

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON STUDENT INTERNSHIPS  
WITH THE  
PENNSYLVANIA BOARD OF PROBATION AND PAROLE**



## **PREFACE**

The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) has provided both graduate and undergraduate student placement opportunities to over 30 colleges and universities in Pennsylvania. The PBPP is committed to providing students with a unique opportunity to learn about this segment of the criminal justice system. We feel that by offering placements, we are preparing future employees of the criminal justice system and involving community citizens in the correctional process.

Prospective students and their sponsoring educational institutions are asked to review this information in detail when considering a placement with our agency. We feel the foundation for a valuable internship experience is built upon sound communication, preparation, and clear expectations of all those involved in this joint learning experience. This publication is designed to aid prospective students and their sponsoring institutions in considering a placement with our agency.

## **What is the “philosophy” of The Board in structuring your internship program?**

The PBPP will provide the student an opportunity to learn, while it is the student’s responsibility to take advantage of these opportunities. The placement by its nature is not a highly structured experience, but is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of the agency, its offenders, and the individual student. The student will be regarded as a professional person during the placement and will be expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, including being able to identify their own developmental needs, and conducting themselves within the realm of professional ethics.

The student is expected to be an asset to the agency and its offenders, NOT a liability.

Agency staff, with ever increasing workloads, must focus their efforts on serving its offenders. Agency staff cannot afford non-productive diversions that would tax our already limited resources and cost valuable time. In this process there are certain legal and administrative limitations affecting the role and duties of the student intern which will be explained later in this packet.

The PBPP feels student internships can be a valuable asset to the agency, while students receive a practical education in probation and parole work.

## **What types of placements are available?**

Most placements with our agency are in the district and sub-offices working with parole agents and investigators as they perform their normal duties. While the district offices and sub-offices present the most sought after placement experiences, internships are also possible at the central office for students interested in administrative, legal, or research-related placements, and at institutional parole offices. Applications for these internships will be handled on an individual basis between the student and the appropriate bureau director.

Additionally, we will attempt to provide a placement for you in the area you request, although this is not always possible. In completing the Application for Student Internship, students should specify what other areas in which they are willing to work. Any special interest, needs, or limitations should be noted at the time formal application for placement is made.

## **What types of duties may I be assigned to?**

The exact duties a student may be assigned to do will vary depending on their placement within the PBPP.

### **A. Field Undergraduate Internship Programs**

1. Direct Services (Supervision)
  - a. General travel and observation of agents
  - b. Sit-in on group counseling sessions
  - c. Initial interviewing
  - d. Individual counseling

- e. Specialized counseling
  - f. Observation of hearings
2. Direct Services (Investigation)
- a. Assist agents with classification summary investigations
  - b. Assist with pre-parole investigations
  - c. Observe pre-sentence investigations
  - d. Observe Pardon Board investigations
  - e. Observe investigations incidental to arrest
  - f. Assist with paperwork
3. Administrative
- a. Completion of surveys, research, etc.
  - b. Assist agent in relevant surveys and any assigned administrative duties

B. Office of Policy, Legislative Affairs, and Communications

- 1. Policy research and analysis of other states efforts regarding prison overcrowding and parole issues
- 2. Interns may work with senior staff to update agency procedures
- 3. Research and write-up stories on parole activities
- 4. Absconder research under the Interstate Compact
- 5. Aiding with legislative bill research and analysis
- 6. Observe parole hearings
- 7. Ride along with a parole agent for a day
- 8. Other tasks as assigned

C. Office of Chief Counsel – Law Clerks

- 1. Handle document requests
- 2. Research and summarize cases and statutes
- 3. Memorandum writing
- 4. Assisting with administrative appeals
- 5. Additional assignments as the attorneys may assign

D. The Harrisburg Internship Semester “THIS”

- 1. Office of Chief Counsel
  - a. Ride along with an agent
  - b. Observe parole hearings
  - c. Attend trials/hearings as scheduled
  - d. Update publications in law library
  - e. Pull central office files as needed
  - f. Draft responses to administrative appeals, legislative bills, etc.
  
- 2. Office of Policy, Legislative Affairs, and Communications
  - a. Legislative inquiries

- b. Bill analysis
- c. Policy issue research project
- d. Attend various meetings

E. Sexual Offenders Assessment Board

- 1. Research
- 2. Assisting clinical directors with studies
- 3. Work with investigators
- 4. Accompany investigators in the field
- 5. Attend legislative hearings
- 6. Observe offender interviews
- 7. Observe sex offender board members during assessments

In all instances the student will report to an agency supervisor or an agency-assigned field instructor. This staff member will be responsible for providing necessary guidance and support during the course of placement and agency orientation.

