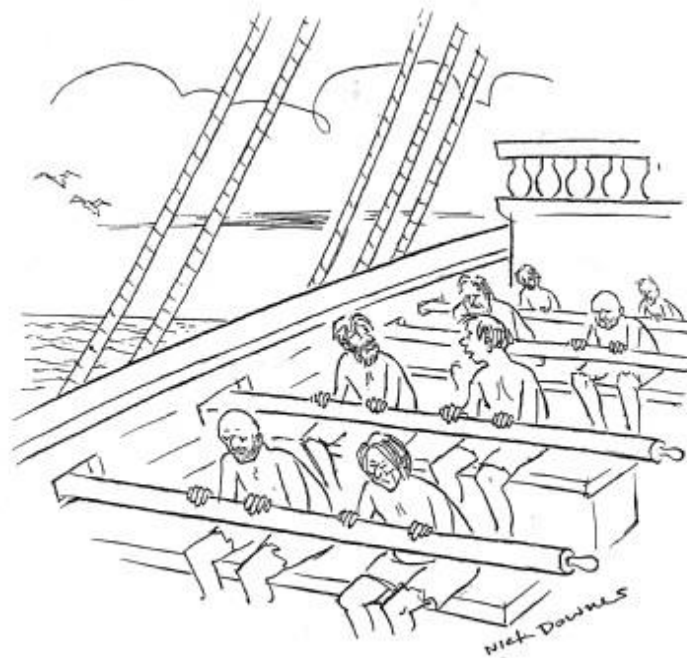


Revised 2022

# YOUR INTERNSHIP



"Are you in their internship program, as well?"

## Everything You Need to Know

**Department of Communication  
Eastern Connecticut State University**

Your internship is the culmination of the undergraduate program in Communication at Eastern Connecticut State University. This is your opportunity to work with communication professionals and obtain practical, on-the-job experience, as well as make contacts that may prove valuable later in your career. Your advisor will help you make the most of this opportunity.

Communication internships are designed to benefit both students and employers. An intern from the Department of Communication at Eastern Connecticut State University is expected to bring to the organization the expertise necessary to provide high quality support at the beginning professional level; organizations are expected to offer the intern practical experience in a communication-related career setting. While some routine or clerical work is acceptable, the internship experience should also offer substantial hands-on professional experience to the intern.

## **Finding an Internship**

### **When should I start thinking about completing an internship?**

You should begin looking for an internship when you are a junior or senior – interns are expected to have completed at least 60 credits towards a degree. You should also have considerable classroom experience in your chosen field. A student interested in a Public Relations internship, for example, should have completed at least six credits of PR-related classes before searching for an internship. Employers have come to expect Eastern interns to arrive with a solid foundation in the field, which allows them to offer the intern more challenging assignments.

Don't wait until the last minute! Many internships are competitive and have application deadlines well in advance of your start date. As a general rule, start looking for an internship during the semester prior to when you plan to complete the work.

### **Are there specific requirements for the type of internship I find?**

All internships must be communication-related in some way. While the Communication Department defines the term "communication" in a broad and reasonable way, all internships must involve some form of effective oral, written, and/or electronic communication, and should help the student make progress towards achieving long-term career goals. The internship must provide the student a learning experience by applying previous coursework in the Department or opening new avenues of inquiry.

Although simply doing low-level tasks in certain environments can provide valuable information and networking contacts, our interns are expected to do more than merely run errands, fetch coffee, or perform clerical duties.

Students planning an internship must remember that the employer invests time and energy supervising and training the intern. Services of value are expected in return. The internship is a reciprocal arrangement: students exchange their work in return for on-the-job training, work experience, and an important resume item.

## **Will the Communication Department set me up with an internship?**

The principal responsibility for finding an internship rests with the student. (Think of it as training for your post-graduation job search.) Your advisor and other professors will, of course, be happy to give you suggestions of appropriate organizations. The Department of Communication periodically offers internship workshops and hosts information sessions with regional employers such as ESPN.

Be sure to check out the resources on our department website, especially [Career Resources](#) and [IDEA Employability Resources](#). It's also a good idea to keep an eye on the bulletin board just outside the Communication Department office suite. Internship and job openings are posted there regularly. Students in the past have interned at many kinds of organizations, including:

television stations	radio stations
advertising agencies	public relations firms
hospitals	banks
sports teams	insurance companies
small mom-and-pop businesses	tourism agencies
newspapers	government offices
dance studios	day camps
magazines	film studios
casinos	community theaters
aquariums	nonprofit groups

Many organizations are open to hosting interns but do not advertise for them. Informal conversations with friends and family can provide valuable leads.

