INTERNERSHIP MANUAL

FOR

Recreation & Outdoor Education Program

WESTERN STATE COLORADO UNIVERSITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

This manual has been prepared to inform students, faculty, and agency supervisors about the purpose, objectives, policies and requirements of the internship experience within the curriculum of the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program, at Western State Colorado University. The manual is meant to serve as a guide for establishing and carrying out the internship experience. Since learning opportunities at internship agencies vary considerably and change periodically, the manual should not be considered as a rigid document. Any changes however, must be clearly defined and approved by all persons involved: the student, the agency supervisor, the faculty internship advisor and the Program Coordinator.

The internship experience is designed to serve as a transition for a student from the university curriculum to a professional setting. Within the structured environment of an approved agency and under the supervision of a professional practitioner, a student is allowed the opportunity to make the adjustment from the academic surroundings to a career workplace.

II. MISSION STATEMENTS

Western State Colorado University fulfills its statutory mission by promoting intellectual maturity and personal growth in its students and graduates citizens prepared to assume constructive roles in local, national, and global communities. Western helps its students to develop the skills and commitments needed to continue learning for the rest of their lives and strives to elucidate the connections unifying academic domains which have traditionally existed separately: the sciences, the liberal arts, and professional programs. The University provides students with a solid foundation of skills in written and spoken communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Our programs encourage a breadth and depth of knowledge, which will serve as a foundation for a professional career or graduate study, and an appreciation of values appropriate to a liberally educated individual. Western's distinctive character emerges from its unity among academic and professional disciplines, its high standards of scholarship, and its unique environment in the mountains of western Colorado.

A student who successfully completes the major in Recreation and Outdoor Education will have received exemplary training in both the fundamental concepts involved in the recreation field and their practical applications. Excellence in this professional and graduate preparation is achieved through an interdisciplinary approach incorporating other programs at the university, public and private partnerships, experiential education, and our unique proximity to the wilderness and backcountry environment. In addition to the traditional competencies and critical thinking skills involved in our liberal arts studies, those students majoring in recreation will develop their leadership ability, environmental responsibility, and global awareness. They will learn how the over-all quality of life can be enhanced by the integration of appropriate leisure activities.

III. DEFINITIONS

INTERNSHIP
An optional, senior level capstone experience (students must apply) at an approved agency for students majoring in Recreation and Outdoor Education. The experience will be one term in duration varying from 6-9 credits with a minimum of 7 weeks/40 hours per week to 10 weeks/40 hours per week.

PRE-INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE (See Appendix A)
Six hundred hours of volunteer or paid work at a professional recreation agency within the last four years and at, at least, two different sites.

AGENCY
An organization which provides recreation programs (in a wide context), and has been approved to serve as an internship site by designated members of the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program at Western State Colorado University. Such organizations may include, but are not limited to: municipal, county, state and federal recreation and parks departments; camps; voluntary youth serving agencies; military installations; resorts and private/commercial enterprises.
WSCU PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Faculty member who has the overall responsibility for the Recreation and Outdoor Education internship program. The coordinator can assist students and other faculty members in selecting and contracting with an approved agency. The coordinator will be responsible for the approval of new internship sites.

WSCU FACULTY INTERNSHIP ADVISOR
A faculty member of the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program at Western State Colorado University who is designated to advise a specific student during their internship experience.

AGENCY SUPERVISOR / EMPLOYER
A qualified staff member of an agency, as determined by the WSCU Program Coordinator, who is responsible for the orientation, guidance, and evaluation of a student while the student is engaged in the internship experience.

INTERNSHIP CONTRACT (See Appendix B)
A formal written agreement between all parties involved: Agency, Agency Supervisor, Student, Internship Advisor, and Program Coordinator.

STUDENT SERVICES CENTER
Maintains extensive list of potential internship sites and can assist with initial contact. Provides workshops on résumé writing, interview skills, etc. Located in Student Union.

IV. GOALS OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
When students, agency professionals, and university faculty are brought together through the internship experience, all three benefit from the resultant interaction. Although the primary purpose of the program is to produce future recreation professionals, the total value of the program takes other goals into account.

