

# PACS 625 Internship Requirements

## Course Contact

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## Introduction

An internship combines rigorous scholarly reflection with experience and should invigorate, prepare, and mobilize you to be a more active global citizen guided by the values of global engagement, life-long learning, and compassionate service. It is therefore important to remember the overall MPACS program objectives as you consider what kind of internship experience is appropriate for you. MPACS aims to:

- Foster the capacity of students to understand the promise and potential of civil society to advance peace through principled advocacy, effective programming, and dynamic engagement with the state and marketplace;
- Educate students to be responsible, reflective and self-critical agents of peaceful change in local, national and/or global contexts.

The goal of an internship is to develop practical competencies necessary for peace work in a setting in which you can observe agencies at work and be mentored to develop your own approaches. In addition to improving your own skill base, you will be required to deepen your own research capacity by engaging in projects directed by or related to your host agency. You will also be challenged to see linkages between the host agency and organizations performing relevant work in other sectors (i.e., government, civil society, and the marketplace).

## Graduate Studies Calendar Course Description

*The internship allows students to engage in experiential learning with a research institute, non-governmental organization or other agency/entity that deals with peace and conflict issues. Students are expected to read relevant texts before, during and after the field study, to engage in substantial research on the issues addressed by the host agency/entity and to submit a report reflecting on what the field study/internship revealed about the integration of peace studies theory and practice. Field study placements may be either in Canada or in international contexts. Departmental consent is required.*

## Course Rationale and Objectives

The purpose of an internship is to integrate on-the-ground experience with reading, research, and writing. It is meant to provide you with practical experience in an organization related to your interests in a local, national, or global context.

An internship offers you an opportunity to develop personal, professional, and community engagement skills.<sup>1</sup>

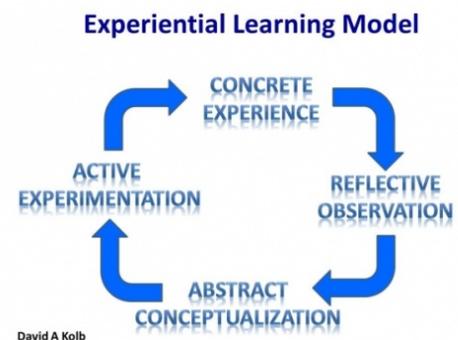
- *Personal development* involves critical thinking, an ability to look at issues from multiple perspectives, the development of communication skills (oral and written), learning team work, and benefitting from coaching/mentoring/supervision. It is a chance to further “know yourself” as a peace practitioner.

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<sup>1</sup> The following ideas are adapted from: H. Frederick Sweitzer and Mary A. King, *The Successful Internship. Personal, Professional, and Civic Development*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole CENGAGE Learning, 2009), 5.

- *Professional development* for peace practitioners may involve anything from a more loosely structured experience observing and participating in the daily ebb and flow of peacebuilding practice to a more “highly structured and sequenced set of experiences” with clear activity goals and outcomes within a professional context. The professional context may not focus on “peacebuilding” per se (e.g. it might be in an environmental law office or poverty alleviation program), but is one that welcomes and affirms efforts to incorporate civil society-based peacebuilding practices and perspectives that you bring from your MPACS training.
- *Community engagement* focuses the “development of personal and professional knowledge, skills, and values” on tasks and experiences related to building a more peaceful world. It means that one’s personal and professional development occurs within a community and is ‘about’ that community. It means that the full human context of the work is taken into account and your own growth interacts with, and develops out of, this larger context.

The integrated learning experience of an internship can be illustrated by the Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle<sup>2</sup> (right). You will have an opportunity to gain concrete experience and incorporate reflective observation within the experience. Out of this you will be able to develop principles based on your experience and reflection, and from there you may test your theory in a new situation. While not all aspects of this cycle will be present in all internship situations, the cycle represents the learning framework provided by the MPACS program for internships and other forms of applied peace work.



An MPACS internship may not provide a specific career path, but it should expose you to professional options and will specifically prepare you to both understand and be involved with the development of civil society’s role in creating healthy, resilient, and more peaceful and just communities. Three specific learning goals apply to the PACS Internship. The internship provides an opportunity to:

- Apply principles of conflict analysis and transformation at community, institutional, and/or systemic levels.
- Develop practical competencies necessary for effective peace building work.
- Have a vision for advancing peace in practical and meaningful ways locally, nationally, and globally.

Building on our program’s emphasis on catalyzing self-directed student learning processes that will continue well after the granting of a degree, the internship program has been developed to help students critically engage and apply key concepts from the classroom setting, in relation to their unique circumstances and learning objectives. Reflecting on the relationship between theory and practice, identifying areas of personal strength and competency, and developing one’s own distinctive vision for practical peace work are all integral parts of an internship experience.

