

Guidelines for Completion of COMM 492

Communication Studies Internship

(adopted 07/01/2006)

Why Do I Have to Do an Internship?

First, completing an internship is a part of the General Education Curriculum of Longwood University, and is required of all students.

GOAL 15. The application of knowledge and skills developed in the student's course of study through completion of an internship, guided field experience, or directed research (one credit).

OUTCOMES: STUDENTS WILL:

- Identify specific objectives to be achieved through the completion of the internship, field experience, or research project
- Evaluate their own progress toward those objectives

Beyond this, Communication Studies students at Longwood have been required to complete an internship throughout the history of the program, even before it became part of the General Education curriculum. This stems from our belief in the importance of balancing communication theory and practice in our program. To this end, the Communication Studies program offers the following goals for students during their internship experience:

- 1) Application of skills developed during the course of study within the program
- 2) Development of new skills and knowledge
- 3) Application and testing of theories explored in Communication Studies coursework
- 4) Development of professional experiences in which additional coursework may be grounded
- 5) Opportunity to explore possible career options
- 6) Development of professional skills that will be valued by potential employers upon graduation

When Should I Complete COMM 492?

Students typically complete COMM 492 during the summer between their junior and senior years. In some cases, students may complete COMM 492 earlier if they have met the necessary requirements, or during the fall semester of their Senior year. Students are strongly discouraged from completing COMM 492 while working on their Senior Thesis project due to time constraints created by both projects.

Why Do I Have to Register for the COMM 492 Course?

COMM 492 is a course that is an integral part of the Communication Studies curriculum, just like Public Speaking or Research Methods. Like any other course at Longwood, students are required by the Registrar's Office to register for the course at the time the work is being completed. For internships completed during the summer, this means registering for COMM 492 during Longwood University's Summer Session.

Why Do I Have to Pay an Internship Fee?

The supervision of internships is not counted as a normal part of a faculty member's teaching load. Internship fees exist to compensate the faculty members who supervise and evaluate student internships, much as if the faculty member were compensated to teach an additional course over and above his or her normal teaching load.

How Do I Find an Internship?

There are three basic ways students may find internships

- 1) Networking. Good old-fashioned networking is still one of the best ways to find an internship. If you are looking for an internship, make sure that everyone you know knows about your search, and the type(s) of internship(s) for which you are looking.
- 2) Career Center. Longwood University's Career center maintains databases of available internships and contact information for Longwood alumni that are available for free to all current Longwood students. All you need to do is register with the Career Center to access their databases. They won't do the work for you, but can help guide you through the process.
- 3) Communication Studies Program. Periodically, the Department receives information about upcoming internships and scholarships that are distributed to Communication Studies students via e-mail, and through the BlackBoard system.
- 4) Independent Search. Students may conduct their own independent search to identify internship possibilities.

How Do I Get Signed Up for COMM 492?

Ultimately, enrollment in COMM 492 is by permission only, which means that a faculty member or member of the Communication Studies office staff must manually enroll the student in COMM 492. In order to be enrolled in COMM 492, the following conditions must be met:

- 1) The student must have completed 24 credits in Communication Studies with a minimum GPA of 2.5.
- 2) The student must have completed a resume workshop and consultation and an interviewing workshop and practice interview with a member of the Longwood University Career Center staff. This must be completed no later than April 1 (Prior to Spring Break is highly recommended)
- 3) The student must complete and submit an Internship Proposal Form (available through the Communication Studies Department) no later than May 1.
- 4) The student must submit (along with the Internship Approval Form) a 2 – 3 page proposal for the internship which addresses the following issues
 - a. Position description—what will the intern's duties and responsibilities be? What are the expectations of the on-site supervisor and host organization for the intern? Will the intern be responsible for a particular project, or for producing materials or other measurable outcomes?

