

**Policy Statement: Forensic and Investigative Science Program**  
*Internships: Roles and Responsibilities*

Issue date: August 11, 2006  
Effective date: August 11, 2006

Version: 1.0

**Background:**

The internship is a vital part of the WVU Forensic Science degree program. WVU places far more interns on a yearly basis than any other program. For many students, the internship is the gateway to their first job. In a typical year, 40 or more students must be placed which is a significant administrative task. Because of its importance and the complexity of the process, the student as well as the program must work together to insure a successful internship experience for the student, host agency, and the program.

The internship experience is designed to get students into a working forensic or related environment and to expose them to daily work of the profession. Some internships focus on laboratory work, some on field work, some on research, and other combinations. Agencies that host interns assume the cost of background checks as well as the responsibility of overseeing the interns, a significant investment of time and effort. Therefore, the utmost in professionalism is required from the student and from the WVU program. These policies and procedures are designed to insure such professionalism.

Given the large number of placements needed, it is unlikely that students will have a large list of sites to choose from. While every effort will be made to accommodate student wishes, there are ultimately only a limited number of selections available. Students must be aware of this and be willing to accept a second or third preference.

Students in the WVU Forensic Science program must take their internship through WVU and for WVU credit. This is required because all sites are vetted by the program to insure that the experience is a meaningful and appropriate one for the student. In addition, the WVU forensic science program assumes responsibility for finding internship sites, creating agreements with sites, overseeing academic quality and content, and for evaluating student performance.

Students wishing to do internships in specific locations such as close to home are strongly encouraged to notify the assistant director as soon as they are admitted to the program. Every effort will be made to facilitate this, but early notification is essential. This provides the program with sufficient time to establish a contract with the site and insure that the student experience will meet programmatic and academic requirements.

Administrative responsibility:

The primary administrative responsibility for the internship program lies with the assistant director, who will oversee implementation of this policy.

Specific policy and procedures:

Once a student has been admitted to the forensic program, they will be in the queue for internship placement. Students typically participate in the internship during the summer between their junior and senior years and priority for allocating internships will be given to students at this stage of their studies.

Internships require 420 hours of contact time with the host agency, although lesser times combined with additional project work will be considered on a case-to-case basis. Any deviation from the required time will be specified in writing and approved by the assistant director in consultation with the host agency.

The following procedure will be used for placement of interns:

1. During admission interviews, students will be asked to summarize the policy and will be reminded of the procedures described here. They will also sign the form below.
2. During the academic year prior to their internship, eligible students must attend any meetings called pertaining to the internship. Failure to do so may result in loss of placement privileges for that year.
3. Beginning in the fall of the academic year, students eligible for internships will be contacted by the internship coordinator and asked to confirm that they plan on doing an internship the following summer and in what concentration area.
4. Once the list is finalized no later than October 1, the internship coordinator will compile a list of available sites along with the specialty area that will be covered.
5. The assistant director and internship coordinator will then prepare a cross-referenced list of sites and students for which the site would be appropriate.
6. Beginning in January, the assistant director and coordinator will begin contacting students to finalize assignments.
7. The program will make every effort to find the best possible placement for each student based on their track (biology, chemistry, or examiner). However, students must be aware that given the number of placements needed, it may not be possible for each student to go to their first choice site.
8. If a student declines, for whatever reason, a confirmed location for internship, then the student will automatically be placed at the end of the priority list and may not obtain an internship. In such cases, the student is responsible for securing an alternative.
9. Parents will be notified of this policy in writing when students are admitted to the program.

## Student Acknowledgement:

The signatures below are acknowledgement that I have read and understood the program's policies and procedures entitled *Internships: Roles and Responsibilities*. I understand what will be expected of me relating to my internship experience and agree to meet those expectations.

---

Signature of Student

---

Date

---

Director/Assistant Director

---

Date