

COMM 695: INTERNSHIP/SERVICE LEARNING IN
SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Dr. Rick Isaacson, Director of the Internship Program
HUM 559, (415) 338-2921 e-mail: isaacson@sfsu.edu

Communication Studies Department
College of Humanities
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Humanities students receive many educational benefits through participation in an internship program. An internship gives a student the chance to apply theories and concepts learned in class in a “real world” job. The student also gets a taste of what it feels like to contribute at a professional level to an organization’s success. An internship helps ensure that a student will receive a well-rounded education.

Studies have found that humanities graduate perform as well as business graduates in professional organizational settings. The high degree of training humanities majors have had in written and oral communication skills, increasingly valued by the business world, may partially account for such success.

The guidelines established by the Communication Studies Department, under which students are chosen for internships and agencies are asked to participate, emphasize the learning experience which is to be provided. The Communication Studies Department recognizes that many non-profit agencies provide important social services in the community and need volunteer help to further their work. Credit for students interning with these agencies will be approved, however, only if the description of the activity shows clearly that the student will benefit from the experience.

A successful internship -- from the point of view of both the student and the agency -- provides an appropriate balance between observation and participation. Because the student is not intended as a replacement for regular personnel, and because he or she is coming to the agency primarily to learn, we assume much of the time will be spent as an observer. Such an approach also permits students without highly specific backgrounds to benefit from the internship experience. And, of course, company policies, union regulations, and other conditions may permit only observation.

On the other hand, a greater depth of understanding of the particular requirements of a task may be gained by actual participation, and student morale is generally higher when participation is permitted. We urge agencies to permit participation whenever it is possible to do so.

Establishing an Internship

Each participating agency is requested to:

1. Identify and describe the internship opportunity or opportunities it may be able to provide which would be appropriate for humanities students,
2. Describe the requisite background which the student(s) should have in order to perform optimally in the internship,
3. Identify a supervisor who will plan the experience for, provide direct guidance of, and evaluate the intern(s).

A check list form on which to provide this information is attached.

The Communication Studies Department is particularly grateful for opportunities which will continue over an extended period of time. Students then may anticipate applying for a particular internship which will be available in a future semester, and may plan their course work so as to qualify for it. However, we will make every effort to locate students with the appropriate background and experience for “one-time-only” internship opportunities when they are offered. These are typically 15-week stints, September-December, or February-May.

Placing Interns

Since the primary reason for entering into an internship agreement is to provide the best possible learning experience for the student, the Communication Studies Department will screen intern applicants whose prior experience and education indicate that the internship should be particularly beneficial. If two or more candidates are recommended to the agency, the final choice may be made by the agency. In any event a probation period of about three weeks will be established on all internships.

Requirements

Students are expected to devote about eight to ten hours per week for the fifteen weeks of the semester in return for four units of credit. Under some circumstances internships encompassing more or fewer hours, or a different time schedule, may be approved. The exact hours may be arranged by mutual agreement between the student and the agency, if they are not specified by the agency.

Interns are required to submit periodic reports to the faculty supervisor, and to include copies of materials prepared under the internship if such materials are available. The agency may request copies of these reports, if the agency supervisor wishes.

Toward the middle and at the end of the semester the agency supervisor will be requested to evaluate the intern's performance. These evaluations and the reports will form the formal record of the internship. A written requirement, such as a log and evaluation of the work experience, may be required of the student, and will be evaluated by the Communication Studies Department faculty supervisor. Such an additional assignment, if required, allows the University to evaluate an intern's academic understanding and application of his/her work experience.

Contracts

Our procedure is to ask the student and the agency supervisor together to fill out a form which briefly describes the student's duties and hours. This form, signed by the student and agency supervisor, is then brought by the student to the faculty supervisor for his/her signature. All parties will be given copies of this form, which constitutes the contract. If a different procedure is needed for your purposes, please let us know.

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: Information Sheet

1. Is your organization (still) interested in accepting student interns?

2. Name of organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Contact Person: Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Location of Internship (if different from address above):

3. If we currently have listed an internship opportunity with your organization, I have enclosed a copy of that description. It may be what you wrote, what I modified from what you wrote, or what was written from information taken on the phone; in any event it may no longer be accurate. Please rewrite, modify, add or delete as needed. (We place these descriptions in a binder which is made available to students interested in applying for internship openings.)