- b. Time allocation—How many total hours will be completed (a minimum of 150 total hours is required)? Also, approximately what percentage of the intern’s time will be allocated to each of the responsibilities described in the Position Description?
 - c. Rationale—Why does the student wish to obtain this particular internship? Is there interest in the specific job, or in the career field?
 - d. Skills fit—Based upon experiences working with the Career Center, the student should make an argument that the particular internship is a good match for their skills. **HINT:** You may not have job specific skills yet, but you should have interpersonal communication skills and others that will assist you in adapting to your internship environment.
 - e. Learning plan—What is it that the student hopes to learn from the internship experience? Again, the internship should move beyond reinforcement of existing skills to teach the student new skills, and provide perspective-broadening experiences.
 - f. Theoretical relevance—The student must a description of at least 3 Longwood University courses and 3 Communication Studies theories that are pertinent to the proposed internship.
- 5) Once the student has submitted the required Internship Approval documents, students will be notified within 10 days via their Longwood e-mail account whether or not their internship proposal has been approved.
 - 6) If the student’s proposal is accepted , and the student has obtained approval from the host organization to complete an internship under an on-site supervisor, then the student will be enrolled in COMM 492.
 - 7) The student is responsible for verifying (via the WIN system) that she/he is enrolled in COMM 492 at the beginning of the internship. If the students believes she/he is not properly enrolled, she/he should contact the Communication Studies office immediately (434-395-2643, commstudies@longwood.edu)

Is My Internship Guaranteed to be Approved?

The short answer is “No.” Although more than 90% of internship proposals are approved, there is no guarantee of this. One of the best things that a student can do is to speak with his/her academic advisor and/or the Communication Studies program’s Internship Supervisor in order to discuss internship ideas and requirements.

Grounds for rejecting internship proposals include, but are not limited to, the following rationale:

- 1) Potential for physical or psychological harm to the student.
- 2) Failure to meet minimum qualifications/pre-requisites.
- 3) Failure to meet specified guidelines.
- 4) Incomplete Internship Proposal materials.
- 5) Inadequate documentation/potential for learning and skill development.
- 6) Potential for damage to the reputation of the Communication Studies program or Longwood University.

Internship proposals may be rejected by the Internship Supervisor in consultation with the Chair of the Department of Communication Studies and Theatre for Items 1 – 5 on the list above. For Item #6, if a majority of the Communication Studies faculty concur that the proposed internship would be inappropriate, or if the Department Chair in Consultation with the Longwood University Director of Public Relations, believe the internship to be detrimental to the department and the University, then the proposed internship will be rejected. In the event of a tie vote among the Communication Studies faculty, the Chair will consult with the Longwood University Director of Public Relations or the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to break the tie.

Once I Have My Internship, What Do I Have to Do or Turn In?

There are several components of the evaluation process for your internship, which are outlined below.

- 1) A weekly journal of what you are observing, learning, feeling, and experiencing as you complete your internship. The journal will be kept via BlackBoard, which means that the student must have Internet access during the time period when the internship is being completed.
- 2) A PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the learning outcomes and personal development generated during the internship.
- 3) A professionally developed (computer generated) poster that demonstrates what the student learned. If student is asked to present the poster during a poster session, the Communication Studies program will assist the student in reproducing the poster to an appropriate size for demonstration.
- 4) A list of key talking points the student would use to explain the internship experience, either in a poster session, or if making a formal presentation to an audience.
- 5) Participation in a University or Departmental Internship Fair/Forum. Students may be asked to explain their internship experiences at a poster session or other event.
- 6) Completion of the Internship Evaluation Form by the on-site supervisor. The Communication Studies program will mail the form to the supervisor and collect the results.

Once the above criteria are met, the student will be assigned a grade for the course.

NOTE: COMM 492 is designated as a “Pass/Fail” course by the Longwood University Registrar. It is very common for students to receive an interim grade of “I” (Incomplete) once the on-site work is completed, but prior to the completion of Items 1 – 6 above.

References

In many cases, potential internship supervisors may want references from faculty members. Students must receive permission from faculty members before listing them as references. If a written recommendation is required, students must request the recommendation at least 10 days prior to the date that the recommendation is needed. In some cases, an organization may require verification that the student will receive academic credit for the internship. In this case, the student should request such a letter from the Communication Studies program’s Internship Supervisor.

COMM 392

If a student does not meet the minimum hours requirement for COMM 492, then she/he may elect to complete COMM 392 if they desire to receive academic credit for the internship experience. NOTE: COMM 392 may be completed *in addition to* COMM 492, but may not substitute for it. Students also may choose to enroll in COMM 392 if they have previously completed COMM 492, but wish to pursue an additional Communication Studies Internship. The requirements for approval and satisfactory completion for COMM 392 are the same as those listed above for COMM 492.