### Preparing for Your Internship

The Internship Coordinator is available to help you identify an appropriate placement, assist you as you negotiate specific aspects of the internship with the mentor in the partner organization, creation of the proposal, and can serve as a logistics advisor throughout the internship development process as well as during the time you are in the field.

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<sup>2</sup> D. A. Kolb, *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1984) in H. Frederick Sweitzer and Mary A. King, *The Successful Internship. Personal, Professional, and Civic Development*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole CENGAGE Learning, 2009), 11.

**It is first important to think about the kind of internship you want to have.** Here are some core questions to consider: Do you want an experience in a Canadian or non-Canadian setting? Do you wish to delve into an organization that is based in your home community or another community? Do you have a specific kind of host organization with which you would like to work? Are they set up to cater to your needs as an intern? **Next, you'll begin to search for placement opportunities that meet your goals.** You can look for internship programs that are already running in an organization, or approach an organization to create a position for you.

Criteria for an internship are as follows:

- The placement must be at least 50 working days (350-400 hours)
  - These hours can be completed full-time during one academic term, or on a part-time basis over multiple academic terms.
  - If an exceptional opportunity arises that does not meet the preferred duration, it may be considered.
- The substance of the work to be completed is consistent with the goals of the MPACS program and provides a level of rigor that is consistent with a graduate level course credit.
  - It is ideal to have opportunities to understand the organization's internal structures and dynamics, how your organization operates within the government-civil society organization (CSO)-marketplace triangle that is core to the MPACS worldview. The internship should also involve opportunities for you to develop an understanding of how the organization works, and not just to complete important day-to-day tasks. This will ideally mean exposure to management meetings, visioning sessions, and board or committee meetings (if a CSO), or to bodies of similar function if you are working in a business or government context. These expectations are in part communicated through a letter from the Internship Coordinator and can be sent as your plan develops. Throughout this process and during the internship, be on the lookout for specific research projects to which you can contribute that will benefit your host while also advancing your own learning goals.
  - Typically placements with "start-up" organizations will not be approved because they often lack the same organizational structures of more established organizations and thus have a different depth of learning than is intended for a graduate student.
- Organizations will appoint a local mentor, typically this will be your work supervisor. While your Faculty Advisor will be your primary contact, developing a "check-in" relationship with someone "in the field" for whom you work is equally important. You will include a copy of this person's CV/resume in your proposal. Ideally they will have a Master's degree and five years of experience or a Bachelor's degree and ten years of experience.

### **Proposal for PACS 625**

Once you have secured a placement with an organization, you will need to have this work approved for credit by the PACS Advisory Group (PACS AG) through a proposal. The deadline for proposal submission is **January 15** if you wish to do an internship that will begin during the following Spring term. If you would like to do an internship that begins in one of the other terms (Fall or Winter) please check with the Internship Coordinator for deadlines.

The proposal should be approximately 5-8 pages and include the following elements:

1. A cover page that includes your full name, student ID number, name of host organization, job title (if known), location of placement, as well as the start and end dates of your placement.

2. An introduction with a brief description of the placement, the location, the cultural context, and issues the placement will enable you to study.
3. A concrete list of learning objectives and a brief explanation of how the internship will help you to achieve those objectives. Aim for a list of 6-8 learning objectives.
4. A preliminary bibliography of at least 20 works that you draw upon throughout your placement and utilize in the internship assignments.
5. A copy of the correspondence with the organization confirming the placement and providing the job or internship description. This can be a formal letter or an email message.
6. A copy of the CV/resume of your local mentor. This person should preferably have a Master's degree and five years of experience or a Bachelor's degree and ten years of experience.
7. If you would like to request financial assistance from the MPACS program, you will need to include a budget outlining the expenses associated with your placement.
8. If you have any preference for which faculty member might serve as your Faculty Advisor, you may include a note at the end. There is no guarantee that you will work with this person, but it is helpful to know. You will be assigned a Faculty Advisor once your proposal is approved.

Note that for international placements, you must complete the required Waterloo International pre-departure course online, and submit additional risk management forms. These will be administered by the Internship Coordinator.

If you intend to do research that requires ethical clearance, you will need to work closely with your Faculty Advisor to submit your proposal to the Office of Research Ethics early – it takes at least *three weeks* from submission to decision for a project needing minimal clearance. Ethical clearance takes time so you need to plan accordingly.

### **Course Enrolment**

The PACS 625 course is established so that the student is enrolled in PACS 625 during the term in which the bulk of their internship placement work takes place. The nature and scope of the course is one that may not allow the student to complete all of the course requirements and academic requirements during the term of course enrollment. In the case where not all the necessary work has been completed the student will carry a blank grade into the next term which will be replaced with a numeric grade upon completion of the work and grading by the assigned Faculty Advisor.

