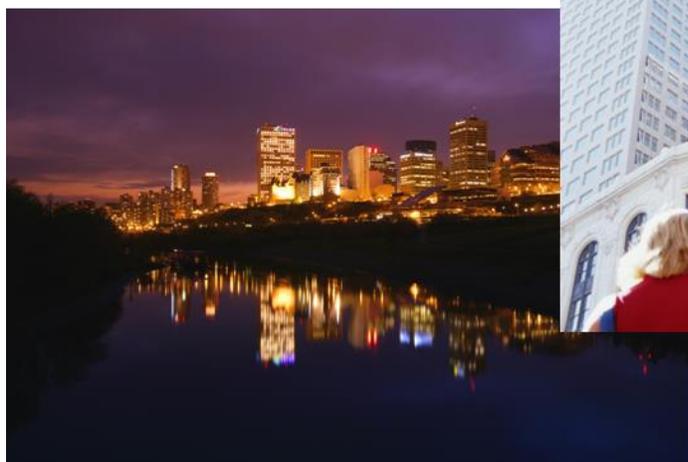


Alberta Public Service Internship Program



Intern Supervisor Handbook

Updated March 2017

RESPECT ACCOUNTABILITY INTEGRITY EXCELLENCE

Alberta

Proudly working together to build a stronger province for current and future generations

WELCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

I would like to extend my personal appreciation to you for your interest and contributions to the Alberta Public Service Internship Program (APS). As an Intern Supervisor you play an important role in building and shaping the APS by helping to guide the new interns as they begin their journey with the Government of Alberta. You will find that this handbook offers an excellent understanding of internships in the Alberta Public Service, and will help guide you as an Intern Supervisor.

Internships mark the beginning of professional careers and they may be the first time many of these recent graduates will experience a full-time professional position. While they will need to learn how government operates and how we provide service to Albertans, the knowledge and experience they possess will be extremely valuable to our organization. As interns, they bring with them a new set of ideas and a fresh perspective to the work we do.

Please take the opportunity to show the interns that careers in the public service are rewarding, diverse and exciting. Introduce them to our organization and the dynamic group of people they will be working with. Teach them our values of respect, accountability, integrity and excellence. Take pride in what we do and show them the opportunities open to them.

Your commitment to the success of this program and the interns is crucial in ensuring we have the right people in the organization with the skills needed to deliver on our commitments to Albertans.

Thank you again for your support of the APS Internship Program.

Sincerely,

[Original signed]

Lana Lougheed
Public Service Commissioner

The Public Service Commissioner is the deputy head of Alberta Public Service Commission and has been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to administer the Alberta Public Service Act.



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SECTION 1 - THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT INTERNS

1.1 Congratulations on Being an Intern Supervisor!

The objective of this handbook is to provide you with a broad understanding of internships in the Alberta public service (APS) and resources including tips, information and tools to make the most of your experience as an intern supervisor. Your role is an important one in the working life of an intern. You will influence their ongoing impressions of the APS. Thank you for your commitment to the intern program.

1.2 Why Should We Hire Interns?

Interns bring current knowledge and skills, new ideas and enthusiasm which helps renew the APS. Many interns have gone on to secure continued employment in the APS which is a clear demonstration that the investment in interns bodes well for the future of the public service. Benefits include:

Interns can be one of your best marketing tools

- Every internship placement can have a positive effect on the image of the APS, your department and each intern's long-term career decisions.
- Interns increase awareness of the APS when associating with friends, families and acquaintances.

Interns can increase your department's effectiveness with:

- Current skills, training and knowledge required to meet business plan deliverables and other tasks.
- New ideas and perspectives.
- Flexibility and the confidence to assume new responsibilities.
- Eagerness, initiative and a strong willingness to learn.
- Creativity and enthusiasm.
- High computer literacy and knowledge of different software applications.
- Opportunities for staff to develop coaching and mentoring skills.

