

HDFS Child, Youth and Family Development Internship

Placement Process

STEP 1: Self-Reflection

The first step to start looking for an internship placement is to think about and identify areas of specialization that you would like to experience within the Human Development and Family Studies field. You should consider, for example, the population, setting, and function you would like to work with. Think about the type of experience you want to achieve (you can have different interests! This is the time to explore different options). Issues to consider:

- Do you want to work with adolescents? Young children? Older people? Families?
- Do you want to work in a specific setting, e.g., healthcare, educational, immigration, or judicial setting?
- Do you want to work with people with some specific needs or in specific areas, e.g., special needs, adoption/foster care, after school programs, or nutrition?
- Do you want to have more hands-on experience (working directly with clients) or have more of an administrative experience (work “behind the scenes”)? Or do you want a little of both?

Where can you complete the internship? You have flexibility in selecting your internship with two exceptions. This flexibility provides the opportunity of selecting an internship that will give you the most beneficial experience. **The two exceptions include childcare centers (all types included) or in the classroom in K-12 school settings.** Please note that it is possible to be placed outside of the classroom in K-12 settings, such as guidance counsel offices. Again, childcare centers of any type are not permitted. Internships may be coordinated with a job which you hold full time WITH prior permission AND only if expanded responsibilities are beyond your job.

STEP 2: Finding a Placement

After reflecting about and identifying your interests (Step 1), start looking for places that match your interests (Step 2). Explore your options and choose some agencies to contact; **make a priority list but be open-minded.** Once you have located a few places and created a list, do some preliminary research on the agencies you want to visit—look at their mission, services, internship opportunities, and any other relevant information. You can find information on the web or by visiting the agency and collecting brochures and pamphlets. You should do this **BEFORE** scheduling a meeting with an agency representative.

Resources to explore:

- [The Career & Professional Development Center \(CPD\)](#) at UNCG has a database of possible internships, which can be found at [Find an Internship](#).
- Look at the Sample Placements to see a list of agencies where interns have been accepted in previous semesters. This list gives you an idea of the possibilities but does not mean that you have to do your internship with these agencies. *You must contact the agency to verify that they are still accepting interns.* **NOTE:** If you are interested in an agency that is not listed, please provide the Internship Coordinator with a contact person and phone number.
- Check the North Carolina Agency database list of social service agencies throughout the state of North Carolina. This website is NOT an internship database, rather it is a place to find potential agencies. Website: <http://www.nc211.org/>.

STEP 3: Making Contact

You are encouraged to interview at least three agencies before deciding on a placement. Once you have identified possible placements (Step 2), and **after receiving approval from the Internship Coordinator**, you may begin contacting an agency representative at the placement of interest (Step 3). **This contact will be your first impression**; make sure that you are prepared before sending an email or calling an agency. Make sure to be professional and respectful when contacting agencies. Below are general guidelines to follow when making contact:

1. **Research about the agency first.** Make sure that you have some basic knowledge about the agency before contacting them.
2. Check to make sure that you are using the correct name for the agency.
3. When contacting, send an email AND leave a message. Some agency representatives respond faster to one method over the other.
4. When making a phone call, be clear and concise. Have a script or an outline of what you are planning to say, either for a message or a live person, so that you don't speak too long. **Be prepared.**
5. When leaving your phone number, remember to speak slowly and repeat it.
6. Make sure to have an appropriate, professional email address.
7. When sending an email, use an appropriate, professional salutation (ex: Dear Ms. Williams) and email closings (e.g., Sincerely). **Make sure to re-read your email for typos and clarity before sending it.**

Examples of Contact Scripts:

Example #1: Telephone script – Speaking with an actual person

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a (class year) at UNCG majoring in Human Development & Family Studies. (pause...wait for their acknowledgement). I am looking for an internship for next semester and, if possible, would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss internship possibilities. Is this a good time for me to try to set up a meeting with you or someone on your staff?

