ENGR 597 – Internship in Engineering with Professional Writing and Communication
Units: 0.5
Summer 2025
Course URL: **https://brightspace.usc.edu/d2l/home**
Location: Virtual (Online)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is for the first internship taken by Viterbi master's students. Within two course components, students will gain practical work experience in a professional internship and develop their communication skills. The course is fully online.

Please note the sections of this syllabus:

1. Course Schedule
2. Professional Writing and Communication Component
3. Internship Component
4. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems
5. Sample Internship Reflections & SkillSurvey Information

Students must successfully complete both the 'Professional Writing and Communication' and the 'Internship' components listed below to receive credit in this course.

International students must additionally adhere to Curricular Practical Training (CPT) guidelines. The internship's purpose must be academic, not just for employment purposes, and integral to the student's degree program. **Successful completion of the course is required to be considered for future CPT authorizations.** For more information regarding CPT policies, please refer to https://ois.usc.edu/employment/.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Weekly Breakdown

Check each of the deliverable boxes to ensure that you will receive credit for this course. Any boxes left unchecked will result in a No Credit grade.

<mark>Yellow</mark> = Writing Component Assignment Due Date

<mark>Blue</mark> = Internship Component Assignment Due Date

Note: The communication component is offered concurrently with the internship

	Weekly Activities	Communications Textbook Reading	Deliverables/Due Dates
Week 1 -5 May 19-June 16	**Internship work**		
Week 6 June 23	**Internship work** **6/25: Communication Lecture #1** COURSE OVERVIEW WORKPLACE WRITING WRITING SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL TONE	Tebeaux & Dragga **Ch. 1**: *Writing at Work* **Ch. 2**: *Writing for Readers* **Ch. 7**: *Emails, Texts, Memos*	❑ <mark>Internship Reflection #1 Due 6/26/25</mark> ❑ <mark>Syllabus Quiz due 6/27/25</mark> ❑ <mark>Academic Integrity Video and Quiz Due 6/27 (Friday)</mark>
Week 7 June 30	**Internship work** **7/2: Communication Lecture #2** WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 AVOIDING PLAGIARISM MEMOS COHERENCE & CLARITY	Tebeaux & Dragga **Ch. 5**: *Designing Documents* *pp.36-39 Recognizing Unethical Communication*	❑ <mark>Writing Sample Due 7/5</mark>
Week 8 July 7	**Internship work** **7/9: Communication Lecture #3** WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 COVER LETTERS READABILITY	Tebeaux & Dragga **Ch. 4**: *Readable Style* **Ch. 12**: *Resumes & Job Apps* **Appendix B**: *citing & sources*	❑ <mark>Writing Assignment #1 Due 7/12</mark>

Week 9 July 14	**Internship work** **7/16 Communication Lecture #4** REVIEW OF WA1 WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3 PARAPHRASING DOCUMENT DESIGN	Tebeaux & Dragga **Appendix A:** *brief guide to grammar, punctuation and usage (optional)*	❏ **Internship Reflection #2 Due 7/17/25** ❏ **SkillSurvey Supervisor Contact Information Upload Due 7/18/25** ❏ **Writing Assignment #2 Due 7/19**
Week 10 July 21	**Internship work** **7/23: Communication Lecture #5** REVIEW WA2 VISUALIZING DATA INFO PLACEMENT SUMMARIZING VARYING SENTENCES	Tebeaux & Dragga **Ch. 9:** *Proposals* **Ch. 5**: *Designing Docs* **Appendix C**: *proposal example*	❏ **Writing Assignment #3 Due 7/26**
Week 11 July 28	**Internship work** **7/30: Communication Lecture #6** COURSE WRAP-UP ADDING IMPACT TO YOUR WRITING		❏ **SkillSurvey Supervisor Assessment due 7/31/2025*** ❏ **SkillSurvey Self-Assessment due 7/31/2025**
Week 12 Aug 4	**Internship work**		

*If you work for an organization that DOES NOT complete external performance evaluations, you must inform the internship component course manager at least one week before the deadline by emailing **engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu**

PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATION COMPONENT

Students must successfully complete both the 'Professional Writing and Communication' and the 'Internship' components to receive credit in the course.

INSTRUCTOR:
Elizabeth Fife, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Technical Communication Practice
Engineering in Society Program (EiS), Viterbi School of Engineering
University of Southern California
fife@usc.edu

COMMUNICATIONS COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

We will be working to improve your communication skills in this course: understanding different audiences and their needs, concision and organizing information to maximize your effectiveness. Short oral commentaries on your written communications are also included to give you practice explaining your ideas and recommendations to colleagues and supervisors. Emphasis is placed on readiness for writing and speaking in a professional engineering environment. Developing your communication skills comes from effort: writing/speaking, feedback and revision. This course is designed to give you practice, personalized guidance and support. To get the most out of this opportunity you should carefully consider the feedback you receive on each assignment and try to apply it to your next efforts.

