COMMUNICATION INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES
GAINING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

A Communication internship at the College of Charleston provides you with valuable exposure to the working world and increases your chances for employment. The primary goals of a field internship are (1) to acquire first-hand knowledge about the field of work; (2) to explore new professional activities; (3) to apply conceptual knowledge and skills to the work environment; (4) to experience the problems and successes of efficiently and effectively communicating within a complex organization; and (5) to “Learn by doing.”

Employers view internship experience as valuable, particularly if you do a good job and acquire a strong letter of recommendation from the organization. Some students are hired by the company with which they interned.

While on an internship, you will be treated as an apprentice. You will work regular hours on the job. You will be assigned tasks and be allowed to observe what goes on at the organization. Of course, you are expected to dress and behave in a professional manner and to complete all the projects and other work you are assigned.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS*

To be eligible to earn credit for COMM 495: The Field Internship, you must:

- Be a Junior or Senior
- Have completed 15 hours of your major coursework
- If minoring in Communication, have completed at least 9 hours of minor coursework in residence.
- Have a minimum 2.5 GPA in your major or minor, and a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA
- Submit the internship agreement and accompanying documentation by the deadlines specified by the Department of Communication.

*All internships are approved or denied at the discretion of the internship director.

DEADLINE
To register for an internship, students must have the paperwork finalized and signed by Dr. Stone by the stated deadline each semester. Students who hope to register after this date must have
written approval from the department chair. Please help us (and yourselves) by completing all the internship paperwork before the deadline.

**SUPERVISION AND COURSE CREDIT**

Your **faculty internship director** counsels you on your work and determines your final grade. Dr. Kirk Stone, one of the original faculty members for the Department of Communication, serves as Director of the Department of Communication Internship Program. Dr. Stone will be the supervising professor for all COMM 495 internships throughout the academic year, including the summer sessions.

While interning with an organization, you usually will be under the supervision of one person, known as your **field supervisor**.

You may earn from one to three credits for an internship, but no more than three credits total may be earned for all internships. The number of credits you may earn is determined by you and the internship director.

You will be required to complete your work over multiple weeks, as negotiated by you with the field supervisor and the internship director:

- To earn one (1) credit hour, you must complete a **minimum** of 40 hours of supervised work.
- To earn two (2) credit hours, you must complete a **minimum** of 80 hours of supervised work.
- To earn three (3) credit hours, you must complete a **minimum** of 120 hours of supervised work.

The work-hour totals noted here are the minimum requirements of the Department of Communication. Many internship providers will require much more than the minimum hour total as a condition of agreeing to the internship. In completing the internship agreement, you should be certain that you and the field supervisor agree *in writing* on the number of hours to be completed in order to complete the internship.

Credit for the Capstone requirement will only be awarded for a single three hour internship.

**Your Faculty Internship Director**

Your faculty internship director is responsible for ensuring that your internship provides you with a valuable educational experience. You should provide your internship director with regular reports about what you are learning through the internship, the particulars of your job responsibilities, and any problems you are encountering. The faculty internship director can intervene if you have problems with the organization. Your director needs feedback from you not only to keep your internship on track academically, but also to develop future internships for other students. Your director will establish a specific number of times to make contact with you and your field supervisor to ensure that all is going well.
Keeping the Internship on Track
The internship agreement is signed by you, your field supervisor and the director of the Communication internship program prior to your starting the internship. It will stipulate the nature of the work to be completed and any special conditions involved. The terms of this agreement should be carried out. The agreement represents a working document to which all four relevant parties have consented. You must also complete an application for individual enrollment signed by you, the Internship Coordinator and the Associate Chair of the department.

What to Do If Problems Develop
Problems could develop during your internship. The organization may cancel the project associated with your internship, your field supervisor may leave or be reassigned, or the timing of your project may get off schedule for reasons not under your control. So if problems develop--including sexual harassment, inappropriate assignments, working you too many hours, ignoring you – you need to notify your faculty internship director immediately so that the problems can be worked out. Otherwise, the consequences may include an incomplete internship and poor relations with the organization.

