immediately if there is a problem/concern with my site placement.
- I must have current CPR/First-Aid certification throughout the entire Kinesiology Internship Program, from the beginning of KINE 341 (before I start counting hours) all the way through until the end of my KINE 490 internship. It may not expire at any time during a semester in which I am enrolled in an internship.
- None of my internship hours will count until I have submitted my properly-completed paperwork (ELA, etc.). For example, if I submit my ELA on February 1, then none of the hours completed in January count towards my internship hours.
- When I begin working at a site, it is my responsibility to show my syllabus and all assignments to my site supervisor, and to remind my site supervisor of approaching deadlines.
- If I am “fired” from a site, then I fail the class.
- I am expected to be professional in all interactions (including social interactions) with the Internship Coordinator, my University Supervisor, my Site Supervisor, my coworkers, my classmates, and everyone whom I encounter as part of my Mason Kinesiology Internship experience. This includes abstaining from disparaging my University, program, faculty/staff, and other Mason peers.
- There are no exceptions; I am bound to follow all of the rules, regardless of my personal struggles.
I, ________________________, fully understand I must adhere to all school policies and procedures. This also includes all Kinesiology internship policies and procedures. My Kinesiology internship guidelines outline many of the rules to which I must abide. This contract does not enable me to be excluded from the school rules all students must follow.

II. I, ________________________, fully understand that the hours that I and the internship site agree on cannot be changed or missed without proper notification. Notification of a missed session at a practicum site must be recorded in the Weekly Report and reported to the Kinesiology Internship Coordinator (Dr. Andre), and the internship Site Supervisor must be notified at least twelve (12) hours in advance. If notification cannot be made in advance, I will notify the Site Supervisor and the Kinesiology Internship Coordinator immediately and include the reason for not making the session. Failure to do so will result in consequences in my final grade.

III. I, ________________________, will make all attempts be on time to the practicum site and attend all meetings on campus when required. Failure to do so will result in consequences in my final grade.

IV. If I am unable to meet the preceding terms, I, ________________________, understand that the internship site reserves the right to end my internship (which will result in failing the class). The Kinesiology Internship Coordinator reserves the right to end my practicum, and refuse to replace me at another internship site due to breaking the rules of this contract (which will result in failing the class).

V. I, ________________________, do hereby submit to the terms of this contract. My signature below indicates my willingness to avoid time management problems, adhere to all school/classroom rules and procedures, and become a better student as a result.
Overview: Mason Kinesiology Internship Program

- Use the Kinesiology organization page on Blackboard.
- We have three internship classes: KINE 341, KINE 441, and KINE 490.
  - KINE 341 is 150 hours (approximately 10-15 hours/week) and has an emphasis on general fitness for the general population.
  - KINE 441 is comprised of two 75-hour internships (approximately 10-15 hours/week), with one internship emphasizing sport performance and the other internship emphasizing exercise for clinical populations.
  - KINE 490 can be at any site that involves exercise instruction, pending my approval (which is based on the requirements of the program and the input of the Academic Program Coordinators and other Kinesiology faculty).
- For both class registration and for the site placement process, you will receive an email from me at the beginning of class registration for each semester (including summer) with all of the information that you need. All internship classes require an override for registration, and all site placement is done through me; please do not contact sites until I tell you to do that.
  - In the email, I will ask you to do the following things:
    - State your G#.
    - State your preferred CRN.
      - Note that I am not obligated to ask your preference.
    - State your preferred internship sites from the appropriate tab on the most current Site Database on Blackboard.
      - Sites are being added/removed constantly for numerous reasons.
      - Note that I am not obligated to ask your preference.
    - In addition to listing the requested number of sites from the Site Database, I will state that you may suggest other potential sites that you think that you would prefer. If you choose to do this, then please explain why, and whether or not you are already employed there or in-contact with that site.
      - Note that I am not obligated to consider other sites.
    - State your current career goals.
  - When I receive your email, I will check to see if you followed directions. If you did not follow directions, then I will respond and ask you to provide the information that you failed to provide in your original email.
  - If you followed directions well, then I will input your override and mark your site preferences in my databases. Then, I will respond and tell you to register into a specific CRN. It is highly-likely that you will not hear from me again for several weeks; during that time, I will be continuing to work on site placement.
    - The site placement process is very intense.
      - I attempt to get every person into a site that they prefer. Note that I do not have to do this. Since I cannot control your preferences, your communication efforts, the sites’ preferences, the sites’ communication efforts, your schedule compatibility, etc., it is very challenging to make this happen.
      - KINE 490 students are responsible for finding their own site. However, you need to contact me before you contact a site, especially if they are located somewhere in the Northern Virginia region and/or on the Site Database.
When you state your KINE 490 site intentions, I will let you know if it is a situation where I need to contact the site first or if you may contact them. I am happy to help you contact a site and facilitate the process.