The course will cover:
- writing and speaking concepts and strategies for communicating to public and professional audiences
- standard conventions for industry communications
- skills to prepare effective documents and oral communications for professional purposes

COMMUNICATION COMPONENT OUTCOMES

At the end of ENGR 597, you will be better equipped to:

- write for professional audiences
- revise and edit to professional standards
- compose accurate and precise documents
- analyze and adapt to varied professional writing contexts
- speak in a professional but conversational manner about your ideas, findings, information, and recommendations

COMMUNICATION LECTURES

Video lectures will be posted on the course website on Wednesdays. These lectures explain what is needed to complete assignments and to learn the requirements of the course. The lectures also provide general instruction for improving your professional communication skills.

COMMUNICATION ENGAGEMENT

You are expected to watch all the lectures posted by the instructor, correspond with your grading consultant when necessary, and stay up to date on readings and assignments.

COMMUNICATION REQUIRED TEXT

The Essentials of Technical Communication, Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga, Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition, 2017.

Additional readings, guides, schedule and PPTs accompanying the video lectures are found on

Brightspace.

COMMUNICATION ASSIGNMENTS

You will be asked to complete four writing assignments. Pre-writing, research, and revision are elements of each assignment. Each writing assignment has a short oral component (one minute) based on your written document.   You must pass Writing Assignments 1, 2, and 3 to pass the course.

Turn in your work on time. If you submit late, you risk failing the assignment. However, you may request an extension from your grading consultant for any of the assignments **before** the deadline. Missing assignments will not be accepted after the class concludes and you may not turn in multiple assignments at the end of the course.

All assignments must pass the 70% threshold (see below). The course will be organized around the introduction of the course assignments and the specific requirements for each. The prompts for each assignment are posted on Brightspace.

Please note: For every written submission, students are required to add a "Statement of Originality." Details are found on the course website.

Important: You have the opportunity to revise each assignment, so your work achieves an appropriate professional tone and content. If you do not pass an assignment, you need to revise and submit it again. You need to submit your revision within three days after you get the returned assignment. Make sure to notify your grading consultant by email when you resubmit.

If you do not notify your grading consultant, you may not get credit for the assignment. It is up to you to check to see if you have received credit for all assignments in a prompt manner, and then submit the revision in line with the grading consultant's comments if you have not passed. Do not wait until the end of the course to ask about the status of an assignment.

COMMUNICATION EVALUATION POLICIES

This course is Credit/No Credit. Credit for this course is based on the following criteria:

- Completing writing assignments 1, 2 and 3 to a 70% level of approval. It is highly recommended that you do "Writing Sample," but it is not required to pass the course. It is beneficial for building your writing practice and receiving feedback.
- Submitting all assignments sequentially at the required deadlines. You cannot turn in all work at the end of the course. Your assignments will not be graded if you do this and you will not pass the course.
- One upload of an assignment is allowed. If multiple uploads are made only the first effort is graded.
- Written assignments go through Turnitin, and a similarity score will be generated. A score above 10% can result in failing an assignment. Sources used for the submission will be investigated, and a report will be made to the USC's Office of Academic Integrity: https://academicintegrity.usc.edu/
- You may not turn in a writing assignment that you have previously submitted to another class. If you do this, you will not pass the assignment.
- If Turnitin identifies your assignment as having high similarity to another student's submission

or an external source that is not attributed such as a natural language processor you risk failing the course. A report will be submitted to USC's Office of Academic Integrity, and appropriate actions will be taken.

- Do not use any NLP (Natural Language Processor) such as Chat GPT. Even simple forms of AI assistance such as Grammarly will detract from what you can learn and may constitute plagiarism.
- In sum: work submitted must be your individual effort and any external sources must be attributed. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and constitutes an academic integrity violation.

COMMUNICATION COMPONENT GRADING

The course is graded on a credit/no credit basis. To receive credit, you must achieve a score of 70% on all assignments. Guidance and criteria will be provided to you for each assignment.   Expectations for each assignment will be made clear, and they will be evaluated as fairly and objectively as possible. You will review the requirements for effective writing in the video lectures, and you can refer to the writing rubric on the course website.

All required assignments must be completed to pass the course. It is your responsibility to check and make sure you have received credit for your work and to communicate with your grader before the end of the course if any assignment needs grading.