The duties assigned to the student are made at the discretion of their agency supervisor. These determinations are made based on an assessment of local needs, resources, and capabilities of the agency and the student. Prior to the placement, the student should communicate with their assigned agency supervisor their overall expectations and objectives associated with their placement in addition to the special requirements or expectations of their sponsoring educational institution.

Due to the sensitive nature of the work, all prospective interns will be required to submit to a background check prior to the PBPP offering an internship.

**What are the qualifications and expectations associated with my internship?**

A. Field Undergraduate Internship Programs

- 1. Students should be pursuing a course of study related to the field of criminal justice or human services.
- 2. Students must be juniors or seniors in good academic standing.
- 3. Students must be available to work 30-35 hours a week minimum
- 4. Required Essential Functions:
  - a. Quickly get into and/or out of a vehicle in response to an emergency situation.
  - b. Stand continuously for extended periods of time.
  - c. Walkup/down steps to visit offenders or other parties.
  - d. Walk continuously for extended periods of time.
  - e. Be able to run/jog continuously for a minimum of five minutes.

B. Office of Policy, Legislative Affairs, and Communications

1. Interns must be a graduate or law student and have an interest in criminal law or state policy formation
2. Interns will be required to work the equivalent of full-time (4-5 days per week) during the summer or a minimum of 2 half days during the fall or spring semesters when they are enrolled in classes full time.

C. Office of Chief Counsel Law Clerks

1. Legal interns are recruited through a coordinated effort between the Office of General Counsel and the Office of Chief Counsel.

D. The Harrisburg Internship Semester "THIS"

1. Students are recruited from throughout the state by a group of fourteen faculty campus coordinators and are placed through the Pennsylvania State System for Higher Education.
2. Students must have earned at least 45 undergraduate college credits and maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average.

E. Sexual Offenders Assessment Board

1. Students must be studying psychology, criminal justice or similarly related fields and be in good academic standing.

**How do I apply for placement?**

All students seeking a placement with the PBPP are required to complete the Application for Student Internship. We actively encourage the supervising professor or designated placement coordinator from your education institute to screen the application prior to your submittal to assure timely coordination and support.

The PBPP must be given the opportunity to review any administrative or other requirements placed upon the PBPP by your sponsoring institution. The applicant must inform the PBPP of any requirements at the time of application. The PBPP retains the right to disapprove an application for internship if the PBPP feels these requirements are not in the best interest of the agency.

It is preferred that undergraduate internship candidates submit their applications at least two months prior to when they would be available to start and internship. Submittals that do not allow for this time may be delayed.

The original application is to be sent to the internship coordinator at the central office and a copy is to be sent to the applicable district director in the area where placement is desired. In the event more than one location is being requested, this should be clearly indicated on the application along with order of preference, with separate forms going to all districts involved. Proper procedures for special types of internships may be secured by contacting the internship coordinator listed in the back of this booklet.

If additional copies of the Application for Student Internship are needed, prospective interns are encouraged to make photocopies prior to filling out the attached Application for Student Internship, also additional copies may be secured by contacting an agency office or the internship coordinator.

Once the completed application is received, it will be screened, and a determination will be made regarding the desired placements. A personal interview and background check will be required before any perspective intern's acceptance is finalized. Furthermore, at this time, it is important for both the agency and the student to understand the mutual expectations so that a productive learning experience will result. Any questions or problems should be resolved prior to accepting the placement.

After initiating an application, students are requested to immediately advise the agency of any changes in their personal information in order to assure that the process goes as smoothly and quickly as possible. If there are any questions regarding the status of the application or other questions, the internship coordinator should be contacted.

### **What criteria are used in accepting a student for placement?**

In addition to adequate academic preparation, a high degree of maturity is an essential prerequisite for placement with a law enforcement agency such as the PBPP. The following criteria should be taken into account when considering prospective interns:

- A. Students considered for internships should be pursuing a course of study related to the field of criminal justice or human services.
- B. Undergraduate interns must be juniors or seniors in good academic standing.
- C. Interest in the field, maturity, and initiative are characteristics necessary for placement with the agency.
- D. Logistical considerations should be given to transportation, potential interruptions in work schedule, lodging arrangements, etc.
- E. A background check will be made on all applicants. Any criminal arrests and/or convictions may result in the requested placement being denied.

### **What about part-time placements?**

Part-time student placements of less than 30 to 35 hours a week are usually discouraged. This is due to the logistical and scheduling problems that may have an adverse effect on the overall quality of the placement. However, each situation is reviewed individually and is contingent upon the approval of the district director.

