

GEMA/HS Intern/Fellowship Program

Internships and fellowships are an investment in the development of our future emergency management professionals. GEMA/HS makes every effort to provide internships that are challenging and of value to both the intern and the agency. There will be some semesters during which internships are not offered.

Types of Internships

While internships may be offered in any GEMA/HS Division or unit, they have historically been offered most often in the Director's Office, Planning Unit, Public Affairs Unit, Exercise Unit, State Operations Center and Homeland Security Division.

Duration of internships

Internships are one semester long. From time to time internships are extended up to one semester based on the needs of the agency, funding, and the availability of the student.

Fellowships

Director's Office Interns are eligible for consideration for a one year fellowship at the completion of an internship based on performance during the internship and need of the agency. This fellowship includes special research projects and can present the opportunity for joint publication with the director in industry publications. The fellowship includes the opportunity to learn about the work of all divisions of GEMA/HS and may include projects in any area of operation.

Academic Credit for Internships

GEMA/HS interns who wish to receive academic credit for their internship are responsible for contacting their university intern coordinator and ascertaining the school's requirements to award credit and for communicating these requirements to the HR Specialist before accepting an internship. GEMA/HS will make every effort to meet these requirements if communicated in a timely manner. Internships are not restricted to students earning academic credit.

Recruitment and Selection Process

Intern candidates are welcome to apply at any time by submitting a resume and cover letter to the GEMA/HS Human Resource Specialist. They may also apply in response to an announcement for a specific internship, through their school's intern program, or by submitting their resume to a representative of GEMA/HS at a career fair or other recruitment event on or off campus.

Resumes are kept on file for one semester after the initial application. Candidates wishing to be considered in succeeding semesters will be asked to submit an updated resume.

The GEMA/HS HR Specialist keeps in regular contact with universities in Georgia offering graduate and undergraduate degrees in the Emergency Management/Homeland Security field to encourage applicants from those programs. At this time they are:

- Georgia State University
- University of Georgia
- Savannah State University
- Georgia Institute of Technology

- Perimeter College
- Central Georgia Technical College
- Chattahoochee Technical College
- Gwinnett Technical College

When managers request interns, they submit a project outline to the GEMA/HR Specialist that details the substance of the assignment, number of hours required per week, and any special skills or competencies required by the nature of the proposed project. The GEMA/HS HR Specialist or the Deputy Director of Administration screens current applicants based on the position requirements and submits resumes for those candidates who best meet the preferred requirements for the position to the manager for review.

If few current candidates meet the preferred requirements for the position the HR Specialist may perform position specific recruitment. In these cases the position will be announced at the GEMA/HS website, through university career centers and specific university academic departments (chosen based on the nature of the internship), and any other avenues necessary to attract candidates with the requisite qualifications.

Intern interviews are arranged through the HR Specialist. Candidates interviewed but not selected receive a non-selection letter and may be contacted by the HR Specialist with feedback.

Intern candidates not chosen at GEMA/HS may be referred to other State of Georgia Agencies or the Governor's Intern Program.

Requirements

Candidates must have declared a major and be at least a rising junior at an accredited college or university, have at least a B average, and be available for at least 20 hours a week for the duration of the internship. Candidates are also eligible for internships the semester immediately following their graduation. Graduate students may intern at any time during their course of study. Graduates of Associate's Degree programs are eligible to apply the summer following their graduation. Candidates who have completed their degree but who are re-enrolled in certificate program will be considered on a case by case basis.

The Director may approve exceptions to these requirements.

A criminal background check and driver's history check are required before any intern placement can be finalized.

Preferred areas of study

The following degree fields are typical of the type or preparation expected for most GEMA/HS internships:

- Emergency or Disaster Management,
- Homeland Security,
- Public Administration with a concentration in Emergency Management or Disaster Policy
- Emergency Communications
- Journalism
- Web Development
- Geospatial Information Systems

From time to time there will be internships offered that are appropriate to other degree fields (e.g. accounting and finance, information technology, human resources).