In addition, many of the Communication clubs focus specifically on career opportunities. Get involved with TV-22, WECS, the *Campus Lantern*, the American Advertising Federation (AAF), or the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) – these activities are fun and also look great on a resume! Another great resource for establishing yourself professionally is Eastern's [Center for Internships and Career Development](#).

## **Transportation is a problem for me. Are there any internships available on campus?**

While it is recommended that the student obtain off-campus experience, the location of the internship is less important than the learning opportunities presented by the experience itself. Communication students have successfully interned for university offices including University Relations, Sports Information Office, Alumni Affairs, Center for Early Childhood Education, Chartwell's Dining Services, and other campus offices.

There are also a number of internship opportunities located close to Eastern., including local businesses and nonprofit groups. Particularly popular have been WILI Radio, Red Cross, Charter Communication, and Windham Hospital, among others.

## **Can I do an internship over the summer or during winter break?**

Provided that you can fit in the required 120 hours (that's three weeks of full-time 9-5 work or about 10 hours per week during a regular semester), you can take the internship at any time. However, you should be aware that when taking the internship in the summer or winter session,

you will be charged for it as a three-credit class. During the fall and spring semesters, the tuition cost of the internship simply is included as part of your full-time course load.

### **Does my internship need to be in Connecticut?**

As long as it's communication-related, your internship can be based anywhere. Many students choose to do an internship closer to home, but others enjoy travelling into New York or Boston. Students have done internships across the country, and some have even found international internships!

### **Can I do a virtual internship, or do I need to physically be in an office?**

The Department of Communication accepts both virtual and on-ground internships.

### **Times are tough. I need to get paid for my internship.**

Students may complete either a paid or unpaid internship. For an unpaid internship, your payment comes in the form of college credit. As an intern, you will be functioning as a quasi- professional, sitting in on meetings, shadowing experienced workers, and so on. Interns are expected to do more than fetch coffee and make copies, unlike entry-level employees who are paid for those tasks (but not much).

Because some companies *have* exploited unpaid interns, the federal Department of Labor has established criteria for internships under the Fair Labor and Standards Act. Interns at for-profit organizations may participate in training programs without compensation when the following six criteria are met.

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

The Department of Communication only approves internships which comply with these legal requirements.

### **I already have a job where I do some communication work. Can I use that for the internship?**

Although some students have found ways to make this kind of scenario work out, it is unlikely to be successful for a variety of practical reasons. Can you really arrange to work your regular job on

MWF and then come in on TR for an unpaid internship in another department at the company? As always, check with your advisor if this is a possibility you are considering.

### **What about the six-credit internship?**

Internships may be either 3 credits (120 hours of work) or 6 credits (240 hours). Students selecting the 6-credit option must demonstrate a strong rationale for that choice, such as an organizational requirement, and the work done for the second 120 hours must differ substantially from that done for the first 120 (i.e. you might do public relations for the first 120 hours and work in video for the second 120). Frankly, your resume will be stronger if you complete two separate 3-credit internships at two different organizations.

Students who are approved for a six credit internship must complete the [Six-Credit Internship Registration Form](#) and the [Internship Info Sheet](#), and send both to their advisor in order to register.

### **I want to do even more internships. Can I register for additional internship credit?**

Internships are a great way to network and get a foot in the door to start your career. Students may register for a total of 6 credits of internship as an undergraduate. The Department of Communication encourages students interested in extensive internship experience to pursue additional opportunities independently.

Note that only one internship is counted toward the requirements for the Communication major. An additional three-credit internship counts as general university electives, not Communication major or minor electives.

## **Resumes and Job Interviews**

### **How do I write a resume?**

If you haven't already found the [Center for Internships and Career Development](#) (CICD), you should check them out immediately! They are located on the Second Floor of the Wood Support Services Building and are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 – 5:00. They can help you with everything from [writing a resume](#) to finding an internship to the etiquette expected at a [job interview](#) dinner. The services of these professionals are included in your tuition – take advantage of them!