A. Student Goals:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to expand their philosophy and knowledge of the recreation profession.

2. Help students gain a greater understanding of the duties and responsibilities of full-time recreation personnel.

3. Enable students to identify the strengths they have acquired and the weaknesses which they need to improve through further education and/or experience.

4. Help students understand recreation management techniques and practices.

5. Allow students to become familiar with the procedures of seeking employment.

6. Provide an opportunity to relate to, interact with, and learn from professional practitioners in their various areas of expertise.

7. Supplement and broaden the base of a student's education by using private or governmental resources as laboratories of learning.

8. Provide students the opportunity to observe and to understand the working relationships between employees at all levels within an organization.

9. Provide the opportunity to put theory into practice under the close supervision of an agency supervisor.
B. Agency Goals:

1. Provide an opportunity to be a partner in the preparation of future recreation professional.
2. Provide contact and interaction with faculty and students in the field of recreation and relate agency services to current theory and practice.
3. Provide an opportunity to evaluate perspective staff candidates for later employment.
4. Provide an opportunity to serve additional clientele through the contributions of the intern.
5. Allow agency personnel the opportunity to provide expertise and guidance as related to theory obtained in the academic setting.

C. University Goals:

1. Improve the educational process and expand the scope of the professional curriculum.
2. Provide faculty contact with professional recreation and park leaders on a cooperative working basis.
3. Provide faculty the opportunity to keep abreast of programs, issues, concerns and innovations of professionals in the field.
4. Strengthen the educational process which prepares future professionals.
5. Provide an opportunity to evaluate the student's needs, abilities and progress in his or her professional development.
6. Provide a laboratory to test the relevance of the academic program.
7. Acquaint faculty with the needs of employers through their contact and interaction with agency supervisors.
8. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum of the Outdoor Leadership and Resort Management Program at Western State Colorado University.

V. REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY FOR STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN ROE 499 INTERNSHIP IN RECREATION & OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Students are advised to become familiar with the requirements for enrolling in ROE 499 early in their university experience. Students not planning far enough in advance for ROE 499 may find themselves without the necessary prerequisites. They may have to prolong their university experience in order to become eligible to enroll in the internship experience.

Requirements include:

1. Successfully complete a minimum of 90 credit hours (senior standing).
2. Successfully complete all ROE courses required in the major, including those required by each emphasis.
3. Complete and verify a minimum of 600 hours of pre-internship experience (see Appendix A). These hours must be A) within the last four years; B) at a minimum of two different settings.
4. Have a minimum (Cumulative GPA) of 2.20 at the end of the semester preceding the internship experience (and a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the major).

Any student who fails to meet any of the listed requirements will not be allowed to register for the internship experience.

VI. GENERAL POLICIES CONCERNING AGENCY SELECTION/APPROVAL

A. SELECTION

The selection of an internship agency is an important decision on the part of the student. The future professional career of the student will be significantly influenced by this choice. Therefore, the agencies must be selected carefully to ensure a high quality learning experience for the student. Students are encouraged to visit prospective agencies during their junior year.

Prospective agencies should be willing to allow the student to become involved not only with the "hands on" programmatic aspects of the agency, but to allow involvement or at least develop a working knowledge of as many aspects of the agency as possible.

Any employment outside the internship assignment while a student is enrolled in the internship program must be approved in writing by the agency and the Program Coordinator. Approval for outside employment will be given only in cases where extreme financial hardships can be demonstrated.

Students should not plan to take other university courses during the term they are registered for the Internship. Should this be absolutely necessary, written permission from the Program Coordinator and agency supervisor must be on file in advance of the internship.

The student is expected to bear all expenses incidental to living in the area of the internship placement and to work out his/her own satisfactory housing arrangements in order to be able to carry out assignments as required. It is recommended that the student visit the area of placement in advance and arrange living facilities. Agency personnel may be able to assist the student in locating housing possibilities. In addition, some agencies may be able to provide room and board.

