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### Psych 430 – Undergraduate Internship in Psychology

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# Psych 430-Undergraduate Internship in Psychology

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Program Coordinator and Instructor

## Summary/Abstract

This is a 6-credit Capstone course, Psychology majors intern 15 hours/week at a wide variety of human service agencies around Massachusetts. They in a weekly seminar to share their experiences, course readings, and have case presentations that complement the learning experience. In addition, this course also a service and learning components. **Service:** Students provide much needed assistance to clients in agencies that are often under-funded and under-staffed. The intern offers 1-1 support and caring to children, adolescents, and adults struggling to improve their lives. **Learning:** The experience of joining a professional staff in a hospital or agency offers a chance to learn and grow on many levels. Students learn about themselves as they see first hand how agencies attempt to assist those with psychological problems. The economic and political challenges that plague the delivery of services become abundantly clear, as do the rewards that come with a career in human services.

## Goals and Objectives

The internship program aims to provide psychology majors with hands-on experience working in a mental health/human service agency within a supportive learning context. Its objectives include clarifying career goals and aspirations, enabling students to be more focused. The program is also aimed at providing students with a successful transition from an academic role, with support, into real work in mental health, enabling them to be employed, contributing to an increase in their self confidence, maturity and communication skill.

## Approaches and Methods

Students work directly with our community partners, supporting their treatment and experiencing the workings of the agency under the supervision of experienced staff, where they directly observe the roles of various mental health personnel, learn about how agencies function, and gain an introductory exposure to the network of mental health services in Greater Boston. Students have an opportunity to see the application of their coursework in real-life settings, test their ability to function in a professional setting, and explore career paths. The seminar allows students to process the challenges and personal growth opportunities that occur at the placement. The internship serves as a bridge for students to make the journey from the classroom to the professional world.

## Partners

- ABCD Head Start
- Arbour Hospital
- Amego, Inc.
- Arc of the South Shore Early Intervention Program
- Atlantic House Clubhouse
- Bay Cove Early Intervention Program
- Bourne Wood Hospital
- Braintree Manor Nursing Care Facility
- Brockton Area Multiservice (BAMSI)
- Brockton High Point Addictions Treatment Center
- Cambridge Juvenile Court Probation
- Chestnut Street Residence
- Children's Hospital Early Intervention Program
- Children's Services of Roxbury
- Crisis Stabilization Unit, Boston Medical Center
- Dana Farber Pediatric Resource Room
- Dedham Starr Program
- Elliot Community Human Services
- Father Bill's Shelter
- George Keverian School
- Girls, Inc. of Lynn
- Granite House Residential Program
- Kelliher Center
- Lafayette Place Adolescent Program
- NFI New England
- North Shore Head Start
- Quincy Early Intervention
- Riverside Community Care
- Somerville District Court Probation Department
- Somerville Early Head Start
- South Bay House of Corrections
- South Shore Educational Collaborative
- St. Francis House
- The Fernandez Center, St. Anne's Hospital
- The Riverside School
- Union Hospital Child Psychiatric Unit
- Waltham Starr Program
- Youth on Fire

## Results and Next Steps

### Impact on Students

Apart from meeting its objectives, this program has the following impact on participating students :

- Earn academic credit while earning real world experience in their specific area of interest
- Apply textbook learning
- Clarify career goals and aspirations, become more focused
- Explore a potential career field
- Develop career related skills
- Prepare for life after graduation
- Build maturity and self confidence
- Improve human relation skills to take to the workplace
- Teaches students to advocate for their own learning needs
- Build a network for career development

### Impact on Community Partners

The Internship program's long-term (and newer) partners have reported that hosting our interns provides them with a pool of well-trained and vetted entry level employees. These partner agencies also appreciate that through the "service" part of service learning, participating interns enrich the quality of care for their clients, adding that extra caring and support that are often in short supply in programs that are stressed and under staffed. Partners have also reported that having interns at an adds an educational function for the staff of the agency which enriches their professional work.

### Benefits to UMass Boston

This program has helped establish a positive image for UMass Boston and its students within the local mental health community. It has created employment opportunities for UMass Boston students, thereby creating better alumni connections for the university, that'll serve career needs for future students as well. Also, the presence of an actively engaged faculty member in the mental health marketplace has allowed the university increased access to current information about the mental health needs of the community. This in turn has helped the Psychology department in its of curriculum review and development process.

### Student Feedback

*"This internship has given me the chance to push my comfort zone further than I ever could have imagined. As a result I have gained an abundance of confidence, as well as a greater understanding and appreciation for the entire mental health field. This experience has truly rejuvenated and reinforced my passion for social work, in addition to providing me with an arena to utilize the various elements, theories, and models that I have studied as psychology major. Having the chance to put my knowledge and skills to the test in a hands-on environment has enriched my sense of self-worth, capability, and drive, in ways that a classroom-setting simply could not. Taking advantage of this amazing opportunity as an undergraduate has proven to be one of the best decisions I have made thus far as a student, and I could not be more pleased with the entire process!"* - Jessica Brudnick, UMass Boston Psychology Major



## Next Steps and Resources

Next steps for the program primarily involve continuing to build and expand our network of partner agencies and to continue to gather data about the impact of the internship on students' employment and graduate school acceptances. Interested partners can contact: Dr. Kathryn Kogan, [kathryn.kogan@umb.edu](mailto:kathryn.kogan@umb.edu) or Telephone: 617-287-6424