GRADING
Your final grade for the internship is assigned by the faculty internship director and is based on the following items.

1. Portfolio
2. Final paper
3. Journal
4. Field supervisor’s evaluation of your work (Organizational Evaluation)*
5. Student Evaluation*

Both content and the quality of composition will be evaluated for any written work you provide in support of your work on the internship.

* Both the Organizational and Student Evaluations are available on the Department’s website under “Internships.”

Keeping an Internship Journal
No matter what the specific type of internship activity, the key focus of your journal entries should be on the communication aspects of your assignment. These entries should be made each day you work in the organization. The journal will allow you to look back and see how your attitudes and knowledge developed over the semester and how communication theory and principles fit into your assignment. This must be typed and double spaced.

Since one of the primary goals of internship activities is to apply theory to practical contexts, the journal provides evidence on a daily basis that this, in fact, has taken place. It also allows you to integrate all of the observations and theoretical principles into your analysis at the completion of the internship.
**Portfolio**
This is proof of your work and efforts during the internship, such as:
- News clippings
- Letters
- Television/radio scripts
- Video tapes/DVD recordings
- Photographs
- Promotional packets
- Press releases
- Articles
- Television/radio promotions
- Brochures
- Press kits
- Newsletters
- Web site development

These materials should be kept in three-ring binder and be as neat and professional as possible. The portfolio should be designed so that you can use it during future employment interviews.

**10-Page Paper**
The intent of the final report is to reflect on the internship and to consider what you have derived from the experience. Your report will address the following areas:
- Describe your initial contact with the organization – the interview and any materials you submitted to them.
- Describe your job responsibilities in the internship and any projects you developed.
- Describe the goals and objectives of the agency and the department for which you worked.
- Develop an organizational chart for the agency and the department in which you worked and
- Indicate where you fit into the system.
- In what ways did your knowledge of communication principles help you accomplish the tasks associated with your internship duties?
- Was the job associated with the internship what you expected it to be? Why or why not?
- Have any of your assumptions about the working world changed as a result of your internship experience? If so, how?
- What did you learn about yourself through this internship?
- Did you learn any new technical skills as a result of your internship? If so, what were they?
- What would you tell other students who are about to undertake such an experience in order to maximize their participation in the program?
- What did you learn throughout the internship about the relationship between communication theories and practical experience? In what ways do they interrelate and in what ways do they fail to do so?
MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

An internship provides you with a unique opportunity to apply theories to reality, to develop practical skills, and to make valuable professional contacts. Therefore, you should make every effort to maximize the experience. There are a number of ways to do this:

- You should ask many questions. Being inquisitive without being a pest will lead to greater breadth of information about organizational operations, some of which will be particular to the agency involved and some of which will apply to organizations of a similar nature.
- You should be a self-starter or self-motivator. By initiating projects, you will become more valuable to the organization and, in turn, create more knowledge. Of course, you need to gain the organization’s approval before you start such projects.
- You should seek the opportunity to sit in on meetings. Observation of interactions will be invaluable in learning about organizational life and technical details. The organization, however, may limit this activity or not allow it because of policy, the nature of the meetings involved, or the wishes of conference participants.
- You should move around the organization to observe the operations of various departments, if possible. Some internship assignments require the student to shift from office to office to complete various tasks. In any case, these observations allow you to see how interdependent parts of the organization work together.
- You should build respect among people in the organization for your willingness to work. This may cause people to seek you out for assignments, to depend on you for task completion, and to expose you to a greater variety of situations.
- You should be able to handle criticism constructively. An internship provides you the opportunity to make mistakes before entering full-time employment. Viewed productively, you will learn from it and change your attitudes and behaviors accordingly.
- You should recognize the value of experience and learn from others. Internship experience provides you the opportunity to be exposed to professionals in the field. Many insights can be gained from these people if you seek them out.