If you cannot meet a deadline, email your grading consultant and request an extension before the due date.

Your grading consultant will email you at the beginning of the course. Email addresses for grading consultants are on the front page Brightspace.

All required assignments must be completed to pass the communication component of this course. Successful completion of the course is required to be considered for future CPT authorizations. For more information regarding CPT policies, please refer to https://ois.usc.edu/employment/.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT

Course Coordinator: Joey Leon, Assistant Director
Office: Viterbi Career Connections, RTH 218
Office Hours: Zoom Monday & Wednesday from 1pm-2pm
Contact Info: engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In the internship component of the course, students must gain part-time or full-time practical work experience in his/her/their field of study. By the end of the semester:

- Students will produce two (2) internship reflections of his/her/their work activity, problems investigated, significant results, and any follow-up projects they may engage in.
- Students must complete the SkillSurvey Career Readiness Self-Assessment.
- Students' internship supervisors should also complete the SkillSurvey Career Readiness report, acknowledging students' work and communication skills.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT DESCRIPTION

The student must gain part-time or full-time practical work experience in his or her field of study. The internship must be located at an off-campus facility. Students must provide three (3) internship reflections before the conclusion of their internship. The student and internship site supervisor must also complete a SkillSurvey Career Readiness Assessment as part of this course's internship component requirements.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Syllabus Quiz**

Students must complete a syllabus quiz and pass with a score of 100% to obtain credit for this assignment. This quiz was designed to ensure all students read the entirety of their syllabus and take ownership of completing all the assignments within the due dates of this course. The quiz will be located in Brightspace, and students must log in to Brightspace to complete this assignment by the end of the first week of their internship or **June 27, 2025** whichever comes first. Students will receive unlimited attempts to pass the quiz with 100%, so please review the entire syllabus before taking the quiz. This is not an optional assignment and must be completed to receive credit for this class.

2. **Reflections**

During the semester, the student will submit three internship reflections based on his/her/their internship progression. Internship reflections may include work activity, problems investigated, significant results, and any follow-up projects they may engage in. These reflections must meet all of the following criteria.

- Internship reflections must thoroughly answer each question in paragraph format with a minimum of 2-3 sentences for each question.
- All reflection submissions must generate a Turnitin Similarity. The course coordinator will review the Turnitin grade and students will be expected to write new statements or reflections if your answers show a significant amount of your response is highlighted (words highlighted in

red means it is copied from previous submissions). Samples of internship reflection questions are available for review at the end of this syllabus.

3. **Skill Survey (Performance Evaluation):**

Viterbi Career Connections utilizes SkillSurvey for the online evaluation process for ENGR 597. SkillSurvey is part of the Career Readiness Project which leverages proven HR technology to improve the evaluation process and provide students with feedback on how "career-ready" they are following an internship.

On July 9, 2025, you will receive an email from Skill Survey directing you to enter your supervisor's contact information. Your supervisor will then receive an email with an electronic link along with instructions on filling out the performance evaluation. They will also be given a deadline and informed that the performance evaluation is required for course credit. Once you provide your supervisor's contact information into Skill Survey you will be able to complete the self-assessment. After you complete the self-assessment, take a screenshot of the completed self-assessment and upload it into (Bright Space). **Steps to complete this assignment:**

- Respond to email sent to you by SkillSurvey and provide your supervisor's contact information by the due date assigned.
- Students must complete the SkillSurvey Career Readiness Self-Reflection Assessment by the due date assigned.
- Once you provide your supervisor's contact information to SkillSurvey and complete the self-assessment, take a screenshot of the completed process and upload it into Brightspace. Make sure the date you completed the self-assessment is available, this is the only way our office will know that you completed the skill survey assignment for this current semester
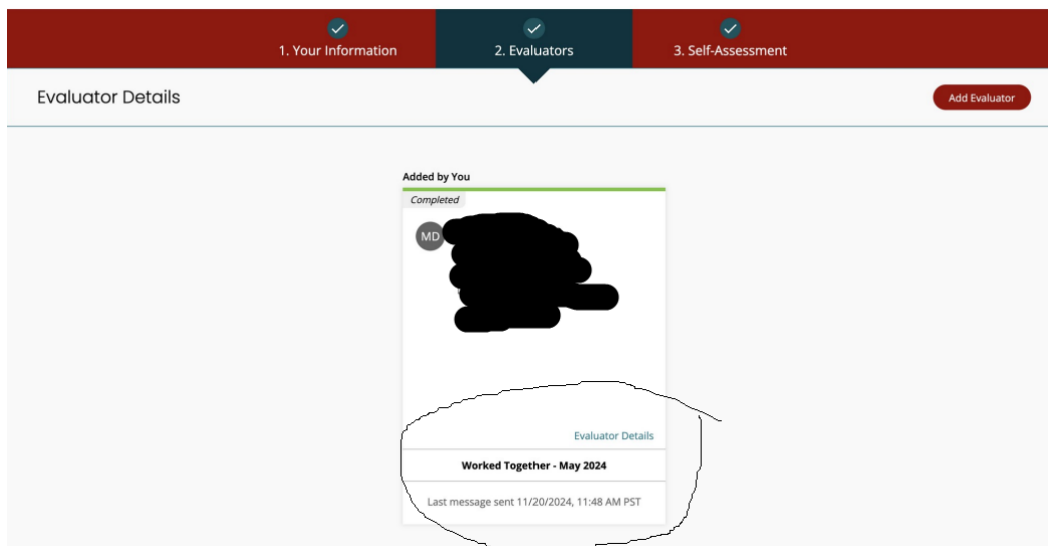
- At the end of the semester, the completed SkillSurvey Career Readiness report information will be directly emailed to you through the SkillSurvey platform.

