Faculty Presentations

Summer 8-22-2013

25 years of Psychology Internships

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Recommended Citation

Repository citation: vanOyen-Witvliet, Charlotte and Roehling, Patricia V., "25 years of Psychology Internships" (2013). *Faculty Presentations.* Paper 23.
http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty_presentations/23
Summer August 22, 2013.

Hope College
HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

25 years of Psychology Internships
Charlotte Witvliet, Ph.D. & Patricia Roehling, Ph.D.

Internship Process

Application
Interview
Secure placement
Begin course on-campus
Begin on-site
Ethics Agreement
Learning Contract
Weekly course with Professor
Weekly supervision on-site
Weekly written assignments
Project
Mid-Term & Final Evaluations

Fast Facts

Patricia Roehling developed the internship program in 1987. Charlotte Witvliet joined the faculty in 1997. Typically, they alternate teaching internships. In the past 2 years, 85 students have completed PSY 496.

Overview

What distinguishes an internship from a short-term job or volunteer work? Psychology Internships at Hope College are academic semester-long, supervised, pre-professional work experiences related to Psychology and the student's vocational interests. Students pursue agreed upon learning goals in a written learning contract, are supervised on-site, complete weekly written assignments, complete a site-specific project, and participate in a class on campus for academic credit.

A Hope College internship is an academic course and an applied experience. It is an academic course that emphasizes depth of learning within an applied setting for which students receive a grade and academic credit listed on their Hope College transcript. The applied experience occurs at a placement outside of the department from which credit is given. The internship experience may be paid or unpaid, on or off-campus.

The student intern has
✓an on-site supervisor with expertise in a field relevant to psychology majors, and with whom weekly face-to-face supervision meetings occur.
✓a professor who oversees the internship, making contact with the on-site supervisor and student, evaluating weekly written work and a course project, assigning readings, and meeting or communicating on a weekly basis with the student. The professor aims to foster students' analysis of their experiences, synthesizing them with knowledge from coursework, and stimulating substantive reflections by the student about the roles of their faith, values, and beliefs as they develop an unfolding understanding of their own vocation and callings. The professor assigns the grade with input from the on-site supervisor.

The student completes
✓three hours on-site for every credit of internship enrolled, along with time invested in course meetings and writing.
✓a contract in collaboration with the on-site supervisor and professor that includes learning objectives and strategies for obtaining them, site expectations for intern behavior, and a plan for supervision from the on-site supervisor.
✓ethics and liability agreements regarding appropriate and inappropriate conduct and risk management information.
✓a project mutually agreed upon by the professor, supervisor, and student.

The internship site provides
✓a clear job/project description for the internship experience.
✓an orientation for the student to the organization, its "culture" and intern work assignment(s).
✓assistance in development of the intern's learning objectives and learning contract.
✓feedback to the student on a regular basis.
✓formal written evaluation(s) of the student using the format provided by the professor.

Template for PSY 496 Internship Learning Contract

Term and year
Placement Name
Student Intern Name

Description of the Agency
Describe the agency and specific department in which you are serving for your internship. This should include the name of the agency, the purpose of the agency, the clientele served, and the services provided.

Learning Goals
Separately list at least three learning goals for the internship. What can you learn or gain experience with during your internship? Think in terms of at *content knowledge* you want to gain, *process knowledge* of how your placement conducts important work, and *skills* you can develop through your internship. Challenge yourself to extend beyond your comfort zone, and consider the unique learning opportunities you have in your placement. Frame goals behaviorally so you know when you have achieved them.

After each goal, list the strategies you will use (consider the people, locations, tasks, and resources available) to meet your objectives. When you frame strategies in ways that describe your behaviors in achieving the goals, you will know how to go about accomplishing them. In your strategies, be sure to consider information you can learn from people and from resources, processes or activities you can observe, and skills you can practice. Think about how you can use the opportunity to write in your weekly Directed Reflections, use supervision, and speak as well as listen in class as strategies to achieve your goals.

Expectations of the Agency
List the activities that you will be performing which are expectations of the agency, and were not listed in as part of your learning goals. Report the days and times during which you will be working at the agency.

Supervision
Specify the name of your supervisor, his/her degrees and title, and the times during which you will receive supervision.

Student's name_____ date _____
On-Site Supervisor's name, degrees/title_____ date_____
Professor's name, Ph.D._____ date_____