



Internship Handbook

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Overview

This handbook is provided and available to students, faculty, and experience providers/internship supervisors who are involved in qualified internships for the Department of Communication Studies at Colorado State University. This handbook contains information on how to create, register, and get credit for an internship. Questions and comments can be directed to the Internship Coordinator, Karyl Sabbath, PhD, via email at karyl.sabbath@colostate.edu

What is a Qualified Internship?

CSU as an institution of higher education does on occasion provide for-credit, off-site internships for its students. Some departments also provide informal opportunities for practical learning experiences, which may include not-for-credit opportunities, and volunteer opportunities.

In Colorado, there are certain circumstances where a student engaged in an off-site, for-credit internship may be considered for Workers' Compensation insurance through CSU. These internships are known as Qualified Internships. This guide is intended to assist departments outline Qualified Internships that provide high-quality learning experiences, integrating academic knowledge and work experience in professional environments.

We recognize that other learning opportunities are equally valid and important, however, may not be eligible for Workers' Compensation coverage through CSU.

What Defines a Qualified Internship?

To establish uniformity in the use and application of the term “internship,” CSU’s Risk Management recommends the following definition as provided by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE):

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent

Criteria for Qualified Internship

To ensure that an experience is a qualified internship, and thus may be eligible for workers’ compensation, all the following criteria must be met:

1. The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. There must be a Learning Agreement between the student, experience provider, and university that clearly outlines and documents the roles and responsibilities of each party to ensure the integrity of the internship experience for all parties.
4. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
5. There are clearly defined learning objectives related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.
6. There is supervision by a professional with expertise, educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
7. Internships include an academic component supervised by a CSU faculty member (known as a faculty internship coordinator) who monitors and evaluates the academic learning and assigns a grade.
8. There is routine feedback by the experience provider supervisor.
9. There is an evaluation by the experience provider and student intern at the end of the internship.

If these criteria are met, then the experience can be considered a qualified internship, and the student may be considered for workers’ compensation. Other experiences/internships may not entitle the student for Workers’ Compensation benefits.

Qualified Internships Parameters

- One-semester work experience
- Paid or unpaid
- For Academic credit in which the student enrolls
 - Students work approximately 135 hours to earn 3 credit hours
 - *45 hours of work= 1 college credit*
- The company/organization must be a legitimate established business
 - *Home-based businesses shouldn't be approved due to liability and risk issues*
- Interns must be given an orientation to the organization, safety procedures, training, ongoing supervision, and evaluation
- Interns must have an appropriate workspace and tools with which to perform their duties (e.g. access to a computer, software, etc.)
- Interns must be provided with information on any safety risks and potential exposures prior to the start of internship and allowed to make an informed choice regarding the acceptance of the internship
- Interns need to receive any required vaccinations prior to starting the internship
- Interns must be provided and instructed in the use of any needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- If a confidentiality agreement is required, it must be stated in the job description upon posting
- There are no requirements for the student to pay the employer in any form for any part of the experience

Experiences that DO NOT qualify as Qualified Internships

- Commission-based positions
- Internship located in home-based businesses
- Positions in which an intern is unpaid and not registered for academic credit
- Positions that require more than 20% clerical duties when this is not field of academic study
- Volunteer opportunities
- “Independent contractor” relationships that require the intern to set up his/her own business for the purpose of selling products, services and/or recruiting other individuals to set up their own businesses
- Family-owned businesses or positions supervised by a family member
- Telemarketing positions
- Positions in which the employer requires the student to pay a fee or fees in order to work at the organization
Licensure fees should be covered by employer
- Internships that are approved retroactively

Non-Qualified/ Non-Academic Internships

- For non-qualified internships please ensure that the Internship Coordinator has clearly communicated that these experiences are non-qualified internships. For example, be careful how you describe and market the opportunities to students. Instead, call these opportunities **“volunteer opportunities”** or **“non-CSU sponsored work experiences”** in order to avoid confusion.
- Not-for-credit learning experiences should be viewed as volunteer opportunities and appropriate waivers signed.