This is not an optional assignment and must be completed to receive credit for this class. **If you**

have completed a skill survey from the same employer previously you will still need to complete this assignment again for this semester.

* **Need help?** First check your USC Inbox, junk/spam folders for the email info above! Then if needed, contact engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu and include your inquiry, USC email address, course number and semester (ENGR 598, Summer 2025). If you cannot find the email after the date mentioned and reviewing your spam email box, please email Jacquelyn Gourley, Jacquelyn.Gourley@icims.com.*

If you work for an organization that DOES NOT complete external performance evaluations, when you receive the email from SkillSurvey put Joey Leon as your Supervisor using the email address engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu. Then complete the self-assessment portion of this assignment based on the information provided to you in the email sent to you by engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS:

All assignments must only be submitted through Brightspace. **NO ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED BY EMAIL**. In addition, all reflection submissions on Brightspace must be in Word or pdf format with a Turnitin score, assignments without a Turnitin score cannot be graded. Please do not send your assignments by email to the course coordinator as it will not be accepted. SkillSurvey Career Readiness report information will be directly emailed to you and submitted through the SkillSurvey platform only. Your Course Coordinator does not have access to this link or edit any supervisor information you may have submitted.

Some students enrolled in this course may sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with their employer, common in engineering organizations. **If the employer must review any assignments before submission, it is the student's responsibility to plan accordingly to avoid late submissions.**

If a different standard or format is used other than an internship reflection, it must meet the same intellectual standard described in this syllabus. This is typically only applicable in the case of an unexpected cancellation or shortened internship. In this case, the internship component course manager will document the definition of an alternative deliverable of intellectual merit equivalent to an internship reflection.

Non-Disclosure Agreement Information
If you are collaborating on research with a faculty member, it is your responsibility to inform him/her/them of your NDA.

An NDA should not impact your ability to complete class assignments. Students who have NDAs produce reports with general details on the work completed as part of their internship, not disclosing any project specifics or sensitive information. Assignments can focus on your professional skills and career development attained during your experience.

In the course of the internship, the student must not violate the company's policies on Intellectual Property and/or confidentiality. However, sufficient responses must be included in

the students' internship reflections to demonstrate meaningful experience and work has been completed.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT PREREQUISITE(S):

This course may not be taken until the student has completed at least one semester of enrollment in the graduate program. Students must be in good academic standing (cumulative and degree GPA of at least 3.00). On a case-by-case basis, students with a cumulative or major GPA below 3.00 may be permitted to take this course. The student must have a verifiable internship offer letter from a company.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT NOTES:
The internship component of this course is graded credit/no credit. Failure to meet the criteria in this syllabus is grounds for receiving a grade of NC (No Credit) and denial of participation in future internship courses.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY AND HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIRED: You must have access to the internet to submit required internship reflections and SkillSurvey Career Readiness surveys.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INTERNSHIP COMPONENT:

- Students must complete the ICR application process by the deadline provided by VCC (International students only.)
- Students must be employed at a company for a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Students must submit two (2) internship reflections on Brightspace.
- Students must complete the SkillSurvey Career Readiness Self-Reflection Report by the due date assigned.
- Students must complete the upload of the supervisor's contact information in SkillSurvey by the due date assigned. Students will receive an email with the SkillSurvey link 2 weeks before it is due.

    o In the event the student works for an organization that DOES NOT complete external performance evaluations, the student must inform the internship component course manager at least one week in advance of the deadline by emailing engrinternshipcourses@usc.edu

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT GRADING BREAKDOWN:

- Syllabus Quiz - **25%**
- Internship reflection #1 uploaded to course management system - **25%**
- Internship reflection #2 uploaded to course management system - **25%**
- SkillSurvey Career Readiness Report **- 25%**

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT GRADING SCALE:
All internship reflections are required with passing scores for the Internship Component. This course is graded credit/no credit. The faculty supervisor may choose another grading policy if appropriate. Failure to meet the criteria in this syllabus is grounds for receiving a grade of NC (No Credit).

