

PA 509



Organizational Experience

Orientation
and

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions



What is PA 509?

- Final integrative experience in the MPA, MPA-HA and MPH-HMP programs
- Worth six credits (ie two classes)
- Taken after at least 42 credits of coursework completed
- Ideally taken as close to end of program of study as possible



What is the purpose?

- To provide a final, culminating, applied, integrative, personalized experience
- Allows students to apply knowledge acquired in courses to field settings
- Opportunity to experience and “work” in a new organization
- Explore possibility of future employment
- Opportunity to reflect on learning/career



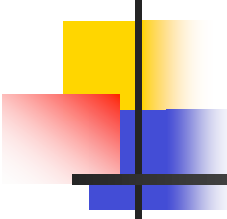
Who takes PA 509?

- All MPH students (no exceptions)
- MPA and MPA-HA students who have not had at least 3 years of managerial and/or supervisory experience
- Experienced MPA students are encouraged to take PA 509
- Faculty advisor must sign off on 509/alternatives for students



If I don't take PA 509 ...

- You must have your advisor's permission to waive the PA 509
- Instead of PA 509 you will take PA 512 Case Studies and an additional 3-credit elective approved by your faculty advisor
- If you think you can waive PA 509, you may leave this presentation now; please consult with your faculty advisor to get the waiver



Why “organizational experience” not ‘internship’?

- An “internship” is perceived by many in the field as a full-time intense experience for students who bring very little expertise, require intense supervision, and often may not produce much in the way of a substantive product
- Many of our students have considerable expertise and will not do PA 509 full-time or need extensive supervision because of their backgrounds
- Therefore this is an “experience” rather than an “internship” with higher expectations for outcomes



What are the prerequisites?

- Complete at least 42 credits of the MPA, MPA-HA or MPH program of study
- For MPA students, have a signed “Field of Specialization” form on file
- Meet with your faculty advisor to discuss your interests and relevant sites for a PA 509 experience
- Attend the PA 509 Orientation and review the relevant documents



What is involved in PA 509?

- Field-based applied experience
- Placement negotiated by you to meet your career and learning objectives
- 6 credits = 2 days per week over one quarter or 1 day per week over two quarters plus research and writing time (200 total hours)
- Develop project report relevant to setting AND a reflective paper AND public presentation
- Graded A-F: Project Report 40%; Reflective Paper 30%; Presentation 20%; PA 509 Faculty Assessment 10%



Who are the PA 509 faculty?

- Linda Golaszewski for MPA students; 503-725-2955, lagola@pdx.edu
- Sherril Gelmon for MPA-HA and MPH-HMP students; 503-725-3044, gelmons@pdx.edu



How do I find a placement?

- Your own contacts
- Suggestions from your faculty advisor or other faculty
- Information on program listservs
- Conduct informational interviews
- A special project arrangement at the organization where you work (NOT your regular duties and job)

**** Start looking early ****



What is appropriate for a PA 509 project?

- Parameters for the field-based project(s):
 - Topic of work is of interest to you
 - Substance of work is of interest to the field site and makes a contribution to its operations
 - Work required integrates across the curriculum
- Can complete within timeframe available
- Must have relevant expertise/coursework
 - For example, do not take on an evaluation project if you have not taken a course on program evaluation or do not have relevant expertise



Can I get paid?

- Not expected/required
- May be negotiated between student and field supervisor
- Not a condition of establishing the PA 509 experience
- University not involved in any such arrangements



What goes into the learning contract?

- Completed and signed two-page cover sheet
- Unofficial PSU transcript of classes to date (#4)
- MPA students: Copy of Field of Specialization form, signed by your faculty advisor
- Current resume (#5)
- Career goals -- now and 5 years from now (#6)
- Description of the setting and the work you will do (#7)
- Learning objectives for PA 509 experience (#8)
- List of relevant courses completed, relevant theoretical principles, application (#9)
- Description of final submissions to be graded (#10)
- Signed special registration form(s)



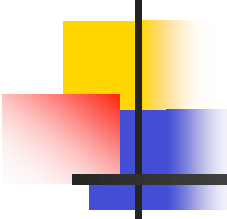
Why is the learning contract so important?

- Serves as your syllabus for PA 509
- Allows you to define:
 - A relevant learning experience
 - Your expectations
 - The expectations of the field supervisor
- Builds upon your career, skills, graduate education
- Protects you from inappropriate assignments
- Provides the basis for your final reflection
- Basis for PA 509 faculty evaluation and grading



5: How do I write a resume?

- Many resources on campus
 - Career Center
 - Library
 - CAPS
 - Writing Laboratory
- Check out these resources for assistance to write/update resume
- Resume should be up-to-date



6: How do I write career goals?

- Articulate what you want to do in the near-term
- Articulate where you want to be in 5 years in terms of professional work
- Ensure relevance to current program of study
- Consider potential:
 - Titles
 - Settings
 - Responsibilities
- **2-3 pages** in length



7: What kind of work description is expected?

- Describe the setting, organization, supervisor
- **With the field supervisor**, define the work to be done and articulate:
 - Skills and experience
 - Expectations
 - Responsibilities
 - Deliverables/products
- Specific for the work you will do during PA 509
- **2-3 paragraphs** in length



8: How do I write learning objectives?