CSU Roles & Responsibilities

The Intern

- Review the internship position description with internship coordinator to ensure that it meets the criteria for an internship within the student’s area of academic study
- Submit a Student Internship Learning Agreement for approval to department/internship Coordinator
- Complete all pre intern requirements that are listed in the job description, created by the department, including course prerequisites, and contained in the learning agreement
- Enroll and register for academic credit
- Complete tasks that fulfill the job description and learning objectives
- Approach the internship in a professional manner that is guided by courtesy, a desire to learn, and a willingness to receive feedback for improvement
- Complete all assignments and academic deliverables
- Observe all safety rules
- Keep in contact with the Internship Coordinator, complete all Monthly Reports, and complete the Final Reporting responsibilities, as well as the Final Public Presentation.

The Faculty Internship Coordinator

- Review student's eligibility to participate in a qualified internship
- Assist students in creating appropriate learning objectives that must be met during the internship
- Review the position description and ensure that it meets the learning objectives
- Ensure that all agreements and documents are in place prior to the start of the internship
- Provide students with appropriate academic assignment deliverables related to the internship placement
- Keep in contact with interns throughout the internship in order to appraise progress and address concerns and questions
- Upon request, meet with site supervisors to discuss internship placement
- Serve as liaison for any issues that arise during an internship – e.g. workplace conflicts or problems with supervisors or co-workers, injuries, not getting the agreed onsite hours, ensuring the opportunity to fulfill the requirements of the internship – number of work hours, learning goals, etc.
- Collect and review the internship supervisor's evaluation which will be used as part of student's final grade
- Award credit and a final grade based on interns' completion of assignment deliverables
- Address all academic issues related to the internship
- Act as primary liaison between the experience provider and CSU
- Have an emergency response plan in case an injury occurs. Plan should include who to contact in an emergency; if injury could be compensable under workers' compensation, then what are the protocols for filing a workers' compensation claim. (For filing a workers' compensation claim <http://rmi.prep.colostate.edu/workers-compensation/>)

The Internship Supervisor's Roles & Responsibilities

- Verify the position and duties meet the University's Qualified Internship criteria.
- Complete a job description that includes learning objectives and goals; professional experience and skills the intern will gain exposure to and is expected to learn; Duties and responsibilities of intern; Resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support the learning objectives/goals; Special qualifications required for the position; Special training or considerations required of the position; the start and end dates of the internship.
- Disclose all agreements a student will be asked to sign in the internship description.
- Identify the risks of activities the intern maybe involved in and identify the required safety training for any tools, computers, specialized equipment, vehicles, physical activities, hazardous chemicals, biologicals or radioactive materials, etc. that are part of their activities.
- Provide Intern and CSU staff with information regarding any Safety Considerations.
- Provide adequate safety training and provide all Personal Protection Equipment to the student and have them properly fitted prior to the start of internship.
- Provide an orientation, any precautionary safety instructions, training and

ongoing supervision for assigned duties.

- Document training and include a signature that the training was received and understood and provide CSU with copies of safety and training instructions.
- Provide a safe work environment.
- Encourage professionalism by assisting student in developing communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and other skills.
- Provide opportunities for increasing responsibility and keep Intern directed toward accomplishing their learning objectives.
- Maintain an open channel of communication with regular meetings
- Keep internship duties within the scope outlined.
- Complete all training documentations a final evaluation.
- If the student is paid, understand the responsibility for:
 - Providing workers' compensation and liability insurance in accordance with State laws where the internship is conducted. Provide CSU a Certificate of Insurance.
 - Comply with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, and/or disability.
 - Comply with Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
 - Comply with Affordable Care Act and IRS reporting requirements.
- Add intern under your business vehicle insurance if employee is expected to operate business vehicles.
 - Any insurance requirements of Colorado State University need to be approved and agreed to by the Office of Risk Management & Insurance prior to placements. CSU doesn't automatically provide professional liability insurance. A number of CSU academic programs, and organizations offer professional liability policies for a fee. The employment site and/or intern is responsible for outlining needs and obtaining this insurance if required.
- Notify Faculty Sponsor and Internship Coordinator in a timely manner if any problems arise during the internship placement.
- Complete a final written evaluation of the student's performance.
- Stay within the hours outlined in the internship learning agreement.