### **Academic Content: Your Internship Portfolio and Presentation**

The PACS 625 Internship course is worth 1.0 units, equivalent to two regular graduate-level courses. The academic work aligns with the course value and expectations. Each intern will construct a portfolio with the guidance, discussion and feedback of their Faculty Advisor. These guidelines are intended to provide support to the intern and Faculty Advisor as you conceptualize this internship portfolio together. The first activity of your internship should be to arrange a meeting with your Faculty Advisor to discuss plans for your internship in more detail.

To fulfill PACS 625 academic requirements, most students will complete a six-part Internship Portfolio and share their most essential insights with peers during a final presentation. Each component is described below.

- Reflective Journal – 40%
- Research Project – 50%

- Overall Performance – 10% (The overall performance of the internship will include consideration on the completion, performance and quality of the course requirements and milestones. This is inclusive of but not limited to the feedback that is provided by the local mentor, the quality of the presentation, the quality of the proposal, and correspondence with your Faculty Advisor.)

### **Part One: A Copy of your Internship Proposal**

Provide the copy of the internship proposal that was approved by PACS AG.

### **Part Two: The Reflective Journal**

The PACS 625 course is one that presents an opportunity for students to test ideas developed in classrooms and to hone skills in various applied settings. The reflective journal will track reflections and growth as a peacebuilder and as an MPACS student, as you actively engage with host organizations and citizens, record observations and thoughts, and critically explore major questions that define the internship experience.

*A few examples of these questions could be:*

- What are you learning and discovering?
- How does the work you and your organization are doing relate to concepts and practices you have explored in MPACS courses?
- What position do you see your organization occupying within the landscape of civil society?
- How do you view yourself within the context of your organization and within the broader civil society setting of your organization?

This journal can and should become a resource for your other academic work within the PACS 625 framework, and for additional courses you take after the internship. Write your journal with the expectation that you will be revisiting it in the future, to recapture defining moments, insights, and ideas.

#### *Expectations for the Reflective Journal*

- The journal must be written regularly – students should strive to complete at least one substantive entry per week, producing a minimum of 15 entries for the journal as a whole
- The length of the journal will depend partially on the length of your time in the internship, but the final product should be at minimum 25 pages or 7,000 words in length
- Your reflective journal should also conclude with a 3-page summary of key learnings
- Maintaining a regular rhythm of journal entries during the course of the internship will enable you to reflect on and analyze your experiences, actively exploring connections (as well as tensions) between theory and practice.
- Feedback is an important piece of the journal assignment so it is important to work with your Faculty Advisor in journal direction and design.
- The journal assignment is very flexible, depending on your discussions with your Faculty Advisor, and may take various forms and incorporate different mediums (photography, documentary, painting, etc.). It should be shaped by interactions and discussions with your Faculty Advisor.

### **Part Three: Research Project or Final Paper**

The academic centerpiece of your internship will be a final report or research project that builds on your field experience but engages current thinking and theoretical debates that relate to the substance of your placement. The expectation is that the paper will be 20-25 pages in length, and will include an expansive bibliography that incorporates works from the bibliography you included in your original internship proposal. More specific report requirements will be designed in conjunction with your Faculty Advisor.

There is a range of options for this assignment. Here is a short list of possibilities:

- A theoretically informed assessment or evaluation of a project undertaken by your organization
- An in-depth, analytical study of a conflict or a set of issues with which your host organization is engaged
- An action research project in which you plan and implement a set of activities for your organization and then reflect on lessons learned
- A critical assessment of “best practice” ideas that are relevant to your organization’s field of practice

Additional options may also be acceptable, so do not hesitate to consult with your Faculty Advisor.

**Part Four: Materials**

If applicable, this consists of any materials that you develop during your work placement. For example, if you are involved in creating manuals, policies, or press releases you would want to include any materials you developed for your work.

**Part Five: Employer Feedback**

The host organization/mentor is expected to complete an Internship Assessment form to confirm that the student completed the agreed upon work and a brief evaluation of their performance. This form is used to verify that you have successfully completed the internship and provide your Faculty Advisor with a sense of how the internship went. The PACS Internship Coordinator will arrange with the local mentor for this to be completed. The local mentor may choose to share this feedback with you or may submit the form confidentially to the Internship Coordinator.

**Part Six: Presentation on Internship Experience**

This piece of the internship course is a 20-minute presentation with a five-minute question period with your peers. The presentation summarizes and synthesizes your experience, its key learning, and (if applicable) the key findings of your final paper. These presentations will be delivered during scheduled symposia within the two months of the term following your internship.