

INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK
for students in the

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION

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An application to participate in an internship is the equivalent of a job application and should be taken seriously. Similarly, an internship should be considered the equivalent of a job. The responsibility of applying and registering for an internship, complying with the deadlines and other requirements explained herein, lie with the student.

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ALL ABOUT INTERNSHIPS

Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

An internship is an opportunity for a student to work with communication professionals. It gives the student a chance to obtain practical, on-the-job experience, and to network, making contacts that may prove valuable later in the student's career. The Department of Communication does not require internships for graduation but strongly encourages every qualified student seeking a career in communication to do at least one internship.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME AN INTERN?

Any student majoring in Communication who meets the following requirements may participate in an internship:

1. Junior or senior status. At least 60 semester hours must be completed before the internship is to begin.
2. Completion of at least 15 semester hours of Communication course work.
3. A GPA of at least 2.5 in Communication course work and overall course work.
4. At least 6 hours of course work specifically related to the internship, as determined by the Director of Internships.

HOW DOES A STUDENT APPLY FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

Follow these steps to apply and register for an internship:

1. Make sure you meet the prerequisites. These prerequisites are set by the Department of Communication and **will not be waived**; you will waste a lot of time and will be disappointed unless you make sure you meet all the requirements before you begin.
2. Talk with your academic advisor about the type of internship that will fit into your educational and career goals. Some internships will not work well for you. You will need your advisor's signature on the application.
3. Locate a potential internship. Some possible sources are:
 - The Department of Communication website, internship postings are made regularly.
 - Potential employers you may know.
 - The Advising Office has a bulletin board in Shanks Hall of current and previous internships.
 - Department faculty members who may have ideas about jobs in your area of interest.
 - The Career Placement Services Office located in the Career Services Bldg. on campus.
 - If you know the area you wish to work, review the web, the newspaper, and/or the phone book for possible locations.
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4. Talk with a potential internship employer about a position.
5. During the university registration period prior to your internship, follow this procedure:
 - On the Departmental homepage, under "curriculum," download a copy of the Internship Handbook. Complete the Internship Approval Form [pp. 5 & 6]. The form requires all communication classes to be listed and your academic advisor's signature. Forms without a complete course list and your advisor's signature will not be accepted.
 - In consultation with your employer, complete the Student-Employer Agreement Form with signatures [p. 7].
 - Submit both forms to Kimberly Higgs, 130A Shanks Hall.

The internship assistant will check your file to make sure you meet all prerequisites. You will be notified by email of approval or non-approval. In addition, the due dates for the various reports will be specified in the email.

Remember, you are not registered for the course until:

- 1) all of your paperwork is properly and completely filled out, signed by you, your advisor, your employer, and turned in appropriately,
- 3) your internship submission has been reviewed and approved by the internship assistant,
- 4) your application has final approval by the Internship Coordinator.

NOTE: You are responsible for obtaining an internship position, completing the application and employer agreement forms and submitting the forms to the department prior to the semester of the internship or during the drop-add period. Once your paperwork has been turned in check on Hokie Spa to verify that you have been force-added for your internship hours.

HOW MUCH ACADEMIC CREDIT CAN STUDENTS EARN THROUGH INTERNSHIPS?

A student may apply **no more than six hours** of internship credit toward graduation. In addition, a student may receive **no more than three semester hours credit for any one internship experience or from any one employer.**

Internship credit is always earned on a **pass/fail basis**. Since no more than ten percent of the hours completed at Virginia Tech that count toward graduation may be taken pass/fail, each student must balance internship credit with other pass/fail course work. Also, as pass/fail hours, they **do not** count toward the 42 graded hours required for the major.

HOW MUCH MUST A STUDENT WORK TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships receive variable credit, ranging from one to three semester hours for each experience. Students must work at least 45 hours in the semester for each hour of academic credit earned. For three hours of credit, then, a student must work 135 hours during the internship, which amounts to nine hours a week during a 15-week fall or spring semester.

The department will only allow internships to begin during Summer Session I. Students will receive an “X” at the end of Summer I, then the “P” or “F” at the end of Summer II.

MAY AN INTERNSHIP EMPLOYER REQUIRE A STUDENT TO WORK FOR MORE HOURS PER WEEK THAN THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT?

