Westmont College
Spanish Internship Program
(SP 190)

STUDENT MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The following information is designed to acquaint you with the Westmont College Spanish Department’s Internship Program.

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: RATIONALE & PURPOSE

We increasingly recognize that much significant learning takes place outside the classroom in “learning-by-doing” situations. Our goal is to provide our majors with meaningful off-campus experiences that effectively promote the learning process.

An internship refers to a job/learning arrangement for college students that seeks to combine practical work experience with structured education. Westmont promotes internships as an educational strategy that creates a bridge between classroom preparation and “real-world” applications. Participating in this program gives supervisor’s an opportunity to be involved in the educational process while profiting from the contributions of competent workers.

Under adequate supervision and counsel, students voluntarily serve in on-the-job contexts where their help is needed. In keeping with the objectives of the program, students are to be regarded as pre-professional interns and should not be used as additional clerical help. This experience exposes students to career opportunities, enriches their academic knowledge, and enables them to make a positive contribution in a work environment while developing specific personal skills.

Students receive 2-4 units of academic credit for their internship and are expected to complete academic assignments concurrent with their work experience. Because they receive Spanish credit, students must be able to use their Spanish language skills on a daily basis, and minimally at least 50% of the time on-site.

Specific internship assignments are made in view of the student’s interests, academic preparation, and vocational goals. All placements are dependent on acceptance and approval of the participating agency, and details of the specific work assignments and related tasks should be worked out between the agency and the student. Participating students are fully insured under existing student insurance coverage provided by Westmont College, and cooperating agencies are in no way responsible should accident or injury occur during the course of placement activities.
EXPECTATIONS

What can the participating organization expect?
A. From the student:
   • Volunteer service as an intern for 12 hours per week (4 units) or 6-7 hours per week (2 units) during the 15-week semester.
   • Ability to speak, understand, read, and write Spanish.
   • Willingness and ability to take responsibility.
   • Cooperation with the goals of the organization; cooperation with the staff.
   • Interest and initiative.

B. From the Westmont faculty coordinator:
   • Consultation through telephone contact and at least one placement site visitation during the course of the semester.
   • Direct communication if any difficulties arise.
   • A desire and willingness to listen to suggestions for program improvements and innovations.

What can the student expect?
A. From the participating organization:
   • Appropriate orientation and an opportunity to meet staff.
   • Initial meeting(s) to design the Learning Contract (goals to be accomplished by the student).
   • As a pre-professional, academic training in practical working situations.
   • An opportunity to use the Spanish language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) as much as possible, as well as to learn about aspects of Hispanic culture.
   • A wide exposure to the scope of problems, responsibilities, structure, and functions of the organization.
   • Direct supervision with increasing responsibility as the semester progresses.
   • Regular feedback sessions with an established immediate supervisor for informal professional and personal evaluations and for review of the objectives of the learning contract.
   • Suggestions for readings, lectures, and seminars related to placement activities.
   • Mid.semester (oral) and final (written) evaluation of the work and learning.
B. From the Westmont faculty coordinator:

- Assistance in locating a site where the student will learn the most in relation to their academic and potential vocational interests.

- Group meetings to support their placement by acquainting them with the experiences of other interns and discussing general placement information and problems.

- A visit to the placement site to explore their working situation, to meet their supervisor, and discuss their progress.

- Individual sessions whenever necessary to discuss any problems or issues which arise at the placement.

- Assistance in guiding their reflection and integrating their faith with this experience (through feedback and evaluation of essays and journal entries).

**What does Westmont expect?**

A. From the student:

- Commitment to learning and to reliable performance.

- Fulfillment of the time commitments agreed upon with the organization.

- Successful completion of the goals as outlined in the learning contract.

- Immediate, direct communication regarding any areas of difficulty.

- Completion of all responsibilities (papers, presentations, readings, meetings, etc.) as outlined in the syllabus.

B. From the participating organization:

- Direct communication of any difficulties, questions, or problems relating to the field assignment or the student intern’s performance.

- The completion of a learning contract and evaluations in order to assess the student’s progress and performance.

- Suggestions regarding speakers, materials, readings, films, and other information which will help us to provide maximum benefit to all students.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to work at the internship site an average of 12 hours per week (for 4 units of academic credit) or 6 hours per week (for 2 units of credit) during the 15 week semester.

The first week of school is a “placement week” in which students will contact potential sites and supervisors, set up interviews, and ultimately arrange their internship. By the second week of the semester, students should be on the job and logging their hours. The internship semester ends the last week of classes, i.e. students are not expected to work during finals week.

The typical Westmont semester runs from the second week of January through the first of May (Spring), or the end of August through the first full week of December (Fall). The following holidays are also respected:

Spring Semester:
• Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January)
• President’s Day (Monday and Tuesday, usually the 2nd week of February)
• Spring Break (one week, usually in mid-March)
• Easter Recess (Friday before and Monday after Easter)

Fall Semester:
• Fall break (Monday and Tuesday, 2nd week of October)
• Thanksgiving Holiday (Wednesday through Friday of Thanksgiving week)

Days before and after breaks should not be missed, nor should they be shortened. Days missed due to illness should be made up. If you know in advance that you will need to miss a day, please let your supervisor know as soon as possible, and arrange times to make up the missed hours. If the internship requires weekend and/or evening work, and if supervisors are in agreement, students may take compensatory time for these additional hours.

