

INTERNSHIP GUIDE

(FULL TIME POSITIONS)

(12 CREDITS)



ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

INTRODUCTION

Internships and practicums are valuable experiences linking the academic and professional worlds. These experiences provide a properly prepared student with a bridge between the worlds of the classroom and the world of work. Students integrate classroom experience and practical experience, testing their understanding and abilities in a field related to their career choice.

Depending on the number of credits chosen, task assignments are given in addition to the student simply being able to observe various aspects of a business operation. Internship site supervisors provide counseling, guidance and supervision to the student.

A positive internship can be one of the best experiences of a student's career preparation. Students interested in securing such a position should be aware of the responsibilities and duties of the position, as well as those of the college and department. Subsequent sections of this guide provide an overview of those areas.

Internship and practicum defined: In the Department of Communications at Elizabethtown College, these two terms delineate two different experiences. But in the business community, these two terms are often used for to describe the same type of work; that is a student who is taken on (paid or unpaid) to explore their career preparation through a work experience.

In the Department of Communications, the term *internship* is used to describe an experiential activity that is reserved for seniors who must meet eligibility requirements and then be engaged for no less than 40 hours/week for 15 weeks to earn 12 credits. It is a letter-graded course that requires a number of academic assignments as well as the company assignments.

A *practicum* is a less intense "intern" experience. Any student majoring in communications is eligible for a practicum, which requires a minimum of 10 hours per week on site for 15 weeks. The student can earn between 1 to 3 credits for a practicum, determined by required additional coursework. (Please see the Practicum Guide for full details.)

YOUR ROLE

As a student in Elizabethtown College's Department of Communications it is your decision whether or not to obtain an internship. An internship is an option in the communications curriculum. Credits earned through an internship experience are general elective credits only.

Initial contact is made with the department chair or department representative who coordinates the internship and practicum program. This meeting usually results in a discussion of your career goals, course preparation, and a delineation of requirements and procedures.

Once deciding to pursue an internship, the student explores possible internship opportunities through a number of avenues. Finding an internship position is similar to finding a job. Companies advertise their openings, student apply for the positions and are interviewed just like in a job search. The company makes a final selection and contacts the candidate of their choice.

There are a number of places to look for internship positions. In the Department of Communications, internship positions are posted on bulletin boards in the main hallway. In the Office of Student Success, there are databases of jobs and internships, too. Lastly, if there is a company or organization you are interested in working with, go to their website and check out career opportunities. Most companies and organizations list internship opportunities on their websites.

Internship experiences during the school year should be with organizations close to the college, since that is where the student will most likely be living. In the summer, you may want to pursue an experience with a company that is closer to your home or summer address.

Some internship positions are supported by a stipend payment, other experiences are voluntary (unpaid) in nature. Students are encouraged to pursue experiences that best align with their career goals and interests. Getting paid does not make one experience better than another. It is the work that you do that is most important.

Often, letters, resumes, credentials, interviews, etc. may be required before being selected for an opening. During the final interview process, the student and the organization's practicum supervisor at the company will delineate duties and responsibilities that will be performed during the experience. This agreement then results in practicum the goals and objectives, which form the basis for a learning contract with the department and the college. This contract details what will be accomplished during the experience (as well as, additional coursework and requirements specified by the department or college.)

Once accepted into an internship program, plans must be developed to set up a priority schedule for the position (making other activities on campus less important.) Costs for internships may run high. Provision for transportation, meals, special clothing, etc. must be taken into consideration. Students are required to pay for 12 credits of tuition. In some situations, companies hosting students pay a minimum salary, a stipend, or a scholarship. This, however, is not a requirement and special expenses may be entirely borne by the student. Professional standards and government regulations do not require pay when 1) the student is performing duties for which the company would not regularly pay, 2) when students are only a small part of a working staff, or 3) the presence of a student does not effect a lowering of wages or staff size.

Once the internship is begun, the greatest responsibility is to show good work habits. Be on time, pleasant, reliable; do the best work possible, show assertiveness (contributing ideas), but follow instructions and learn.

