
SUMMARY OF NASPAA 2010 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM SURVEY

NASPAA conducted an Internship online survey in late March, 2010, in order to obtain more updated information regarding the practice and management of internship programs offered by MPP/MPA programs. The survey was originated by NAPSAA's membership institutions, seeking some bench-marking information on internship programs. The Survey URL was sent to 276 NASPAA institutional contacts and 156 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 56 percent. Distribution of respondents by type of institution and size of the program were compared with those of NASPAA's general membership and results are presented in Figures 1 and 2. According to Figure 1, about 70 percent of NASPAA 2010-11 member-institutions are public 4-year or above; about 74 percent of the survey respondents are from public 4-year institutions or above.

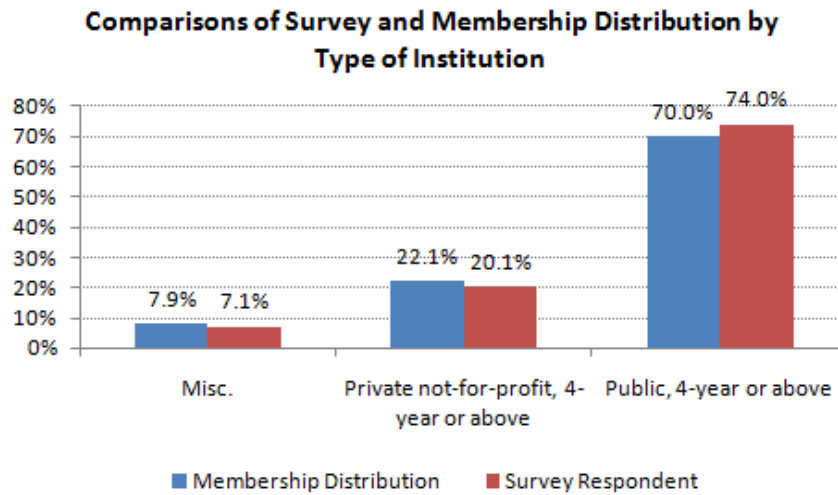


FIGURE 1

Figure 2 shows that about 29 percent of NASPAA's membership programs enroll students up to 50 or fewer; among the survey respondents, about 26 percent of them are from programs that enroll 50 students or fewer. Among NASPAA general memberships, about 26 percent have enrollment of 51 - 100; about 26 percent of the survey respondents are from programs of this category. Figure 2 indicates that survey respondents do not over-present any particular group in terms of program size. The survey respondents seem to represent adequately NASPAA membership in general.

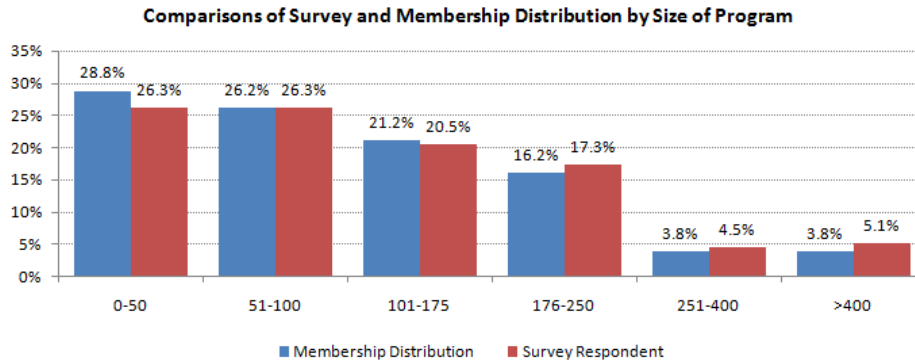


FIGURE 2

The survey questionnaire consists of 12 questions ranging from internship program configuration, program lengths, program waiver requirement to program supervision and student performance evaluation processes. Findings from the survey are summarized below.

THE PRACTICE AND POLICY OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

The first part of the survey covers internship policies such as whether all students are required to complete internship before graduation, conditions to waive the internship requirement, when internships are offered, if financial aid are provided for unpaid internships, and how long the internship program lasts .

According to the survey respondents, about 93 percent of the respondents report that their program offers an internship program (Figure 3). About 52 percent of the respondents say that all students are required to complete an internship unless it is waived on an individual basis; about 30 percent report that they don't have such requirement (Figure 4). An average of 2-years of work experience is required on an individual basis for an internship waiver to be granted by more than 80 percent of the respondents (Table 1). Seventeen percent of the respondents selected "other"; they explain that they do not require all of their graduates to complete the internship programs because while their pre-service students are all required to complete the internship programs, their in-service students or students who already have working experience in the public sector do not have to complete the internship requirement. In terms of when an internship is usually offered, about 60 percent of the internships are offered both in summer and during term-time; about 24 percent of the respondents report that their internship programs are offered in summer only; about six percent programs offer internship in term-time only (Figure 5). As far as financial assistance is concerned, about 80 percent of the internship programs do not offer student financial aid for unpaid internships (Figure 6). The average minimum internship duration requirement was 288 clock hours; actual internship duration range from 10 hours as the minimum to 768 hours as the maximum (Table 2).