CSU establishes internships and learning experiences for the academic and professional development of our students. When developing these experiences, please keep in mind that other factors outside of learning experience need to be considered. Internship Supervisors will be responsible for being informed and complying with all federal and state laws that may apply.

Index of Internship Documents

The following is a list of all of the documents essential to the enactment of the steps mentioned in this handbook. (Hyperlinks will be provided as direct links to the CMST Internship webpage except for the Supervisor Evaluation form:

<https://communicationstudies.colostate.edu/undergraduate-program/career-pathways-and-internships/>

Department of Communication Studies Internship Handbook

Student Internship Learning Agreement

Liability Waiver

Internship Guidelines

Supervisor Evaluation

Final Report (student completes as a final internship assessment)

Creating an Internship with an Internship Supervisor

If the internship is new and unestablished, the Internship Coordinator and Internship Supervisor will consult to create an internship that will support both the Internship Supervisor and the Intern. Guidelines for a Qualified Internship are found in this handbook. Interviewing and hiring a student for the Internship falls to the Internship Supervisor. Interviewing and hiring the intern is entirely up to the experience provider.

If the employer is open to hiring students who are undocumented, they should make sure that the internship description does not say U.S. citizenship is required. Other than that, the employer must hire only students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Undocumented students without DACA cannot be hired as employees in the traditional sense.

Step 1: Internship Coordinator and Internship Supervisor Meeting

The Internship Coordinator and the Internship Supervisor will take about 30-40 minutes to review this document, the Internship Learning Agreement, and walk through the Creating a Qualified Internship document. The Internship Coordinator will ensure that the internship meets the above qualifications for a Qualified Internship.

Step 2: Creating an Internship Description

Using the guidelines for a Qualified Internship, the Internship Supervisor will draft an Internship description that clearly outlines what the internship entails, including the day-to-day expectations, how many hours the internship requires, and what the Intern will get out of the Internship. The Internship Supervisor can ask for assistance in reviewing the job description to make sure it is clear and meets the expectations for an internship description.

Step 3: Posting the Internship on Handshake

The Internship Supervisor will need to make an account on Handshake, if they don't already have one. From there, the Internship Supervisor can post their internship and receive applications. For more information on recruiting on CSU's campus, please visit the [Career Center's Employers](#) page on their website. Submission of the internship flyer will be provided to the Department of Communication Studies Internship Coordinator, who will navigate the posting of the internship opportunity on the department website.

Step 4: Advertise Internship

All internships are advertised on the Department of Communication Studies Internship webpage, as well as appropriate posting boards near department offices in the Behavioral Science Building. Students will be provided information on applying for the specific internship via the posted information from the Internship Supervisor.

Setting up an Internship Experience for the Intern

Each person involved in a student's internship will review the Student Internship Learning Agreement sign before the student registers for an internship. The Intern is responsible for having each person review and sign the document and submitting the final digital paperwork to Internship Coordinator. If the internship spans more than one semester, the student will need to fill out the paperwork for a subsequent semester, with attention to growth in the Student Learning Objectives and possible expansion of the listing of Job Tasks. The student does need to register for the internship each semester to ensure credits.

The Internship Learning Agreement is a signed agreement between the Intern, the Internship Coordinator, and the Internship Supervisor. Each Intern will be given their own copy and the Department of Communication Studies and Internship Coordinator will store the student's paperwork, as well. Interns should fill out the file digitally, via the provided pdf formatting. Signatures can be a cursive font; no need to insert a signature image.