### **What about part-time employment or course work?**

The parole agent's job consists of uncertain work hours with properly supervising the offender being the first priority. Therefore, the PBPP discourages student interns from making other outside commitments (i.e. classes and/or part-time employment scheduled

on days while in placement). Careful review by the intern coordinator and your supervisor should take place before approving such arrangements.

### **Will I be paid or receive compensation for my expenses?**

Under most placement situations, the agency shall not reimburse the student for any transportation, lodging, or subsistence expenditures; nor is it able to provide any stipends or reimbursement to either student or school.

Situations where expense reimbursements to students seem warranted will be handled on an individual basis subject to the prior review and approval of the director of the Office Administrative Services. These situations will be limited to expenses incurred as a result of assigned duties furthering the agency's immediate interests. Specific guidelines in this regard are impractical and are subject to the variables of each placement and the duties assigned. After approval is given, the student may submit an expense voucher subject to the same guidelines and procedures that apply to regular employees.

Student interns are not permitted to operate state vehicles. Only properly licensed Commonwealth employees to whom the vehicles are assigned or dispatched shall operate Commonwealth vehicles.

### **Insurance Coverage . . . What happens if I am injured or involved in any type of litigation as a result of my placement?**

In view of our agency's commitment to the use of student interns, coupled with the potential risks associated with our mission, certain issues relative to personal and/or agency liability require clarification.

The Commonwealth has no insurance to cover an intern in situations where they may be exposed to risk or injury, nor is the Commonwealth empowered to seek such, or to cover such exposure.

If an act of negligence committed by a student intern resulted in a suit brought against an employee of this agency, the Commonwealth would assume the employee's defense; unless it was determined the employee did not act in good faith or acted outside the scope of his/her duties. There will be no response to a claim or suit against the intern and the Commonwealth will not represent or indemnify any interns in such situations.

It is very important that the student and their sponsoring educational institution understand these provisions and limitations.

### **When and where should I report?**

On the first day of placement, unless otherwise instructed, you should report at 8:30 a.m. to the office where you were assigned. After that, in most cases, your supervisor (or district director) will establish an ongoing schedule exposing you to a variety of the day-to-day activities of parole agents. If you desire any special activities, you should speak with your supervisor regarding its timeliness and feasibility.

The supervisor is responsible for providing an overview of the agency process. He/she will be available to answer questions regarding your internship within the agency and will be responsible for the overall coordination of the placement experience.

### **What will be my work hours?**

Normal agency hours as coordinated with a supervisor. If you are a field/undergraduate intern, the agent to whom you are assigned will be working beyond “normal” working hours. This overtime work is often unexpected, particularly if an emergency or crisis situation arises. Therefore, the student must be flexible in terms of the time commitments for it may not be feasible to transport the student back to the office or meeting location at the planned time.

### **Where will I be working?**

Interns may be working anywhere within the area covered by the office to which you are assigned. The PBPP is primarily a field service organization with most of the agent’s functions taking place in the field. In most areas, especially rural areas, agents report to their respective office only one day a week. Therefore, many students will be asked to meet their assigned agents at a predetermined location away from the office en-route to his/her caseload responsibilities.

### **What should I do if I am sick and unable to report to work?**

The student should immediately contact their supervisor and cancel any arrangements for the particular day. If your supervisor is not available, their supervisor should be contacted. Failure to do this may result in wasted time for an agent by leaving them waiting for the student to meet them.

### **Should I have transportation available**

All students accepted for placement must have transportation available since it is the student’s responsibility to provide transportation to and from the office they are assigned to, or to meet their supervising agent at a predetermined location. The agency supervisor should be consulted regarding specific expectations.

### **How about dress and grooming?**

Once accepted, the student is considered an agency representative. Student interns should dress according to the situation. If coming into contact with various public officials (i.e. court room judges or attending PBPP hearings), more formal attire is necessary. For males, a suit and tie is appropriate, while females may need to wear a dress or suit. The PBPP requires the student to be neatly and appropriately groomed at all times while in placement. Furthermore, your assigned supervisor will be able to elaborate on the specific requirements for your placement.

### **What about conducting research and studies while on placement?**

The PBPP welcomes the objective examination of its efforts and is continually trying to find ways to improve its operations, though the student is asked to follow various guidelines in doing research or independent studies.

First the student should discuss the project topic, scope, and methodology for any proposed research with the agency supervisor. Assistance may then be offered in helping the student structure the study to be consistent with the availability of information and can possibly suggest additional resources. It must be realized that while the case folders and other offender-related data are available for review by students they can only be used for educational purposes. As the PBPP is bound by strict rules of confidentiality, so will the student. Student's will need to agree to sign a confidentiality agreement. Absolutely no information, written or verbal, may leave the agency or folder regarding offenders without the specific approval of the agency supervisor.

