

MuseumsForward

Internship experiences in museum studies graduate programs

Grace A. Liatti

Abstract

An internship is a typical experience for museum studies graduate students (Welsh, 2013). Internships have long been recognized as central to museum studies education that prepares students to enter the professional museum field. However, current field-wide standards may be outdated, underused, written from the perspective of staff, and/or anecdotal. To date, no empirical research has been undertaken that this author could identify to understand the internship experiences of students from their perspectives. To address this gap, an online survey was sent to students enrolled in eight American museum studies programs. The purpose was to understand how museum studies graduate students think about and experience internships in museums and related institutions. Only results from the University of Washington (UW) Museology program were analyzed. Findings revealed that students were most interested in skills development factors, such as applying theory in “the real world.” Most respondents reported that their internship responsibilities helped them fulfill their priorities, but a recurring issue was that internships experiences lacked structure and clarity, leaving students uncertain if they made meaningful contributions through their internship work. Respondents reported largely positive experiences with their internship supervisors, but results also suggested that some supervisors are not providing clear feedback to interns, and that while supervisors largely showed concern for the interns’ learning and career goals, they sometimes fell short of providing clear guidance on the interns’ responsibilities. Further evaluation of UW internships is recommended to determine how well students’ experiences align with the standards set out by the program. For the museum field at large, further research is recommended to capture broad experiences of students throughout the country, which can inform updated internship standards and best practices created by individual museums and field-wide professional organizations.

Keywords Museum studies; museum internships; museum studies curriculum; museology; student perspectives

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Introduction

An internship is a typical experience for museum studies graduate students (Welsh, 2013). Cross-sector research on internships has found that they help ease the transition between academic theory and professional practice for students (D'Abate et. al., 2009; Hoy, 2011; Barnett, 2012), provide opportunities for hands-on experience (Dubberly, 1993), and help increase employability and set realistic standards for students entering the workforce (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Organizations hosting interns also benefit by training the next generation of professionals, partnering with educational institutions, enhancing their own reputations as places of learning, and contributing to staff members' professional development (True, n.d.; Dubberly, 1993; Wesselmann, 2012, Douglas et. al, 2021).

Experiential learning has long been a focus in museums. Hearn (2012) notes that training or apprentice work has persisted as the most effective way to prepare for professional museum practice since the foundation of the first continuous museum training program at the University of Iowa in 1917. Post-WWII America experienced a museum "boom", leading to the first efforts at museum accreditation in the 1970's, followed by the establishment of many museum studies programs (Glaser, 1987). Justification for these programs includes arguments that many aspects of museum work require specialized knowledge, and hands-on training is an effective way to hone this knowledge. Indeed, the first stated goal of museum training programs according to the American Alliance of Museum's (AAM) Committee on Museum Professional Training (COMPT, now the Museum Studies Network) is to "provide excellent education and training of museum

professionals that melds the theoretical with the practical.” COMPT (n.d.) further stated that museum training program content should include “directed internships, practicums, or fieldwork.” The importance of internships has been reaffirmed by several bodies, including the International Council of Museums (ICOM) General Assembly (1965, as cited in Boylan, 1987), AAM’s Museum Studies Curriculum Committee (1973, as cited in Bomar, 2012), ICOM’s Committee for the Training of Personnel Symposium (1973, as cited in Boylan, 1987), and Professionalizing Museum Work in Higher Education (Project P-MUS, 2017).

Yet despite their recognized importance, the American museum sector lacks current, field-wide best practices about developing and implementing internship programs. Those coming from large museums associations have not been updated in several decades (for example, American Alliance of Museums, 1978; Dubberly, 1993), and may not be relevant to current professionals. For example, Simmons (2015) found that just nine percent of internship coordinators at AAM-accredited academic art museums in her study identified AAM’s 1978 minimum standards for internships as a resource when designing or improving their internship programs. She theorized that, with the resource being nearly 40 years old at the time of the study and 37% of the study’s participants having fewer than a decade of professional museum experience, internship coordinators may have been unaware that the resource existed, believed it to be dated, or had created different programming. Some resources about internship management contain useful information—such as setting clear goals, giving interns regular feedback, and using internships as screenings for potential employees—but are not field-specific (for example, True, n.d., which is a general instruction manual for anyone hosting college interns), and therefore their recommendations are not easily adaptable to individual museums’ unique contexts. Another notable limitation is that the recommendations are usually based in anecdotal evidence of what “works” and are written from the perspective of staff (for example, American Association of State and Local History [AASLH], n.d.; Brady, 2005; Hollander, 2003; Wesselmann, 2012; Reed, 2018), but the critical voice of interns themselves is missing. While museums may develop and improve internships based on their own interns’ feedback, the lack of current, field-wide standards means that supervisory practices, and overall internship experiences, can be inconsistent.

This lack of empirical research into the students’ perspectives is one obstacle to developing standardized best practices. Indeed, museum scholars note the lack of research about the development of best

practices at all (Beckmann, 2013; Bomar, 2013; Simmons, 2015). Beckmann (2013) specifically argues that successful internship programs are critical to the validity of higher education programs in the field because they advertise hands-on internship experiences as part of their curriculum. The author further argues that empirical research on best practices for internships would support strategic change in how such programs are designed, therefore ensuring successful learning and workplace outcomes.

Besides understanding how they think about and experience internships, intern perspectives are important for the field's future because interns provide important labor and bring new perspectives to museum work. While studying a variety of student interns across U.S. higher education institutions, Hora et al. (2020) further argued that understanding student conceptualizations of internships reveals gaps in how students and institutions may think differently about internship purpose and structure. The authors posit that more research on student perspectives will help close this gap and improve program outcomes by eliciting user (student) feedback on internship design and implementation, encouraging student-centric instruction, and increasing the field's understanding of how students experience the transition into the professional world.

Building on the widely accepted importance of internship programs, the purpose of this quantitative study is to understand how museum studies graduate students think about and experience internships in museums and related institutions.

Literature Review

While empirical research of student internships is generally lacking in the museum sector, research is abundant elsewhere. Common themes that appear in the literature are internship satisfaction factors (Rothman, 2003; Cook et al., 2004; D'Abate et al., 2009; Hutchison & Cartmell, 2016; McHugh, 2017; Hora et al., 2023), internship curriculum in relation to pre-existing standards (Simmons, 2016), internship impacts on academic performance (Knouse et al., 1999; Binder et al., 2015); and internship impacts on professional development (Brooks et al., 1995; Knouse et al., 1999; Barnett, 2012; Chandler et al., 2023).

Intern and Supervisor Relationships

One salient theme is the relationship between interns and supervisors. In a mixed-methods study, Hora et al. (2023) found that supervisor support and mentoring significantly contributed to intern satisfaction and perceived developmental value of the internship experience among students at five American universities. Specifically, students appreciated when their supervisors clearly communicated tasks and expectations of project outcomes, gave interns autonomy but were available for support, paid close attention to intern learning, and provided regular feedback. Support for the importance of intern-supervisor relationships was also demonstrated by Newman, Rose, and Teo (2016), who found that participative leadership practices by supervisors were positively related to intern job performance because it encouraged interns to participate in reciprocal social exchange. Supervisors invited interns to participate in decision-making and accept responsibility for their work, and interns reciprocated this treatment with higher job performance.

Career Plans Confirmed by Supervisory Support

Internships are valuable from the career development perspective because they can help confirm, redirect, or challenge a student's conceptions of their academic and professional paths. For example, Brooks et al. (1995) found that internships or other career-related work experiences were significantly related to vocational self-concept crystallization among college seniors. In other words, these experiences helped confirm the alignment between students' self-perceived work attributes and their career choices. Internship supervisors can play an important role in this process. Hoy (2011) undertook a two-year qualitative study of professionals who had at least three to five years of experience and study in at least one collecting institution via internships, volunteering, and/or paid employment. All participants indicated that their supervisors highly influenced their career and learning choices. Hoy's findings were confirmed by other researchers such as Lui, Xu, and Weitz (2011); McHugh (2017); and Ali, Gardner, and Edmondson (2022).