1.3 What do Interns Expect?

As the supervisor, you need to ensure your expectations are realistic. Here are a few expectations identified as being consistently important to interns:

Realistic expectations regarding post-internship employment opportunities in the APS

- It is important that your intern is advised of the likelihood of obtaining permanent employment with the APS after their internship.
- If a permanent position is not available on completion of the internship, you may wish to explore other options including temporary project positions.
- Help them understand the career possibilities in the APS and the resources available to them.

An involved, two-way relationship with their supervisors

- The internship is often the first employment experience where the intern can use the skills they learned through post-secondary training; therefore most interns will require direction and guidance from an experienced employee.

Challenging career-related work assignments

- Interns accept these positions for the opportunity to learn new skills, to have interesting and challenging work assignments and to excel in their occupational field.
- Be sure to provide work assignments that were promised during the interview.
- Tap into your intern's enthusiasm and creativity, as they are more than capable, to handle complex and challenging work assignments.

Adequate feedback and recognition from supervisors, colleagues and clients

- Regular feedback from colleagues, clients and supervisors is a vital component in every employee's professional development process.
- Public recognition increases an intern's confidence.

1.4 Understanding Generational Differences in the Workplace

Understanding generational differences and perspectives is becoming increasingly important in fostering a quality work environment.

Soon there will be five generations working side-by-side in the APS:

- Matures/Veterans (1930-1945) (Traditionalists)
- Baby Boomers (1946-1964) (Sandwich Generation)
- Generation X (1965-1976) (Baby Busters)
- Generation Y (1977-2000) (Millenials, Net, Nexus, Echo Boomers)
- Generation Z (2001-Present) (New Millenials, Next, Cuspers, Zoomers)

One important step to making generational diversity work is to understand what motivates members of each generation. People in the same generation often experience similar events in the economy, society and political environment. These events help to form their perceptions of work, and dictate how they react to situations.

Tips for Integrating Interns into the Workforce Crossing-Over Generational Boundaries

Many interns in the APS are either categorized within Generation X or Generation Y. The following tips may be used to prepare the current work environment for the arrival of an intern.

Let current staff know what internships are all about:

- Internships are a long-term strategy to attract and develop talent.
- Intern positions are temporary, typically six to 24 months in duration.
- Recent graduates apply for positions through the APS competition process. They are paid for their position according to their classification.
- Internships provide professional development and networking opportunities. Interns are assigned interesting and challenging work that meets their skills and qualifications.
- Internships provide valuable experience that supports interns in competing for future vacancies.

Let current staff know what interns bring to the department:

- Another resource to help meet business objectives.
- A constant source of new talent that's ready to hit the ground running.
- Fresh perspectives, new knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm to the workplace.
- Interns are eager to provide you with their input and want to be heard. Take the time to listen to their opinions, and then provide them with appropriate feedback.

Let current staff know how to work best with interns:

Generation X (1965-1976)

- ⇒ Speak directly and succinctly to them
- ⇒ Ask them for their feedback/opinions on issues
- ⇒ Let them know that you are open to new ideas, and that you don't think you are the only one with the answers
- ⇒ Keep communication open and frequent

Generation Y (1977-2000)

- ⇒ Provide positive, systematic feedback — as it happens.
- ⇒ Ask for regular feedback on job and work environment.
- ⇒ Allow for independence and input into job tasks.
- ⇒ Do not talk down to them.
- ⇒ Challenge them.
- ⇒ Email communication is the norm for this generation.
- ⇒ Use humour and create a fun environment.

Develop generation-building tactics within your ministry

- Develop a mentoring or coaching program.
- Encourage experienced employees to speak to interns about their position and experiences in either an informal or formal environment.
- Make interns feel as if they are an important part of your ministry's culture.