Department Note: Students pursuing an internship may not use their internship client as a senior seminar client, as this is a conflict of interest.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Take advantage of the resume and cover letter writing services of the Center for Student Success to make your application package the best it can be.
- Respond to all the requests outlined in a position description, i.e., writing or work samples, list of references.
- Identify faculty and past supervisors for your reference; these people should be willing to speak on your behalf; they should know your skills and have positive comments to make about your work practices.
- Contact your references in advance and let them know what companies or organizations you are contacting. That's just a courtesy.

THE COLLEGE'S ROLE

Initially, the role of the college and the department is to set policies and requirements for internships. Often these seem stifling, but are necessary for efficient and proper operation of the program. These policies include: eligibility, credits, number of hours, pay, and supervision.

Most importantly, the college's role is vested in the department's interaction and supervision of the practicum while in the field. Students are required, in addition to on-the-job employer requirements, to complete coursework responsibilities. These may include: class meetings, reports, logs, journals, and projects. The coursework is delineated in internship requirements. Additionally, the internship supervisor for the college will require several evaluations during the experience.

Responsibility for grading falls within the province of the faculty supervisor and the college, although the site supervisor will certainly be asked for a recommendation. Additionally, grades on required coursework will also be taken into consideration when calculating the final grade.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISING ORGANIZATION

Once a company agrees to accept an intern, an individual within the firm is identified as the student's supervisor. Usually it is someone who genuinely likes young people, likes to teach/coach, and is tolerant of the learning process.

It is with this individual that the student plans goals and objectives for the field experience, and who ultimately agrees to provide day-to-day guidance to the intern. An internship is a learning experience for the student and a way for the company to assist in the training and development of future professionals in the field, as well as a means for the student to contribute to the company.

A salary is not a requirement of the program, although it is expected that the student will be reimbursed for expenses directly incurred by the student while performing assigned duties for the organization.

The supervisor decides in what activities the student will be involved. The student can also suggest activities that will augment his interests and abilities. Be prepared for the student; plan his/her duties. Refrain from asking fellow employees in front of the student if there is any task to be done. Involve the student; include him/her in meetings. In this entire range of assignments, the student is evaluated by his supervisor. Areas for this evaluation usually include: accuracy, dependability, willingness, quality of work, initiative, maturity, promptness, etc. Evaluations are usually made on a continual basis and informally communicated to the student. However, twice during the practicum, the process is formalized and a form is submitted to the college supervisor.

Companies realize students often come to internships with less knowledge and experience than a regular job applicant -- therefore, the agreement to teach and learn on-the-job.

However, the company supervisor can reasonably expect that the student will be eager to participate and will display the self-confidence, initiative, and assertiveness that are important elements of success. Set standards. Your student is a budding professional. Don't accept work you wouldn't accept from your permanent staff - but, explain carefully and patiently what it is you expect. Students not meeting these expectations may be requested, by the company supervisor, to terminate the internship.

INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Any student desiring a senior internship must develop a proposal for approval PRIOR to enrolling in the course. All senior internships are letter-graded and will only count as free elective credit. Communications majors may elect a senior internship.
- 2 The proposal must be developed with the direct field supervisor of the internship. Once that approval has been received, it must be presented to the department faculty coordinator for internships for final approval. The proposal must clearly establish a single GOAL for the internship and 7 to 10 objectives.
- 3 The College will NOT (retroactively) transcript credits or grades on the records of a student for an internship for which no written agreement exists which was filed and dated prior to the start of the internship.
- 4 The written agreement, or “learning contract” minimally must:
 - Specify the purpose or nature of the internship in educational terms, the credits to be awarded, and any requirements relating to tuition or special charges or transfer of credits;
 - Carry the signature of the student intern, the employer/supervisor, the supervising faculty member, and the department chair representative.
- 5 Changes in details of the learning contract after it has been filed with the Registrar (e.g., changes in the number of credits awarded) must be approved by the sponsoring faculty member and the chair’s representative.
- 6 Tuition and internship fees due the College for an internship will be billed to the student in the semester or summer session in which the internship is started. The 12 credit internship means that the student is the equivalent of full-time and is billed the regular tuition for either the Fall or Spring. For part-time and summer session students there is a special internship fee. Contact the Business Office or Registrar for the current tuition rate.
- 7 If an internship requires payment by the College to another supervising agency or organization, prior approval must be obtained. Unless exceptions are approved, any special tuition fees charged by a supervising organization will be the financial obligation of the student taking the internship.
- 8 Transfer credits for an internship will be accepted only from an approved institution and on the same basis as that by which summer school and transfer credits are now accepted. The learning contract must indicate if an internship involves transfer credits.
- 9 Students are encouraged to seek appropriate help from a variety of college offices in developing internships. However, only full-time faculty appointed by the College and the Department are authorized to sponsor, supervise, and evaluate or grade student internships carrying academic credit.
- 10 Waiver of any of these guidelines must receive final approval of the Provost.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