Job Satisfaction Factors

Other researchers argue that the overlap between internship satisfaction factors and those of permanent employees is substantial and that using indicators of job satisfaction can highlight the most

impactful elements of internships for students. One repeatedly used measure of job satisfaction is by Hackman and Oldham (1975), known as the “Job Diagnostic Survey” or the “Job Characteristics Model.” The authors theorized that employee satisfaction led to specific positive outcomes, including high internal motivation, high quality job performance, and low absenteeism and turnover. For these positive outcomes to be met, three “critical psychological states” were necessary: the employee experienced 1) meaningfulness of the work, 2) responsibility for the outcomes of the work, and 3) knowledge of the results (or impact) of their work. Hackman and Oldham further argued that these critical psychological states were created by five “core” job dimensions—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Skill variety is defined as the degree to which the job requires the employee to use their different skills and talents. Task identity describes doing the job from beginning to end with clear outcomes, while task significance is the degree to which the job impacts the lives or work of others. Autonomy describes the amount of freedom and discretion given to the employee, and feedback is the degree to which doing the job’s activities results in the employee obtaining clear information about their performance’s effectiveness. In their development of the survey, Hackman and Oldham found that these core job dimensions were strongly related to the critical psychological states, as well as general satisfaction (how happy the employee is with their job) and internal work motivation.

Using an adapted model of Hackman and Oldham’s survey, Friedman and Roodin (2013), found that student satisfaction levels with their internships were significantly correlated with all five core job dimensions. D’Abate et al. (2009) found similar results using the same modified survey, and further showed that task significance was the strongest predictor of internship satisfaction, followed by feedback.

Research Questions

Drawing on the literature about the importance of supervisory relationships and the centrality of internships in professional museum training, this research seeks to answer three questions:

1. How do museum studies graduate students conceptualize internships? That is, what are the purposes and benefits of doing internships as part of graduate education from the perspective of these students?

2. To what degree do museum studies graduate students' internship experiences meet their expectations?
3. What is the interaction between museum studies graduate interns' relationships with their supervisors and their perceptions of their internship experiences.

Methodology

Sampling and Recruitment

Eight museum studies graduate programs were recruited. Program staff were contacted and asked to disseminate the survey on behalf of the researcher. These particular programs were chosen for their similarities regarding length of the program (18 months to 2.5 years), emphasis on interdisciplinary study, requirement of an internship, and the wide offering of institutions from which students could select to complete internships.

It was important to recruit programs with relatively similar structures for several reasons. Longer programs that require an internship typically require a greater number of internship credit hours than programs that are one year or less in length. Students from these programs were more likely to have spent a significant amount of time in an internship, thus giving them the opportunity to develop a stronger sense of the organization where they interned, the nature of their work, and its effect on their perceptions of the museum field. Secondly, an emphasis on interdisciplinary study and a wide variety of institutions in which students could intern allowed for a wider variety of organizational types and structures, with varying capacities, resources, and internship projects, to be represented in the study. This variety may have been less apparent in programs with rigid specialization tracks, or programs partnered with one specific institution.

To be eligible to participate in the study, respondents needed to satisfy the following criteria:

1. Be a graduate student currently enrolled in a U.S.-based museum studies graduate program.
2. Had completed at least one internship in a museum, science center, zoo, aquarium, library, archive, botanical garden, nature center, or historic site *during their time in their graduate program* (internships completed during undergraduate study or outside of their graduate program were not eligible for this research).

3. The internship required them to complete at least 40 hours of work.

Students who had completed more than one internship during their graduate studies were directed to respond to survey questions based only on their most recent internship experience.

Instrument Design

Data was collected via a SurveyMonkey online survey. The first portion of the survey asked respondents to name the purpose and benefits of doing an internship in the form of a free list. Schensul and LeCompte (2012) affirm that free lists are suitable for eliciting cultural domains.

The following questions asked respondents to name at least one and up to three priorities for their most recent internship experience. A subsequent set of quantitative questions asked respondents to rate the degree to which their internship responsibilities helped them fulfill their priorities.

Intern perspectives of their supervisors were measured with a modified version of Scarpello and Vanderberg's (1987) Satisfaction with my Supervisor Survey (SWMSS). Their original eighteen-item scale was adapted to include ten items, removing those items that assessed supervisory skills or behavior that exist independent of interactions with interns.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which their relationships with their supervisors influenced the factors of internship success as defined by Lui, Xu, & Weitz (2016): experiencing job satisfaction, affective commitment to the organization, and a positive outlook on the industry as a career.

The survey concluded with open-ended questions adapted from the four generic Appreciate Inquiry (AI) questions (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavroz, 2003, p. 3, as cited in Coghlan et. al., 2003, p. 10). Used in the field of organizational management, AI asks what it would be like if "the best of what is" happened more frequently (Coghlan et. al, 2003, pp. 5–6). Coghlan et. al. argue that using AI to frame evaluation facilitates reflection on moments of success that help guide an organization in a positive direction. As such, this survey specifically asked respondents to describe positive elements of their internship experiences to identify specific practices that deserve replication in the internship program design. Identification of "the best of what already exists" from students'

perspectives thus may help the museums apply what is successful in a more consistent manner through the development of standardized internship best practices.

Data Analysis

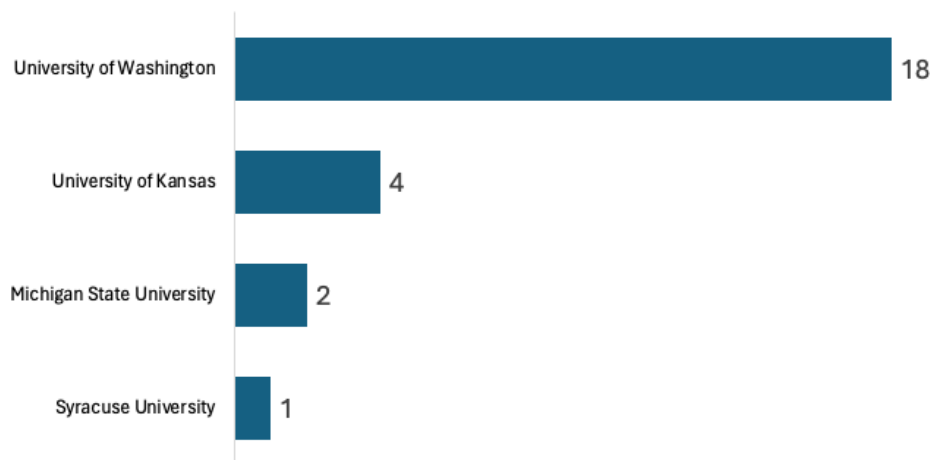
Free list and open-ended responses were analyzed with emergent coding. Some open-ended questions had relatively few responses. In these instances, categories of responses via formal codes were replaced with a general discussion of themes in the responses.

Quantitative questions were presented on a five- or six-point Likert scale. This yielded ordinal data that is analyzed via relative frequency distributions.

Results and Analysis

Data collection took place between January 31st and April 1st, 2024. A total of 33 responses were recorded. Eight of these were incomplete and not valid for analysis. Though eight sites were recruited, only four programs were represented in the responses. Of the 25 valid responses, 18 represented students from the University of Washington (UW) Museology program. Lacking an adequate number of responses from the other three programs to engage in cross-program comparison, the remaining seven non-UW responses were not analyzed. Thus, while this study attempted to survey a variety of programs and students, the analyzed data will only reflect the experiences and opinions of UW Museology students.

UW students represented 72% of valid survey responses (n=25)



Context for the UW Museology Internship Program

The University of Washington's Museology program follows a cohort model of first- and second-year students. As data collection began less than one month into winter quarter 2024, it was unlikely that any or many first-years had completed at least 40 hours of internship work at the time of data collection. Still, it is possible that some first-years had completed an internship in their first quarter of study (fall quarter 2023). Including both first- and second-year students, 18 completed surveys represents a response rate of 30.5%; counting only second-year students, 18 completed surveys represents a response rate of 72%.

Results and analysis are organized according to this study's research questions. Analysis is contextualized within the structure of UW Museology's internship program, and supported by observations provided by the UW Museology Graduate Advisor in personal communication with the researcher.

The UW Museology program requires 180 credit hours of internship work, equivalent to six credits earned. The program guarantees payment for up to 90 hours of work through its paid partner site program, in which organizations who would otherwise not be able to pay interns from their own budgets can compensate interns and be reimbursed by the Museology program. The program can only guarantee payment through this system for up to 90 hours of work, meaning that the additional 90 hours of required work must either be paid to interns directly from organizational budgets, or the intern does not receive payment.

The program provides specific guidelines for internship supervisors in its *Internship Supervisor Handbook*. The handbook defines an internship as "a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting" (p. 1). The handbook specifically states that internships should be supervised by qualified professionals who support clear learning objectives. Finally, the handbook outlines what qualifies "great internship experiences", which includes several factors, notably that these experiences "have a clear set of expectations that everyone involved agrees upon" and "are meaningful to the organization" (p. 6).

Furthermore, the UW Museology program does allow students to contact organizations to inquire about internship opportunities, even if there are no formal opportunities advertised. In these cases, interns work with organizations to develop a project that both fulfills the

intern's learning and career goals and supports a need within the organization. The program urges internship hosts to be realistic about their capacity to host interns and to ensure that they can provide meaningful work.