SECTION 2 - APS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

2.1 Purpose

The APS Internship Program provides recent post-secondary graduates with meaningful work experience, stimulates their interest in the APS as an attractive employer, and develops graduates so they may be competitive for future vacancies. The Internship program also supports the Alberta Government as a long-term recruitment strategy to attract and develop talent. Interns are a valuable human resource that helps us continually build a new generation of leaders.

2.2 Cross-Government Supports for Interns

Handbook for Interns

Objective: To provide interns with practical information on their internship and the workplace.

Information includes the objectives of internships, Government of Alberta organization, corporate vision and values, tips for a successful internship, intern orientation, where to find various types of information, and more.

Intern Website

Objective: To provide an online information source on internships in the APS.

The website is an information source for the public, interns, supervisors and the APS Human Resource Community. The website is located at <http://www.jobs.alberta.ca/students/internships.html>.

Members of the public can learn about the various opportunities for recent graduates as interns with the Government of Alberta. The site is used to promote the Government of Alberta as an employer of choice.

SECTION 3- TIPS FOR SUPERVISORS OF INTERNS

This section outlines some suggested areas of focus when managing an intern, from the perspective of previous interns and managers.

3.1 Orientation

Give a thorough orientation

- Access the Orientation Supervisor's checklist to help you provide interns with the information they need to start off on the right track <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/orientation/orientation-supervisor-checklist.docx>.
- Provide a copy of your department's business plan.
- Provide access to the Intern Handbook.
- Reference the New Employee Orientation website at <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/orientation/>.
- Ensure interns are aware of the APS Vision and Values and encourage them to visit the website at <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/apsvisionandvalues/>.

Present the intern as a professional

- ⇒ Introduce your interns to clients and stakeholders in a way that enhances their credibility.
- ⇒ Use the intern's working title when meeting with internal and external clients to avoid misconceptions of what an intern is capable of.
- ⇒ Provide the intern with business cards.
- ⇒ Although internships are temporary positions, do all you can to ensure that interns have the resources required to do their job.
- ⇒ Remember interns are an important part of the team and often do not want to be introduced as "the intern".

3.2 Performance Excellence

Provide your intern with a job description

- A job description is an important tool, especially in entry-level positions, as it reduces anxiety of employees by providing clear direction on expectations.
- Ensure you provide meaningful work experience that builds on the intern's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Roles should be well defined to avoid confusion (ensure your intern is aware of the expectations of the position).
- A job description clearly outlines the specific tasks the employee is responsible for completing.

Develop a performance/learning plan

The APS Performance Excellence framework provides you and the intern with many resources and tools:

- The primary purpose of Performance Excellence is to help every employee achieve his or her personal best. It's an ongoing process that engages and supports us in aligning our efforts towards achieving both the organization's and our personal goals.
- Key features of the plan are:

Performance Agreement – Part 1 sets out core commitments for every employee – to their job, branch/division/department, work environment and learning/career. It also sets out your commitments as a supervisor. Part 2 supports and captures performance conversations, focusing on key results, demonstrated strengths, and upcoming areas of focus.

Performance Plan – A tool to help interns and supervisors think about commitments and engage in discussion; a living document that allows the intern to record as much or as little as they or you would like. The Career and Learning section of the Performance Plan allows interns to detail their learning and development needs to improve job performance, develop competencies, achieve performance goals, and work towards career goals.

Further information on Performance Excellence can be found at:

<http://www.psc.alberta.ca/Practitioners/Doclist781.cfm>

The APS Competency Model is the foundation for all talent management practices. Competencies support decisions to: hire the best people; provide meaningful feedback to improve performance; focus training to have the biggest impact; and provide guidance in creating career and learning plans.

- As an Intern Supervisor, you can provide regular, constructive competency based feedback, coaching and learning opportunities.
- Interns can also assess their behavior according to the APS competencies and use the findings in the development of their career and learning plan.