Step 1: Meet with the Internship Coordinator

Students need to have a conversation with the Internship Coordinator to go over the Student Internship Learning Agreement and this Handbook. This is to clarify expectations, answer questions, and make sure the student understands what their responsibilities are.

Step 2: Complete the Intern Information Section, Job Tasks & Learning Objectives

The Intern needs to complete the Intern Information section of the Internship Learning Agreement before moving forward with the other steps. Additionally, the intern needs to sign and date the agreement document. Once the student has been offered the internship position, they are responsible for completing the Job Tasks section and Internship Learning Objectives, prior to signing and obtaining the Internship Supervisor's signature. The student will need to pay special attention to integrating a Communication Studies focus in both the listed Job Tasks, which can be guided by the

job description, and for their Learning Objectives. The Learning Objectives will guide the assessments completed in their three required Monthly Reports and the Final Report. Students will also be scheduled for a Final Public Presentation of their internship experience on MSTEams/Zoom or in-person. The student's internship experience, Communication Studies-based Job Tasks, and Learning Objectives will guide the content of the presentation. In any given semester, the presentation forum will range from an audience of the semester interns and Internship Coordinator to including faculty, staff, graduate students, and Internship Supervisors. Therefore, the Internship Coordinator will review the Job Tasks and Learning Objectives for clear integration of a Communication Studies focus, prior to their signing of the Student Internship Learning Agreement.

Step 3: Determine Academic Requirements

The Internship Coordinator will provide all required assignment materials on Canvas. The intern will have access to the break-down of semester assignments from the Communication Studies Internship webpage and within the Internship Guidelines.

Step 4: Figure out how many credits the Internship is worth

Students may take a maximum of 3 internship credits to count towards their Communication Studies electives. Workload expectations are equivalent to 45 hours per credit over the course of the semester. Internship credits count towards the maximum 6 credits a student can take in experiential courses (i.e., SPCM 278 courses, 384, 386, 387, and 486). **Internship credit is to be awarded for work done during the term of enrollment ONLY.** No more than three credits total can apply toward graduation. Whether or not the student is paid is irrelevant to the obtaining of credit; however, in the case of unpaid internships, it is presumed that the hosting entity will comply with the standards set forth under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Step 5: Register for the Internship

Students should register for SPCM 387 in the section determined by the department Accounting Technician II, Azumi Solbrig or department Operations Manager, Eliza Wagner-Kinyon. It is up to the student to register for SPCM 387; doing the paperwork or getting the necessary information does not register them for the internship. If the internship spans more than one semester, the student must register for the internship each semester. Please note: SPCM 387 default to one credit on the registration page. Make sure to view details and update the credits so that it is reflective of the correct number of credits.

If the student registers for the internship credit after the add/drop date at the beginning of the semester, the department will facilitate a Late Change Request with the student intern. Internships will not be given credit retroactively; students must register the internship before or during the internship.

Internship Conclusion

Step 1: Student Self-Evaluation/Final Report (to be completed by the Intern)

At the conclusion of the internship, the student needs to complete a Final Report that will help them reflect on their knowledge they've gained and contextualize their experience. The Internship Coordinator will share a Final Report guideline document on Canvas Modules and Assignments. The Final Report needs to be completed before the last day of the semester.

Step 2: Intern Evaluation (to be completed by the Internship Supervisor)

The Internship Supervisor is asked to complete a Supervisor Intern Evaluation to provide feedback to the Internship Coordinator and Intern. The Internship Coordinator will personally discuss the evaluation with the student intern for assessment & learning purposes. The Supervisor Intern Evaluation will be directly emailed to the supervisor during the 14th week of the semester and the form needs to be completed and emailed as a digital attachment before the last day of the semester.