Evaluation Question 1: How do museum studies graduate students conceptualize internships? That is, what are the purposes and benefits of doing internships as part of graduate education from the perspective of these students?

Key Finding

Networking and skills development are primary purposes and benefits of internships. Respondents highlighted the desire to apply theoretical knowledge to the workplace and gain “real-world experience”, and noted that making connections both inside and outside an institution was important.

Question 1 (“From your perspective, what is the purpose of doing an internship as part of your coursework, and what benefits do you gain, if any?”) elicited free-list responses and were coded with emergent coding. The codes that emerged are:

1. Networking and building connections: Respondents identified opportunities to network with and learn from other professionals as a purpose and benefit of an internship. This category also includes responses that mentioned building connections with community members and other stakeholders who were not necessarily internal to the internship host site.

Networking;

Making professional connections;

Making community connections

2. Skills development: Respondent mentioned hands-on learning, workplace experience, and practical application of academic knowledge and theory in the work environment—i.e., gaining “real-world” experience. This category also includes any responses that mentioned

generic “skill building” or honing specific skills related to particular areas of museum work.

Hands-on learning;

Gaining skills related to the field;

Practicing/applying academic learning in the real world

3. Career exploration: Respondents identified exploring different career paths as a purpose or benefit. This includes responses that noted wanting to “try things out” and “get a feel” for different career options, or gain familiarity with the field as a whole.

Trying out different aspects of museums to see what speaks to you;

Familiarity with the field and best practices;

Understanding the inner workings of museums;

Testing different career options

4. Boosting professional credentials: This category represents those responses that mentioned tangible benefits/outcomes of an internship, such as adding experience to one’s resume or expanding one’s portfolio.

Building my resume;

Creating a product to add to my portfolio

5. Program requirement: Respondent identified gaining credit or needing to complete an internship as a program requirement as a purpose or benefit.

School credit;

Program requirement

6. Other: This category encompasses all responses that did not fit clearly into the previous five.

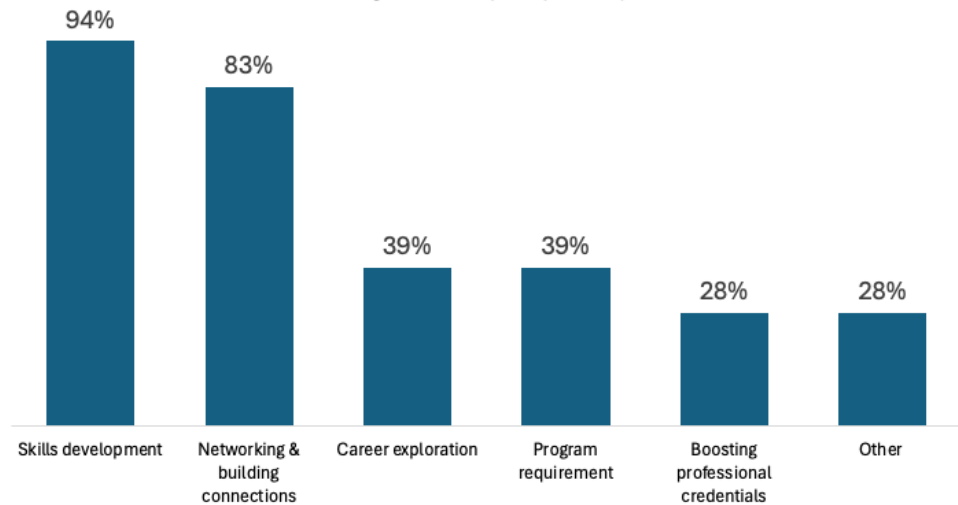
Achievability;

Gaining confidence;

Doing something of interest;

Receiving feedback that isn't in grade form;

94% (n=17) and 83% (n=15) of responses identified "Skills development" and "Networking and building connections" as the primary purposes and benefits of doing an internship, respectively.*



Responses to Q1 highlight that students appreciate applying classroom knowledge to the workplace. More generally, responses indicate students feel that internships provide valuable skill-building opportunities not gained through theoretical study. These responses reaffirm previous assertions by many museum bodies (e.g., AAM, COMPT, etc.) that view internships as one of the most effective ways to prepare for a career in the museum field. This also suggests that, despite the growth of academic museum studies programs, students do not view academic study alone as sufficient to prepare for a professional career. This latter point is reaffirmed by the relatively low number of responses (n=5) that mentioned gaining academic credit as a purpose or benefit of internships; students are clearly more motivated by other factors than an internship's relationship to their degree requirements.

Networking and building connections was also a primary purpose and benefit that respondents identified. The high frequency of responses in this category (83%, n=15) suggests that students view networking as a critical component of being successful in a museum career. Compared to the low number of responses that mentioned boosting professional credentials (n=5), the emphasis on networking may indicate that students see success in the museum field as hinging more on “who one knows” rather than on the credentials one carries.

Evaluation Question 2: To what degree do museum studies graduate students’ internship experiences meet their expectations?

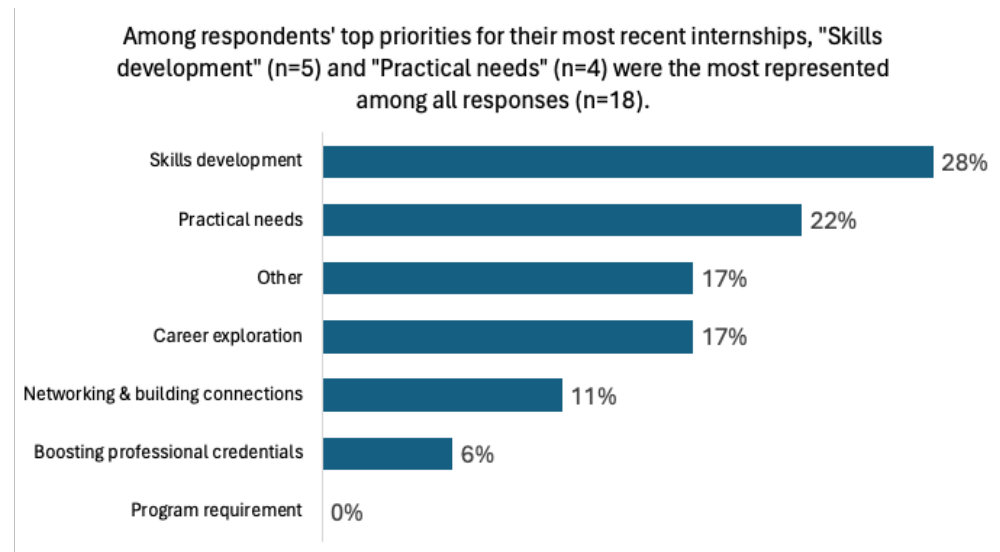
Key Finding

Skills development was a priority for respondents at the beginning of their most recent internship, followed by practical needs. Networking represented a smaller percentage of responses to the questions centered on Evaluation Question 2 than it did in responses to Q1 described above, suggesting that while students view networking as important, it is not a conscious top priority for them. Overall, most respondents felt that their responsibilities in their most recent internship largely met their priorities. In instances where they did not, reasons given were that their internships lacked structure and opportunities to complete meaningful work.

Question 2 was divided into three parts that asked respondents to identify their top three priorities at the beginning of their most recent internship. Respondents were only required to identify one priority.

Responses to Question 2a (“What was your first priority at the beginning of your most recent internship?”) were coded with the same codes that emerged from Question 1, plus one additional code: “Practical needs.” This code encompasses any responses that mentioned payment, flexible scheduling, and ease of transportation to the internship site as a priority. Some responses that mentioned career-related priorities were not necessarily coded in “Career exploration.” Instead, responses that prioritized an internship that gave the intern skills or experience in an area of museum work that they already had intentions to pursue were coded in the “Skills development” category. These responses highlighted that a priority was to develop skills in a specific area of work, rather than explore career

possibilities. For example, the response “I wanted work experience in different areas of the museum field that I am interested in pursuing a career” was coded as “Career exploration,” whereas “I needed an internship that provided elements and job duties for a career I am specifically looking for” was coded as “Skills development.”