(If not) *When would be a better time for me to call?*

(If yes) *I would like to meet with you for about 30 minutes at your convenience. Would you be available to speak with me during the week of _____?*

NOTE: Be prepared to discuss your internship on the phone. The agency representative may only have that time to speak or ask questions to get an idea of who you are and your interest in the agency.

Example #2: Telephone script – Leaving a message

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a (class year) at UNCG majoring in Human Development & Family Studies. If possible, I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss internship possibilities for the (fall/spring). I can be reached at (555) 555-5555. Again, my name is _____ and I can be reached at (555) 555-5555.

(If applicable) *I will also contact you through email. I look forward to hearing from you.*

NOTE: Remember to speak slowly.

Example #3: Email Script

Dear Ms./Mr./Mrs. _____:

My name is _____ and I am a (class year) at UNCG majoring in Human Development & Family Studies. I have an interest in working with

_____. I am in the process of researching internship placements for the (fall/spring) semester and I believe that your agency connects with my future goals. I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss internship possibilities with (name of agency). I can be reached at (555) 555-5555 or through this email.

(If applicable) *I also left a message for you earlier. I look forward to hearing from you.*

STEP 4: Preparing for an Informational Interview

After researching about the agency and scheduling a meeting with a representative (Step 3), you should prepare for the interview (Step 4). Issues to consider:

- Bring notes with you about the agency—you can write down the agency's mission, services, projects, etc. Also, research about the person you will talk to (e.g., their role and responsibilities in the agency).
- Bring a copy of your resume (or notes about your professional goals) so you can also talk about your professional experiences and how they fit with your career goals and the agency's mission.
- Ask relevant questions (based on your research). Remember that you are also trying to determine if the agency would be a good fit for you.
- Prior to the meeting, print a copy of the [Site Supervisor Letter](#), which provides information about the internship requirements and expectations, and the roles and responsibilities of the site supervisor.
- Dress appropriately and be on time (allow time to find parking and find the correct place).

Tips on what to look for in a placement:

1. **Supervision:** One of the key components to a successful internship is having a good working relationship with your site supervisor. You will work very close with your site supervisor, and it is important to determine if you will be able to work professionally. Try to determine if this supervisor will give you adequate supervision to meet your needs. Some interns need more guidance than others—it is important to determine **your** needs as an intern. Question for consideration:
 - a. What type of supervision do you prefer? Are you looking for regular contact, supervision meetings, or reporting (for example)?
2. **Roles and responsibilities:** Identify the types of experiences internship placements provide. You want to ensure that you can get the appropriate experience to meet your needs as well as meet the needs of the agency. Therefore, you will need to have an idea about your goals for this internship. Questions for consideration:
 - a. Will you have direct contact with clients, or will you do more administrative work? Will you do programming, evaluation, grant writing?
 - b. Has your site supervisor had interns before? If so, what were their roles and responsibilities? Does it match with your expectations?
3. **Scheduling:** Some agencies have very limited hours of when you can earn your internship hours, while other agencies are flexible. Therefore, think about your schedule, including classes and work, to determine if the agency is an appropriate placement. Some supervisors can provide feedback about the number of hours that can be accumulated based on previous experience. Question for consideration:
 - a. Will you be able to complete your hours in the allotted timeframe?

STEP 5: Conducting Informational Interview

Now that you are prepared for the interview (Step 4), it is time to conduct the interview (Step 5).

During the meeting, you should:

- Clarify any questions you may have about the agency and the services provided by the agency (remember that you already researched about the agency).
- Discuss responsibilities of all parties and the activities you would be engaging in during the semester.
- Inquire about internship application procedures and expectations.
- Ask general questions about the process of selecting interns. For example, the time frame for selecting an intern or how many interns they will accept.

SPEP 6: After the Informational Interview

- Remember to send thank you letters!
- When an internship is offered, respond to that offer immediately with a phone call and either a letter of acceptance or a letter of regret.
- Complete the [HDFS Internship Application Form](#) once you have secured your placement and met with the internship coordinator. You should submit the form before the start of the semester.