### **What should I say when I contact a potential internship employer?**

Along with your resume, send a cover letter indicating that you are looking for an internship. Include a short statement of why you would like the internship, what you can offer them, and how the internship would complement your career goals. Indicate that you will be receiving college credit for the work performed and that no compensation is required. This is especially helpful if you are applying to a company or organization that does not advertise publicly for interns. Follow up with a phone call within a week or so.

## **Before You Start Work**

### **I've been offered an internship! Now what do I have to do?**

Celebrate....and go talk to your advisor. You will need to fill out two forms, [Internship Registration Form](#) and the [Internship Information Sheet](#), both of which you'll need in order to register. These forms can also be found on the [Communication Department Internship](#) webpage.

Fill out the top portion of the Internship Registration Form with your information, save it, then email it to your advisor for a signature. Your advisor will collect the signatures from the department chair and the dean for you.

You should complete the Internship Info Sheet with your supervisor at the internship site. The Info Sheet is your "contract" with the employer for the duration of the internship, and specifies the organization's expectations for your work.

Each intern has two supervisors, one on-the-job site supervisor and the other from the faculty of the Department of Communication (usually your advisor). It is important that all three parties – you, your faculty advisor, and your on-site supervisor – share an agreement about the number of hours you are scheduled to complete, the starting and ending dates of your internship, and the tasks you will be performing. Completing the Info Sheet protects you from any misunderstandings about your responsibilities that might arise during your internship.

### **I've been offered two internships! How can I decide which one is the best for me?**

Congratulations! Every internship should benefit both the intern and the organization. Some questions to ask before accepting the internship include:

What days and hours will I be expected to work?

Can I fit the internship into my existing class and work schedule?

Do those times line up with the 120 hours required for the internship?

If the organization expects more than 120 hours, am I willing to put in additional time? Will I be able to finish the 120 hours by the university's deadline for completion?

What duties will I be expected to complete on the job?

Do I currently have the skills to meet those expectations?

What opportunities will I have to learn new skills?

Will this internship improve my ability to get a professional position after graduation?

Note that the organization is counting on your work as an intern. It is unprofessional to accept an internship position and then back out if something better comes along.

### **Help! The online course registration won't let me sign up for an internship.**

In order to register for an internship, you must fill out the online Internship Registration Form and Internship Info Sheet. After you submit these to your advisor, the paperwork automatically makes its way to the Department Chair and Dean, and then to the Registrar's office.

Please note that these forms MUST be submitted either prior to the start of the semester in which you plan to do the internship or within the first few days of that semester, before the add/drop period closes. Late registrations are never accepted by the Dean.

### **I didn't know about the Internship Registration Form, but I've already completed 120 hours of work, and I have all of the logs, the paper, and the evaluation forms. Can't you put it in retroactively for me?**

No. You will need to complete another internship in the future once the paperwork is correctly filed.

### **My internship site wants some sort of letter from Eastern verifying that I am a student.**

No problem. Simply provide the Department Secretary with the name and contact information for your internship employer and we'll send one out right away.

## **On the Job**

### **So, I've handed in the Internship Registration Form and the Info Sheet. Now what?**

There are six action items you will need to finish in order to get credit for an internship. You can begin on the first two items right away and keep the others in mind for the end of the internship. All of these items are submitted to the faculty advisor who signed your Internship Registration Form.

1. Complete 120 hours of work on site (for a three-credit internship)
2. Maintain an ongoing log of those hours including details about your activities
3. Write a ten-page reflection paper about your experience
4. Submit [your evaluation of the internship site](#) online
5. Have your site supervisor send an [evaluation form](#) online
6. Include a portfolio of work completed at your internship – if applicable

### **When are these due?**

You will receive an email from your advisor with specific due dates for each of these. Typically, the logs should be handed in to your advisor when you are about one-third of the way through the internship (40 hours), again at the two-thirds mark (80 hours), and once again at the end (120 hours). The paper, portfolio (when appropriate), and all evaluation forms are due at the end of the

semester.

### **What do I put in the logbook?**

The intern log is nothing more than a daily diary that lists the date, number of hours you worked, and what you did. The content may be informal; check with your advisor for specifics on that person's preferred format. The more detail you include in each entry, the more help the log will be when it's time to write your final 10-page paper. You should keep a running summary of your hours in the logbook so that you know how close you are to completing the required 120 hours.

### **Sample Log entry**

January 8, 10:00 – 4:00 (6 hours, total hours = 24)

I spent a half hour this morning meeting some new producers and people I don't know where to put into the system yet as I made my way down to the control room. Doug explained to me again how he captures graphics and assigns them randomly until he gets a finalized program.

I spent the rest of the morning in the audio side of the control room with John and Steve as they showed me how the board works. They were discussing how the strategy would change between this week's programming and next week during the telethon.

I spent most of the afternoon editing video, picking sound bites and cutaways, and jotting down ideas for voiceovers.

### **Any tips for success on the job?**

You will be working in the real world and making real decisions. Every aspect of your behavior contributes to your image in the business world. Common sense and good judgment will help you establish good rapport with your internship supervisor and coworkers. You are in charge of what you learn and how much you learn. Most importantly, your internship will help you determine whether or not you want to pursue your chosen field.

You may feel somewhat unsure of yourself when you start your internship. By following these suggestions, you may alleviate some of your anxiety.

Be pleasant and polite to everyone with whom you come in contact.

Be enthusiastic about your internship opportunity. Remember, all tasks are important, no matter how menial!

Be punctual. Show your professional attitude

Dress appropriately for your position. When in doubt, dress up rather than down.

Check with your supervisor regarding policies before a problem arises.

### **I'm running into a problem at my internship. What should I do?**

Occasionally, interns experience a conflict with their supervisor or find that the tasks they have



been assigned don't match what was promised. (This is one reason why filling out that Internship Info Form completely is so important – it can save you from potential problems!) If this happens, be sure to contact your advisor promptly. They can offer you advice, talk directly to your internship supervisor, or brainstorm other solutions with you.

**I put in some extra hours and finished my internship early. Now my supervisor is insisting that I keep coming to work until the end of the semester anyway.**

Remember that Info Sheet you filled out with your supervisor before you began? That's your "contract" for the internship. The organization may be depending on you to perform certain tasks until the date they anticipated you would be finished. If you can't work things out amicably with your supervisor, have a talk with your faculty advisor... and remember not to burn any bridges professionally.

**Ugh! If I had known it would be this bad, I'd never have taken this internship!**

Most interns enjoy their experience, but occasionally, there's a mismatch between the intern and the organization (or the supervisor). Chalk it up to a "learning experience." It's better to find out now that your planned career in [x] would be a disaster than after graduation when you're committed to a job in the field.

Don't get pulled into conflicts among coworkers. These may have started long before you appeared on the scene and probably will continue long after you leave the internship. Just do your best and be nice to everyone.

## **After the Internship**

As your internship winds down, you can start reflecting on your experiences and evaluating how your internship fits in to your long-term career plans. Now is the time to begin work on your ten-page paper, submit [your evaluation](#) of the internship, and remind your internship supervisor to submit [their organization's](#) evaluation of you. Don't forget to update your resume to include the internship!

**Ten pages?!! I did pretty much the same thing every day. What can I possibly say about my internship for ten whole pages?**

Here are some suggestions. This is not an exhaustive list, but a place where you might begin to reflect upon your experiences.

**What did you learn on the job?** Read through your log for inspiration – don't just summarize the logs (your advisor has already read them!) but build upon them. Did you learn technical skills? People skills? Communication skills? How to take the train into the city? Even if you did absolutely nothing of interest and had a terrible time, write about that.

**Move from specific to abstract.** If you learned to post social media content, what did that activity teach you about strategic communication in general? If you did paperwork for the promotions department, what did that tell you about the behind-the-scenes operation of a television station?

**Did the internship match up with your expectations?** Did people do things “by the book” or did they break the rules you learned in class? Were you surprised at anything you found? What were the best and worst parts of the internship?

**The paper should offer a big picture, philosophical view of your internship.** After all, this was supposed to be the capstone of your undergraduate experience, one of the last things you do before you venture out into the world with a “real” job. Use the opportunity to contemplate your own place in your chosen profession. How will you do things differently on your next assignment? Where do you see yourself ten years in the future?

## **Internship Checklist**

### **Before you begin work**

\_\_\_ [Internship Registration Form](#) submitted to advisor

\_\_\_ [Info Sheet Form](#) submitted to advisor

### **During the semester**

\_\_\_ Logbook documenting 120 hours or work

### **At the end of the semester**

\_\_\_ Ten-page reflection paper

\_\_\_ [Your evaluation](#) of internship site

\_\_\_ [Supervisor’s evaluation](#) of your work

\_\_\_ Portfolio of work completed at internship (if applicable)

\_\_\_ Add internship to your resume