“Other”-coded responses (n=3) were:

Completing a project I was proud of/having an end product;

Freedom and responsibility. I don't like being micromanaged and I don't like working on mature projects where I'm given a very specific task and nothing else;

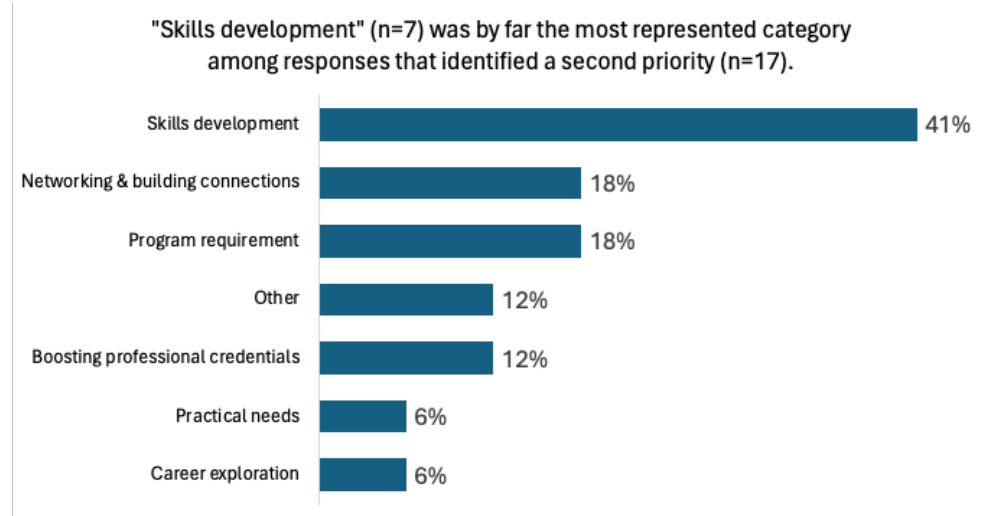
Engage with/work for an institution whose work & priorities I was excited about

Seventeen respondents identified a second priority. Among them, “Skills development” (n=7) was again the most represented priority. Some of these answers include:

Understand the administration aspect as well as collections side of repatriation;

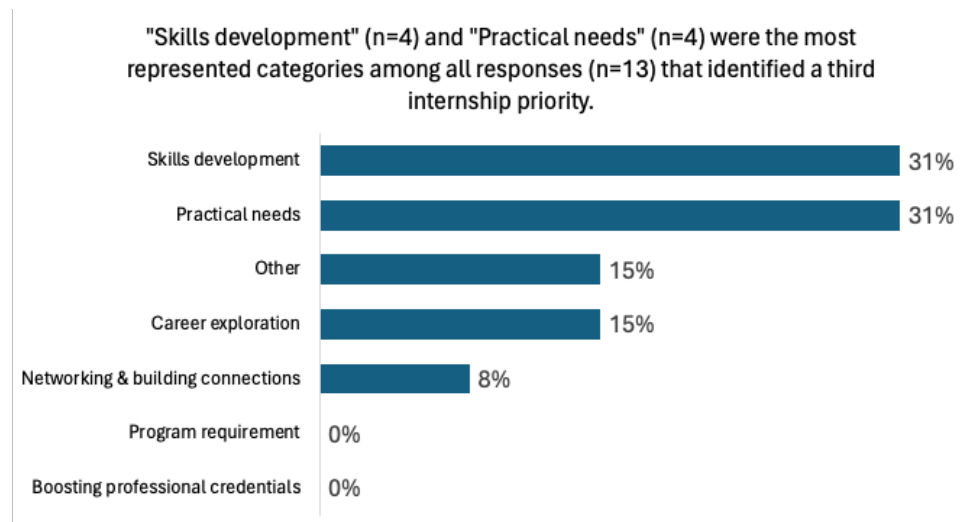
Learning new skills, mostly computer related software and programs;

I wanted to look deeper in seeing how a museum-related institution truly functions when it comes to funding, community engagement, and public outreach



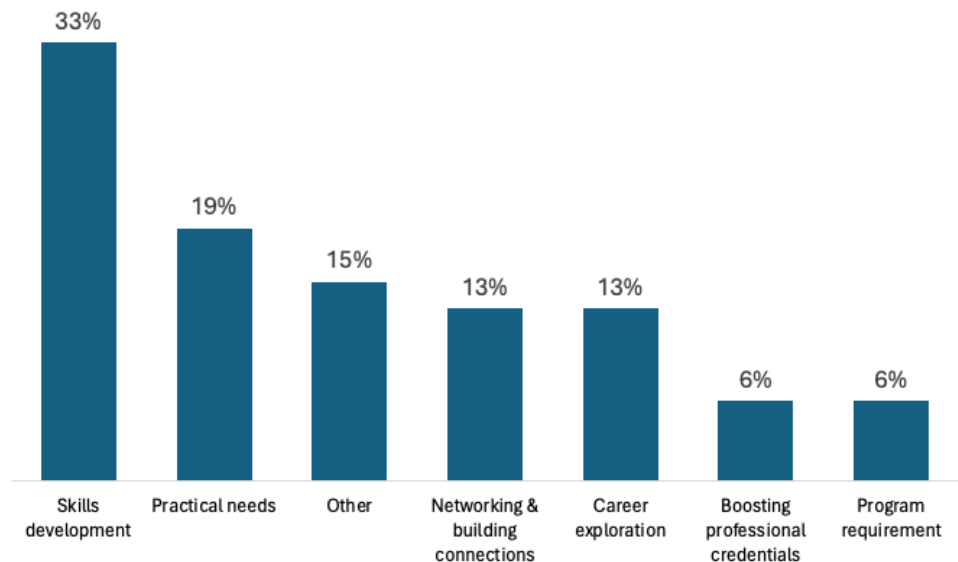
Thirteen respondents identified a third priority. Again, "Skills development" was most represented, equaled by "Practical needs" (n=4). "Other"-coded answers (n=2) were:

*Interning somewhere with a reputable reputation that is known nationally;
Contributing*



Questions 2a–2c (asking respondents to identify their first, second, and third priorities at the beginning of their most recent internship) received a total of 48 responses. Totaling each code across all 48 responses, “Skills development” (n=16) and “Practical needs” (n=9) were the highest priorities for respondents. Interestingly, “Networking and building connections” only accounted for 13% (n=6) of answers, despite the fact that this was the second-most represented category in responses to Question 1 about the purposes and benefits of doing internships (83% of answers to Q1 fell into this category). This may suggest that while students see networking as a valuable perk of internships, perhaps they believe it’s something that just “happens” in the course of doing an internship rather than something they actively pursue alongside their internship responsibilities.

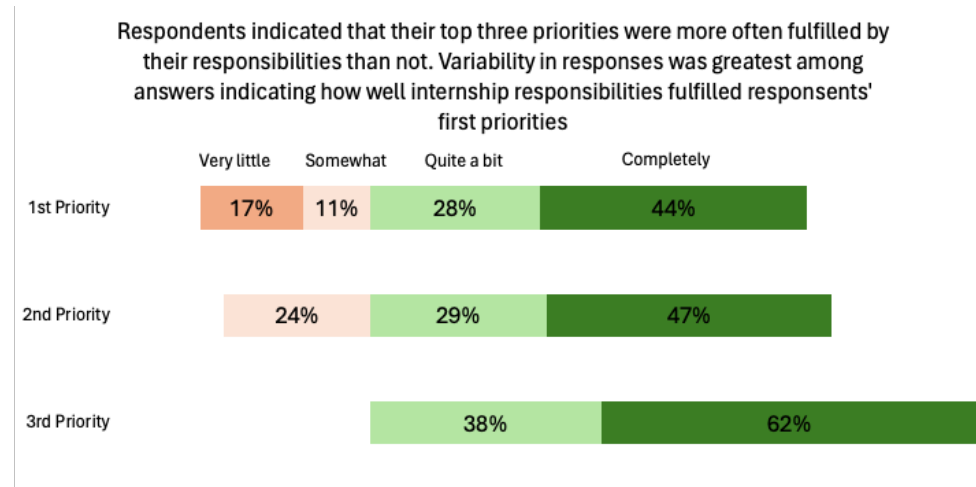
When totaling how frequently each category of priorities appeared across all the responses to Question 2 (n=48), “Skills development” (n=16) and “Practical needs” (n=9) appeared most often.



Questions 3a–3c then asked respondents to rate the degree to which their internship responsibilities fulfilled each of their priorities on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Not at all” to “Completely,” with the middle point being “Somewhat.” Participants were directed to skip answering how well their responsibilities helped them fulfill their second and third priorities if they did not indicate having a second or third priority in Questions 2b and 2c.

Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that their responsibilities were well aligned (indicated by the “Quite a bit” point on the Likert scale), or

perfectly or nearly perfectly aligned (indicated by the “Completely” point on the Likert scale) with their priorities. None of the respondents answered that internship responsibilities were not at all aligned with their priorities.



