Student interns are encouraged to take responsibility for their education, and the *Professional Agricultural Internship* is one of the Agricultural Education and Studies Department’s primary non-classroom experiences that allow them to do so. It promotes personal discovery and self discipline. The internship is a dynamic application of education, where students enhance their abilities to set goals and outline plans to achieve them, communicate, think critically, and reflect on their observations and experiences in an environment where they can develop these skills professionally.

This document is designed as a guide for the student intern and the intern’s site supervisor in the *Professional Agricultural Internship Program*. It describes the procedures to follow and the course expectations. It includes forms the student is responsible for completing or sending to the Department Internship Supervisor and those to give to the site supervisor. The student is responsible for ensuring that all relevant forms are completed by the site supervisor and returned to the Department Internship Supervisor via Blackboard.

While gaining proficiency in specific competencies is the core of the internship, instructions and procedures provided by the manual also are part of the learning experience that can enhance the intern’s experience with business practices. For example, forgetting to turn in the BEFORE self-assessment at the appropriate time is equivalent to not putting in the time to plan a project in a work setting. Not going over the evaluations with your site supervisor is the same as not satisfying a business client. Ensuring that the site supervisor returns intern evaluations to the Department Internship Supervisor is as important as completing a job task during the internship. Keeping track of details and instructions as outlined in the Manual that are required for the course is comparable to keeping track of your job responsibilities in a business or organization.

Kathleen Hunt, Ph.D., Department Internship Supervisor, *Professional Agricultural Internship Programs*, Department of Agricultural Education and Studies

Sorrel Brown, Ph.D., former Department Internship Supervisor, *Professional Agricultural Internship Programs*, Department of Agricultural Education and Studies

Revised April 2016.
AgEdS 412 Professional Agricultural Internship

Course Objectives

Upon taking this course, and engaging in a professional internship experience, the student will be able to:

1. Develop and practice the ten competencies that are critical to become a successful professional in an agricultural professional setting.

2. Develop professional attitudes and appropriate behaviors for an agricultural profession.

3. Practice and adopt organizational procedures appropriate for the profession.

4. Self-monitor, reflect on and evaluate your performance and achievement of your professional goals.

5. Seek career development input and guidance from mentors/supervisors; establish networks within the profession.

6. Enhance technical agricultural skills and knowledge in an applied agricultural setting.

Competencies

The purpose of your professional internship is to give you an opportunity to develop each of the competencies in a professional agricultural environment so that valid learning is taking place on the job.

The core of your internship experience is to gain experience in and strengthen the following 10 competencies while interning at an agriculturally related business:

- Decision Making
- Problem Solving
- Initiative Taking
- Active Listening
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Written/Visual Communication
- Verbal Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
Course Overview

This section provides an overview of the AgEds 412 course structure, delineating expectations as students complete the professional internship experience. Please read this section carefully.

Scheduling
The Professional Agriculture Internship Program (AgEdS 412) is open to all Agricultural Communication and Agricultural Studies students. Agricultural Communication students must have completed AgEdS 211C, Early Field-Based Experience, at a site other than the proposed site for the internship prior to being eligible for taking AgEdS 412.

Permission of the Department Internship Supervisor is a prerequisite for AgEdS 412. Students interested in an internship should consult with their advisors, and then schedule a meeting with the Department Internship Supervisor several months prior to the beginning of their internship to allow time for negotiations or corrections. Students must meet with the Department Internship Supervisor for approval prior to registration and get a reference number in order to register for the course. Students register for the internship course just as they would for any other course.

Length of Time and Credit
The maximum number of credits allowed for AgEdS 412 is six (6). Though the focus of the internship is not specific time, interns are generally expected to complete the equivalent of approximately 2 weeks for each academic credit. The Ag Communications Option requires 6 credits. For other majors, students may negotiate the number of credits they wish to take with the Department Internship Supervisor and their advisor.

Expectation for Writing Quality
Correct use of English grammar, terminology, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, possessives and contractions, and verb tense will be considered in the grading of your portfolio. Remember, you want your writing to carry a reader from idea to idea without them getting lost along the way. Written communication is one of the competencies that the internship emphasizes, thus your portfolio should reflect this skill.

Course Structure
Students are expected to engage in a professional internship experience relevant to Agricultural Education & Studies. For AgComm students, this should be in alignment with the student’s degree trajectory for developing communication-based skills and perspectives in agriculture. For Ag Studies students, this should be in alignment with the student’s degree trajectory for developing knowledge and skills in technical agriculture.

Students are expected to select and secure their internship site in consultation with the Internship Program Director. Upon securing the professional site, students should visit with the site supervisor to determine specific work responsibilities for the internship experience. These
responsibilities should be in alignment with the student’s degree trajectory. Interns are expected to complete a special project, assigned as needed by the site supervisor. This should be a major learning component that you are primarily responsible for; the results you produce should be of value to the organization. Before accepting a professional position, the student and site supervisor should discuss opportunities to complete work that achieves the ten competencies outlined above.

