



Office of the State Demographer

Summer 2013

Please give a brief description of your duties.	What value do you feel you added to the organization during your internship?	Did this internship meet your expectations? Why or why not?
<p>As an intern, I was involved in an individual research project relating the public hospital inpatient discharge data in Texas. I designed a statistical model that estimates relative risks of asthma hospitalization on a county level, using spatial and non-spatial random effects. This model was implemented by Bayesian method and a methodology report was produced as a final result. I was in charge of the whole process of this project.</p>	<p>I was hired to assist a research project so that this office tries a new statistical analysis, especially for the Bayesian method. Although I could not get involved in any ongoing project, I provided an example of Bayesian modeling which can be applied on demographic issues as well.</p>	<p>Frankly speaking, this internship did not meet my expectations. Although the job title is research scientist assistant, interns were not assigned to any team projects and there was no chance to learn from senior researchers. Work pressure was heavy due to high responsibilities with insufficient feedbacks. Information was hardly provided in advance unless requested.</p>
Would you recommend this internship to another student? Why or why not?	If you could change one thing about your internship experience, what would it be and why?	Please provide any additional information regarding your internship that you feel students should know.
<p>I would not recommend this internship in general. Since this office is very small (only 1 full-time employee works at office), interns hardly have chances to meet mentors in their research fields. Sufficient guidance or feedback also does not provided effectively. It allows much flexible with respect to what interns do for projects, but less in other things. Therefore, this internship would be good for those who are already confident in research and look for a high degree of autonomy, not for those who want to learn and experience a work through internship. In addition, I cannot recommend because there were several important administrative mistakes during internship. For example, they have lost one intern's employment packet submitted, and associated me with different UT EID for payroll. Since this office belongs to University of Texas at San Antonio, administrative errors had to be resolved by phone, email or fax, which is inefficient and takes more time.</p>	<p>The topic for my project changed one time during the internship period. Since I had to spend several weeks on waiting for the director's decision, there were considerable delays in my progress. If I could change one thing about my internship experience, it would be this.</p>	<p>Firstly, students should know that Office of the State Demographer is housed and budgeted through University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). It is located in a government building in Austin, but all employees including interns belong to the small research group, IDSER, in UTSA. I couldn't find this fact when I was applying for the internship. Secondly, this office has only two employees as fulltime. One is the director, or the state demographer, and the other is the legislative liason who usually works at this office. She was also the interns' supervisor. Since the director never visited the office this summer, we spent most of time only with her. Lastly, research interest of this office heavily lies on Public Policy or Demography. IDSER also belongs to College of Public Policy, UTSA. Almost all employees in this office and IDSER have degrees from Public Policy rather than other fields.</p>