

COMS 530: INTERNSHIP IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

PURPOSE:

An internship provides an opportunity to immerse yourself in the activities of an outstanding organization in a profession you might enter after graduating, to discover how well-suited you are to that kind of work, and to demonstrate to that potential employer how capable you are.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

You will arrange your own internship. Like all business arrangements, an internship is an exchange. You will provide that organization with your time, energy, intelligence, and all the knowledge and abilities you have developed so far. In return, you will receive opportunities, which wouldn't otherwise be available to you, to observe activities, gain information and skills, try your hand at meeting challenges, demonstrate what you have to offer, "network" in that professional milieu, and receive feedback that wouldn't otherwise be available to you.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS:

1) The internship must be approved by the COMS 530 faculty coordinator, Dr. Adrienne Kunkel (116C Bailey Hall, 864-9884, adkunkel@ku.edu). Permission is contingent upon her approval of:

- a) a fully initialed "Contract With Prospective Internship Supervisors,"
- b) a completed Internship Plan (see later pages in this packet), and
- c) an updated copy of the student's ARTS form.

2) **DEADLINES FOR ENROLLMENT PERMISSION:** As a general rule, Dr. Kunkel will not approve students for enrollment into COMS 530 after "Stop Day" of the previous semester (usually a Friday in early May, early December, or late July). In exceptional cases, an internship can be approved at a later date.

3) In general, you may enroll in COMS 530: Internship in Communication Studies only for the same semester that you are performing your internship for a maximum of 3 hours of credit (again, some exceptions can be made). This enrollment is available only to students formally admitted to the COMS major via the department's application process, who have completed at least 15 hours in COMS (with a 3.0 GPA).

4) Each enrolled student will be required to:

- a) fulfill the responsibilities arranged with the organization,
- b) ask his or her Supervisor to return an evaluation form to Dr. Kunkel, and
- c) write a final paper describing and analyzing his or her internship experience.

5) Students must arrange their own internship placements. The COMS Department does not maintain internships to distribute (although Amber Blackmore, Communication Studies Advising Specialist, has some information you can examine about organizations that offer internships and about internships COMS students have done in the past). You might also try contacting your "dream" organization and/or the internship listings of the University Career Center, 110 Burge Union.

- 6) COMS 530 is NOT an option with any organization that requires a waiver or indemnification agreement be signed by a representative of the department or University.
- 7) Students cannot use their COMS internship to fulfill internship requirements in another department, and vice-versa, nor can they intern under a family member's supervision.
- 8) Students' minimum time commitment to the internship organization is 40 hours per academic credit hour (i.e., at least 120 hours of work for three credit hours).

ARRANGING AN INTERNSHIP

- 1) Start this process several months before the beginning of the semester in which you want to enroll in COMS 530.
- 2) Identify an organization in which you want to work (preferably in a profession you might enter after graduation). Read all of the materials in this packet.
- 3) Contact someone in the organization you have selected and ask who there can help you arrange an internship experience. Explain what you have in mind, based upon your reading of this material.
- 4) Make an appointment to meet with the individual you've identified, and discuss what your "exchange of services" might be. Explain what you'd like to learn and propose what you are willing to do for the organization, or ask what they would expect of you.
- 5) Share the Contract With Prospective Internship Supervisors enclosed in this packet and get all eight of the paragraphs initialed by the person who will supervise your work.
- 6) Elicit at this meeting, several options for what you might do in your internship. Fill out the Internship Plan together. Explain that your KU professor must approve whatever plans you make before you can gain credit for your work. So your preliminary plans should be tentative, yet clear and detailed.
- 7) Represent in the Plan what the Supervisor will provide by way of instruction about the placement, industry, or profession, in addition to supervision of the student's performance.
- 8) Get the necessary signatures on the Plan.
- 9) Submit your Contract, Plan, and ARTS form to Dr. Kunkel's mailbox in Bailey 102 and e-mail her at adkunkel@ku.edu to indicate that you have done so. If these materials are all satisfactory, you will receive a reply that will include a Special Permission to Enroll number for online enrollment into COMS 530.

CONTRACT WITH PROSPECTIVE INTERNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Dear Prospective Internship Supervisor:

Thank you for your interest in supervising an intern from the University of Kansas Communication Studies Department. Interning puts our students into situations where they learn what we can't teach: how people in organizations like yours really operate day to day. In return, the intern will provide you with genuinely useful services (enhanced, we hope, by the education received here).

