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Commonwealth College

DEFINITION OF AN ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP

A Commonwealth College academic internship combines an on-site supervised work experience with a structured academic learning plan for which a student earns academic credit. An internship is a work-based learning experience in a for-profit or non-profit setting. Some academic programs require an internship, while others offer students the option of scheduling an elective internship.

The student’s substantive work and responsibilities within the work organization create a professional experience that supports academic and career goals. The faculty internship instructor and work-site supervisor collaborate to promote the student’s critical thinking, observation, and reflection that foster intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

The work-site organization determines if monetary compensation is available for the internship. The length of the internship varies depending upon academic and work-site minimum requirements. Assuming a 15-week semester, one credit hour requires 3 to 4 hours per week of work-site activity and one hour of academic work such as journal writing, related research, or special projects.

An internship offers a student the opportunity to apply academic knowledge in world-of-work situations, to explore a career choice, and to begin to establish a network of professional contacts. The pre-internship preparation course that is required by the major must be completed prior to registering for any internship credits.

For more information on careers and definitions of other experiential learning opportunities visit the following websites:
http://www.sa.psu.edu/career/intern.html
http://www.sa.psu.edu/career/
http://www.nsee.org/
Commonwealth College

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS

Successful delivery of an academic internship occurs when an effective partnership is established among the key constituents: student, faculty internship instructor, work-site supervisor, Director of Academic Affairs (DAA), College Program Head (CPH), Career Services professional, and academic advisor. The roles that each one plays in the academic internship experience follow:

STUDENT:

• Register for the pre-internship course during the semester preceding the planned registration for the academic internship in compliance with course prerequisites.
• With the assistance of the faculty internship instructor, the academic adviser, and the Career Services professional, investigate, identify, and secure an internship experience that best meets educational and personal goals while adhering to Commonwealth College guidelines, major prerequisites, and program requirements.
• Determine learning opportunities and educational objectives available through the internship and formulate your action plan with the assistance of the faculty internship instructor.
• Obtain liability insurance if required.
• Adhere to professional and ethical standards as approved and required by the work-site and professional association.

FACULTY INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR:

• Ensure that there is sufficient academic activity to merit the awarding of credit.
• Determine the appropriateness of a specific internship experience in the context of the student’s academic major and career goals.
• Give final approval for internship.
• Track student progress throughout the semester.
• Teach pre-internship course as required by curriculum if possible.
• Assist student in the identification of internship opportunities, although ultimate responsibility for locating a site resides with the individual student.
• Maintain records of internship opportunities to enable front-end exploration by the student.
• Collaborate with Career Services professional in an effort to have on hand educational resources that might be helpful the student engaged in the internship experience.
• Schedule a personal or electronic contact with work-site supervisor to establish a working relationship that will benefit the student.
• Ensure that prerequisites are satisfied by the student prior to scheduling the internship course.
• Collaborate with Career Services professional and Commonwealth College Program Head throughout the duration of the internship experience.
• Build strong work-site relationships.
• Coordinate necessary paperwork throughout the internship period including preparation of learning agreements and completion of preliminary, mid-semester and final evaluations.
• After consultation with work-site supervisor, determine grading rubric.
• Evaluate student performance, assign grade, and post it.
WORK-SITE SUPERVISOR/COMPANY OR AGENCY:

- Provide a professional environment conducive to student learning.
- Set goals for internship experience as supported by organizational leadership.
- Collaborate with faculty internship instructor to establish specific learning objectives; identify outcomes or expected products.
- Participate in the selection of student interns.
- Help student build professional work-site relationships.
- Supervise the student throughout the internship experience at the work-site.
- Offer an orientation program and supply necessary resources to support student success.
- Provide supervision, guidance, and feedback.
- Report immediately to the faculty internship instructor any student problem that develops.
- Work directly with the faculty internship instructor to evaluate the student performance, possibly three times: preliminarily during the first few weeks, at a mid-point in the internship experience, and at the end of the experience.
- Sign *University Internship Affiliation Agreements* as appropriate.

DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (DAA) AND COLLEGE PROGRAM HEAD (CPH):

- Keep abreast of the faculty internship instructor’s involvement with internships.
- Assist student in the identification of internship opportunities, although ultimate responsibility for locating a site resides with the individual student.
- Provide support for faculty internship instructor and assist with the management of the internship process.
- Enable appropriate scheduling of internship preparation course.
- Administer *University Affiliation Agreement* in accordance with University policy.