Priority fulfillment was then analyzed in relation to Q2 answers that mentioned “Skills development” as a priority, as this was the most represented answer category among responses. 33% of Q2 responses mentioned that “Skills development” was a priority. Averaging respondents’ ratings of how well their responsibilities fulfilled this priority, this priority had an average fulfillment score of 3.9 (out of 5) among this 33% of responses. In other words, “Skills development” priorities were fulfilled by internship responsibilities 78% of the time among the internship experiences represented in the sample.

Question 3d asked respondents who answered “Not at all”, “Very little”, or “Somewhat” to Questions 3a–3c to explain why they felt their responsibilities were not well aligned with their priorities. This yielded seven responses, which are reported fully in Appendix A. Due to the low number of responses, developing emergent coding categories would not accurately communicate the data. Rather, a general theme among a handful of the responses (n=4) was that respondents felt that their internship lacked structure and that they were not given meaningful work. For example, staff turnover at the host organization led one participant’s experience to be more self-guided, which they did not want, and they questioned if their internship work was even being used by the institution.

Evaluation Question 3: What is the interaction between museum studies graduate interns' relationships with their supervisors and their perceptions of their internship experiences?

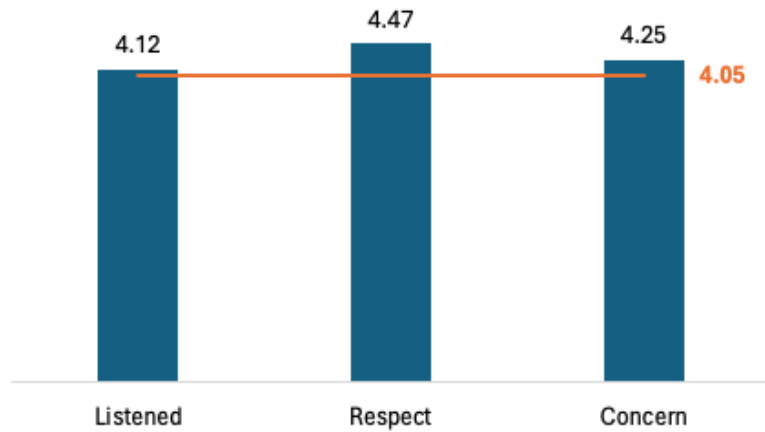
Key Finding

Overall, respondents reported largely positive experiences with supervisors in terms of how their supervisors treated them, but that supervisors sometimes fell short of supporting interns logistically. Responses proved that supervisors make a significant impact on students' overall satisfaction with their internships and their perceptions of the organization where they interned, but that generally, supervisors do not greatly affect how students think about the museum field as a whole.

Questions 4a–4j asked respondents to rate the degree to which their supervisor performed certain actions or behaved in certain ways towards the intern, based on Scarpello and Vanderberg's (1987) Satisfaction with my Supervisor Survey (SWMSS). Answer options were presented on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" (1) to "Always or almost always" (5) with the middle point labeled "Sometimes" (3). There was also a "Not applicable" (0) option. The aggregated average score across all responses was 4.05 (calculation of the average score did not include answers that selected "Not applicable" [0]).

The first three questions, Questions 4a-4c, asked about supervisors' behaviors towards the intern, focusing on interpersonal treatment such as listening to the intern, showing the intern respect even when they made a mistake, and showing concern for the intern's learning and career goals. Respondents largely felt that their supervisors behaved positively towards them a majority of the time in these regards.

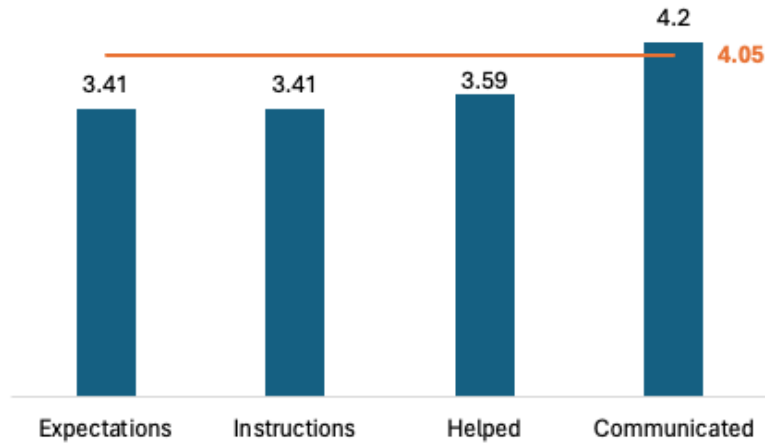
Average scores for questions about how well supervisors listened to interns, showed them respect, and showed concern for their learning and career goals were higher than the aggregated average across all ten SWMSS questions.*



*Only 17 respondents answered Q4c ("My supervisor showed concern for my learning and career goals.").

However, when it came to receiving logistical support from supervisors, interns rated their supervisors lower on average. Logistical support included setting clear expectations for what the intern was meant to accomplish, providing clear instructions to help them accomplish their responsibilities, helping them accomplish their responsibilities, and effectively communicating any changes to their internship plan or structure.

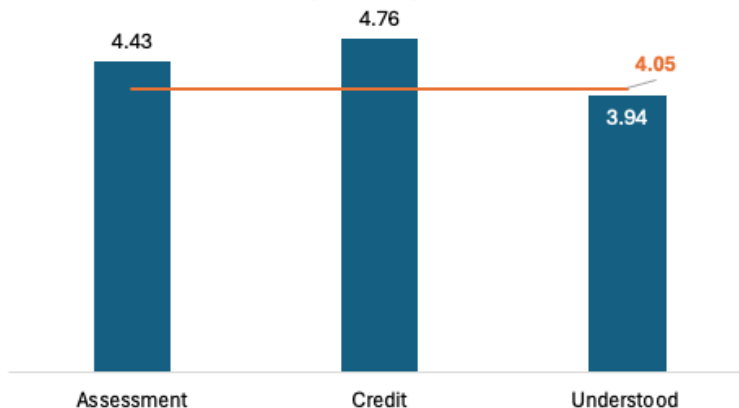
Average ratings for how often supervisors supported interns in logistical ways were lower than the aggregated average across all ten items, except when it came to communicating changes in the internship.*



*17% (n=3) of respondents indicated that the question about communicating changes was not applicable to their experience, indicating that some students experience little to no change to their internship structure or plan.

The final three questions of the SWMSS asked about how fair supervisors were in their assessment of interns' work, how often supervisors gave interns credit for their ideas, and how well supervisors understood the challenges that interns might face in their work and if they helped interns work through these challenges.

Interns largely felt that their supervisors were fair in their assessments and gave interns credit for their ideas. On average, a lower percentage of respondents felt that their supervisors understood the challenges they might face in their internships.



22% of respondents (n=4) said that the assessment question was not applicable to their experience, indicating that some internships lack formal assessment processes. It could also indicate that these respondents received little or no feedback on their work throughout the course of their internship. This reveals that some internship supervisors are not implementing a mid-internship review as recommended by UW Museology's *Internship Supervisor Handbook*. Furthermore, UW Museology requires that internship supervisors submit an evaluation form at the end of the internship experience to the program. While students might not see the form, the handbook does state that the evaluation form "is an acknowledgement that you and your intern had an opportunity to debrief at the end of the internship" (p. 9). That 22% of respondents said the assessment question was not applicable to their experience reveals that some internship supervisors may not be aware of the expectation to communicate their evaluation to their interns, or are aware of the expectation but not implementing it.

The vast majority of respondents—83% (n=15)—said their supervisor always or almost always gave them credit for their ideas. Just two respondents said their supervisor sometimes gave them credit, and the final remaining respondent said this question was not applicable to their experience. That such a large majority of respondents said their supervisor gave them credit for their ideas indicates both that supervisors successfully recognize the contributions of interns and that there are many opportunities for supervisors to share their interns' work with their organizations.