In addition, the student should not discuss specific cases and their identifying data with anyone outside the agency for it may prove to be damaging to the offender.

Students will also be required to provide the agency with copies of any papers or other reports they develop as a result of this experience. This material should be forwarded to the Training Division for inclusion in the agency library after it is reviewed at the local level.

### **What about evaluations?**

The agency supervisor will be responsible for completing any performance evaluations required by your school.

### **What happens if there are problems, complaints, or grievances?**

Any questions or other matters requiring clarification relative to student internships may be directed to the intern coordinator within the Training Division.

Similarly, if problems are encountered in conjunction with a particular placement or program of a participating college/university, which cannot be resolved at the "local" level, they should be brought to the immediate attention of the Training Division. We will attempt to resolve the problem and/or bring the matter to the attention of the involved parties, making appropriate program modifications so future problems can be averted.

## **Inquiries and Additional Information**

The preceding information is designed to answer some of the more common questions posed by students. It is the hope of the PBPP to further enrich your education experiences while continuing to improve the quality and quantity of services to the offender and community

Should you have any further questions, or desire additional information, please feel free to contact:

PA Board of Probation and Parole  
Bureau of Human Resources  
Attn: Intern Coordinator  
1101 S. Front Street, Suite 5600  
Harrisburg, PA 17104-2522  
Phone: 717-787-5699 ext. 253  
Fax: 717-772-4197

Below is a list of the district offices, their related sub-offices, and a listing of counties supervised by each office where student's may apply to work at for their internships.

### **Western Region Office**

North Shore Sub-Office  
1121 West North Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
Phone: 412.880.0235

### **Altoona District Office**

Cricket Field Plaza  
1304 7th Street – Rear  
Altoona, PA 16601  
Phone: 814.946.7357

### **Erie District Office**

221 East 18th Street  
Erie, PA 16503  
Phone: 814.871.4201

### **Mercer District Office**

P.O. Box 547  
Creekside Office Complex  
Suite 102  
8362 Sharon-Mercer Road  
Mercer, PA 16137  
Phone: 724.662.2380

### **Butler Sub-Office**

207 Sunset Drive - Suite 1  
Butler, PA 16001  
Phone: 724.284.8888

### **Franklin Sub-Office**

1272 Elk Street  
Franklin, PA 16323  
Phone: 814.437.7531

### **Pittsburgh District Office**

133 Penn Circle West  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Phone: 412.645.7000

### **Beaver Falls Sub-Office**

600 Sixth Street  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010  
Phone: 724.847.5575

### **Greensburg Sub-Office**

333 Harvey Avenue  
Suite 100  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
Phone: 724.832.5369

### **Mon-Valley Sub-Office**

335 Fifth Avenue  
McKeesport, PA 15132  
Phone: 412.664.5320

**North Shore Sub-Office**  
1121 West North Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
Phone: 412.442.5840

**Central Region Office**  
1101 South Front Street  
Suite 5950  
Harrisburg, PA 17104  
Phone: 717.787.5699

**Allentown District Office**  
2040 South 12th Street  
Allentown, PA 18103  
Phone: 610.791.6157

**Reading Sub-Office**  
State Office Building  
633 Cherry Street  
Reading, PA 19602  
Phone: 610.378.4331

**Harrisburg District Office**  
1130 Herr Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17103  
Phone: 717.787.2563

**Chambersburg Sub-Office**  
630 Norland Avenue  
Chambersburg, PA 17201  
Phone: 717.491.1038

**Lancaster Sub-Office**  
635 Union Street  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
Phone: 717.299.7593

**York Sub-Office**  
785 Vogelsong Road  
York, PA 17404  
Phone: 717.812.0263

**Scranton District Office**  
430 Penn Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18503  
Phone: 570.963.4326

**Williamsport District Office**  
450 Little League Boulevard  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: 570.327.3575

**Eastern Region Office**  
2630 North 13th Street  
Suite 100  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
Phone: 215.560.6594

**Chester District Office**  
701 Crosby Street – Suite C  
Chester, PA 19013  
Phone: 610.447.3270

**Norristown Sub-Office**  
1961 New Hope Street  
Norristown, PA 19401  
Phone: 484.250.7580

**Philadelphia District Office**  
2630 North 13th Street  
Suite 100  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
Phone: 215.560.6594

**Philadelphia Northeast Division**  
1318-24 W. Clearfield Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
Phone: 215.965.2700

**Philadelphia County Wide Division**  
2630 North 13th Street  
Suite 200  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
Phone: 215.560.2082

**Philadelphia West Division**  
5828-38 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19139  
Phone: 215.560.6261

**Philadelphia Northwest Division**  
2630 North 13th Street  
Suite 200  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
Phone: 215.560.4685