Students may not complete their internship program at an agency in which they have held a similar position (paid or voluntary). Requests for exceptions to this must be submitted in writing to the Program Coordinator. The criteria must be met in order for the request to be considered. The criteria include the following:
   a. the internship position is significantly different in terms of the responsibilities (ie., field leadership versus supervisory or administration)
   b. the position is one which is in a significantly different program service area (ie., ski school versus marketing).

Students should be aware that an agency and position must be approved by the Program Coordinator AND Faculty Internship Supervisor prior to the actual placement and/or acceptance of the position by the student.

B. CRITERIA

The following criteria will serve as a general guide to the student when searching for and selecting an internship site. Any agency approved as an internship site must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Be willing to participate in an educational program with the goal of helping prepare quality personnel for the recreation profession.

2. Provide the student with a diversity of experience in order for the student to become knowledgeable of the many functions and operations of the agency.
3. Have sufficient facilities, areas, equipment and clients to allow the student to become familiar with planning, scheduling, and maintenance.

4. Provide a supervisor with time committed to the purpose of supervising the student and scheduling regular meetings with the student for consultation, guidance, and evaluation.

5. Allow the student to attend appropriate meetings. These include but are not restricted to:
   a. Staff meetings
   b. Board or Commission meetings
   c. In-service workshops
   d. Joint meetings between departments or institutions
   e. Local, state, regional, or national professional association workshops, conferences, conventions, or job fairs.

6. Provide liability insurance coverage and workman's compensation when appropriate, while the student is involved in the internship experience.

7. To the extent authorized by law, the agency shall indemnify, save and hold harmless the State of Colorado (including Western State Colorado University), its employees and agents, against any and all claims, damages, liability and court awards including costs, expenses, and attorney fees incurred as a result of any act or omission by the agency, or its employees, agent subcontractors, or assignees pursuant to the terms of this contract.

8. The agency is not required to furnish remuneration to a student. However, the agency is encouraged to help defray the student's tuition and/or living expenses by offering the student an opportunity for part-time employment or a stipend.

9. Should an agency require a student to travel to conduct agency business, the agency will pay mileage or furnish an agency vehicle.

10. Be willing to complete both a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation of the student using the forms provided by the university (see Appendices). If an agency chooses, it may do an additional evaluation utilizing its own format.

11. Students will be discouraged from pursuing an internship in their hometown and internships with close relatives will not be approved.

12. The agency supervisor should be a seasoned professional with a minimum of three years in the field. Recent university graduates are not appropriate.

13. Interns should select their site with their career goal in mind. Will this agency provide you with the opportunities to further your career? If it is only a convenient site which meets Western’s minimum qualifications, but does not provide you with valuable training, it may become a long and tedious experience. Take responsibility for your choice in this matter.
VII. STUDENT PROCESS FOR SELECTING AND BEGINNING AN INTERNSHIP

This will be the first attempt by most students to search for and select a professional position. The Recreation Faculty believes it is the student's responsibility to investigate, select, interview and secure an internship position at an appropriate agency site. The Program Coordinator and other faculty members shall serve as advisors to the student throughout the selection process. The student should understand that in some instances there will be competition from classmates as well as students from other universities and universities for internship positions.

Therefore, it is recommended that a student select five or more agencies to review and contact. The student should keep in mind: (1) the dates of the internship must approximate WSCU's academic calendar; (2) the selection process should begin in the term or two preceding your internship assignment; (3) if you begin a job/internship at a site before it is formally approved by your internship advisor, that experience will not be approved for fulfilling the required internship. A student may "walk" in a graduation ceremony prior to beginning their internship. Typically a student must be enrolled in an internship by April 15 to participate in spring commencement or November 15 to participate in fall commencement.

### Step Description

**Pre-Placement**

1.0 One term prior to your anticipated Internship complete all prerequisites necessary, as described in the following steps.

1.1 Update and polish your résumé - include your professional goals.

1.2 Complete Pre-Internship Experience Forms (Appendix A)

1.3 Obtain current copy of your transcript (unofficial is fine)

1.4 Obtain Graduation Update

1.5 Bring all of the material mentioned above to a meeting with your WSCU academic advisor and get preliminary approval of your prerequisites for the internship and suggestions on possible internship sites.