We want to treat fairly and equally all students who request internship credit and to maintain consistent standards for our internships, to assure that each merits college credit. Therefore, each internship must meet the criteria listed below. Please read them over and then initial, in the spaces provided, each of the eight conditions to indicate your agreement.

Students will write a paper at the end of the internship period on how these standards were met, so we want to assure now that they are achievable. (Incidentally, if the standards below don't fit the opportunity you have available, we hope you and the student still can arrange a job or internship agreement. Many such work arrangements are very beneficial to students and their employers, even if they don't fit the criteria for which our department offers academic credit.)

Dr. Adrienne Kunkel
Associate Professor, Communication Studies
University of Kansas

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT AWARDS INTERNSHIP CREDIT WHEN A STUDENT INTERNS:

1. ___ Spends at least 40 hours involved in work activities per credit hour (e.g., at least 120 hours for the maximum three credit hour internship).
2. ___ Plans at the start a series of internship experiences. Most college courses begin with a review of the "syllabus." Most business arrangements also are spelled out in advance, to prevent conflicts from arising later on. So we would prefer that you and the student make a detailed list of precisely what each of you will do during the internship period. (See the attached Internship Plan for this purpose.) The KU COMS internship Supervisor will review that list, and when it is approved, the student can proceed with a clear idea of what lies ahead and with some assurance that everyone will be pleased if those responsibilities are fulfilled.
3. ___ Meets regularly with a Supervisor to talk over the student's activities and observations. Every college course has a teacher. In an internship, that role is primarily yours. You should be willing and accessible, therefore, to answer the student's questions, give the student advice, and provide helpful feedback. Moreover, your proposal for educating the student about your profession and industry should be indicated in the Plan.

4. ____ Is exposed to a variety of work challenges and contexts. Over the course of a semester here, students constantly are being exposed to new information. An internship should be an equivalent experience. If the student's tasks are repetitive; if s/he will do essentially the same thing every day, the position is a job instead of an internship. (Likewise, the intern shouldn't spend time sitting around doing nothing.) We hope you will rotate the student among a variety of tasks, people, and contexts, so she or he is steadily learning more and more.

5. ____ Performs tasks that use and expand the student's communication abilities. Our department's "mission" involves teaching students about communication. So our students' internship work must involve communication challenges. In other words, interns should be involved in interactions that call for some skill and maturity, so they must think before they speak, make communication decisions, and can reflect afterwards on how well they did and how they might do better in the future. Conversely, their internship should involve a minimum of solitary tasks (such as typing, computer data entry, letter-stuffing, or filing).

6. ____ Holds a position that is not the same as one a jobholder fills. An internship should be a unique role, involving an exchange, in which you provide education and the intern provides "supplementary" assistance at work. In other words, we'd prefer that an intern do for you a special project, ideally one that uses their communication knowledge. For example, an intern might develop a training program for new employees, do market research with your customers, help to prepare speeches, arrange a conference, or contribute to a company publication (such as a newsletter or annual report), do the background work to create or update a web site, etc.

7. ____ Provides professional level work for you. We think it is essential for you, and our students, that interns meet professional performance standards. We want our interns to see how top quality work is done at successful organizations and to produce that level of work themselves. The internship isn't meant to be a "donation" of your time to help out needy students. Our internship students are just months away from applying for well-paying jobs, so they should be able to do as well as your other employees after just a short time on the job. Expect first rate work from them, and tell us frankly when that isn't the case. Your input will help us do a better job of evaluating the students and of educating future generations.

8. ____ Receives compensation as the organization sees fit. Most COMS 530 interns are not compensated financially, but the department does not discourage payment of students.

Thanks again, for reading through this form and providing your responses. If the opportunity you have to offer is an internship as we define it, we look forward to working with you. If not, we appreciate your letting us know now, so problems are avoided down the road. We also will appreciate, at any time, learning your thoughts or feedback about our work, because our department wants to educate the kinds of students you would be eager to work with in the years ahead. Just write Dr. Adrienne Kunkel, University of Kansas, Department of Communication Studies, Bailey Hall, 1440 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 102, Lawrence, KS 66045-7574, call (785) 864-9884, or e-mail adkunkel@ku.edu.

