



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

... OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

... DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

UPDATED: 2 August 2024

The Rio Grande Valley Legislative Internship Program (VLIP) is an academic program of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley made possible with funding approved by Dr. Guy Bailey, Founding President of UTRGV. It offers opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to serve as interns in the Texas Legislature during regular legislative sessions.

Undergraduate students receive six (6) credit hours for participating in the VLIP, which provides “real world” experience through assisting legislative staff in administration, engaging in research and writing, and involvement in all facets of the governmental process. Graduate students receive academic credit hours as provided by their academic departments. The length of the internship is for the duration of the 140-day legislative session, and interns are responsible for their academic admissions and enrollment in the courses required for participation. Qualified undergraduate and graduate students interested in the political process and in giving back to the community are encouraged to apply for the internship.

During legislative sessions, VLIP interns will be placed in the offices of members of the Legislature representing the Rio Grande Valley. Interns are exposed to the legislative process of both chambers of the Texas Legislature. Their experiences often serve as the springboard for selecting public service careers. The hope is that many interns will continue to work in public service at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

**BE A UTRGV LEGISLATIVE INTERN AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL!**

**Live & Work in Austin While Earning College Credit**



# **RIO GRANDE VALLEY LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

## **SPRING 2025 SESSION PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### **THE PROGRAM**

The VLIP is a program of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley made possible with funding approved by Dr. Guy Bailey, Founding President of UTRGV, to provide undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to serve as interns in the Texas Legislature during regular legislative sessions. Interns are placed in the Capitol Offices (Austin, TX) of the Rio Grande Valley's legislative delegation.

### **ACADEMIC CREDIT**

Interns must be enrolled in The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and receive credit for their internship experience. *Interns are responsible for their academic admissions and enrollment in the necessary courses.* Undergraduate interns may earn six (6) hours of Political Science academic credit by fulfilling the requirements of their internship experience. Graduate students receive academic credit hours as specified by their academic department.

### **PROGRAM DETAILS**

The 89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature convenes January 14, 2025, and the session will adjourn on June 2, 2025; interns are required to attend orientation training prior to the beginning of the session. Financial support will be available to support the internship. Interns are responsible for housing, transportation, and other expenses.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Interns will be assigned to work in the offices of members of the Texas Legislature representing the Rio Grande Valley. The position requires the ability to perform and manage a number of diverse activities, including writing a variety of documents, analyzing proposals, performing research, and meeting with stakeholders. Integrity, good judgment, independent thinking, a high degree of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and professionalism are critical to the successful management of an intern's responsibilities. Special attention must be given to confidentiality and other protocols of the host office.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible students must:

- Be enrolled at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- Have completed at least 60 undergraduate hours, including 12 hours in POLS/GOVT courses from an accredited college or university
- Undergraduates must possess a 3.0 G.P.A. in POLS/GOVT courses and a 2.5 cumulative G.P.A. Eligible graduate students must be currently enrolled in a degree program at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and enroll in the appropriate course(s) in their academic departments.
- Demonstrate exceptional skills in writing, composition, and computer literacy.
- Flu Vaccination - Students participating in the Valley Legislative Internship Program will be required to receive their flu vaccination prior to beginning their internship, or provide an exemption.

## **STUDENT EMPLOYEE STATUS**

Students who are selected for VLIP will be hired by the university as Undergraduate Research Assistants. This status allows UTRGV to pay interns monthly (with applicable tax deduction) and provide health insurance.

## **STUDENT INTERN CODE OF CONDUCT**

As an intern working for an elected official, your role will encompass a range of responsibilities that require a high level of professionalism, ethical conduct, and discretion. This internship offers a unique opportunity to gain firsthand experience in the political and legislative process, contributing to the effective functioning of the elected official's office.

## **DISCRETION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Given the sensitive nature of the work involved in an elected official's office, interns are expected to exercise the utmost discretion and maintain strict confidentiality of all proprietary sensitive or personal information they encounter. This includes:

Handling Sensitive Information: Interns will have access to confidential information, including constituent casework, policy discussions, legislative documents, and strategic planning. It is imperative to handle such information with care and ensure it is not disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA): As part of the onboarding process, interns may be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement to formally acknowledge their obligation to maintain confidentiality of certain documents and information. This agreement serves to protect the integrity of the elected official's office and the privacy of constituents.

Professional Conduct: Interns must demonstrate a high level of professionalism in all interactions, both within the office and when representing the elected official in public. This includes adhering to office policies, respecting privacy, and upholding ethical standards.

Student Intern Code of Conduct: In accepting a VLIP placement students must acknowledge, understand, agree to comply with, and sign the Student Intern Code of Conduct.

## **THE APPLICATION**

Completed applications should be accompanied by:

- One writing sample of no more than five (5) pages.
- Two letters of recommendation electronically submitted to Jack Kaufold, collector of applications at the Career Center.
- A resume.
- One wallet-size photo submitted electronically.
- Graduate students must submit a letter from their academic department Chair specifying that they will receive academic credit applicable to their degree upon successful completion of the internship.
- FERPA Consent to Release Student Information Form (attached at the end of the application).