1.6 Identify and select potential internship agencies that reflect your goals and objective.

1.7 Contact these agencies and state your interest in completing an internship with the agency. If your first contact is by phone or email be prepared to send a hard copy of your résumé and cover letter.

1.8 Whenever possible schedule an on-site interview with those agencies expressing an interest in you as an intern. Discuss the type of experiences that both you and the agency are expecting and can provide. Make sure the agency is aware of their responsibilities as outlined in the manual. (Some agencies will require you to complete their internship application form.)

1.9 Obtain approval from your WSCU faculty internship advisor if you are requesting an internship at an agency that the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program has not utilized in the past or is unfamiliar to your WSCU faculty internship advisor. You will be required to supply descriptive information on the agency and the agency supervisor. The Program Coordinator will then make a decision on whether the site will be approved.
1.10 Apply to the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program for permission to complete an internship. Remember, only exceptional students with excellent internship opportunities will be allowed to have this opportunity (see Appendix N).

**Negotiating your Internship**

2.0 After submitting an application and receiving approval to complete an internship, negotiate your actual internship experience. Prior to signing the contract and liability release make sure you have asked for clarification of any portion that you do not fully understand.

2.2 Make three copies of the final contract when all appropriate signatures have been obtained. (One copy will go to the agency supervisor, you will keep one copy, and one copy will be given to the WSCU faculty internship advisor.)

2.3 Concurrently, the student and agency supervisor must also review and agree to Western's liability release (Appendix C & D). The student and agency will each keep a signed copy of the appropriate form and the WSCU faculty internship advisor will maintain a copy of both releases in the student's file.

2.4 Students will notify, in writing, all other agencies contacted that they have chosen another internship site and are no longer available. In addition, students will thank the agency representative for the time and consideration given them (bring a copy to your advisor).

**Registering for ROE 499: Internship**

3.0 Register for ROE 499 (turn in the variable credit form; Appendix K) in the term that best approximates your internship assignment. Meet with your WSCU faculty internship advisor for a final check of all necessary paperwork and to discuss any specifics of your internship.

3.1 Agree upon the specifics of the final project; what have you, the agency supervisor and the WSCU faculty internship advisor agreed to as an acceptable project?

3.2 Correspondence; have you and the WSCU faculty internship advisor agreed to how, when, where, etc. you will communicate with one another, (phone, fax, mail, email).

3.3 Variable credit form: If you have accomplished all of the above steps it will be a simple matter to complete the variable credit form. Your WSCU faculty internship advisor and the department chair must sign their approval before you can register for the course.

3.4 If your internship is outside of Gunnison County you should submit a Student Union Fee Waiver (Appendix M).

**During the Internship**

4.0 During the internship you will be expected to provide the following information in order to receive a grade for the course.
4.1 Submit reports every-other-week that are informative, describe your learning experiences, document your time and are well written and sent promptly. (Include: Log of hours, description of your activities, reflection on what you learned and whether you achieved your goals, projected goals for the next two weeks; see Appendix M for a sample).

4.2 Contact your WSCU faculty internship advisor immediately if there seems to be a problem between you and your agency or agency supervisor.

4.3 Submit your mid-term evaluation (Appendix E) and final evaluation (Appendix F) forms to your agency supervisor and have them mail or fax the results to the WSCU faculty internship advisor based on the arranged schedule.

4.4 Submit the Agency Evaluation of the Final Project (Appendix G) and the Agency Feedback Report (Appendix H) to your agency supervisor. Instruct him/her to complete the forms and mail them to the WSCU faculty internship advisor along with the final evaluation form.

4.5 Submit a copy of your final project to the WSCU faculty internship advisor upon the completion of your internship assignment (on or before date on Appendix C).

4.6 Submit your final agency evaluation report to the WSCU faculty internship advisor upon the completion of your internship assignment (on or before date on Appendix C).

