

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING AN INTERNSHIP JOURNAL

What is a journal? A journal is a systematic and analytical record of your reflections as stimulated by observations, experiences, conversations, readings, etc. It is more than a diary, which typically contains only your thoughts and activities, and more than just a recording log which is simply a listing of events, work, or reading with no analysis. A good learning journal makes thoughtful connections between “theory and practice”.

Purposes of a journal: A number of useful ends can be served simultaneously by keeping a journal.

- A journal can force you to try to make sense out of a great variety of observations, experiences, and ideas. You might think of it as a dialogue with yourself, in which the very act of committing thought to paper forces you to reflect more systematically and hopefully contributes to new insights which you might otherwise overlook.
- A journal also permits you to demonstrate to the faculty supervisor some of what you have learned without the restriction inherent in other types of "research" writing that may focus on one narrow aspect of a particular subject area or topic.

TYPES OF ENTRIES TO INCLUDE IN AN INTERNSHIP JOURNAL

Log Entries: The learning log requires the intern to say concisely and specifically just what was done at a particular time during the internship. It is similar to the *who, what, where* of the lead paragraph of a news story. The log requires accurate, factual recording of what happened in a particular time frame.

Recording of observations, perceptions and analysis: Along with recording of facts, the detailed recording of perceptions in the journal helps the student intern assemble, organize and begin to make sense of his/her own observations and experiences. What did you see? What do you observe? What patterns begin to emerge in the course of events in your placement? How does this connect with what you know from courses or other knowledge? How does your placement fit into the overall organizational system? What supports your opinions or analysis of why things are the way they are?

Recording of feelings: You can also include the recording of your feelings toward the internship, the work you are doing, and the organization (positive or negative and why).

Recording of perspectives: The recording of other persons' perspectives assists the student intern in the process of understanding and analysis. Write about the perspectives of your supervisors, departmental manager, an agency director, a client or customer, the company president, a co-worker, etc. as it relates to your internship and your learning goals. A deeper understanding and sensitivity may be developed as the intern takes the role of "the other" or "walks in someone else's shoes".

New language recording: Interns soon learn that each placement has its own specialized language. Recording such language assists in the communicator role and the beginning process toward professionalism.

Recording of questions: Record three questions a day--something you find interesting and relevant. The questions can be directed at anyone or anything related to your internship. Answers are not necessary expected in the journal, but questioning shows critical thought. However, do find out the answer and add them to your journal.