4. What are the activities (duties, responsibilities) in which the intern would be engaged?

5. Can these activities be done on a flexible days/hours schedule, so the student can fit them around other classes and activities?

Or is there a fixed days/hours schedule which must be followed? If so, what days and hours? _____

6. How many days/hours per week will the internship require (or are optimum)?
A “normal” pattern is 8-10 hours per week for the approximately 15 weeks of a semester, or a minimum of 120 hours, for 4 units of academic credit. Other patterns--more or fewer weeks--can be worked out if they seem more appropriate, with a corresponding adjustment in credit.

7. What background--types of academic courses, operational skills, other experiences--should the student have had in order to be able to function within your organization and to get the most from the opportunity? Also, if it's appropriate, please distinguish between necessary and desirable backgrounds.

Necessary: _____

Desirable: _____

8. Is the intern paid?
If so, what wage? _____

If not, will the intern have expenses associated with the internship (such as cost of driving a car on organization business)? _____

Will the expenses be reimbursed? _____

The University does not carry Worker's Compensation on students placed as interns. If your organization has questions about Worker's Compensation, please call (415) 338-1541.

9. Does your organization have an employee union contract(s)? _____
If so, what effect, if any, does that contract have on the activities of interns?

10. Our “normal” pattern is to establish internships for one semester (about 15 weeks), with the possibility of renewing if there are to be new learning opportunities in the second semester. We also provide summer internships for students who are interested.

What is your preferred length of internship?

One semester: _____

Two semesters: _____

Other length (describe): _____

Available in summer? _____

Renewable by same student? _____

11. How many openings are available simultaneously? _____

12. Again, our “normal” pattern is to collect applications from prospective interns, and then to recommend to you those candidates we feel can benefit from your opportunity and contribute to your organization. If you have a formal process for the screening of interns, we’d like to know that, so that we can accommodate our schedule to yours.

Do you have a fixed schedule for interviewing prospective interns? _____

If so, when: _____

How far in advance of the beginning of the semester do you want to interview applicants? _____

What materials, if any, should the applicants bring to the interview?

HUMANITIES INTERNSHIP CONTRACT FORM

Student's Name _____

Student's Number _____

Student's Address & Phone _____

Semester of Internship _____

Name of Agency _____

Address _____

Name of Agency Supervisor _____

Phone _____

Name of Faculty Supervisor _____

Phone _____

Brief description of student's activities and responsibilities, including schedule of hours to be worked, and starting date:

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Agency Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

In case of questions or problems, contact Dr. Rick Isaacson, Internship Director,
(415) 338-2921 or e-mail: isaacson@sfsu.edu.

**HUMANITIES INTERNSHIP
FINAL EVALUATION FORM**

Student's Name _____

1. Has the student, in your opinion, met the original objectives of his/her work contract? If so, how? If not, why not?

2. Any additional comments you would like to make about the student's strengths, weaknesses, or capacities for similar work in the future?

3. Using an A - F grading scale, please rate this student's overall performance for the semester. _____

4. Was the internship experience profitable for you as supervisor? Would you like another intern in the future?

Agency Supervisor's Name _____

Agency Supervisor's Signature _____

Date _____

COMM 695 EVALUATION PAPER GUIDELINES

You will have two options in writing an evaluation of your internship experience.

The Perspective Paper: This paper, approximately seven to eight pages in length, has three components.

1. Describe your responsibilities at the participating agency. If your responsibilities have changed over the course of your internship, describe these changes. It is important that you liberally describe your responsibilities with concrete examples.
2. Describe the skills or competencies that you obtained through your internship experience. For example, if you interned at a public relations agency, these skills could include writing press releases and newsletters, developing media kits and updating computer lists. Again, provide ample illustration, giving details of actual project experiences and resulting skills.
3. In the final section of the paper, assess how your internship has benefited your professional/academic development. In this discussion you could address some of the following issues: how your experience has influenced your professional objectives, how you could tap into a helpful network of established contacts, the next step you might take in career development, how your experience has complimented academic studies and increased your understanding of principles of speech and communication studies.

The Journal Option: Some students find it easier to keep an on-going journal, rather than write a perspective paper near the end of the term. If you choose to keep a journal, each entry need not address all three of the above concerns, but the sum total of your journal should supply information sufficient to satisfy the objectives of the perspective paper. Journals run longer than perspective papers, but still work better for some students.