CAREER SERVICES PROFESSIONAL:

- Assist student in the identification of internship opportunities, although ultimate responsibility for locating a site resides with the individual student.
- On a limited basis and at the invitation of the faculty internship instructor, serve as a guest speaker in class on topics related to the internship search.
- Educate student on the internship search including researching potential sites and developing cover letters, resumes and interview skills.
- Promote job and career information fairs to students.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR:

- Continue to maintain contact with student.
- Informally assist student in identification of internship opportunities and procedures.
- Informally keep abreast of student’s internship progress.
- Prior to having the student submit the *Student Internship Application Form*, check to be sure that all course prerequisites have been satisfied.
Please attach a brief (one-page) description of the internship opportunity. You may want to include:

1. **Company/Organization Description**: a three- or four-sentence description of your organization, its products and services, and market scope (e.g., local, regional, national, international).
2. **Internship Description**: describe the primary responsibilities and duties of the intern; location; travel requirements; office/work space available; and compensation.
3. **Benefits for the Student**: what skills, perspectives, contacts, or other benefits can the student-intern expect to derive from the experience?
4. **Specific Expectations**: what final set of “deliverables” you expect to see?
5. **Skills**: what special skills must the student have in order to be competitive for and successful throughout the experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship Status</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>When Available (check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For-Credit</td>
<td>Per Hour</td>
<td>Fall semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>Spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Credit</td>
<td>Non available</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational Plan & Learning Agreement

Semester & Year: ____________________
Course Number: ____________________
Number of Credits: ____________________

Student: ____________________
Address During Internship: ____________________
Phone: ___________ E-mail: ___________

Internship Title: ____________________
Start Date: ____________________

Work Site: ____________________
Address: ____________________

Work-Site Supervisor: ____________________
Supervisor’s Title: ____________________
Phone: ___________ E-mail: ___________

Faculty Internship Instructor: ____________________
PSU Division/Program: ____________________
Phone: ___________ E-mail: ___________

Components:
1. Suggested Bibliography
2. Academic Objectives & Learning Methods
3. Methods of Evaluation and Timeline
4. Signatures

NOTE: This Agreement must be completed and signed by all parties (student, faculty internship instructor, work-site supervisor), and returned to the faculty internship instructor prior to commencing the internship.
To support the quality of the internship experience, please complete and return all evaluations to the faculty internship instructor (__________________________) by the dates indicated below.

**Evaluation Forms**

1. Preliminary Evaluation of Student Intern
2. Mid-Semester Evaluation of Student Intern
3. Final Evaluation of Student Intern

**Due Date**

End of the second week of the internship.  
Mid-Semester of the internship.  
Within one week of the conclusion of the internship.

Thank you for your support of Penn State experiential education!

Please contact the faculty internship instructor with any questions.

Telephone: ___________________
Fax: _______________________
E-mail: ____________________
Work-Site Supervisor’s
Preliminary Evaluation

This evaluation will alert us to any aspect of the experience to date that warrants immediate attention.

Student Name: __________________________________________
Internship Site Organization: __________________________________
Internship Site Supervisor: __________________________________
Supervisor: __________________________________________

1. The internship (check one) ______ is ______ is not ______ working well.
2. In the space below, please comment on the internship experience to date:
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Supervisor’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Please complete and return to the faculty internship instructor by the end of the second week of the internship to:
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Phone: _______________ E-mail: __________
Work-Site Supervisor

Mid-Semester Evaluation

Student Name: __________________________

Circle One: Fall Spring Summer Year: __________________________

Internship Organization: __________________________

Internship Site Supervisor: __________________________

Title/Position: __________________________

Location (City, State): __________________________

Instructions:

• The immediate supervisor should evaluate the student objectively. Serious, careful assessment of the intern will enable all parties—your organization, the student intern, and Penn State—to gain the most from the experience.

• The student and his/her supervisor should review this form together. The supervisor should sign the form on the reverse side.

• Please return the original copy of this form to the Academic Internship Office by the due date. Keep a photocopy for your records.

1. Please respond to the following statements.

A. The student-intern reports to work as scheduled and on-time. ______ Yes ______ No

B. Dress and appearance of the student-intern are appropriate. ______ Yes ______ No

2. Please rate the student’s performance in the following areas, using the numerical scale below. If you mark 1 or 2 for any item, please elaborate on the back of this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Competency</th>
<th>5 Exceptional</th>
<th>4 Commendable</th>
<th>3 Fair</th>
<th>2 Uncomplimentary</th>
<th>1 Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Consistently exceeds expectations</td>
<td>Sometimes exceeds expectations</td>
<td>Meets expectations</td>
<td>Rarely meets expectations</td>
<td>Does not meet expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skills and Competencies

1. Communicates effectively in writing
2. Demonstrates effective oral communication skills
3. Asks pertinent and purposeful questions.
4. Handles multiple priorities efficiently and effectively
5. Maintains responsibility for a task/project until completion
6. Uses good judgment when developing and evaluating alternatives
7. Can initiate and convey ideas and gain support from others
8. Adapts well to change
9. Exhibits a positive and professional attitude
10. Shows initiative; is self-directed when appropriate
11. Quality of output/product
12. Overall performance

Please remember to sign this evaluation once it is completed.
3. What improvements could be made by the intern to enhance his/her employment opportunities?