Step 3: Final Public Presentation

Before the last day of the semester, students will be scheduled for a Final Public Presentation of their internship experience on MSTEams/Zoom or in-person. The student's internship experience, Communication Studies-based Job Tasks, and Learning Objectives will guide the content of the presentation. In any given semester, the presentation forum will range from an audience of the semester interns and Internship Coordinator to including faculty, staff, graduate students, and Internship Supervisors.

Step 4: Grading and Grade Submission

Grades are submitted as a normal class grade through ARIESWeb by the date set forth by the university.

During all parts of the internship process – from locating an internship to working on-site – students should remember that they represent Colorado State University, the Communication Studies department, and they are building their professional reputation. A student who does a poor job, is not dependable, or creates problems of other kinds not only jeopardizes their own standing with the organization and their grade for the internship but will ruin the opportunity for other students who may want to work with the organization in the future. While the student is on the job, they are under the supervision of the organization

Frequently Asked Questions and Concerns

How do international internships work?

An international internship needs to meet the same criteria in order to be a qualified internship, and for that student to be covered under CSU's workers' compensation coverage. In addition, there may be other international host country requirements that would have to be met.

There are established international program providers that make all the necessary arrangements to facilitate internship placements, housing, orientation, onsite support, and sometimes excursions, typically for a fee. Students in international placements need to work with the Office of Education Abroad.

Each internship agreement or relationship with the experience provider/internship supervisor may be different and may require review. CSU's International Travel Risk Manager and CSU's Workers' Compensation Manager can assist to determine whether the internship is a qualified internship and whether the student may be considered for workers' compensation coverage.

Please contact Nicole Tobin, Nicole.Tobin@colostate.edu, and Kenda Weigang, Kenda.Weigang@colostate.edu for assistance.

To file a workers' compensation claim see <http://rmi.prep.colostate.edu/workers-compensation/file-an-incident/>

Are there special considerations for out of state internships?

In order for an out of state internship to be a qualified internship, the same criteria will apply. Students injured while completing the duties of an unpaid/non-remuneration qualified internship out of state should file a Workers' Compensation claim at <http://rmi.prep.colostate.edu/workers-compensation/file-an-incident/>

(Note room and board is considered remuneration)

Workers' Compensation coverage for paid, out of state, qualified interns varies from state to state as to what qualifies a person as an employee and when student interns are covered. Students injured in the course and scope of their internship functions should consider filing a claim in both states, one against the employer or host site in the state of internship and one against CSU in Colorado.

CSU Workers' Compensation Program Manager, Kenda Weigang kweigang@colostate.edu, Tel. # (970) 491-4832 should be contacted immediately so that there is coordination of communication with multiple states' adjusters and responsibilities for injury benefits can be assessed and assigned.

Are students participating in an internship covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance?

A student participating in a **qualified** internship may be considered for Workers' Compensation coverage if injured while performing the duties of the internship. Individuals involved in a learning experience, on-the-job training or volunteer experience that does not meet the **qualified** internship criteria are unlikely to be eligible for workers' compensation coverage.

Who is responsible for providing the coverage?

Experience Provider/Internship Supervisor:

Any business that enters into a bona fide cooperative education or student internship program sponsored by CSU for the purpose of providing on-the-job training for students, **for pay**, is considered an employer and potentially responsible for workers' compensation coverage. The employer can be any business, agency, organization or governmental agency.

International experience providers are required to follow the laws of the host country. There may be situations where there is a conflict of laws. Please contact the Office of Risk Management and Insurance for advice on international insurance.

What can be considered as pay for an internship?

Under Colorado statute, if a student receives any kind of remuneration (including room and/or board, salary) from the service provider then the intern may be entitled to workers' compensation benefits from that service provider.