Over the course of this field-based experience, students will complete assignments aimed to synthesize knowledge and skills gained through the degree program, apply disciplinary knowledge in the professional setting, and reflect on their learning and development. These include: pre- and post- internship self-assessments, background information on the site and work expectations, weekly reflection journal entries, as well as other written components at the end of the field-based experience. There are also several opportunities for feedback on your progress during the internship: site supervisor evaluations, and a site visit. The “final exam” is a public poster presentation detailing the student’s experience, showing off their work, and reflecting on their learning relative to the ten competencies outlined above.

All assignments are described in detail, with specific instructions for submission, on the Blackboard site. You should also scan and submit all AgEds 412 forms under the “assignment” in Blackboard.

*See also: A Step-By-Step Guide to Completing This Course on page 5.

**Student Intern Professional Responsibilities during Internship**

1. Make contact with your site supervisor for internship approval as soon as approval is given by the Department Internship Supervisor.
   a. Request assistance to obtain housing, if desired.
   b. Find out procedures for reporting: when, where, and start time.
   c. Find out if you are covered by their insurance during the internship.

2. Personal appearance is important. You are beginning to assume the role of a professional and should dress accordingly. Dress neatly, appropriately, and according to the organization’s dress code.

3. Arrive at your intern site on time and ready to work. Be prepared to work past normal business hours. You are not a wage earner; you are there to get the job done, however long it takes.

4. Use proper channels of communication and always go through your site supervisor before contacting someone in a different position. In case of difficulties, contact the Department Internship Supervisor.

5. You are expected to be one of the staff/office employees. You must be willing to accept certain obligations expected of all staff members/employees. If assigned to do “odd jobs” that are not required or expected of other staff members/employees, politely and tactfully remind your supervisor of your intern role.
6. Immediately after your arrival at your intern site, you should make an effort to become acquainted.
   a. Meet all other professional staff members.
   b. Meet office assistants and other individuals with whom you will be in close contact.
   c. Familiarize yourself with the policies and regulations of the site, and abide by them.

7. Always be alert for ways to assist your site supervisor in carrying out his/her work. Look ahead to
   tasks. Don’t always wait for your supervisor to tell you what to do. Be prepared to carry out any
   responsibilities given you, even if you think they are menial tasks. Remember, these responsibilities are
   an opportunity for you to gain experience.

8. You will be expected to complete a detailed Plan of Work within the first two weeks with the
   assistance of your site supervisor. Also send potential site visit dates. They should be sent to the
   Department Internship Supervisor.

9. Be prompt for appointments. It is much better to arrive slightly ahead of schedule than to arrive
   even a few minutes late. A first impression is lasting and only occurs once.

10. Maintain a professional attitude, regardless of whether you like or dislike anything about your
    internship. HOWEVER, do not tolerate inappropriate behavior from your site supervisor or anyone else
    during your internship. If you find yourself subjected to any kind of harassment, contact the
    Department Internship Supervisor or any faculty or staff in the department immediately. Interns will
    not be penalized if their internship has to be interrupted due to inappropriate behavior on the part of
    someone else. Refer to http://www.dso.iastate.edu/sexualmisconduct/ for specific actions.

11. Inform your site supervisor of your whereabouts if you plan to leave the area for the weekend. If
    foreseeable absences during the work week must occur, they should be discussed with and approved by
    your site supervisor.

12. Treat discussions in staff meetings as confidential. Never criticize your employer, the organization,
    or staff members.

13. At the beginning of your internship, ask your site supervisor to set aside regular times for
    conferences with you. Invite constructive criticism and suggestions with an open mind. Suggestions are
    offered for your professional improvement.

14. Express appreciation to your site supervisor and others for the internship through a letter and/or
    card. Include a copy in your portfolio.
A Step-By-Step Guide to Completing this Course

This Step-By-Step Guide is a detailed outline of the AgEds 412 course structure and assignments. Specific actions and/or submissions to the Department Internship Supervisor or Blackboard are indicated below the step at which they should be taken/completed. The order of the steps below mirrors the order of the assignments as they are listed on the Blackboard course site. Specific instructions and guidelines for submission for each assignment are on Blackboard.

*NOTE: This manual is updated less frequently than the Blackboard course site. For the most up-to-the-minute assignment instructions, submission guidelines, and other important action items’ information please see the AgEds 412 Blackboard course site.

Step 1: Consider what kind of internship would best fit your educational and career needs. Visit the Agricultural Career Planning and Placement Office and agricultural representatives at the various Career Days held during the fall and spring of the academic year. For AgComm students, this should be in alignment with the student’s degree trajectory for developing communication-based skills and perspectives in agriculture. For Ag Studies students, this should be in alignment with the student’s degree trajectory for developing knowledge and skills in technical agriculture. Make sure the internship you choose will provide the opportunity to practice the competencies.