Please add additional observations on any item from the previous page. Highlighting specific strengths or potential strengths of the intern in addition to notable professional shortcomings will be especially helpful.

Work-Site Supervisor’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________

Please discuss the student’s strengths and weaknesses with him/her in conjunction with this review.

Please complete and return to the faculty internship instructor by mid-semester of the internship to:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Phone: _______________ Email: __________
Penn State ___________________________  Work-Site Supervisor

Final Evaluation

Student Name: ___________________________

Circle One:  Fall  Spring  Summer  Year: ___________________________

Internship Organization: ___________________________

Internship Site Supervisor: ___________________________

Title/ Position: ___________________________

Location (City, State): ___________________________

Instructions:
• The immediate supervisor should evaluate the student honestly and objectively.
• Please sign the form on the reverse side.
• Please return the original copy of this form to the Academic Internship Office as soon as possible after the conclusion of the internship. Keep a photocopy for your records.

1. Please respond to the following statements.

A. The student-intern reports to work as scheduled and on-time. _____ Yes _____ No

B. Dress and appearance of the student-intern are appropriate. _____ Yes _____ No

2. Please rate the interns performance in the following areas, using the numerical scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
<th>Consistently exceeded expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Commandable</td>
<td>Sometimes exceeded expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Met expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uncomplimentary</td>
<td>Rarely met expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Did not meet expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 4 3 2 1 N/A

A. Work Habits
1. Exhibits a positive and professional attitude
2. Effectively handles routine problems and/or sees routine tasks through to their conclusion.
3. Effectively manages his/her time

B. Ability/ Willingness to Learn
1. Shows willingness to learn/be taught by supervising personnel
2. Asks pertinent and purposeful questions
3. Seeks out and utilizes appropriate resources
4. Accepts responsibility for mistakes and learns from experiences

C. Reading/ Writing/ Computation Skills
1. Comprehends and follows written materials/instructions
2. Communicates ideas and concepts clearly in writing
3. Uses mathematical procedures and/or computer applications appropriate to the job

D. Listening & Oral Communication Skills
1. Listens to others in an active and attentive manner
2. Demonstrates effective verbal communication skills in one-on-one settings
3. Demonstrates effective verbal communication skills in group settings

Please remember to sign this evaluation once it is completed.
Exceptional | Consistently exceeded expectations  
Commendable | Sometimes exceeded expectations  
Fair | Met expectations  
Uncomplimentary | Rarely met expectations  
Unsatisfactory | Did not meet expectations

E. **Creative Thinking & Problem Solving**
1. Breaks down complex tasks/problems into manageable pieces
2. Incorporates a holistic perspective in addressing or managing problems
3. Demonstrates initiative in defining and solving non-routine problems

F. **Professionalism/ Potential for Growth & Advancement**
1. Exhibits a self-motivated approach to work
2. Demonstrates ability to set appropriate priorities/goals
3. Takes the initiative is self-directed when appropriate

G. **Teamwork/ Interaction with Colleagues**
1. Establishes effective working relationships with co-workers
2. Works within appropriate authority and decision-making channels
3. Accepts criticism in a professional and constructive manner
4. Shows willingness to accept responsibility for his/her role in a problem or conflict situation
5. Demonstrates professionalism in addressing conflicts

H. **Character Attributes**
1. Brings a sense of values and integrity to the job
2. Behaves in an ethical manner
3. Respects the diversity (religious/cultural/ethnic) of co-workers

I. **Profession or Position-Specific Skills**
Please note any skills or competencies that are important to the profession that have not been listed, and assess the intern accordingly.
1. 
2. 

J. **Overall Performance**

3. Comments: Please attach a separate sheet to address the following questions.
A. What are the student's strongest assets?
B. What qualities and characteristics should the student strive to improve?
C. Other observations/comments (please elaborate on any item above):

Evaluator’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Please complete and return this form to the faculty internship instructor within one week of the conclusion of the internship to:
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
Phone: ___________________ E-Mail: ___________

- Thank You -