

THE REFLECTION JOURNAL

Reflection journals provide you with an opportunity to describe and to thoughtfully reflect upon what you are doing and learning about yourself, the work environment, professional responsibility, your concentration, and environmental science and policy. The reflection journal should be 5 pages, double-spaced, with approximately one page devoted to each section below:

At the beginning:

- Describe your internship - location, hours, and responsibilities.
- Describe your work assignments, your interactions with your supervisor and others in the work place, your achievements, your concerns, and any surprises, mistakes, or things that did not work as planned or expected.
- Discuss your fit and satisfaction with your internship. What do you need to do to enhance your internship performance and how will you do this? What are you learning about yourself? Provide and discuss specific examples.

Half-way through:

- Evaluate your work performance, and contributions as an intern so far. What do you see as your strengths? Are there areas you need help with? How have you responded to feedback & constructive criticism?
- Assess the on-site supervision of your internship. What are you learning about supervision that you will use - and perhaps not use - when you are in a supervisory role?
- If you have not already had a formal sit-down with your supervisor to discuss your performance so far, now would be a good time to ask for it. Checking in on your own performance is taken as a good sign – it shows that you are motivated to do well and want to do even better! It also gives you an opportunity to ask for help (if you need it) or for new/revised work assignments (if appropriate).

Towards the end of your internship:

- How has your experience compared to your original hopes and expectations?
- Have you achieved the personal / academic goals you had established for yourself? Which ones?
- What did you learn that you didn't expect?
- Explain how your learning in this internship intersects with your academic studies - past, present, and future.
- What was the highlight of your internship? Why?
- Write about a conflict or disappointment you experienced in your internship.
- What are the most important skills you developed and the most critical knowledge you gained during your internship?
- Evaluate (again) your work, performance, and contribution as an intern. What have you contributed to your internship/organization? Is there anything you could you have done to be more effective and responsible?

At the very end, summarize your experience:

- How has this experience informed your knowledge of environmental science and policy? How has this internship affected your intended career goals? Where do you plan to go from here, either academically or in terms of another practical experience, as a result of what you have learned? Other comments?
- Finally, remember to thank your co-workers and on-site supervisor! It takes time and effort to help new employees and part of the reward for a supervisor is knowing their help was appreciated.

At the conclusion of your internship:

- Write a short thank you note to your on-site supervisor – it takes time and effort to supervise interns; make sure your site supervisor knows how much you appreciate what you've gained from his/her efforts!