A student and employer generally reach an agreement on the number of hours the student will work before the student registers for an internship. A student may work more than the minimum number of hours specified by the department and can count that extra time as valuable on-the-job training. A student may receive no more than three hours of academic credit for each experience, however, no matter how many hours the student actually works.

ARE STUDENTS REQUIRED TO PAY TUITION FOR INTERNSHIPS?

Internships earn academic credit. Therefore, students pay tuition for internships just as they would any course. In the summer students pay tuition costs for 1-3 hours, the costs are the same for each block of credit hours. **Students away from campus during the internship period, as is often the case with summer internships, may receive a waiver from having to pay some fees, but no waiver of tuition will be granted.** Ms. Kimberly Higgs will take care of this for you once final approval is given.

MAY A STUDENT TAKE AN INTERNSHIP AND OTHER CLASSES AS WELL?

An internship is much like a part-time job. Students can often work at local internships and simultaneously take other classes. However, students are encouraged to plan their course loads carefully during an internship semester. Often an internship requires a time investment greater than the number of hours actually on the job – travel time, for example.

ARE INTERNS PAID FOR THEIR WORK?

The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences no longer prohibits academic credit for paid internships. Some sponsoring organizations, particularly those in metropolitan areas, will also pay a student's transportation expenses. This should be specified in writing on the internship agreement.

MAY INTERNSHIPS BE SUBSTITUTED FOR REQUIRED COMMUNICATION COURSES?

No courses required for graduation may be taken pass/fail. Internships, therefore, are always counted as electives and may never be substituted for required courses.

HOW ARE INTERNS EVALUATED?

A student does not automatically get a passing grade for an internship. The Internship Coordinator will evaluate the student's work based on the following:

- all forms/reports from the student are received **by stated deadlines**
- a written professional report evaluating the internship from the student is turned in to the internship coordinator by the last day of classes in the appropriate semester. **The evaluation report will be at least a three (3) page typed, double-spaced report, that includes a title page, sub-headings, and is free of all errors.**
- written evaluations from the student's work site supervisor during and at the completion of the internship. The student is responsible for ensuring that the employer submits these papers to the internship coordinator by the stated deadlines.
- Any other materials appropriate for the student to submit to the Internship Coordinator are based on the type of work done. (All such materials must be agreed upon before the internship begins.)
- Highly critical or negative comments by employer or a grade of C or lower by the employer most often results in failing the course.

All internship materials become part of the student's academic file in the Department.

MUST A STUDENT CONSIDER ONLY THOSE INTERNSHIPS LISTED IN THE DEPARTMENT?

No. Students must arrange their own internships and may find these in any number of ways [web, networking, career fairs, etc.]. However, it is important that students have enough coursework related to the internship in order for the experience to be beneficial to both student and employer.

WHAT IF I DON'T FIND AN INTERNSHIP UNTIL AFTER THE REGISTRATION PERIOD IS OVER? CAN I STILL ADD THE CLASS?

No. It is important to apply for an internship before the last day to add classes. Remember that the College and University treat an internship as any other course, so it must be added prior to the deadline for classes being added "Last Day to Add" on VT academic calendar.

Virginia Tech Department of Communication
Student Internship Approval Form

Date submitted _____

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Name of Student	ID#	Email Address
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Local Address (include city, state & zip)	Phone #
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ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

Name of Organization where you will be interning _____

Supervisor's Name and email address _____

Work Address (include city, state & zip, if other than Blacksburg)	Phone #
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INTERNSHIP INFORMATION:

Proposed internship title: _____

Dates of Internship: _____ to _____

Hours worked each week _____

I will receive [please circle] 1 2 3 credit hours during: Fall Spring Summer I 20__
(This number is determined by the hours worked – see Internship Handbook)

COURSE INFORMATION:

My COMM Option is: PR CMST MJ

Hours completed overall (at the beginning of your internship): _____ *Hours In Comm* _____

Virginia Tech Department of Communication
Student – Employer Agreement Form

_____ Date

I, _____
Name & Title of Employment Supervisor

Name of Organization

Address (include city, state & zip)

Phone (include area code)

Email address of supervisor

accept _____ as an intern
Student name

to work _____ hours per week for _____ weeks.