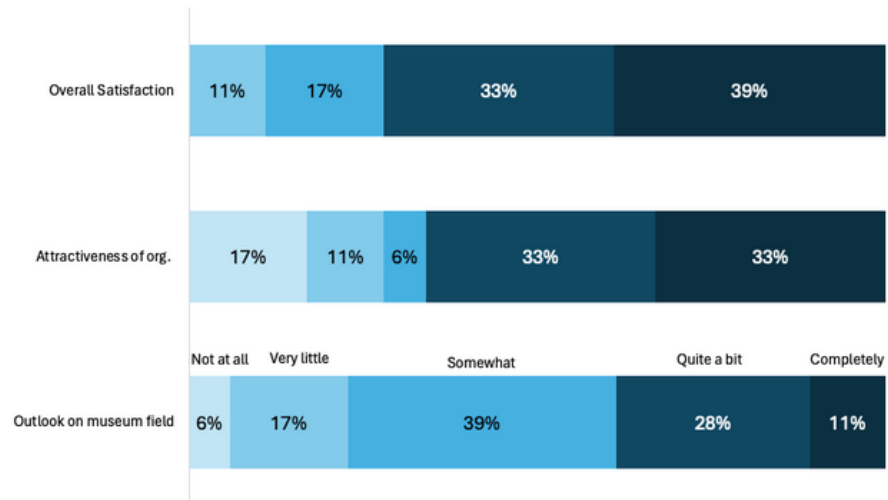
Fewer than half of respondents (n=8) said their supervisors always or almost always understood the challenges they might face during their internship and helped them work through these challenges. There could be a variety of reasons for this. In some instances, the internship may have been planned and structured by someone other than the intern's immediate supervisor, leading to the supervisor to be less familiar with the internship or how to support the intern. It could also point to supervisors who were absent or uninvolved with the intern. Without more information about how present supervisors were or how much they oversaw the intern's day-to-day tasks, the researcher can only speculate as to why a lower proportion of supervisors understood the challenges interns faced in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Responses to these questions indicate that supervisors, on average, perform well with regard to interpersonal relationship factors with their interns, but that they could do more to materially support their interns in their work. These results accord with open-ended responses to Q3d

that noted a general lack of structure in internships that led to students' priorities not being completely fulfilled through their work.

In Questions 5a–5c, respondents were asked to describe how their supervisor made an impact, if at all, on their experience, their perception of the organization as an attractive place to work, and their outlook on the museum field as a whole. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Not at all” (1) to “Completely” (5) with the middle point labeled “Somewhat” (3).

A majority of respondents said their supervisor made a significant impact on their overall satisfaction with their internship and their perception of the organization as an attractive place to work. However, a greater percentage of respondents indicated that their supervisor had only a mild effect on their overall outlook on the museum field as a career path.



Respondents were invited to expand on their answers to Questions 5a–5c in more detail. Ten respondents provided additional context for their answers, which are reported fully in Appendix B and which varied significantly. Some respondents (n=4) noted that they recognized issues in the organization and/or their internship structure that affected their experience, such as a large burden of responsibility on a small staff or that the work itself was not sufficient to fill the interns' time, but that these issues were not their supervisors' fault. These responses seem to confirm some of the researcher's speculation above that supervisors may not always be the ones designing internships, leading some interns to be dissatisfied with their experiences but not necessarily through the fault of their immediate supervisors.

A few respondents (n=2) reported that their overall perceptions of the field would not have been impacted by a negative experience with their

supervisor, and that their supervisor helped reaffirm their interest rather than altering it:

My intention to pursue a career in the museum field would not have been altered by a negative experience (based on past experiences);

I was already enthusiastic about pursuing a museum career, so my supervisor helped confirm that rather than changing that.

These responses align with answers to Question 5c that report a lower percentage of respondents feeling that their supervisors would significantly impact their outlook on the museum field. This could indicate that while supervisors have a significant impact on an intern's satisfaction with their individual internship, the behaviors or actions of the supervisor do not necessarily affect how the intern thinks about the field as a whole.

Appreciative Inquiry Key Findings

While not tied to a specific evaluation question, the appreciative inquiry-based questions provide valuable insights into positive aspects of respondents' experiences and ways they feel that their internships could have been better. Their responses vary widely, but several answers revealed that students appreciate being trusted with significant responsibilities. They are also highly aware of their own skills. A healthy work environment, built on strong interpersonal relationships, made positive impacts, highlighting that the organization as a whole can critically affect the intern's experience, and many respondents felt that their experiences could have been improved with more structure and by having more meaningful responsibilities.

Questions 6a–6d asked respondents to describe a high point in their internship experience, what personal qualities they value in themselves and how these supported the organization, any characteristics or practices of the organization that made a positive impact on their experience, and the primary way they felt their internship could have been better. Answers to these questions are reported fully in Appendix C. On average, fourteen out of 18 respondents answered these questions.

Responses to Question 6a (“Was there a high point in your internship experience—a time when you felt most engaged with the work, with others, and/or with the organization?”) revealed that interns highly appreciate being trusted to manage independent tasks and knowing that their efforts are valuable to the organization (half of the fourteen responses mentioned this). Some tasks mentioned included developing their own curriculum or even supervising and managing other interns or organizational efforts.

Responses to Question 6b (“Without being modest, what qualities do you most value in yourself and how did these qualities benefit the internship host organization?”) were extremely varied and personal to each respondent. This question received the most responses out of the AI questions, indicating that students recognize their unique talents and capabilities, and how these contribute to organizational efforts. This shows that not only do students benefit from internships, but they recognize that organizations significantly benefit from them.

Responses to Question 6c (“Were there any characteristics, practices, or values of the host organization that made an especially positive impact on your internship experience?”) were again varied, but one primary theme that emerged (present in eight out of fourteen responses) was that interns appreciated when an organization cultivated a positive work environment, particularly through interpersonal relationships, citing helpful employees and being treated with openness and respect.

Finally, responses to Question 6d (“What is the primary way you feel your internship experience could’ve been better?”) revealed a recurring theme: that respondents felt that their internship was not structured enough and/or lacked meaningful work (six out of thirteen responses noted this). One respondent said that poorly delegated tasks left them feeling like “another cog in the machine”—a sentiment reflected in other responses that cited a lack of clear goals and project deliverables that left interns questioning if their work made an impact. These answers align with earlier ones from respondents who felt that their internship responsibilities were not well aligned with their priorities, and that a lack of structure and opportunities to make meaningful contributions is disappointing for students. Furthermore, as “Skills development” is a major motivator for students to do internships and a top priority, a lack of structure means they risk missing out on valuable learning opportunities to develop those skills they sought to improve.

There is an obvious tension between responses to Q6d and respondents’ earlier indications of how well their internship responsibilities fulfilled their priorities. Among the six respondents who

felt that their internships could have been better structured, they often responded that their internship responsibilities were well aligned or completely aligned with their internship priorities. For example, the respondent who said that their internship was “not very structured” and that “[the institution] expected very little out of [them]” also said that their responsibilities were completely aligned with their priorities. This appears contradictory, but in examining these six respondents’ top priorities further, it is revealed that their priorities were most often met in relation to practical needs or fulfilling a program requirement. Conversely, priorities related to skills development were less often met. For example, the respondent who responded to Question 6d by saying they left “just as another cog in the machine” said that their top priority was “real world experience” (a “Skills Development”-coded answer). In answering to what degree their responsibilities fulfilled this priority, they responded “Very little.” Similarly, the respondent who answered Question 6d by saying their internship could have been improved with “a clear project and or deliverable/guidance” noted that their top priority was “getting experience in exhibit design.” However, they said their internship responsibility only “Somewhat” fulfilled this priority.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This survey sought to understand how museum studies graduate students conceptualize their internship experiences. It specifically sought to answer questions about what students view as the purposes and benefits of internships; how well their internships have aligned with their personal, professional, or academic priorities; and the impact of their supervisors on their experiences and outlook on the museum field.

Findings related to interns’ perceptions of the purposes and benefits of internships, as well as their priorities, reinforce field-wide assertions by bodies such as AAM and ICOM of the importance of internships as preparation for a museum career. Overwhelmingly, survey respondents identified skills development-related benefits as a top priority in their internships, highlighting that students are seeking meaningful opportunities to engage in hands-on work, apply academic theory to real museum efforts, and gain skills in areas of the field that they are interested in pursuing or learning more about. Related to supervisory support, answers to this survey accord with studies such as Hora et al.’s (2023) that found that supervisory support was strongly correlated with intern satisfaction. However, this study’s results diverge from previous research (e.g., Brooks et al., 1995; Hoy, 2011; Lui, Xu, &

Weitz, 2011) that found notable correlations between supervisory support and interns' outlooks on their respective fields and job pursuit intentions. This study's results suggest that museum studies graduate students' career intentions and perceptions of the museum field are not strongly influenced by their internship supervisors (among UW students, at least). Finally, results of this study affirm previous arguments by researchers such as Rothman (2003), D'Abate et al. (2009), and Friedman and Roodin (2013) that job satisfaction factors are applicable to internships—i.e., what students find rewarding and satisfying in temporary internship positions reflect what permanent employees find rewarding and satisfying in their jobs.

These and other notable findings are explored in greater detail below. Findings are accompanied by recommendations for future researchers, internship host organizations, and museum studies graduate faculty and staff to better understand students' wants, needs, and experiences.

Finding 1

University of Washington Museology students largely view internships as a skills-development opportunity. Their internship purposes and benefits accords with those promoted by professional organizations and the Museology program. Respondents' emphasis on skills development highlights that students see hands-on experience as necessary in their preparation for a museum career.