- You may intern out-of-state for KINE 490.
- You may intern internationally for KINE 490.
  - However, to facilitate that, you will need to go through Mason Study Abroad: [http://studyabroad.gmu.edu/](http://studyabroad.gmu.edu/)

- After I have set-up internships with all of the sites, I will email each one of you individually with instructions on who to contact and what to include in your email. At this point, your internship is already set-up and ready to go, but you need to initiate personal contact to schedule your first meeting.
  - Approximate dates for you to receive your site-placement contact email from me:
    - Fall internships: late July (and early September for 441 2nd-half)
    - Spring internships: mid-December (and early February for 441 2nd-half)
    - Summer internships: mid-April (and early June for 441 2nd-half)
  - I will give you the option of sending a draft email to me (with your resume, if you want feedback on that) if you want my help you write a professional email. When you observe the changes (if any are made), you should attempt to incorporate those changes in future professional contacts.
    - Your initial contact email to any professional should include an appropriate title for the person you are contacting, should be very formal, and should include all important information (including your availability for interviews and for work days/hours). It should not include typos, grammatical errors, exclamation points, smiley-faces, etc.
    - If the person responds informally, then you can decide from there if you want to be less formal or not. When in doubt, be formal.
    - Fitness resumes should be limited to one page with an emphasis on anything exercise-related and health-related. They should include all Kinesiology internships, including your current one, if applicable.
    - Additional resume help can be obtained through University Career Services. Our contact is Ms. Caroline Ramirez-Gaston: cramir@gmu.edu

- Your internship supervisor will either give you a start date or schedule an interview with you.
  - Note that no internship supervisor is required to accept you, and they sometimes decide to not accept an intern after the initial email or interview.
  - First impressions are important.
    - Your initial email (and your responses to their responses) are the first impression, so you need to be very cautious and professional.
    - Your first impression in-person is affected by your arrival time, your attitude upon arrival, and your physical appearance.
      - The common rule of etiquette is to err on the side of overdressed.
      - A good suggestion that I heard from a student is to bring a gym-bag with a change of clothes and whatever you would need to exercise, and inform the interviewer that you are prepared.
  - You can be fired from an internship, and this means that you fail the internship class.
• Missing scheduled hours without a documented excuse (i.e. doctor’s note) and reasonable notice and/or being late is unacceptable.
• Talking poorly about your program, your teachers, your classmates, your previous internship supervisors and/or employers is unacceptable.
• It is your responsibility to ensure that you are having a valuable internship experience.
  o You need to provide your contracts, syllabus, assignments (with deadlines), and all necessary paperwork and information on the first day (or even at the interview, if possible/reasonable).
  o You are responsible for ensuring that your Site Supervisor completes the tasks on-time (i.e. they need at least two weeks of notice plus consistent reminders).
  o You are responsible for ensuring that contracts are filled-out correctly.
  o You are responsible for asking your Site Supervisor for guidance and for specific tasks. If you feel that you are not receiving enough practical instruction, then you need to tell your Site Supervisor (politely and respectfully) and discuss what you want.
  ▪ Note that this is why the “Internship Expectations” form is a required contract. You are to work together with your Site Supervisor to determine what YOU will get out of the experience (in addition to their rules for you). This is your opportunity to get your Site Supervisor to agree to what you want to learn during your internship.
  ▪ On that note, remember that your first 2 weeks is only 20-30 hours and is not a good judge of what your full experience will be like. Your first week at a new job would be 40 hours and would be likely to involve lesser tasks as you adjust to the new position/facility.
• You can find numerous helpful professional development tips (including sample resumes, interview prep, etc.) on the Mason University Career Services website: https://careers.gmu.edu/students/find-job-or-internship/interviewing
• When in doubt about anything, please send an email to the Kinesiology Internship Coordinator, Dr. Andre, and await further instruction: mandre@gmu.edu