Intern duties will include [please use another sheet of paper if necessary]:

Student agrees to:

1. Abide by employer work requirements.
2. Submit the **Student Progress Report** to the Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) by 5 p.m. on the **Last Day to Drop Classes** of the appropriate semester. Neglecting to do so will result in the student receiving a failing grade.
3. Submit the **Student's Final Report Form with a 3 page (minimum) written evaluation** to the Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) by 5 p.m. on the last day of classes for the semester. Late submissions will result in a failing grade.

Student's Signature: _____

Employer agrees to:

1. Submit completed **Employer Progress Report** to the Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) by the end of the sixth week of the semester (Note: It is the responsibility of the student to provide the employer with this deadline date).
2. Submit the **Employer's Final Evaluation** to the Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) by 5 p.m. on the last day of classes of the semester. (Note: It is the responsibility of the student to provide the employer with this deadline date).

Employer's Signature: _____

At any time the employer may contact the VT Communication Department Internship Coordinator, Dr. Robert Denton or Internship Assistant, Ms. Kimberly Higgs.

Student Progress Report

[Please fill out and submit to Internship Coordinator.]

Date

Name

ID#

During the first half of the internship did your duties or activities vary from those specified in the **Student-Employer Agreement Form**? If “yes,” explain the difference below. If “no,” explain what you like best about the internship.

Thus far, how has your internship benefited you and your employer?

Have any problems arisen in connection with your internship? Explain.

What do you plan to do during the remainder of the semester to make the internship a better experience?

Make any additional comments on the back of this sheet.

Student’s signature

Date

Return to: Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) no later than 5 p.m. on the Last Day to Drop in the appropriate semester.

Employer Progress Report

[Please fill out and submit to Internship Coordinator.]

Student Intern's Name

Supervisor's Name and Email

Name & address of Organization

What is your evaluation of the intern thus far?

Have any problems arisen during the first half of the internship? If so, explain, including a statement as to how the problems were resolved or how they are continuing.

Do you plan to make any changes in the internship during the remainder of the semester? If so, please explain what they will be.

Please make additional comments on the back of this sheet.

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Return to: Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) no later than 5 p.m. on the Last Day to Drop in the appropriate semester

(Note: It is the responsibility of the student to provide the employer with this deadline date).

Virginia Tech Department of Communication
Student's Final Report

Date

Student Intern's Name (please print)

ID#

Company/Agency/Organization where interned

Write a professional report of at least three typed, double-spaced pages, evaluating your internship. Use a title page and sub-headings in your report. Be certain that you give appropriate citations (do not plagiarize) and double check all spelling, grammar, style, and punctuation. Your paper must be free of all errors. Address the following questions and points. Sign this form, attach it the report and turn it to the Internship Coordinator **no later than** 5 p.m. on the last day of classes for the appropriate semester.

1. *Briefly describe the principal duties/activities you performed during the internship.*
2. *What were the most beneficial aspects?*
3. *What were the least beneficial aspects?*
4. *In what ways did your academic instruction prepare you for this internship?*
5. *In what ways was your classroom instruction inadequate or lacking in preparing you for this internship?*
6. *Did your employer provide you with assistance and opportunities that you believed were necessary for this internship?*
7. *Would you recommend your internship employer to other students? Why or why not?*
8. *From this internship did you determine that this is the career path for you or will you choose another career path after this internship experience?*

Student's Signature

Date

Return to: Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) no later than 5 p.m. on the Last Day of classes in the appropriate semester.

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Failure to turn in your report form and 3 page (min) evaluation by the last day of classes will result in a failing grade for your internship.

**Employer's Final Evaluation of Internship
PART 1 – Student Performance**

Student Intern's Name

ID#

Supervisor/Title/Company or Organization of Internships

Internships are designed to be learning experiences for students. Your evaluation of student performance in assigned internship can help us achieve this end. Please answer the following questions on this sheet. We are also including several questions that are optional; we encourage you to answer them, but your responses are not necessary to complete the evaluation of the student. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1. If you were to assign a letter grade to this student, what would that grade be?

A B C D F

2. What were the student's strong and weak points?

3. In what ways did the student's academic instruction prepare the student for the internship? Where was the academic preparation lacking?

Thank you for your response.

Would you like to be contacted by the Internship Coordinator regarding this intern? () Yes () No

Supervisor's signature

Date

Return to: Internship Assistant, Department of Communication, 130A Shanks Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 24061-0311 or 540-231-9817 (fax) no later than 5 p.m. on the Last Day of Classes in the appropriate semester

(Note: It is the responsibility of the student to provide the employer with this deadline date).