However, a modest number of students felt that their internships lacked enough structure, guidance, and/or opportunities to complete meaningful work. It is unknown how many students in this survey's sample were referencing internship experiences that had been pre-planned by their host sites versus how many had created a project based on their interests and their host sites' needs. If the former, a lack of meaningful work and/or structure in pre-planned internship experiences might suggest that host sites are struggling to determine meaningful work for students that is within their capacity to oversee. If the latter, responses suggest that internships built by students and host sites, and not pre-planned, can easily become unguided. Additionally, responses in which students noted lack of structure as a primary issue indicate that interns and supervisors are not regularly reflecting on the internship's progress together and redirecting the experience when needed. This is also suggested by responses in which

students indicated that they were not being assessed by their supervisors.

Recommendation 1

This research did not gather information on what type of internships students completed. No information was collected on what departments students interned in, the nature of their work, or if their internships were pre-planned by their host sites or if they approached a host site about internship opportunities and built an experience together. As this study initially recruited eight different museum studies graduate programs as research sites, this research also did not seek to determine how well internships were meeting the standards set out by the University of Washington Museology program's *Internship Supervisor Handbook*. The researcher thus cannot make any definitive conclusions about why some internships lacked structure; it is unknown if this was caused by the nature of the work, supervisory practices, the overall internship plan, or other factors. Going forward, this researcher recommends that UW Museology conduct its own evaluation of the internship host sites affiliated with its program, to determine how well student internships are meeting the expectations outlined in their handbook. While the program does require internship supervisors to submit a final evaluation of their interns, and for students to complete a reflection assignment on their internship experience, the program could consider developing a more standardized survey or other instrument that captures both supervisor and intern feedback on how well internships align with the programs' standards.

Finding 2

Also important for UW students are practical considerations, namely, receiving payment for their work, their internships being flexible around their course schedules and other commitments, and being able to easily access their internship host sites. Due to the fact that the Museology program can only guarantee payment for up to 90 hours work through its paid partner site program, there are instances where students must accept not receiving payment for the remaining 90 hours of required work if an organization cannot pay the intern from its own budget. Related to transportation, survey respondents prioritized being able to easily transit to their host sites. While there are several museums and other cultural organizations in Seattle, there are also a

number in the surrounding region where Museology students have interned, such as Kent Historical Society in Kent, the Eastside Heritage Center in Bellevue, Krukeberg Botanic Garden in Shoreline, or a number of the cultural institutions in Tacoma. While the University of Washington provides subsidized transit passes to all students, these passes are not valid in summer quarter. This means that students must pay for transportation in the summer, when many Museology students complete some or all of their internship hours. Transiting to organizations for internships in the summer, especially those farther away from central Seattle, carries the added burden of transit fares, which can add up over the course of a months-long internship.

Recommendation 2

The University of Washington Museology program should actively seek out additional funding opportunities to cover the cost of compensating interns through the paid partner site program for all 180 hours of required internship credits, ensuring that students will always be paid for their work. Additionally, the program could seek a smaller amount of funding to wholly or partially cover the cost of Seattle-area transportation in summer months for students who choose to complete internships during this time.

Finding 3

Students appreciate being trusted with important responsibilities and knowing that their efforts contribute to the organization. However, supervisors must find the difficult balance of giving interns independence without neglecting them or giving them menial work. The Museology Graduate Advisor highlighted this tension: “Several students...cited the way they either felt positioned as a legitimate expert/trusted authority [versus] being positioned more condescendingly as a volunteer” (K. Glatt, personal communication, November 6, 2023). While interns largely felt respected by their supervisors, they more often lacked logistical support from these figures.

Recommendation 3

There is no one way that students and supervisors could work together to develop better support systems for the intern. Some interns, even if they feel materially unsupported by their supervisor or uncertain about

their role, may be resistant to address this with their supervisor directly, or to have representatives of Museology intervene. One potential solution would be to specify student and supervisor communication norms on the internship agreement forms that students are required to submit before their internship begins, with their supervisor's signature. Currently, there is an "Expectations" section on the form that gives students and supervisors the chance to include any additional expectations for the internship, including "communication expectations" (p. 2). However, this is just one suggestion for the many types of information that could be included. By requiring students and their supervisors to be more purposeful in their plans to address issues that may arise in the internship, they may be better equipped to respond to these issues. Another possibility is to require students to check in with the Museology Graduate Advisor or their Faculty Advisor at least once throughout their internship, giving them the opportunity to communicate any issues they are having and to receive suggestions for how to approach the issue with their internship supervisor.

Finding 4

Finally, respondents noted that they liked interacting with many people in the organization hosting their internship outside their immediate supervisor. They appreciated the positive work environments created when host site employees shared the same organizational values and engaged respectfully with each other. This also relates to survey responses that highlighted networking and building connections as a primary purpose and benefit of internships.

Recommendation 4

Internship host sites should consider integrating their interns more consistently with larger organizational projects or casual social events. By building in these opportunities to interact with many people inside the organization, interns can experience greater networking opportunities. However, it is also important to note that while respondents said networking was a primary purpose and benefit of internships, networking was not a high priority among a majority of respondents. This may suggest that interns expect networking to happen organically, which supports the argument for greater integration of the intern into larger organizational culture. The Museology program could also support networking by providing

resources or training for students on effective networking tactics and how to maintain connections built through a temporary internship experience.

In conclusion, this research is not generalizable to the museum studies field as a whole. It does however provide valuable insight into the experiences of UW Museology students, and as this program's structure is similar to many other U.S.-based museum studies programs, its findings and recommendations may shed light on the experiences of other students enrolled in other programs. For both UW and other programs seeking to better understand their students' experiences, the researcher recommends formal evaluation efforts to determine how well host sites are meeting the internship expectations outlined by academic programs. The researcher also recommends further study of programs' students to better understand their priorities for internships and if programs' current internship structures and requirements align with student goals.

It is still important to conduct a larger study of museum studies graduate studies across programs, as this study initially intended to do. To aid in site recruitment and to guarantee a better response rate, this researcher recommends that future researchers structure their studies in such a way that research participants could elect to enroll in the study at the time they begin their internships. Future researchers could again recruit sites through contacting program faculty and staff, who would encourage study enrollment to students as they are preparing to begin new internships. This researcher also recommends including incentives in the recruitment process to increase the chances that students will enroll in the study.

Based on this study's findings, the larger museum field must grapple with the question of how well-equipped institutions are to host and direct internship work. Several of this study's respondents cited a lack of structure and clarity as a factor that negatively impacted their experiences. Individual institutions should review their own internship management policies and practices to determine if staff are using them as intended and if not, why not. This review should be supported by larger organizations like the American Alliance of Museums and other bodies. This updating effort could be informed by focused evaluation efforts to determine how well current standards are being implemented, if at all. Related to these efforts, internship experiences are undoubtedly influenced by the relative size and available resources of the hosting institution, which vary widely in the museum field.

Professional associations like AAM, AASLH, and ICOM might also consider creating guidelines specific to the structure and capacity of different sized organizations.

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Appendix A

Open-ended responses to Question 3d

"If you answered 'Not at all', 'Very little', or 'Somewhat' to any of the previous questions, please describe why you felt your assigned responsibilities were not well aligned with your priorities and/or how your responsibilities could've been better designed to help fulfill your priorities."

Tasks were limited and my access to the institution was very restricted
My assigned responsibilities in my internship did not feel like it fulfilled my first priority as I expected when I was applying to the internship. I think there was a lack of structure and the staff was very small, so I felt like the work I was doing wasn't really going to support the museum through a project with an end product like I expected it to. The original person meant to supervise me and who developed the internship project had left the institution before I got there. I ended up getting placed into someone else's work who was unsure about what was happening with the original internship and it ended up developing into a more self-interest or self-guided internship, which was not what I wanted at all. In the end, there was something I created, but I do not know if it is even being used for the institution now or will be in the future.
This internship did not have a specific project outlined and left it up to me as the intern to decide what would best fit the museum and my interests, and create said deliverable for the internship. They did not accept anything I proposed but refused to give guidance or even priorities in terms of what the museum needs/ wanted. It was very difficult to come up with anything they approved, let alone something that also fit with my desire to get experience in exhibit design (despite the internship recruitment posting stating it would be in exhibit design).
The responsibilities that were conveyed to me at the start of my internship were slowly diminished as the project went on until I was doing very little practical work related to the repatriation project I was initially hired to be a major part of.
While my internship was very flexible and paid, it was perhaps overly flexible in the sense that there was not always enough meaningful work for me to do. I did a series of small projects that were somewhat helpful experiences, but all in all, I could have learned more and been given more responsibilities/projects.
I think my internship was a great experience in letting me feel confident about what I was doing. But, since it was with a small institution I did not have a mentor in the collections field or the resources to practice some of the skills I had hoped (rehousing, conservation, etc.). Instead, I gained skills related to project planning, managing volunteers, and integrated pest management (among others), which I had not expected prior to the internship and found equally valuable.
I replied somewhat to the second priority because it did not fulfill the full number of required internship credits for the program.

