University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Department of Communication Internship Program

ELIGIBILITY & POLICIES FOR PROVIDERS

The purpose of this document is to formalize the eligibility requirements and policies regarding the granting of Communication credit in association with an internship. These requirements and policies reflect the standards set by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Internships and Learning

According to NACE, an internship "is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent." [1]

Therefore, an internship must contribute to the intellectual development of the student to merit an award of academic credit. An internship that warrants credit is composed of a relationship among a student, designated supervisory personnel from the provider, and sponsoring Departmental faculty. Sponsoring faculty members design assignments that apply Communication learning to the experiences and observations gained during the internship. These assignments allow students to reflect on their internship work and evaluate their own learning.

Some key outcomes of academic internships include:

- an understanding of the relationship between Communication theories and observation of communication interaction in the workplace
- development of professional workplace behavior
- improved communication skills
- acquisition of new "hard" skills
- greater self-awareness of skills, abilities, and potential
- leadership development
- improved time management skills
- development of a professional network
- personal and career development

[1] NACE. "Position Statement: U.S. Internships." NACEweb.org, July 2011; revised August 2018. https://www.naceweb.org/about-us/advocacy/position-statements/position-statement-us-internships/

Criteria for an experience to be defined as an internship

To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional, in-person internship or one conducted remotely—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the NACE definition and the Department of Communication, all the following criteria must be met:

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for the application of knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals. [2]

In addition to the NACE criteria, the Department of Communication stipulates that an internship must meet the following qualifications to be approved for academic credit:

- Directly applicable to the Communication major.
- Sufficiently challenging with meaningful work.
- Fitting for an undergraduate student who has not yet entered the workforce.
- In line with the student's educational and/or career interests.
- Offered by an established organization with a strong, verifiable reputation and positive feedback as provided by previous interns.
- Internships may be paid or unpaid, although we encourage paid opportunities wherever possible.
- Campus "brand ambassadorships" or similar arrangements are **not** eligible for credit.
- All internship providers must comply with the non-discrimination provisions of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

[2] Ibid.

"Based on the commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity, all decisions involving students are based on individual merit. It is the policy of the University of Illinois not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a disabled veteran of the Vietnam era and to comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations."

- To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, students may not be supervised or assigned a grade by a parent or member of his or her immediate or extended family. A non-relative must be designated as a neutral, unbiased supervisor to guide the work of the student and assign a grade at the end of the semester.
- Interns may not be supervised or assigned a grade by an undergraduate or graduate student.

Location eligibility

During Fall and Spring semesters, we encourage students to find internships on campus or in the Urbana-Champaign community. This is to prevent students from driving long distances for an internship; regardless, it is the student's choice. During the Summer, students may work anywhere in the United States. Unfortunately, the Department cannot approve credit for non-US based internships because of federal law.

Remote internships qualify for credit as long as they meet all the requirements stated above. The Internship Program Director will ask for detailed information from the provider on how the remote arrangement will work.

Internship Course Information

The following information is provided as a courtesy to potential providers. More details will be communicated when a student intern is secured.

Enrollment

Students enrolling for academic credit associated with an internship will enroll in the Communication Internship course (CMN 304), which awards variable credit from one to three credit hours per term (determined by Internship Program Director), repeatable up to six hours total, and assigned a letter grade. Students cannot repeat the same internship for more than one semester of CMN 304 credit.

Length and start /end dates of internship

The student must begin the internship at the start of the semester, within the first or second

week. Internships scheduled to begin past the third week of the semester will not qualify for credit. Internships must also extend the full length of the semester or within one week of its ending.

Grading

The final grade for the Communication Internship course is based 50% on the letter grade assigned by the employer and 50% on the letter grade earned for academic coursework. The numerical equivalent of letter grades is based on the University grading scale: https://registrar.illinois.edu/explanation-of-grades.

The student must pass **both** the academic coursework **and** the internship with a D- or higher to earn credit for the entire course. A "F" in either the coursework or for internship performance will result in an "F" for the course.

Termination

The student must fully complete the internship hours and dates as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement. Not fulfilling the agreement schedule will result in an "F" for CMN 304.

A student may drop the Internship course in accordance with the policies of the university governing adding or dropping of courses. The student must notify the Internship Program Director or other faculty sponsor of their intention to do so. They must also notify their site supervisor that they will no longer be pursuing academic credit.

An internship site may terminate an internship for any lawful reason. Upon termination, the site must provide promptly to the student and to the Internship Program Director a written statement of the reasons for the termination. If the termination of the internship is in no way related to the student's performance, and the student wishes to continue earning credit hours, the student and the Internship Program Director will agree on other arrangements for completion of academic work. If the termination of the internship is related to the student's performance, such as poor work or unethical or illegal behaviors, the student will receive a failing grade for the course.

If a student violates the rules or policies set by the Internship Program Director or faculty sponsor at the beginning of the program, including acts of academic dishonesty, a failing grade will be assigned and any other disciplinary measures appropriate to the situation will be pursued.

Responsibilities of the Internship Provider

At the outset of the Internship period, the Internship Supervisor must agree to the following responsibilities and policies to ensure a productive, lawful, and fair internship experience for

the student. The student should be aware of these stipulations upon entering an internship arrangement.

1) The internship provider must provide the work space, tools, equipment, training, and other resources necessary for the student to perform tasks, execute goals, and conduct learning as appropriate.

2) All internship providers must comply with the non-discrimination provisions of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

   "Based on the commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity, all decisions involving students are based on individual merit. It is the policy of the University of Illinois not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a disabled veteran of the Vietnam era and to comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations."

3) To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, students may not be supervised or assigned a grade by a parent or member of his or her immediate or extended family. A non-relative must be designated as a neutral, unbiased supervisor to guide the work of the student and assign a grade at the end of the semester.

4) Interns may not be supervised or assigned a grade by an undergraduate or graduate student.

5) A majority of the work produced by students for an internship provider must be unclassified and available for inspection or review by the faculty supervisor and as a source for the student's academic work. In cases of confidentiality concerns, the internship supervisor must agree to work with the student and the Internship Program Director to determine how to document the student's work and accomplishments for final grading.

6) The provider must assure the Internship Program Director that the student intern will receive professional-level training and the opportunity to perform substantive tasks that can inform his or her academic work. Exclusively clerical/administrative work is not eligible for academic credit; nor is work that can be completed at an "ordinary" part-time job such as retail.

7) The supervisor must cooperate with the student intern in preparing the Memorandum of Agreement, which is a requirement of the student's course.

8) The supervisor must allow the instructor of record for the internship course to conduct a site visit if it can be arranged at a convenient time for all parties.

9) The supervisor must agree to provide mid-semester (Fall and Spring only) and end-of-semester evaluations of the student intern's performance on the job.

10) The supervisor must agree to be available to the student intern to provide assistance in the case of on-the-job conflicts or other issues.

11) Participating internship providers will be evaluated by the intern. The Internship Program Director will maintain a file of these evaluations.