

Risk Management Considerations for Student Internships (Outbound)

The following items may be considered when placing a WWU student at a host site to participate in an internship:

HOST SITE SELECTION

- If the department plays a significant role in selecting the host site or has been made aware of host site problems by students, the faculty advisor may want to consider whether the host site is acceptable and evaluate whether it continues to meet the department's minimum standards for health and safety and supervisory oversight of the intern.

STUDENT READINESS

- The faculty advisor should assess the student's readiness for the internship. Students should be thoroughly oriented by the faculty advisor concerning the internship program and its objectives. The orientation should also include the expectations of host site. Students should also be oriented by the host site advisor prior to beginning any work or other related activities. Orientations should include a number of topics such as the intern's responsibilities and duties, compliance with policies and procedures and reporting of safety, health, discrimination or harassment concerns.

LEARNING OR PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

- This is a three-way learning or placement agreement between the student, faculty advisor and host site advisor. This "academic agreement" is signed by each individual and should outline placement information, learning objectives and the responsibilities of the three individuals while the student is participating in the internship. It is desirable to include an acknowledgement of risk/hold harmless and medical consent signed by the student.

CONTRACT

- This is different than the learning or placement agreement mentioned above. This is a "business contract" prepared by either WWU or host site for a particular college or department internship activity. Although desirable, not all internship arrangements have such contracts. The contractual provisions clearly set forth each institution's respective rights, responsibilities, and legal limitations. Such contracts must be vetted by [WWU's Contract Administration](#) and signed by the Provost or appropriate Vice President.

INJURIES TO STUDENT

- All injuries to the student during the internship must be reported to WWU. This can be done [online](#).
- It is advisable for all students to maintain health insurance coverage while participating in an internship. Coverage is normally provided for the student under a parent or guardian plan. Sometimes students arrange and purchase their own individual health insurance. WWU offers an affordable [student health insurance plan](#) among other individual plans offered by commercial insurers. If the student is being paid by the host site, the student should also be eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits from the host site.

LIABILITY FOR STUDENT'S ACTIONS

- Whether WWU, host site or student is liable for the student intern's actions will be determined by the details of the activity that led to the claim or lawsuit. Generally speaking, a student is an adult, thus ultimately responsible for liability resulting from his or her own actions. However, it will be important know whether the student was performing services for WWU or host site and whether the student was under either's direction or control, in which case WWU and/or host site may be liable. The answer will be sorted out in the claim process or during litigation.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

- Liability Insurance, which provides coverage for litigation expenses, may come from WWU, host site or student. It is reasonable to assume that WWU and host site, including their advisors, will be covered by their respective liability insurance programs. However, students may or may not be covered by these programs, depending on the available coverage and details of claim. Student interns should take responsibility for their own liability insurance protection, since it is part of their professional identify and will be an important professional consideration when they leave the University anyway. Sources for such coverage may include:
 - [WWU's student medical malpractice insurance program](#) for healthcare-related internships
 - Host site's liability insurance coverage for volunteers (unpaid interns) and employees (paid interns)
 - Parent's or student's homeowners/renters policy providing liability insurance while volunteering
 - Professional associations offering liability insurance resources to student members
 - Insurance brokers who offer liability insurance programs to student professionals

SAFETY AND HEALTH HAZARDS

- The host site should promptly notify WWU faculty advisor of a student's exposure to any safety or health hazard while performing the internship.

TRANSPORTATION

- Generally, the student is responsible for transportation to and from the host site and should carry automobile liability insurance as required by state law. The student should know whether the host site expects the student to use his/her own vehicle for transportation related to internship activities and prepare accordingly.

GOVERNING LAW

- The laws of the State of Washington should govern the learning or placement agreement and the contract.

Paul Mueller, CPCU
Risk Management
Environmental Studies 72, MS-9070
Phone: (360) 650-3065
Fax: (360) 650-6514
E-mail: paul.mueller@wwu.edu

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