## **DEADLINE**

***The deadline for submitting the Application for the Spring 2025 legislative session is Friday, October 18, 2024.***

Completed applications must be submitted to Jack Kaufold, Internship Coordinator, Career Center, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at [jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu](mailto:jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu).

Representatives of the UTRGV Office of Governmental Relations and the Political Science Department will review the applications, conduct interviews, and select the interns.

# REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNS

The following conditions must exist to meet the qualifications for the VLIP:

1. Before being approved to start his or her experience, students must:
  - Complete and submit an official application
  - Submit a writing sample of no more than five (5) pages
  - Two letters of recommendation submitted electronically to Jack Kaufold, Career Center
  - Provide an unofficial transcript
  - Submit a resume
  - Provide a wallet-size photo (electronic copy)
  - **Undergraduate students** must have completed sixty (60) hours of post-secondary education, including 12 hours of Political Science/Government courses with a 3.0 G.P.A. by the end of the Fall 2024 semester.
  - **Graduate students** must submit verification of a cumulative 3.0 G.P.A. in graduate studies and a letter from their academic department Chair specifying that they will receive academic credit applicable to their degree program upon successful completion.
  - Complete FERPA Consent to Release Student Information Form (attached)
    - Used for Satisfactorily passing Criminal Background, Academic Disciplinary Record, and Good Academic Standing checks which will be performed for all students being considered for the program.
  - A check of each applicant's social media pages will also be performed and may lead to additional scrutiny.
  - Provide proof of Flu vaccination or exemption.
2. The internship must cover the duration of the legislative session (January 14, 2025, to June 2, 2025) in order for the intern to receive the semester credit hours for which he/she is enrolled.
3. The intern must report daily to his/her assigned office in a timely manner and carry out his/her responsibilities according to instructions provided by the assigned supervisor(s).
4. The intern must perform other assigned projects germane to his/her experiential learning, including writing reports, conducting research, assisting with program development and logistical planning, and attending lectures and symposiums.
5. During the internship, the intern must be available for at least one on-site evaluation.
6. The intern must dress according to the assigned office policy for the duration of the internship.
7. The intern's conduct must be exemplary. Unprofessional behavior will be reason for dismissal.
8. The intern must sign and date the VLIP Agreement and the student Intern Code of Conduct provided by UTRGV.
9. Interns will not be allowed to leave the program early. Interns who fail to keep their commitment to the program may face sanctions ranging from loss of academic credit to liability for the full sum of financial assistance.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### 2025 APPLICATION

(Please Type)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits of SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ DL# \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Current): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Address (Permanent): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

University E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Phone) (Relationship)

Current Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Undergraduates:**

Political Science/Government Courses Completed:

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G.P.A. in POLS/GOVT Courses: \_\_\_\_\_

Cumulative G.P.A.: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**For graduate students:**

Current Cumulative G.P.A.: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate degree and Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate G.P.A.: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Enrollment Status: ☐ Full Time      ☐ Part Time      Projected Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: ☐ Senior      ☐ Junior      ☐ Graduate

Indicate Financial Aid (if any):      ☐ Pell Grant      ☐ Student Loan      ☐ Scholarship      ☐ Work-Study

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

1. How would you describe your level of political interest? (Check one and explain using the space below.)  
☐ Very High                      ☐ High                      ☐ Moderate
  
2. Have you ever worked in a political campaign or been involved in any other governmental or political activity? If yes, please explain in the space below:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How would The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Legislative Internship complement your current academic interests and your future career goals?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you have particular skills which you have developed/mastered that will be beneficial to a legislative office, such as word processing, research, developing data bases, written and oral communication, non-English language proficiency, etc.?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Please explain why you are interested in The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Legislative Internship. (Attach additional sheets.)



6. What course work have you completed that you think is relevant to a legislative internship?
7. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, please explain. **(NOTE: Criminal background checks will be performed for all students being considered for the program prior to the start of the program.)**
8. If you are assigned to the office of a legislator who identifies with a political party that is not yours, would you be able to perform duties as assigned by your supervisor and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner in a political environment? Please discuss.
9. If I am selected, I authorize release of my official transcript and other necessary supporting documentation.

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(signature)

Universities and colleges I have attended:

College or University	Dates Attended	Completed Hours	Graduated (Yes/No)	Degree Received

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

In order to complete the application, please include the following:

- A writing sample of no more than five (5) pages (This may be a current issue essay, report or research paper). It should be typed and properly cited if the sample is a research paper.
- Two letters of recommendation sent electronically to Jack Kaufold, Career Center
- Unofficial transcript
- A resume
- Wallet-size photo (Electronic copy to accompany application)
- Graduate students: Letter from academic department Chair specifying that student will receive academic credit applicable to their degree program upon successful completion of the internship.
- Proof of Flu vaccination or exemption

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Jack Kaufold**  
**Internship Program Manager**  
**Career Center**  
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
1201 West University Drive  
Edinburg, Texas 78539  
Phone: (956) 665-2246  
E-Mail: [jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu](mailto:jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu)

### **COMPLETED APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MAILED ELECTRONICALLY TO:**

Jack Kaufold at [jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu](mailto:jack.kaufold@utrgv.edu).

**Deadline for Submitting Application for Spring 2025 Legislative Session:**

**Friday, October 18, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.**