- What will be different about you as a result of what you learn/do in the PA 509 experience?
 - New/enhanced knowledge, skills, competencies
- **4-5 objectives** that integrate across your courses completed to date
 - Define tasks and deliverables for each learning objective (i.e. processes and outcomes)
- **Required final objective** on integration and application of curriculum
- **1-2 pages** in length; see examples in materials



Example of a complete learning objective

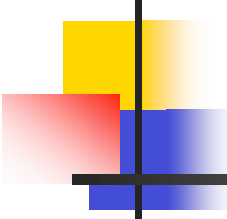
Objective 1: Apply and develop communication skills

■ Tasks:

- Identify relevant constituency groups
- Develop targeted outreach brochures
- Create presentation slides and script
- Speak to at least four community groups

■ Deliverables/evidence:

- Copies of brochure, slide presentations, script, list of community groups
- Written narrative describing process



9: What course content needs to be referenced?

- Your experience should draw upon **8-10 courses** you have completed in your current program
- For each course:
 - List the course name and course number
 - Identify relevant **theoretical learning principles**
 - Discuss how you will apply these in your project work
- Field supervisor should be confident student has the necessary academic background to do the defined work (may ask you for transcript)
- **2-3 pages** in length



10: What are the final submissions? (Part 1)

1: Project report (format varies)

- Begins with project overview including description of setting, processes of work of 509, outcomes
- Includes detailed written documentation developed for the organization (as relevant)
- May include recommendations, conclusions, policies
- Provided to the organization and the university
- May include confidential documentation, only read by PA 509 faculty and then returned to student



10: What are the final submissions? (Part 2)

2: Reflective paper based upon the experience

- Achievement of learning objectives (or not)
- Description of related learning
- Opportunities for integration of curricular content (and relevance)
- Need for future professional development
- Implications for future career
- Personal narrative describing new insights and observations
- Submitted only to university

3: Presentation

- 10 minute slide presentation (10-12 slides)
- Submitted in hard copy with other submissions
- Presented in public setting



Presentations 2009

- Each student presents 10 minutes on organizational experience
 - Follow guide on website
- Field supervisors, faculty, students attend
- Opportunity to synthesize, share experiences, professional development
- Presentations: June 4, September 17, December 10
- **Required** of all students to complete PA 509



What needs to be done?

- Meet with your faculty advisor
- Find a placement and field supervisor
- Negotiate project(s) and expectations
- Complete all elements of the learning contract in draft, **email** text of points #6-10 to faculty advisor, receive feedback, revise, sign-off by faculty advisor (iterative)
- Submit revised draft (#6-10) **by email** to PA 509 faculty, complete final revisions (iterative)
- Sign contract; field supervisor signs; complete **special registration form(s)**; deliver **original hard copy** to PA office; PA 509 faculty signs and registers you



How do I register for PA 509?

- Complete all the pre-work, learning contract and special registration form(s)
- PA 509 faculty signs contract and registers you (not valid if anyone else does this for you)
- Registration cannot be done online or without a signed contract
- May register for 6 credits in one quarter, or 3 credits each in 2 consecutive quarters
 - Complete and sign 1 special registration form (6 credits) or 2 forms for 2 quarters (3 credits each)
 - Hand in signed special registration forms with contract




What are the deadlines?

- Submit complete first draft of contract to your faculty advisor during quarter prior to registration
 - Faculty need at least 2 weeks to review a draft
- Final approved contract must be submitted to PA 509 faculty by end of 1st week of quarter to register
- To receive a final grade, must make presentation as scheduled and hand in all three submissions in hard copy to PA office by:
 - W: March 1; Sp: June 1; S: September 1; F: December 1
- May complete PA 509 in summer and still participate in June graduation ceremonies



How is the grade determined?

- Comprehensive final project report (40%)
 - Complete and detailed documentation and synthesis of work, context, processes, challenges, accomplishments, and outcomes
- Thorough written reflection (30%)
 - Accomplishment of learning objectives, insights into career goals and directions, thoughts on relevant coursework
- Professional PowerPoint presentation (20%)
 - Satisfactory summary and professional delivery
- PA 509 faculty assessment of progress (10%)
- Grade determination based upon learning contract
- Incomplete assigned if insufficient documentation to assess
- 509 faculty will provide guidance for incompletes



How do we resolve problems during PA 509?

Students:

- Are encouraged to resolve problems initially with the field supervisor
- If no resolution students should meet with the PA 509 faculty
- Rely upon the learning contract to ensure learning objectives are being pursued

Field supervisors:

- Work with the student to address any issues
- Contact the PA 509 faculty to discuss the situation
- Rely upon the learning contract to frame the work



Other Useful Information

- Ensure PA 509 faculty have current contact information for you
- If learning objectives and/or focus of project(s) change, contact 509 faculty immediately and provide documentation of updated contract elements
- Follow the guidelines to avoid delays
- Use handouts as reference materials



Most important things to remember:

- Plan ahead to select placement
- Your first draft of the contract will often need multiple revisions for clarity
- Allow time to revise contract prior to registration deadlines
- You may start any time **AFTER** contract is signed
- Allow adequate time to conduct, complete and document your project(s) in order to submit materials in time for deadlines
- Download current documentation when ready