Onboarding

Interns and fellows attend the regularly scheduled orientation session closest to their start date. Orientation is held at the Office of Planning and Budget and includes completion of new hire paperwork, overview of the employee handbook, and training on the sexual harassment policy, drug free workplace policy, rights and responsibilities under the FMLA, governor's ethics policy direct deposit policy, and other topics. In semesters where there are a large number of interns, a special on site orientation may be held.

Once they report to their assigned unit the supervisor is responsible for orienting them to GEMA policies, the GEMA intranet, unit procedures, and the particulars of their assignment. Supervisors should meet regularly with interns and fellows during their stay, particularly during the first weeks.

Desired qualifications

- Demonstrated interest in entering the Emergency Management profession that extends beyond their college coursework (e.g. related volunteer experience, prior work history in the field, FEMA training, involvement in local CERT program, prior internship experiences).
- At least intermediate level skill in the use of computer applications needed for the project (most often MS Word or Excel, but may also include GIS applications, desktop publishing applications)
- Ability to write professionally and self-edit
- Ability to work independently and as a part of a team
- Ability to analyze information
- Ability to conduct research

Individual internships may have position specific qualifications.

Compensation

Interns are compensated based on their educational level at the following rates of pay:

- Undergraduate Interns \$8.00/hour
- Interns having completed a Bachelor's Degree or possessing a special skill or qualification that is a requirement for the internship \$9.00/hour
- Graduate Interns \$10.00/hour

The Fellowship rate of pay is \$12.00/hour

In the rare circumstances where interns and fellows work more than 40 hours in a work week, they are paid at one and a half times their regularly hourly rate.

Interns and fellows are paid on the 15th and the last day of the month. Interns receive their first check on the second pay day after the start of the internship. Direct deposit is required.

Benefits

Interns and fellows are non-exempt hourly employees and are not eligible for leave, health insurance, or flexible benefits.

Interns and fellows must participate in the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (GDCCP). GDCCP is a post-tax state retirement savings plan administered by the Employees Retirement System. There is no Employer contribution to this plan. Because of the requirement that they participate in this plan, they do not contribute to social security nor does the employer contribute on their behalf.

Interns and fellows may:

- Join Georgia United Credit Union
- Establish a 457 deferred compensation plan
- Order transit cards through the agency
- Participate in any discount programs offered to state employees

Employment with GEMA/HS after an internship or fellowship

Interns and fellows are encouraged to apply and compete for jobs for which they meet at least the minimum qualifications listed in the job announcement but there is no guarantee of employment after an internship or fellowship. They must complete an official application and comply with any other requirements listed in the job announcement. Current GEMA/HS interns and fellows are considered internal candidates and will be considered in the same manner as other GEMA employees during the selection process. Once an internship or fellowship is completed the individual is considered an external candidate.

Evaluations

The intern's supervisor will meet with the intern periodically during the internship to provide feedback and direction and again prior to the end of the assignment for an evaluation of the intern's work over the course of the semester. The supervisor will complete any written evaluation required by the university for students receiving course credit for the internship and provide a copy to the GEMA HR Specialist for the intern's file.

Closing out an internship or fellowship

The GEMA HR specialist will meet with the intern or fellow prior to the last day of employment to get feedback.. The intern or fellow will bring the completed property return checklist to this meeting certifying that he/she has returned any agency property to the proper party.

The supervisor is responsible for providing a copy of any evaluation done for a student earning course credit to the HR Specialist for the file.

The last pay check will be directly deposited. At the conclusion of an internship or fellowship the individual may apply for refund of their GDCCP contributions. These contributions are not eligible for rollover to 401K or 457 deferred compensation plans. Application for refund is made online at the Employees Retirement System of Georgia website.

Before their last day they should be sure that their address in Employee Self Service is correct. This is the address where their W-2 will be sent the following January. The intern/fellow is responsible for notifying the Office of Planning and Budget of any address change before that time.