

Pre-Departure Paper Assignment

Anticipating your internship: Once you have initially secured an internship, you may be excited, motivated, and full of expectations. At the same time there might be some sense of self-doubt: “Am I ready to do this? I know how to be a student, but how will I fit into this work setting?”

After watching the introduction video by your professor for this course, Dr. Jennifer Engel, read through the excerpt below entitled *Typical Stages of an Internship Experience*. Then, thinking about this material and your own motivations, write a maximum four page paper that explains **your reasons for doing this internship abroad, your anticipated goals and objectives, and your anticipated outcomes of the internship**. Include at least five goals and objectives that relate to personal and professional development (at least two of each) and explain why these goals are important to future success.

This pre-departure paper is expected to be a **maximum of four pages** and written in an essay format. This means that you will need to carefully focus on what you include in your paper and why. Anything less than three pages will not allow you to fully address your goals and objectives and the rationale behind them.

Please include: your name, major/minor, internship position, and internship company/organization at the top of page one. All of your written assignments are to be double spaced, in 11 point font, with standard one inch margins. Please be sure to carefully proofread your writing and include examples to support your statements, using the grading rubric provided as your guide.

Typical Stages of an Internship Experience

Stage 1: The Journey Begins - Pre-Departure

- A mix of feelings at the beginning (enthusiasm, anxiety, apprehension, excitement)
- High expectations for the experience
- Uncertainty how all the “pieces” will come together
- Overall, a very positive feeling

Stage 2: Establishing a Routine - Arrival On-Site

- Some role ambiguity may exist (am I a student? am I staff? How do others view me?)
- Can be overwhelmed with many different tasks to juggle at one time.

- Can be underwhelmed if going slower than expected, especially if not involved in a 'hands on' project or task.
- Concern/anxiety about developing a good collegial relationship with supervisor and staff in the office.
- Possibly experiencing language/communication challenges while adjusting to communicating in a new language
- Overall, still positive but perhaps not as much as during the first week or two.

Stage 3: Settling In Period

- Role confusion declines
- Begin to make substantive, quality contributions
- More comfortable with co-workers and supervisor and vice versa
- Feeling more comfortable with communicating in the local language
- Starting to adjust to cultural differences, like mealtimes and the culture of the office
- Begin to make progress on projects
- Able to tackle challenges with an overall sense of humor
- Overall, still a positive experience

Stage 4: Reality Stage

- Reality of day-to-day workplace and its many issues begins to hit
- Work may not be as "glamorous" as expected, or not what expected in other ways
- Some disillusionment with co-workers as they struggle with problems, issues, challenges of day-to-day work
- Concerns that you may not be making as much progress on your own goals as you expected.
- Overall this can be a "downer" time for you. But, it is a good time to reevaluate what you are learning in the greater context! You can't help but be learning, it just might not be what you anticipated learning at the outset

Stage 5: Period of Adaptation

- Adjustment of learning goals occurs to reflect more realistically what you and site supervisor believe can be accomplished
- You become much more skillful in getting what you want from the experience
- You are a lot more comfortable with your supervisor; your conversations are more open and candid about your observations and suggestions as well as your personal interests and needs
- Recognition of the value and importance of teamwork and group relations in effectively meeting goals; starting to feel like part of the team
- Feeling that you have settled in and are used to the new routine, local culture, office culture and local language
- Overall, a more positive period

Stage 6: Closure Stage

- For some, hard to believe time of internship is drawing to a close. Time has flown by!
- Acceptance that perhaps not all learning goals were realistic or could be fulfilled in time allotted, or within the realities of the internship itself
- Refocus on what was actually accomplished, what else was learned but maybe in an unexpected way!

- Recognition that much was learned that was unanticipated (about the career field, the company/organization, the staff, the local culture, and yourself).
- Greater recognition of one's strengths and weaknesses
- Overall, satisfaction with the job one has done and with the experience
- Some rush and pressure to get a major project finished before the end of term; desire to perhaps put in more hours to get more experience and to see to completion one or more activities.
- Reflection on what was learned overall during the experience, and what it means for your future both personally and professionally