4.7 Schedule a debriefing meeting with your WSCU faculty internship advisor at the conclusion of your internship and deliver your video or schedule your oral presentation (this may be done via phone, if necessary). (See Appendices I and J.)
VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

The internship experience is a three-way program with university faculty, agency personnel, and students interacting in a cooperative manner to achieve their common and individual objectives. The internship experience is intended to provide a meaningful and rewarding experience for all involved. If all parties to the experience are knowledgeable of the roles and responsibilities of each party, the positive aspects of the experience will be enhanced.

A. Program Coordinator Responsibilities
The Program Coordinator is the individual who assumes ultimate responsibility for the program and assures a coordinated effort between the university, agency, and student.

The Program Coordinator will:

1. Supervise arrangements and give final approval of all student internship placements.

2. Act as a liaison for the student, agency supervisor, and WSCU faculty internship advisor when a problem develops.

3. Upon acceptance of students by an agency, assure that contracts are completed, signed and disseminated to appropriate persons.

4. Maintain a resource file with current information dealing with the internship program.

5. Maintain current contacts with approved agencies and develop new agency-university relationships.

6. Assist faculty internship advisors as needed.

7. Ensure final grades, as provided by advisors, are forwarded to the Registrar.

8. File student reports, final projects, and evaluation of agency in an agency master file, to provide information to future internship students.

B. WSCU Faculty Internship Advisor Responsibilities

The WSCU faculty internship advisor is the student's and agency's direct link with the Recreation & Outdoor Education Program. Should any unresolved difficulty on the part of the student or the agency arise, it should be promptly directed to the WSCU faculty internship advisor. Other responsibilities of the WSCU faculty internship advisor include:

1. Serve as a resource person for both the agency supervisor and the student.

2. Consult with the agency supervisor concerning the nature of the learning experiences the student should receive.

3. Consult with the student periodically during the experience.

4. Maintain a file on each applicant for the internship experience.

5. Observe the student at the agency as needed or as requested by the student or agency during the term. A WSCU faculty internship advisor will normally visit an in-state placement once during the term. However, distance and budget restraints may curtail a visit.

6. Reassign students when either the agency or the student is not suited for the practicum/clinical experience.
7. Receive and grade reports, review agency evaluations, and compute final grades for assigned student.

8. Discuss with agency areas for program improvement including curriculum content, strengths and weaknesses of WSCU students, and new trends and issues. WSCU faculty internship advisor summarizes agency's comments on Feedback Form (See Appendix H).

C. **Agency / Employer Responsibilities**

When an agency becomes approved as an internship site and accepts a specific student to this program, the agency should provide the best possible learning experience. In addition to responsibilities the agency has set for itself in training future professionals, the agency is expected to:

1. Assign a staff member as the agency supervisor who will serve as a resource and role model.

2. Provide initial orientation to internship students covering the agency's purposes, policies, programs, facilities and administration.

3. Define to the student his or her role and responsibilities and what the agency expects.

4. Provide the student with appropriate work space.

5. Permit student to attend staff, agency and other appropriate meetings.

6. Inform the student of available resources at the agency and in the community.

7. Should an agency require an intern to travel to conduct agency business, the agency should pay mileage or furnish an agency vehicle.

8. Present the student with a weekly schedule indicating the times the student must be present and the work assignments to be performed.

9. Inform the internship advisor immediately of any problems concerning a student's performance.

10. Schedule weekly meetings to review and discuss the next week's schedule of assignments.

11. Complete the university's midterm and final evaluation (Appendix E, F) of the student, schedule a meeting to discuss the evaluation with the student, and return evaluations to the WSCU faculty internship advisor promptly.

12. Complete and return to the WSCU faculty internship advisor an evaluation on the student's final project (Appendix G).

13. Complete and return to the WSCU faculty internship advisor a feedback report (Appendix H).

D. **Student Responsibilities**

Finally, it is the student who has the greatest responsibility. Students are expected to become involved in the learning experience offered to them by striving to gain the maximum educational benefit. In addition to specific roles and responsibilities that are expected by an agency, and the stipulations agreed to in the learning contract and release forms, students will:

1. Become familiar with, accept, and adhere to the policies and regulations governing the agency.

2. Act in a professional and ethical manner as a member of the agency staff.
3. Attend meetings and prepare clean, professional reports promptly as required by the agency.