Appendix B

Open-ended responses to Question 5d

"If you would like to expand on any of your answers above [to questions about the impact of the supervisor on overall satisfaction with internship experience, perception of the host organization, and outlook on the museum field] in further detail, please do so here."

<p>My supervisor was great, I struggled with the way institutionally things were done in this specific museum. (I didn't feel needed, which is not the fault of my supervisor.)</p>
<p>My supervisor's behavior was quite erratic, she was nice but super unclear on what she wanted, so I would never work for her institution because of it.</p>
<p>Since it was a small non-profit, I felt that the workload being put on a small amount of people was not appealing to me. I would prefer some kind of team to work with.</p>
<p>Most of the problems faced throughout my internship were not the fault of my supervisor but of my supervisor's supervisor. Many of the negative behaviors and relationships I witnessed that impacted my feelings of the museum field were those of more upper positions at my institution and not between my supervisor and I.</p>
<p>My intention to pursue a career in the museum field would not have been altered by a negative experience (based on past experiences).</p>
<p>My supervisor was extremely understanding and supportive, but the work itself was often not sufficient to fill my time.</p>
<p>I had a difficult experience with my supervisor, he was unexpectedly on leave for the majority of my internship and upon his return he conducted a review that was solely based on hearsay and reflection from other parties rather than his own assessment of my performance as he was not present to observe my performance.</p>
<p>I already was enthusiastic about pursuing a museum career, so my supervisor helped confirm that rather than changing that</p>
<p>My internship experience was largely self-directed. My supervisor partially in name only as the exhibit concept came from myself and my partner. The supervisor was more of a facilitator: scheduling install, detailing limitations and requirements of the space, etc. We still ran things by our supervisor for approval, but the direction and "control" over the project was largely in our (mine and my partner's) control.</p>
<p>While I am speaking about a particularly positive experience here, I have also had very negative supervisor experiences that have turned me off the idea of certain work entirely. Not feeling heard or not getting any help from those in charge can feel very isolating. On the flip side, receiving accolades and workplace help can be very rewarding and make the whole experience worth it.</p>

Appendix C

Appreciative Inquiry open-ended responses

Question 6a

“Was there a high point in your internship experience—a time when you felt most engaged with the work, with others, and/or with the organization?”

Any time I got to meet people affiliated with the museum or meetings in which I could see the bigger picture of the work I was doing.
When I wrote my curatorial statements, my supervisor was super nice and highly complimented my work.
There was a task that I really enjoyed, where I was to digitally scan film slides for the institution. This was exciting to me because I got to use my networks to find someone who would let me use their scanner and then actually scan the photos. This was a clear task with a start and an end, and made me feel like I did something that will help the institution in the long run.
There is not a single high point but a series of them. I've gotten to do a lot of curation and overall exhibit design, as well as mentor and train others
It's been fairly consistent
I really enjoyed when I got to support exhibit openings and community programs, although this was not my actual internship which was in visitor experience. I realized that I am more interested in community programs as a result.
Learning and applying classroom organization skills
Being given responsibilities because my supervisor believed in my abilities and learned skills.
I was offered the opportunity to be the manager of the organization when my supervisor was on vacation, leaving me in charge of setting up events, and installing and de-installing exhibits.
Networking opportunities involving my direct supervisor and their network
The times I worked on cataloging with another intern. I both got to take on a supervisor role and was able to steer the direction of the projects we worked on together.
when I was working from home and given agency
When we were trusted and supported in creating and implementing our own curriculum
At first the project we proposed to our eventual supervisor was more of a personal project, but when she let us know the exhibit would potentially travel to other institutions, we were excited. It has been a high point to realize that our work is useful and will have an impact in multiple locations.

Question 6b

“Without being modest, what qualities do you value most in yourself and how did these qualities benefit the internship host organization?”

Intense skills in research and written marketing.
Hardworking, adaptable. Hardworking seems somewhat self-explanatory, but basically I did all the work I was assigned quickly. Adaptable: my supervisor would come back with revisions or things she needed in learning objectives or other things and I would have them back to her ASAP.
I believe I am a creative person, I chose this internship due to the original creative storytelling project. I hope my ideas helped them build a story for their website
Leadership, ability to get stuff done, and communication skills
The host site has no connection to a museum studies background (no staff, etc.). As someone currently in a museum studies program, I understand best practices in regard to exhibit design, tours, label writing, public programming, etc.
My ability to hear criticism and use it to grow, abilities that I bring with me to the field from past degrees and jobs (design, communication, management)
I think I am a strong researcher so that was a strength in doing research to support visitor experience projects, plans for interactives, lesson plans, etc.
Empathy and equitable inclusion with diverse audiences, particularly children, namely I was the only experienced and knowledgeable staff member when it came to working with children with physical or behavioral disabilities.
I listen to different perspectives of a situation and idea, and I offer my ideas to provide effective methods of public outreach when it is actually necessary.
My strength in academic writing determined the confidence my supervisor had in leaving me to self-manage
I am good at planning and organization, which were really helpful for a collections inventory project. I am also a talented researcher, which was helpful both in ensuring objects had the proper care and with checking the authenticity of objects with missing paperwork.
I have a lot of experience in my field and was able to help them out a lot
My problem-solving skills & adaptability were valuable as we encountered problems throughout the summer—my team & supervisors depended on me to get our campers through the day safely and effectively. I also value my knowledge and creativity in the subject matter of our curriculum, and I was a valuable asset as an educator.
I am a good organizer of time and resources; the development of the exhibit involved a lot of project management. I am good at staying on top of timelines and breaking down the steps necessary to reach an end deliverable, so this was helpful in completing a project that was mostly self-run.
Enthusiasm, creating new ideas, and people skills

Question 6c

“Were there any characteristics, practices, or values of the host organization that made an especially positive impact on your internship experience?”

A beautiful museum that is doing good work for its specific audience. I enjoyed everyone I worked with.
Literally no.
I felt valued and was given responsibility to do the most
Receptiveness to my ideas and willingness to help me grow them
I really appreciated my organization's values of DEAI and ethical storytelling.
The children, some of the teaching materials, and of course working with the animals.
Relationships with other individuals in the department
The environment of the organization was what made a positive impact on my internship experience.
Compensation and benefits, remote work, interfacing with multiple departments
Everyone at my host site were kind, enthusiastic, and generally created a positive work environment.
I really liked having a co-intern
The org has an emphasis on cooperation, mutual trust, and experiential learning that we carried out in our work and also that our supervisors practiced while training and managing us
The host organization was very open to ideas and actively trusted out experience and perspectives. It felt good to be respected in that way. Additionally, our supervisor was very friendly, and other staff at the organization were very friendly -- it felt like the same openness and respect was extended to everyone at the organization.
Positive environment, flexibility, helpful employees

Question 6d

“What is the primary way you feel your internship experience could’ve been better?”

Poorly delegated tasks with lacks of learning outcomes. I didn’t create anything or implement any ideas. I left just as another cog in the machine.
I don't really understand this question, but I think it could have been better if the had give me a succinct goal.
A clearer project. I was not interested in figuring something out based on my interests. I wanted to do a project that the institution wanted from the beginning.
I enjoyed my experience
A clear project and or deliverable/ guidance and priorities in allowing me to come up with said project.

It was hybrid and I wasn't able to spend as much time as I would've liked physically at the host institution
My internship would have been better if I could have had more meaningful work to do, more long-term projects or daily work that would have prevented gaps in having enough work to do.
A fair and objective employee review would have encouraged me to continue work with this organization and help them improve, but the mistreatment of myself and many clients/guests/students by management was unacceptable and caused me to cut ties.
More time
I don't believe there could be any way my experience could have been better.
Is it was a job
it was not very structured. they expected very little out of me.
There were so many elements of our job that even our extensive training couldn't completely cover—mainly, (& this is feedback my supervisors asked for & that I gave them) having more practice with or conversation about what could go wrong throughout the summer (e.g. strategies for common behavioral issues at camp, etc)
I would have liked to work a little more closely with the supervisor on the project. She was unavailable for a large chunk of the internship, which was not a problem for completing the work but would have been nice for networking purposes.