- Companies are able to pay their interns a small stipend and still meet the legal requirements for unpaid internships. Money used solely to offset expenses incurred while performing activities can be considered reimbursement and not considered remuneration for employment but needs to be appropriately documented as such. i.e., mileage, reimbursement for vaccinations.
- If a stipend payment is associated with work performance or is of more than a nominal amount, it may be considered a wage

When is CSU responsible for providing Workers' Compensation Coverage?

CSU provides Workers' Compensation coverage for students receiving academic credit for a **qualified** internship provided:

1. The internship is unpaid and with a non-CSU entity.

2. That the injury or illness is work-related and deemed in the course and scope of the internship.
3. The internship must be sponsored by CSU and CSU must have placed the student with the employer for purposes of training. Approval by CSU must be in advance of commencement of qualified internships. CSU needs to have oversight of the internship through academic assignment deliverables through which a grade can be awarded, an advising/supervising role in the program and it needs to be for academic credit.
4. Retroactive approvals will not make an experience/volunteer opportunity or non-qualified internship, a qualified internship.
5. **Students serving in unremunerated internships at Colorado State University or one of its entities are not covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance** per the Workers' Compensation Act.

Colorado Workers' Compensation Act provides specific guidance pertaining to liability for student internships.

For complete description of Colorado statutes C.R.S. §§8-40-302(7) (a) and 8-40-202 (1)(a), please go to <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/dwc>

If I am in a qualified internship program, am I guaranteed coverage under workers' compensation if I am injured?

Anyone can file a claim for workers' compensation, but nothing is guaranteed. An investigation of the injury, activities involved in at the time of injury and internship requirements will be reviewed to assess whether or not the injury occurred during the course and scope of the internship role. Personal health issues are not covered by workers' compensation.

Can the experience provider be held responsible for injuries incurred during a qualified internship?

Yes, if the experience provider provided an unsafe environment or the actions of an employee of the experience provider caused the event that resulted in the injury, subrogation may be taken against them by CSU or CSU's insurance carrier, if CSU covers the injury.

Can Qualified Internships be approved retroactively?

Risk Management will not provide workers' compensation coverage for any injuries or internships that are set up/approved by the department retroactively. Please ensure that all placements and approvals occur PRIOR to the commencement of the qualified internship.

Does credit for the internship have to occur in the semester that the student is taking the internship to be considered for workers' compensation coverage?

As long as the internship is set up, all forms completed and approved for academic credit **prior** to commencement of the internship, the student can participate in internship activities during school breaks or over the summer and still be considered for coverage. *Signing up for an internship retroactively will not be accepted.* Injuries must be reported immediately when they occur to the Internship Coordinator and an injury report completed <http://rmi.prep.colostate.edu/workers-compensation/file-an-incident/>

Are field trips and other learning experiences that are for credit covered by Workers' Compensation?

Field trips, practicums and other learning experiences which do not meet the criteria of a qualified internship are considered academic in nature and are not covered under Workers' Compensation.

Are internships coordinated by CSU covered by CSU's Workers' Compensation?

Only internships that meet the criteria of a qualified internship are covered by CSU's workers' compensation.

Departments often serve as a resource to the students and outside agencies regarding learning opportunities. This does not constitute a sponsored and/or CSU internship.

What safety issues should be considered?

Experience providers are expected to identify the risks of activities and provide for any required safety training for any tools, computers, specialized equipment, vehicles, physical activities, hazardous chemicals, biologicals or radioactive materials, etc. that are part of the student's activities.

Experience providers who do not provide a safe environment for students to work in may be subject to subrogation for injuries sustained by CSU interns and/or CSU employees.

Who should I address insurance questions to?

Any other insurance requirements that the experience provider requires from CSU needs to be requested in advance. There may be some insurance that CSU will not provide, that is the responsibility of the internship site provider and/or the individual. For example, CSU does not provide auto liability insurance for personal vehicles. If professional liability insurance is required there are a number of associates/groups that provide this and the

student will need to investigate this with their academic advisor. Please contact Office of Risk Management & Insurance (970) 491-6745 for further assistance.