

## Internship Guidelines for Host Organizations

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### I. Plant Biology and Conservation Internship: A Learning Experience

The Plant Biology and Conservation (PBC) program, part of the joint graduate program between Northwestern University and the Chicago Botanic Garden views internships as a valuable component of our students' education. The internship program is designed for MS students who are interested in exploring careers outside of the academy and learning about organizations such as yours. By interning approximately 240 hours (hours can be spread out in a way that best suits the student and organization), graduate students will be able to apply their classroom learning and expertise, while learning through hands-on, real world practice. Your organization will benefit from the energy and ideas of highly motivated graduate students from a world-renowned university who can assist with existing or develop new projects. We expect that students will be able to observe and participate in activities that provide a useful perspective on the organizations and fields in which they may choose to work after graduation or continue to partner with as a part of their career. The best internships are those that offer the student a range of experiences, provide her/him with the opportunity to work on projects that are helpful to the organization and meaningful to the student, and involve regular contact with a supervisor who is interested in the student's learning. To that end, we have established the following requirements regarding the student intern's work:

1. The organization must make efforts to assign the student substantive work— clerical work like photocopying, extensive data entry (without an eye to analyses), answering telephones, providing coffee, etc. should not be included.
2. The student's work should include interaction with co-workers, from whom s/he will learn about the organization and the field.
3. The supervisor must provide the student with clear instructions and expectations concerning his/her projects and with any training necessary to complete them.
4. The supervisor must provide the student with ongoing feedback on her/his performance.
5. The supervisor must conduct a face-to-face review with the student at the end of the term and the supervisor is asked to complete an evaluation form from the PBC program.
6. The student must complete a final project, which is agreed upon by the student and the intern host. The nature of the project is flexible and should be chosen based on skills/experiences the student wants to gain and what would be useful to the organization. Examples could include but are not limited to: a professional report such as a restoration management plan or vegetation survey results; educational/informational material in the form of a website or brochure; or maps of climate change models for critical habitat.

The best internships also incorporate most, if not all, of the following components, which constitute "best practices" in the field:

1. Provide the student with an orientation during their first day. As part of this orientation, in addition to giving the student general background about the organization:
  - a. Introduce the student to key people in different departments.
  - b. Explain what kind of projects people at different levels and in different positions work on—including entry-level employees—so that the student understands the work that s/he will be doing in the context of the organization as a whole.
  - c. Provide periodic opportunities for students to meet with people in other departments and/or constituents of your organization so that they gain a broad understanding of your organization and the field.
2. Arrange for a weekly supervisor meeting with the student.

We share these “best practices” with you in the hopes that they will help to make the internship a successful experience for both the student and your organization.

## **II. PBC Internship Logistics**

### ***Work Hours***

Students are expected to work approximately 240 hours. This typically entails working between 20-30 hours per week on days that are mutually agreed upon by the student and supervisor for 8 – 12 weeks (typically during the late spring and into the summer). It can also be fewer hours per week over a longer period. The exact number of hours per week and duration should be determined ahead of time by the organization in consultation with the student. It is also possible for the student to complete many more hours if this is mutually agreed upon, especially if compensation is provided.

### ***Compensation***

Since students are doing their internships as part of an academic program there is no expectation that they be paid. However, if the host institutions are able to provide payment, it is allowable.

### ***Evaluation***

At the end of the program, we ask that supervisors complete an Evaluation Form.

Students will also complete an evaluation of their internship experience at the end of the quarter. The organization’s name will be written on the evaluation, but the form will not include any individuals’ names. The evaluation will be made available to prospective students and Northwestern faculty, staff, and administrators involved with the program.

Both evaluations will help PBC and Northwestern have a better understanding of what our students do at their internships, and it will be useful to intern hosts as well as prospective students in deciding which internships best match their interests.

### ***Internship Agreement***

Once an internship has been agreed upon, the organization and the student must complete the Internship Agreement Form. This will be reviewed by the faculty committee for internships in Plant Biology and Conservation and placed in the student’s file.

### ***Questions or Concerns?***

If you have questions or concerns regarding the internship, please contact Nyree Zerega, the PBC Program Director, at 847-467-1266 or [n-zerega@northwestern.edu](mailto:n-zerega@northwestern.edu) or [plantbiology@northwestern.edu](mailto:plantbiology@northwestern.edu)

**Plant Biology and Conservation  
MS Internship Agreement**

This 2-page form should be completed by the internship coordinator or the internship supervisor and student and then returned to Nyree Zerega at [n-zerega@northwestern.edu](mailto:n-zerega@northwestern.edu). Please Cc [plantbiology@northwestern.edu](mailto:plantbiology@northwestern.edu).

**Please share this form and all other documents in this packet with the supervisor and staff members who will work most closely with the student.**

Student's name:	Host organization name:
Host Organization Address:	

Name and title of the person completing this form:	Are you the coordinator or supervisor, or both?
Your email:	Your phone:

If you are not the person who will be the student's supervisor, please also answer these four questions:

Supervisor's name:	Supervisor's title:
Supervisor's email:	Supervisor's phone:

**INTERNSHIP SCHEDULE:**

Please indicate below the agreed-upon student work hours (student and supervisor may agree to change these hours as the internship progresses):

**Dates of internship:**

Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday/Sunday
<b>Total Hours Per Week:</b>	

Please provide an overview of the type of work and projects the student will be involved in as well as the expectations of the student and host. Also, include details about what is expected for the final project. Students and supervisors should use their weekly meeting as a chance to revisit assigned tasks and relevant projects throughout the term. You may simply attach details in a separate document if that is easier.

**Signatures**

We agree to follow the parameters outlined in the Internship Guidelines for Host Organizations document and in this PBC Internship Agreement.

Host Organization Representative

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_