Does your MPP/MPA program offer an internship program?

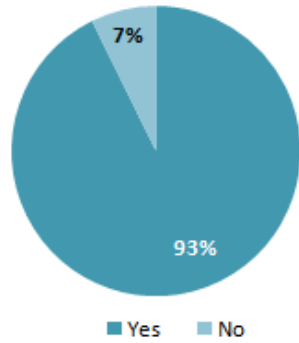


FIGURE 3

Does your MPP/MPA program require all students to complete an internship (unless it is waived on an individual basis)?

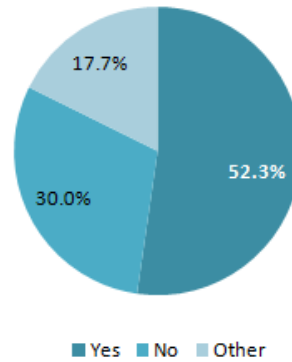


FIGURE 4

When is the internship usually done?

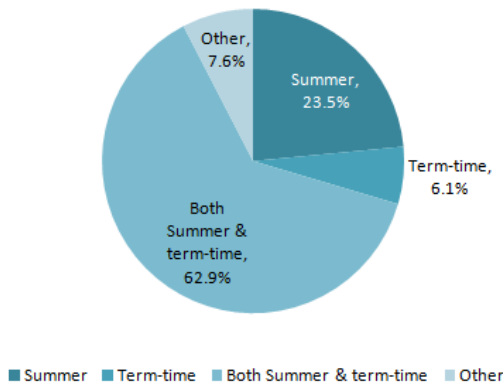


FIGURE 5

Does your internship program offer financial aid assistance for unpaid internships?

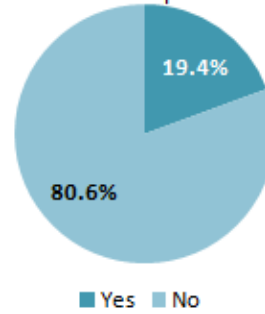


FIGURE 6

Table 1. Summary of Minimum Professional Experience Required to Waive Internship Requirement
If you do waive the student internship on an individual basis, what is the minimum professional public service experience required?

	Response Average	Response Count	%
Months of public service experience	14.95	19	22.6%
Years of public service experience	2.37	68	81.0%
Other (Please specify)		3	3.6%
	answered question		84
	skipped question		72

Table 2. Summaries of Minimum Duration Required for the Internship Program

What is the minimum duration required to satisfy your program’s internship requirement?			
Clock hours	Response Average	Mimumum Duration	Maximum Duration
	287.69	10	768
	<i>answered question</i>		127
	<i>skipped question</i>		29

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The second half of the survey is concerned with the management of the internship programs and how student performances are evaluated. Questions asked in this section include (1) how the program is supervised, (2) how does the supervision – a faculty member or a designated staff, (3) how student evaluation is done and (4) if course credit or course grade are offered for the internships. Summaries of the responses are presented in Figures 7 – 11.

Regarding program supervision, the most commonly adopted practices are “checking on work completion status” (about 68%); “a dedicated internship coordinator” (about 65%); and “faculty mentoring” (about 61%) as shown in Figure 7. As for how student performance evaluations are carried out, based on Figures 8 and 9, written-form evaluation is the most frequently used method by both the hosting organizations (85%) and by faculty (61%) in student performance evaluation. From the student side, about 83 percent of the internship programs require papers or other assignments as part of the internship programs (Figure 10). About 66 percent of the internship programs offer course credits; about 34 percent offer course grades (Figure 11).

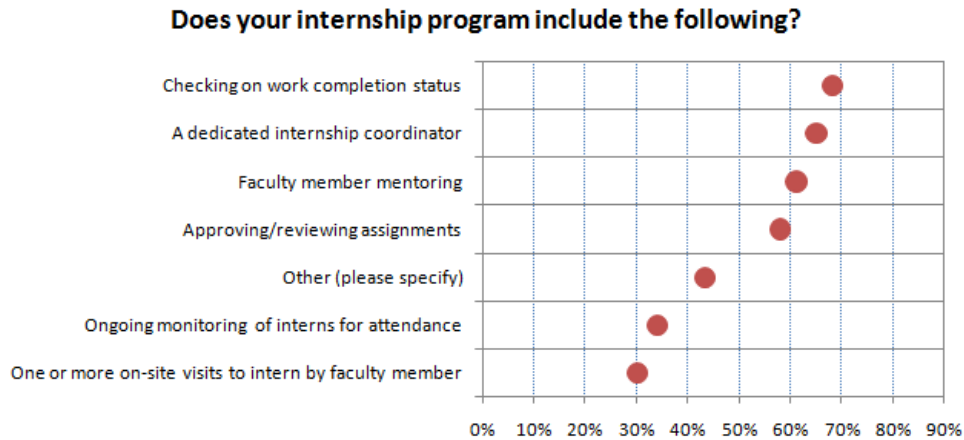


FIGURE 7

How are evaluations of student performance by the supervisor (at the organization hosting the intern) given?