Further information on the APS Competency Model and Self-Assessment Questionnaire can be found at: <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/apscompetencies>

Provide Performance Coaching

- **Assign a supervisor** – Everyone in your department will have projects that could benefit from an intern's work. If you are not able to supervise the workload of your intern directly, have someone keep an eye on the intern's workload. This person can also ensure that they are working on projects and tasks that are consistent with their performance plan and job description.
- **Be a Coach and Mentor** – Continuous learning, assistance, and feedback will be of great value to the intern. Create a guided relationship whereby you assist the intern in developing their competencies and career aspirations. Reference the What is Coaching? Toolkit on the Public Service Commission official website: <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/coachingtoolkit>
- **Broaden their knowledge base** – The opportunity to work with other managers, branches or divisions will help the intern develop a broader understanding of the department or government. Working with stakeholders and/or participating in workshops, conferences or training sessions will help an intern understand your business more thoroughly.
- **Regular feedback sessions** – Helping interns reflect on their contributions to the department is a great learning tool for both parties. Constructive feedback enables the employee to do a better job in the future. A sample feedback form that the intern can use to obtain feedback from colleagues and clients is included to assist you in ensuring your intern receives adequate feedback throughout their term: <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/learning/careermgmtkit/cycle/feedback-form-sample.doc>
- **Enable interns to be involved** – As a supervisor you will notice that an intern's commitment and enthusiasm to working for the Government of Alberta increases when they have opportunities to broaden their scope, connect with other interns and learn about different areas of work.

- **Present career options** – Realistic discussion about career decisions helps provide valuable information to interns. Discuss the many career options available in the APS. The GOA Jobs Website provides tools and information to showcase the diversity of employment options. As the internship draws near to the end, have discussions with the intern regarding their continued employment and if necessary, help them to identify suitable positions for which they might qualify, in your department or others.
- **Recognition** – Provide timely and meaningful feedback and recognition to acknowledge the intern's contributions to the job, branch, division and department, as well as their contributions to a positive work environment.

Further information and resources for supervisors can be found at:

<http://www.psc.alberta.ca/Practitioners/DocList903.cfm>

3.3 Exit Interview

Conduct an exit interview with the Intern

- ⇒ Exit interviews enable supervisors to evaluate the intern's level of satisfaction regarding the quality of their work experience with the organization, including work assignments, interactions with colleagues and the quality of supervision received.
- ⇒ Generally, the exit interview process is managed by Human Resources, providing the exiting intern an opportunity to raise issues with an objective third party.
- ⇒ Address any issues that have come up that could make the next intern's experience more positive (continuous improvement).
- ⇒ Advise the intern that their comments will be kept confidential.
- ⇒ Below are some sample Exit Survey Questions as an example of what type of questions might be asked:
 - What did you like most about working for the Government of Alberta?
 - What did you like least about working for the Government of Alberta?
 - Were you provided with interesting, challenging and career related work assignments?
 - How clearly were work expectations communicated to you?
 - Did you feel you had an opportunity for input? Did you feel your input was valued?
 - Was there sufficient learning and training opportunities?

- Were you able to maintain a work life balance?
- Did you feel you were treated respectfully at work?
- Did you receive timely feedback and recognition?
- Would you recommend to others that they seek employment with the Government of Alberta? Why?
- Have you found continuing employment with the Government of Alberta?
- What suggestions could you provide to make the internship a more positive experience?

⇒ Another option is the online exit survey that provides a consistent method across government of collecting information from employees leaving the APS or transferring to a different ministry about factors that contributed to their decision to leave. The online exit survey is a valuable resource in planning an exit survey for your intern. For further information please visit <http://www.psc.alberta.ca/Practitioners/DocList147.cfm> (please note you must be part of the Human Resource Community to have access to the survey as a login is required).

3.4 Feedback on Internship Program

Provide feedback

⇒ Your feedback is important to help with continually improving the Alberta Government Internship Program. Please provide your feedback to PSC (Public Service Commission) by e-mail to kim.smith@gov.ab.ca. Your questions and comments are appreciated.