- A. All students seeking an internship must have "senior" status.
- B. An overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.70 is required; the GPA in the major must be 3.00.
- C. Internships are offered only on a full-time basis.
 - 1 Approximately 40 clock hours minimum per week.
 - 2 12 academic credits. (FOR GENERAL ELECTIVE CREDIT ONLY – these credits will not fulfill an elective in the major’s concentration.) The internship only receives a letter grade.
 - 3 Schedules are adjusted to accommodate the sponsoring organization and may include evenings, weekends, and holidays.
 - 4 With the exception of official college vacations periods Thanksgiving, Christmas, Semester Break, Spring Break, Easter, etc., specified on the internship contract no other absences are permissible. Interns are to be “on the job” from the first day of classes to half way through finals week (and through the end of normal business hours the day before vacations). Internships during the summer follow the same regulations and “summer vacations” and other days off are not permitted.
 - 5 The college supervisor will have the option of removing any student intern who does not meet expectations and that student will not receive course credit.
- D. After discussing internship options with the department chair’s representative and choosing possible sites and positions, the prospective intern must visit the sponsoring agency. During this pre-internship conference, position, goals, objectives and job duties and responsibilities are to be delineated and agreed upon between the sponsoring agency and student. These are attached to and become part of the internship contract.
- E. Once having successfully located and been accepted for an internship position, the student must file a “learning contract” or Internship Application with the Department.
 - 1 In a review, the student and faculty member will agree upon the formal learning objectives. (Part B of the “contract”).
 - 2 Additionally, internship related coursework will be assigned for completion periodically during the experience.
 - 3 Using the above, the student will sign the formal written document and submit it for various signatures.
 - 4 Deadlines for the approval of an internship contract will be the end of classes prior to the semester of the internship. For summer internships it will be May 1.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a goal (the single most important all encompassing reason for the internship). This paragraph is a statement of the most important reasons for pursuing the particular internship position with a particular sponsoring agency. It is not a listing of the things you will learn or do; those are best listed as objectives. Rather, it summarizes the relationship of what you hope to learn from the experience and relates it to career interests and direction.
- B. Develop 7 to 10 objectives, more specific performance oriented statements that will assist you in reaching your goal. Learning objectives must state unambiguously what the student intends to accomplish. They should identify the competency or skill that is expected to result from the project. Objectives commonly include such results as the ability to describe, explain, answer, solve, construct, write, differentiate, etc. “To learn” or “to understand” is not an objective but the means to achieve it. Such words should be avoided when writing the objectives.

Example: Incorrect - To learn about the different ways news is gathered.

Correct -To be able to list news gathering processes of TV news and outline their components and practices.

Since the student has said only that he will learn, the objective does not have a natural conclusion and cannot be completed. However, the improved objective clearly identifies the result expected and what the student must be able to do before considering the objective accomplished.

Example: Incorrect - To know how to develop a media press kit.

Correct -To be able to identify and list the important components of a media press kit and describe and explain the techniques of utilizing the kit.

Knowing something is not enough. The student must be able to communicate that competence in a form, which the faculty person can evaluate.

Objectives give clear direction to the project, are precisely stated, and reasonable in number. They may vary from the simple to the complex, and include cognitive, effective (attitudinal, emotional, or valuing behaviors), and psychomotor (physical) skills.

POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES

The following is a very short list of generally stated objectives. Note the terms used are not specific and when devising learning contract objective statements must be very specific with regard to skill or activity as it relates to the particular practicum site. The list is only meant to be an aid in devising objectives, it is not all inclusive, and use words like “learn” only in the sense a skill or other demonstratable skill is accomplished.

- practice specific complex job skills under real-life conditions;
- learn specific job coping skills;
- learn how to do something from the real environment;
- develop a skill in communication;
- synthesize many specific facts, methods, techniques, etc. learned in the classroom;
- learn variations in certain approaches to be used;
- learn how to deal with people in a real setting;
- develop certain problem solving abilities and how to make decisions and act under conditions of uncertainty;
- develop self-confidence and independence;
- field research;
- application of theory.

INTERNSHIP COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A syllabus for COM474 is located on the department internship faculty supervisor's website. A summary of the academic assignments for the course are listed here. This is for informational purposes only.

Course Description

Supervised application of previously studied theory by professionals in the field of the student's concentration.

Objectives: The student will be able to:

- Develop technical competencies in a professional setting.
- Integrate theory and practice with professional expectations.
- Develop appropriate professional attitudes and values.
- Meld technical ability, theoretical knowledge, and intellectual development with professional values and attitudes so as to demonstrate marketable professional behavior.

Requirements

Journal - summary report of activities and analysis of events: problems, experiences, etc. An assessment of what was done, why, if it was rewarding, successful, or could be done better.

Relate experiences to college education. A retrospective analysis - key perception of the week and people encountered. (submitted by email on Mondays weekly) At the end of the internship, the final weekly journal entry is a detailed evaluation report of the internship experience. A typed document, the following items should be discussed.

- To what extent were your practicum objectives reached. How and Why? Be specific to each objective.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your practicum supervisor in helping you meet your objectives and in assisting you generally during the experience.
- Were assignments and responsibilities clearly delineated? Were they meaningful to you and your employer?
- Did the practicum provide you with sufficient challenge? In what ways was it a valuable experience? In what ways was it disappointing?
- What kind of regular interaction did you have with your practicum supervisor?
- List strong and weak points of the experience.

Literature reviews - total of 4, each at least two pages in length. Two due in second and third months of internship seminars or before. Review, react, introspective analysis of journal article,

chapter etc. in the student's concentration and directly related to the internship duties and responsibilities.

Mid-term research project including primary and several secondary sources (well-balanced). Analyzes the theory, foundation, goals and objectives of a typical program (same as the internship site.) A second part of the project will be an ethnographic study of the internship site (see class notes from first seminar.) A third part compares and contrasts the ideal with the actual. Due by mid-term.

A final project is produced. Topic and outline due by third meeting. Project due by last day of classes.

Portfolio due by the last day of classes. A folder accumulation of projects/work completed during the internship, with documentation.

Grading: Final grade will be calculated as follows:

Journal/Portfolio 10%	Final Project 15%
Periodical Reviews 10%	Client evaluations 50%
Mid-Term Project 15%	

Internship evaluations are done at mid-term and the end of the semester on forms provided. Field supervisors return these directly to the department faculty representative.

Course Calendar

Interns meet twice a month on campus with the faculty supervisor for seminars regarding academic assignments and to report on progress of work assignments.

These seminars include the following topics: an introduction to ethnographics; primer on literature review and research paper writing; portfolio development.

The faculty supervisor meets with the field supervisor (site supervisor) once by phone and once in person during the internship process. Additional contacts may be necessary to monitor the work of the student.

SOME FINAL WORDS BEFORE YOU BEGIN THE INTERNSHIP

Be prepared. Read up on the company before you get there. Know something about the organization's products, services, clients, or whatever else is critical to your employer's growth, success, and profitability. Talk to anyone else from your school who has worked for that company before.

Don't wait for work to be assigned. When you arrive on the job, find out what needs to be done and volunteer to do it. Don't be a nuisance, but don't be a wallflower, either. Ask questions. Ask to be included in meetings. Get to know the professionals around you; learn what they do, and help all you can.

Don't get discouraged. If there's tedious or boring work to be done, do it with a smile, quickly and well. Be interested in everyone. Even in the worst situation, there is a lesson: How to do things better when it's your turn.