4. Inform the agency supervisor as quickly as possible when he/she is unable to report for work due to illness or emergency.

5. Maintain a well-groomed professional appearance.

6. Maintain regular communication with their faculty advisor. Minimally, this involves sending bi-weekly reports promptly to your faculty advisor which should document your time and learning experiences at your internship site.

7. Consult with agency and WSCU faculty internship advisor when confronted with problems.

8. Provide the following form to the agency supervisor: Mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, final project evaluation and agency feedback report (Appendices E, F, G, and H).

9. Follow instructions in assignments required by the WSCU faculty internship advisor.

10. Receive approval from your WSCU faculty internship advisor and your agency supervisor on your proposal for a final project. Submit a copy of the final project to your WSCU faculty internship advisor.

11. Meet with your WSCU faculty internship advisor for a final debriefing at the conclusion of your internship (via phone or in person) and submit the final evaluation of the agency (Appendix I) and your video/presentation to your WSCU faculty internship advisor. All forms and projects should be in by the date agreed upon and recorded on Appendix C.

E. INTERNSHIP FINAL PROJECT

The internship final project is a special assignment for the student in addition to the general assignments and responsibilities to be completed during the internship. The final project has three primary purposes:

1. It will be a contribution to the agency.
2. It will be an opportunity to gain experiences that build on the student’s educational foundation.
3. It will be an impressive addition to the student’s portfolio.

The agency supervisor and WSCU faculty internship advisor will specifically evaluate the final project separately from the overall evaluation of the Student (Appendix G). There can be a great variety of internship projects. The type of agency or program that you are working in will influence and determine the project you will develop. Following are listed the types of projects that could be considered (note that this list is in no way comprehensive):

- Public relations brochure
- Public relations slide presentation
- Manual for volunteers
- Grant writing
- Development and carrying out of interest surveys of special populations
- Development and implementation of new programs or services
- Video tape training film for sports officials, family members or clients, community members, etc.
- Intern evaluation of administrative structure and function of an agency
- Various kinds of program suggestion and operation manuals
- Adapting programs, facilities, and equipment for persons with special needs
- Developing quality assurance programs
- Evaluating documentation procedures
- Integrating leisure programs and services with persons who have disabilities
IX. EVALUATION AND GRADING

Effective, constructive, and continuous evaluation can help an intern refine skills and build a positive self-concept before employment begins. Within the framework of honesty and compassion, the process need not be dreaded by either supervisor or student. Because this is a learning experience, there will be two evaluations of the student, the midterm evaluation and the final evaluation. Students can find these evaluations in the appendices of this manual. Students are required to provide copies of these evaluations to their agency supervisor in a timely fashion to allow the supervisor time to make the evaluation and turn it in to the faculty advisor on time.

Upon completion of each evaluation by the agency supervisor, the evaluation must be reviewed with the student. The supervisor is encouraged to set aside ample time for the reviews in order to allow a comprehensive discussion of the student's performance. Some areas to be covered during the evaluation review include:

1. Identification of student's strengths and weaknesses.
2. Information and guidance on how a student might improve performance and skills.
3. A frank assessment of student's level of professional competence in relation to the agency's experience with other students.

Upon completion of the written and oral performance evaluation, the student and agency supervisor must sign the evaluation form and submit it to the faculty internship advisor.

The following items constitute the basis for grading in ROE 499 (this is done by the faculty advisor):

1. Bi-weekly reports and communications 20
2. Mid-Term evaluation (Appendix E) 20
3. Final Evaluation (Appendix F) 30
4. Final Student Project (Appendix G & faculty review) 20
5. Final Student Report (Appendix I) and video/presentation 10

100

Late reports and projects will be marked down. All papers should be typed. The intern supervisor will evaluate the quality and professionalism of all reports, communications, and projects (you may make and keep copies of all reports and evaluations for your records).