Successful completion of the course is required to be considered for future CPT authorizations. For more information regarding CPT policies, please refer to https://ois.usc.edu/employment/.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS:
Reflection is an integral part of the learning process. Students will submit three (3) internship reflections throughout their internship. These reflections will ask students to review their internship location responsibilities and think critically about their professional growth. Each reflection will ask for updates and outcomes of the work and prepare them to discuss with their site supervisor or future interviews. While there is no required word count, internship reflections must

- thoroughly answer each question in paragraph format and have a Turnitin Similarity score under 20%.
- Do not use any form of NLP (Natural Language Processor) such as Chat GPT. Even simple forms of AI assistance may constitute as plagiarism.
- work submitted must be your individual effort and should not come from external sources as these are reflections. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and constitutes an academic integrity violation.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:
Internship reflections will be uploaded to the course management system, Brightspace. SkillSurvey Career Readiness report information will be directly emailed to you and submitted through the SkillSurvey platform.

INTERNSHIP COMPONENT GRADING TIMELINE:

- Syllabus Quiz - Due at the end of the first two weeks of your internship or by June 27
- Internship reflection #1 uploaded to course management system – **Due after completion of the first week of your internship or by June 26, whichever comes first**
- Internship reflection #2 uploaded to course management system – **Due after completion of half of your internship or by July 17 whichever comes first**
- SkillSurvey Supervisor Contact Information – **Upload Due July 23, Link given July 1**
- SkillSurvey Career Readiness Report – **Due July 31**

LATE STARTING INTERNSHIPS & EXTENSIONS

If you are starting your internship late, and the first, second or even third assignment listed above is past your internship start date, adhere to the following timeline:

- Syllabus Quiz - **1st Week of the start of your internship but no later than July 31**
- Internship reflection #1 uploaded to course management system – **Due after completion of the first week of your internship or by June 26, whichever comes first**
- Internship reflection #2 uploaded to course management system – **Due after completion of half of your internship or by July 17 whichever comes first**
- SkillSurvey Supervisor Contact Information – **Upload by 1-2 weeks after starting the internship, but no later than July, 18, 2025 to give your supervisor time to complete**
- SkillSurvey Career Readiness Self-Assessment – **Due July 31**

- SkillSurvey Career Readiness Employer Assessment – **Due July 31**

Extension requests for dates after July 31 will not be granted unless you have a personal/family medical reason that you must provide documentation. If students have a legitimate emergency they must make the request prior to July 31, 2025 unless you have documentation indicating that your emergency prevented you from communicating with us in advance.

In addition, extension requests due to employers requiring to review assignment submissions will not be approved. It is the student's responsibility to ask their employer during the first week of their internship if their employer requires them to submit their assignment in advance for review prior to course submission deadlines. The student should have all assignments completed in advance for their employer to review, calculating additional time before the due date of the assignment. Some employers will ask students to provide them 10-15 business days to review before allowing the student to submit their assignment. Please prepare in advance as extensions will not be granted for this reason.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Do not use any form of NLP (Natural Language Processor) such as Chat GPT. More information on the university's policies regarding plagiarism is found at https://academicintegrity.usc.edu/

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Department of Public Safety* http://dps.usc.edu. The sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://ali.usc.edu, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://dsp.usc.edu provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information*

http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Additional Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call, studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call, suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call, studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call, dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call, dps.usc.edu

*Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-33*40 or otfp@med.usc.edu, chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential lifestyle redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP REFLECTION INFORMATION:

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP REFLECTION:

Internship Reflection 1: Student Internship Profile

Student Name:
Student ID number:
Company:
Department/Team:
Team Leader/Supervisor Name:
Team Leader/Supervisor Email Address:
Project name:
- Describe the company at which you are interning:
- Summarize your responsibilities:
- Describe your team and/or role to which you have been assigned
- Describe the project(s) you'll be undertaking:

Internship Reflection 2: Student Progress Report

Student Name:
Student ID number:
Company:
Department/Team:
Project name:
- Brief description of the project:
- Work done and progress made since Report 1:
- Problems encountered: