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## Student Academic Internships and Community Engaged Learning

### I. Policy

This policy establishes guidelines for domestic, credit-bearing and/or academically related student internships, service learning and other forms of curricular community engaged learning.

### II. Purpose

Credit bearing community-engaged learning experiences and internships enrich students' learning opportunities beyond the classroom setting; however, they may present unique risks that our universities must address. For this reason, risk assessments and acknowledgment of said risks become an important component of such programs.

The purpose of this policy is to help universities outline a planning and placement process and mitigate risk associated with academic internships and community engaged learning.

### III. Delegation of Authority

Each university president is delegated the responsibility for the dissemination, implementation and maintenance of this policy.

### IV. Procedures

Each university must either adhere to the requirements outlined in this policy or develop its own university-specific policy that, at a minimum, includes and addresses the following components:

## A. Planning

1. The individual/group responsible for oversight of the university policy;
2. The awarding of academic credit;
3. Accommodation plan for students if one is needed;
4. Emergency response and communication plan;
5. Student compensation, if applicable; and
6. Minimum requirements for contractual agreements between the learning site and the university.

## B. Pre-Placement Assessment

A pre-placement assessment of the learning site as an educational placement for CSU students shall be conducted and documented in writing. The documentation shall be retained by the responsible university office and upon request be available for review. The assessment shall, at minimum, include the following information:

- The potential for the learning site to provide an educationally appropriate experience related to the student's course;
- Identification of the potential risks associated with the learning site;
- Identification of an appropriate individual from the learning site to supervise the student at the learning site;
- Selection criteria and basic skills required of the student;
- Agreement of the learning site to meet university expectations;
- The learning site and university roles in the educational placement, and the student's responsibilities; and
- Confirmation the learning site complies with all applicable federal, state and local regulations.

## C. Learning Site Visits

Site visits play an important role in assessing the suitability and safety of new learning sites and are strongly encouraged as part of the university's risk mitigation strategy. While site visits can be time-intensive and may present logistical challenges, they provide valuable firsthand insights into the site's environment, operations, and supervision practices. In some cases, a site visit may not be required if the university can reasonably demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the learning site through alternative means. This may include reviewing the site's online presence, examining publicly available reports, or communicating directly with site personnel.

## D. Learning Site Placement Agreement

A learning site placement agreement is required between the university and the learning site unless otherwise excused or waived by the university's delegated authority. An agreement may not be required

when the student is a paid hourly or salary employee of the learning site. A student who receives a stipend or other form of remuneration is not considered to be a paid employee of the learning site.

The agreement, at minimum, must include provisions equivalent to or substantially the same as each of the provisions contained in Sections I through IV of the University-Learning Site Comprehensive Student Placement Agreement template.

## E. Placement and Orientation

Before the student begins the placement, the following steps shall be completed:

- Student orientation (can be completed by learning site, university, or both) that includes conduct expectations, health and safety instructions, and student emergency contacts;
- If placement is not required as part of the student's academic program, the student must complete the Hold Harmless/Release of Liability Waiver Form (see [California State University Use of Approved Release of Liability \(EO 1051\)](#)); and
- If the placement is required as part of an academic program and the student declines to sign the waiver, faculty should be prepared to have an alternative assignment (i.e., research, paper, class presentation) for the student.

## F. Ensuring Academic Relevance in Student Placements

To maintain academic relevance and alignment with university standards, all student placements should be supported by a document - such as a position description or learning plan - that outlines the learning objectives, responsibilities, and expected outcomes.

On campuses where faculty have authorized **centralized** review and approval of placements, the following actions are considered equivalent to formal signatures:

- Faculty authorization of the position review process serves as their endorsement;
- The learning site supervisor submission of the position is treated as their agreement to provide what is listed in the document; and
- The student self-placement and completion of required paperwork confirms their agreement.

Documentation of the above items shall be retained by the university supervising office or a designated university office.

## G. Document Retention

The university is expected to retain documents related to each internship or community engaged learning placement consistent with CSU systemwide document retention guidelines. See [Systemwide Records Information Retention and Disposition Schedules Implementation Policy \(EO 1031\)](#).

It is recommended that the instructional agenda, name and contact information for the learning site, student information, and executed liability waiver be retained together after the conclusion of the semester/quarter during which the placement occurred. Electronic copies of the documents are permissible.

## H. University Review

Universities should develop a plan and determine an appropriate schedule to review the programs covered by this policy for educational purposes and for safety to the students. This review may take into account information gathered from on-site supervisors, faculty, university staff, and student experience.

## V. Authority

This policy is issued pursuant to [Section II of the Standing Orders of the Board of Trustees of the California State University](#) as further delegated by the [Standing Delegations of Administrative Authority](#). The president may delegate authority and responsibility described in this policy to other campus officials pursuant to [Section VI of the Standing Orders of the Board of Trustees of the California State University](#).

## VI. Attachment A

### A. Description of Terms

Listed below for informational purposes are descriptions of key terms pertaining to this Policy. They are not intended to supersede university-based definitions.

**Academic Internships:** Typically related to career interests; they provide students with direct experience in a work setting and include supervision/coaching from professionals. Students receive course credit by completing all required course assignments related to the internship approved by a faculty member.

*For the purpose of this policy, "academic internship" does **not** include teacher credentialing placements, clinical placements such as nursing, counseling, physical therapy or occupational therapy, faculty lead trips, or independent student studies/research.*

**Community Engaged Learning (CEL):** The collaboration between institutions of higher education and community partners (entities, organizations, or groups with whom a relationship can be developed) in which students learn and develop through participation in the collaboration; the outcomes of which benefit the common good.

**Common Good:** As distinguished from private or individual interests, the term "common good" refers to the material, cultural or institutional interests and goals that members of a society have in common that embody sustained mutual respect.

**Curricular Community Engaged Learning (CCEL):** A form of community engaged learning. It is a course-based community service experience characterized by reciprocal partnerships that enhance student understanding, the outcomes of which benefit the common good.

**Emergency Response and Communication Plan:** The documentation of procedures, responsibilities, and actions that must be taken by both the learning site and university during emergency incidents that occur while a student is in placement activities.

**Hold Harmless/ Release of Liability:** The California State University Use of Approved Waiver of Release

of Liability (Waiver) was established to facilitate a uniform and consistent application of risk control in the California State University system. The Release of Liability Waiver form is a legal document that students should read thoroughly before signing. Waivers are strongly recommended for all community-engaged learning and academic internship participants and must be completed prior to the first day of placement. They should be stored according to your university document retention policy. Faculty should be prepared to have an alternative assignment (i.e., research, paper, class presentation) for students that decline signing the waiver.

**Learning Plan:** The educational document typically between the student, faculty and learning site that outlines the work or service to be provided by the student, the learning outcomes, and the placement logistics.

**Learning Site:** The partner agency/affiliate/organization who is hosting and supervising the CSU student.

**Site:** The physical location where the student will perform work activity.

- **Remote Placement Site:** A placement that occurs away from the learning site's physical location. Remote placements can occur anywhere (another physical location or virtually) that the organization has authorized tasks/projects to be completed. This may include locations outside of the state or country.
- **Virtual Placement:** A placement that does not occur in-person, but rather through the use of one or more technologies by the student who is delivering the work/service for the learning site either synchronously or asynchronously by online platforms and/or by other modes of online task submission and interaction (i.e., audio conference, video meetings, email, web research, uploading/downloading documents).

**Service Learning (also referred to as community-based learning):** A form of community engaged learning. It is a teaching method in which meaningful service is a critical component of course curriculum and assessment of student learning. It is characterized by critical reflection and a collaborative partnership among the instructor, students, and community, with a focus on both student learning and community impact.

**Student Academic Field Experience for Credit Liability Insurance Program (SAFECLIP):** SAFECLIP provides general and professional liability coverage for students enrolled in community-engaged learning and internships for which students receive academic credit (see [link](#) for detailed information). In essence, the program provides indemnity, including legal defense costs for students, faculty, the University, and the learning site (when required by contract/ agreement), if there is a claim or lawsuit involving injury to others or damage to property in connection with academic internships and community-engaged learning experiences. Please note the SAFECLIP program does not afford coverage for activities that occur outside of the United States and its territories. International service-learning and academic internship placements should be reviewed with the university risk manager.

**Student Employment Based Placements:** Student placements in which the student is compensated as a paid hourly or salaried employee of the Learning Site meet the criteria for formal employment and therefore do not require a university learning site placement agreement. Placements where students receive only a stipend or other forms of remuneration (e.g., gift cards, scholarships, or honoraria) do not qualify as employment under this definition.

**Student Professional Liability Insurance (SPLIP):** SPLIP provides medical professional liability and educators errors and omissions insurance of CSU students enrolled in a health profession practicum, social welfare program, social work program, or education credential program of the CSU who are required by a host institution to obtain general liability and/or professional liability insurance for participation in the institution’s affiliation program (see [link](#) for detailed information).

## All Revision Dates

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## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
DVC	Dilcie Perez: Deputy VC ASA, Chief SA Offcer	10/9/2025
Area Manager	Christina Cruz: Comm Spclst, Acad & Sdnt Affrs	10/9/2025
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