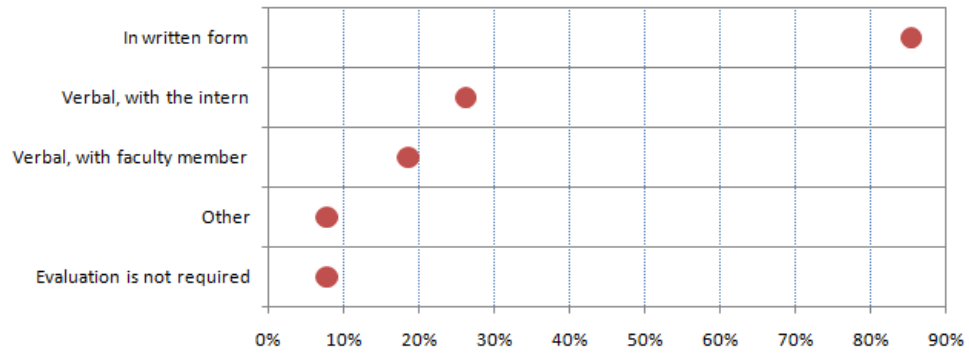


FIGURE 8

How are evaluations of student performance by faculty members given?

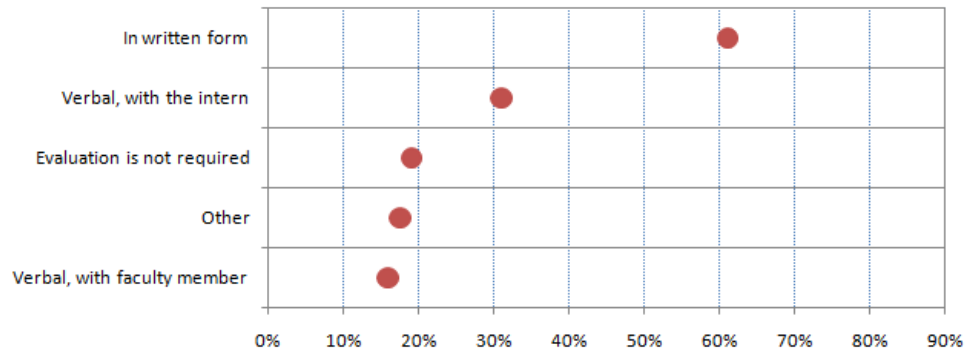


FIGURE 9

Does your internship program require any of the following as part of the internship requirements?

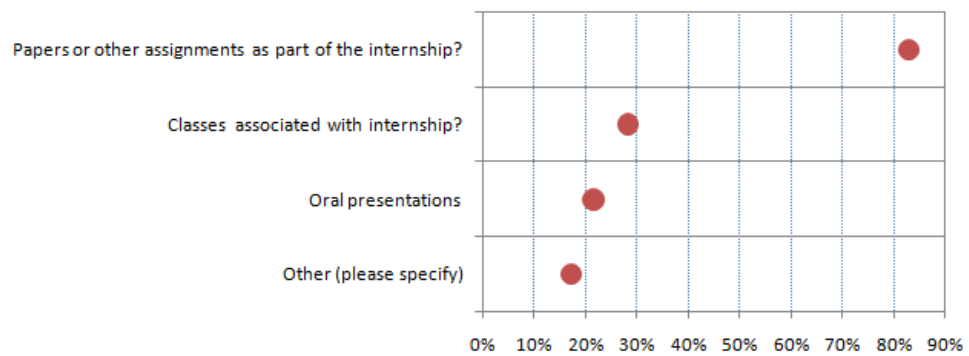


FIGURE 10

Does your internship program offer the following to students?

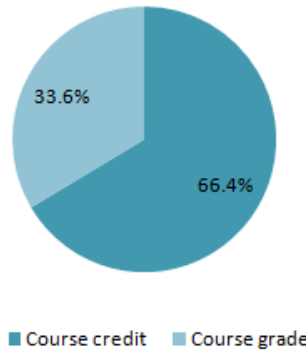


FIGURE 11

SUMMARY

Internships continue to be a nearly universal feature of MPA/MPP programs, and NASPAA schools are demonstrating increasing sophistication in their internship policies and operations. Most are providing significant supervision and evaluations of interns, and are combining that with papers or other assignments to reinforce students' on-the-job learning. Programs seem to be applying internship waivers judiciously, typically looking for at least 2 years of public service experience before doing so.

For other related questions or further inquiries, please send a message to zhai@naspaa.org.