ORIENTATION

The first few days of the student’s experience in an internship are crucial because they establish patterns and expectations of the rest of the semester. In the orientation the student should:

• Become acquainted with the facilities and move into the work space
• Meet other staff members
• Be given reading materials that describe the work and goals of your organization
• Establish procedures for problem solving when the supervisor is unavailable.
SUPERVISORY MEETINGS

We know that one of the most valuable aspects of the student internship experience is the opportunity to receive direct feedback from the supervisor. Therefore, each supervisor should schedule a regular meeting time with the student (once weekly if possible; a minimum of twice monthly) for the feedback essential to the student’s learning throughout the semester. Following are suggestions for that meeting:

• Feedback on the student’s performance
• Questions which have arisen in the course of their work
• Tasks for the weeks ahead
• The student’s comments on corollary reading assignments (if applicable)
• The student’s feedback on the internship and his/her interaction with other staff
• Inviting the student to any appropriate meetings in the coming week

The following is an outline of two sections in an article in New Directions for Higher Education entitled, “Role of the Agency Supervisor,” by William Ramsay:

Dual Roll of the Supervisor:

• See the student as both a worker and learner
• Help the student relate through work to the real world
• Hold the student to productive endeavor even when it is difficult and even when results are imperfect
• Your teaching function is primarily to interpret
• See that the objectives of the organization are met and that work under your supervision is directed to that end

Steps in Supervision:

• Effective planning
• Participation in the selection of student with whom you are working
• See that necessary supporting structures are provided
• Provide orientation
• Establish a schedule
• Regularly scheduled guidance and direction
• Help the student interpret the experience he/she is having
• Be sensitive to problems that may develop in pursuit of the assignment or in personal relations
• Evaluate the program with the student
THE LEARNING CONTRACT

The learning contract should be a joint effort between you and your supervisor. It will describe the goals for the semester and the tasks you will perform in order to meet those goals. Remember as you make this contract that it should provide for increased responsibility as the semester progresses.

When you are establishing your goals for the semester, consider the skills and values you have. It is important to bring these things together with the goals of the organization where you will be working in order to identify the components of a good learning experience for the semester. Your goals should be realistic — don’t take on too much or too little. This is your opportunity, however, to stretch yourself and to learn new things. Goal setting is a technique for helping you build a framework for your internship learning experience. It can provide you with a sense of direction and purpose, and serve as a standard against which to measure your progress as well as an insurance policy for getting what you want and need from the internship.

**Learning goals:** Learning goals should state in general terms what you hope to learn and can include short range and long range goals appropriate to the work of your organization. Think about the following things as you build your contract:

- Relating your internship to your academic goals
- Exploring career opportunities
- Developing specific skills and competencies
- Improving communication skills

**Learning activities:** Learning activities outline the specific tasks you will do in order to meet the goals above. They are specific statements of what you want to achieve by a certain time in the future. They must be *feasible, dated, measurable,* and indicate an acceptable level of achievement.

- To be *feasible,* activities must be possible and reasonable. Your experience or the advice of others (e.g. your supervisor) must suggest that they can be accomplished.
- To be *dated,* activities must set a time frame that indicates the end-date by which something specific is to be accomplished.
- To be *measurable,* activities must enable you to tell whether you have hit the target.
- To be *achievable,* activities must state how much of the desired result must be obtained to consider the effort successful.

*Please see the models on pp. 9-12.*
EVALUATION

In the middle of the semester, both the students and their supervisors should reflect upon what has been accomplished thus far in the semester. At this point, it will be important to go over the Learning Contract to make any revisions that will provide for a more complete learning experience. You should be doing some self-evaluation at this time, based on the characteristics and qualities which supervisors use to evaluate you at the end of the semester. Both you and your supervisor may want to consider the following questions:

• Are there ways in which the internship could be improved?
• Are the goals and activities being accomplished as expected?
• Should there be any additions, subtractions, or changes made in the goals?
• In what ways is the student meeting/not meeting your expectations?
• Are there major discrepancies between your perception of the intern’s performance and the intern’s perception of her/his performance?

During the final weeks of the semester, the supervisor will be asked to evaluate your work. He/She should include you in this process, as this is one of the most valuable learning times of the semester. A copy of the grading standards follows.

Following the meeting with your supervisor, he/she should submit a letter of evaluation (preferably on official letterhead) in which he/she briefly describes your responsibilities and provides a candid evaluation of your performance on the job. This letter is confidential, and can either be mailed directly to Dr. Mary Docter at Westmont College, or given to the student in a sealed, signed envelope to be delivered to campus.

Note that the evaluation of your supervisor is worth 70% of your final grade. The other 30% is based upon your work with Dr. Docter — the four papers, journal, oral presentation, and participation at group meetings and with your peer partner.
GRADING STANDARDS

A+, A
Exceptional:
• almost always surpassed supervisor expectations
• demonstrated skills necessary to perform duties exceptionally well
• fulfilled all contract goals exceptionally
• demonstrated unusual ability to work independently and show initiative
• demonstrated exceptional ability to work cooperatively and build effective relationships with co-workers
• fulfilled the number of hours per week required, was punctual and dependable, and was willing to do extra work as needed

A-, B+, B
Superior:
• often surpassed supervisor expectations
• demonstrated skills necessary to perform duties
• fulfilled all or almost all contract goals
• demonstrated ability to work independently and show initiative
• demonstrated ability to work cooperatively with co-workers
• fulfilled the number of hours per week required (most of the time)

B-, C+, C
Acceptable:
• met supervisor expectations satisfactorily
• demonstrated skills necessary to perform duties
• fulfilled most of the contract goals
• occasionally demonstrated ability to work independently and show initiative
• demonstrated some ability to work well with others
• occasionally failed to fulfill the number of hours per week required, and not consistently punctual or dependable

C-, D: Below Average: • fell below supervisor expectations

F: Unacceptable: • feel far short of supervisor expectations