INTERNSHIP PLAN

Today's Date: _____

Intern's Name: _____

Intern's Phone: _____ Intern's e-mail: _____

Intern's Home Address: _____

Internship Organization: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Supervisor's Phone: _____ Supervisor's e-mail: _____

Supervisor's Mailing Address: _____

Expected Date work will begin: _____ Expected date work will end: _____

Semester of enrollment: _____

Internships should be a mutually satisfying exchange of services. Please spell out below precisely what you understand now that: a) the intern will do for the work-site Supervisor and b) what that Supervisor will do for the intern. Please include elements such as time commitments, training to be provided, regular on-going tasks assigned to the intern, special projects intern will do, and opportunities for receiving instruction and feedback from the Supervisor. (Use an additional sheet if you prefer.)

THE STUDENT WILL: _____

THE SUPERVISOR WILL: _____

Intern's signature

Supervisor's signature

INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION

Dear Internship Supervisor,

Before "Stop Day" of the internship semester (usually a Friday in early May, early December, or late July) please mail this form directly to Dr. Adrienne Kunkel, University of Kansas, Department of Communication Studies, Bailey Hall, 1440 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 102, Lawrence, KS 66045-7574. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you!

Intern's Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Supervisor's Organization: _____

Supervisor's Address: _____

Supervisor's Phone: _____ Supervisor's e-mail: _____

Please assess the intern's performance on the following criteria by circling A, B, C, D or F (using the following scale: A = Outstanding; B = Good; C = Adequate; D = Poor; F = Inadequate.)

(Please circle one)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Quantity of work | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |
| 2. Quality of work | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |
| 3. Responsibility/Dependability | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |
| 4. Relations with people | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |
| 5. Written communication | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |
| 6. Recommended Overall Grade | A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F |

Please comment specifically about what the intern did well and how the intern might improve.

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

FINAL PAPER REQUIREMENTS

The paper outlined below is due at 3:00pm of “Stop Day” during the semester in which you are enrolled. Don’t wait until then, however, to begin preparing it. It is recommended that you keep a daily “diary” of your internship experiences, especially a record of the communication related challenges you face, what course content they bring to mind, how you respond to them, and how they turn out.

The paper should: (a) be between 8-10 pages of 12-point, double-spaced text and (b) consist of the following two parts:

I. A narrative account of your internship experiences.

A. Describe how you chose and arranged to work at the organization.

B. Describe your usual or typical daily activities.

C. Attest to the quantity and quality of work activities you performed and achieved.

II. Application of classroom learning to your field experience, and vice versa.

A. Describe several specific communication challenges you faced, moments when you had to handle a sticky situation, create an effective message for influencing someone, or decide how to deal with a human relations problem. Include the context and people involved, background events, your goal(s) in the situation, what was said to you, how you responded, why you chose that response, and what occurred as a result.

B. Look over your notes and textbooks from past and current COMS courses. Identify several specific concepts, theories, research findings, and/or techniques covered in COMS courses you took that apply to the communication-related experiences you encountered on the job. Name and cite the original sources (i.e., authors or researchers) of concepts, etc., as well as the exact courses and instructors that taught them to you. Point out how each idea (could have) helped you to handle more effectively a situation that you observed or in which you were personally involved.

ASSIGNMENT OF INTERNSHIP GRADE

Though Supervisors should mail evaluations directly to Dr. Kunkel, it is the COMS 530 intern's responsibility to have both the final paper and Supervisor's evaluation delivered to her mailbox in Bailey 102 at or before 3:00pm of "Stop Day" during the semester of enrollment. At that time, a missing final paper warrants a grade of "F" for the course and a missing evaluation warrants a grade of "I" (or Incomplete) for the course.

Otherwise, Dr. Kunkel will arrive at your grade for the course by using the five criteria that follow. 20 points will be awarded for each of these five criteria and the total will determine your grade, based on this scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; and F = 59 and below.

I. THE EMPLOYER'S EVALUATION

The ratings given on the evaluation form by your work site Supervisor comprise this score.

II. YOUR INTERNSHIP FINAL PAPER

A. COHESION, READABILITY, AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ENTIRE PAPER

B. THE QUALITY OF THE INTERNSHIP ASSIGNMENT

Most internships are varied and challenging, but some require that a lot of time be spent in repetitive and/or mundane activities rather than the kinds of communication taught in this department. People who arrange and perform internships that involve a wide range of challenging, communication relevant learning experiences deserve to be graded a bit higher.

C. THE QUANTITY OF INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES

Some people work harder than others during their internship (they put in more hours, and they accomplish more) so they deserve more points.

D. APPLICATION OF COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

Demonstration of nuanced understanding of COMS coursework and application to your internship experience (i.e., you discuss how specific concepts from particular communication texts and courses apply to the work you did) is a critical achievement within the successful final paper.

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