Step 2: Read the entire AgEds 412 Manual, then make some preliminary contacts with a possible site. Your internship must be at a site you have not worked in previously. Initial contact with your proposed site is your responsibility. The department will not make employer contacts for you. Be sure to ask your prospective employer if you are covered by insurance during your internship.

Step 3: Once you have been offered an internship position, schedule a meeting with the Department Internship Supervisor. Approval is needed from both the site supervisor and the Department Internship Supervisor. Confer with the Department Internship Supervisor for approval of the site, scheduling and number of credits, and review course expectations.

Action: The Department Internship Supervisor will enroll you in the AgEds 412 Blackboard course site.

Action: All students completing AgEds 412 must sign up for and attend an orientation workshop offered by the Department Internship Supervisor. This will be recorded on Blackboard as a pass/fail assignment and is required prior to beginning the field-based experience.

Step 4: Register using the course number in the catalog. You will need a reference number to register.

Action: Contact the Department Internship Supervisor for the course reference number.

Submit: Complete the AgEds 412 Contract and turn it in under the appropriate assignment on
Blackboard. You should complete contract and upload this as a PDF. Retain the original hardcopy for your records.

**Step 5:** Send or take the site approval form to your site supervisor. Explain that he/she must be willing to provide you with opportunities to practice transferable career skills (10 competencies).

**Submit:** Complete the AgEdS 412 Site Approval Form and turn it in under the appropriate assignment on Blackboard. You should complete the form and upload this as a PDF. Retain the original hardcopy for your records.

**Submit:** Before you begin any professional tasks at your internship site, complete the Self-Assessment PRE-test on Blackboard. Download the file, fill in your responses, and re-upload your completed assessment.

**Step 6:** Use the first two weeks of the internship to begin assembling information about your position and professional responsibilities.

**Submit:** Compile your Internship Backgrounder. This is a report detailing the history of your professional site, your own professional background, and also includes the job description for your position and a narrative explaining how you identified and secured this position. See specific assignment instructions and guidelines for submission on Blackboard.

**Submit:** Complete a detailed Plan of Work that describes how you expect to achieve the ten competencies through your field-based experience. There are example Plans of Work in this Manual’s Appendix. See specific assignment instructions and guidelines for submission on Blackboard.

**Step 7:** Begin completing your professional work assignments, and special project responsibilities, as assigned by your site supervisor.

**Submit:** Each week of your field-based experience, you are required to submit a Reflection Journal detailing your activities and accomplishment of the ten competencies for this course. Each new journal should discuss progress since previous and incorporate feedback on previous. See specific assignment instructions and guidelines for submission on Blackboard.

**Step 8:** Make arrangements for an on-site visit from the Department Internship Supervisor about midway through your internship. If your site is outside Iowa, a video connection and/or telephone contact may be arranged with the Department Internship Supervisor.

**Submit:** Email the Department Internship Supervisor to schedule the site visit, making sure your internship site supervisor is also available. You will be responsible for responding to feedback posted on Blackboard after your site visit in a short reflection think-piece. See specific assignment instructions and guidelines for submission on Blackboard.

**Step 9:** Your site supervisor should complete their first evaluation of your professional development around the midpoint of your field-based experience: an assessment of your professional business behavior. You are responsible for ensuring that your site supervisor both completes the evaluation and provides you feedback.
**Submit:** Site Supervisor Evaluation #1. You should upload this as a PDF to Blackboard. Retain the original hardcopy for your records.

**Step 10:** As you complete the tasks relevant for your internship’s special project, you should keep any materials, documentation, evidence, and/or products or results associated with it. At the end of your field-based experience, you will be responsible for submitting a Special Project Report (see Step #12 below).

**Step 11:** Your site supervisor should complete their second evaluation of your professional development near the end of your field-based experience: an evaluation of your achievement of the ten competencies. You are responsible for ensuring that your site supervisor both completes the evaluation and provides you feedback.

**Submit:** Site Supervisor Evaluation #2. You should upload this as a PDF to Blackboard. Retain the original hardcopy for your records.

**Step 12:** At the end of your field-based experience, you should compile the remaining items that conclude this course. These items should be treated as a final, cumulative, “test” for which you synthesize all that you have done over the course of your internship and assess your achievement of the ten competencies.

**Submit:** Special Project Report. This report details and illustrates the specific tasks, responsibilities, project, and activities for which you were responsible during your field-based experience. See specific instructions on Blackboard.

**Submit:** Competency Narrative. This is a written report and reflective assessment of your application of disciplinary knowledge, perspectives, and skills at your internship site. See specific assignment instructions and guidelines for submission on Blackboard.

**Submit:** Once you have finished all professional tasks at your internship site, complete the Self Assessment POST-test on Blackboard. Download the file, fill in your responses, and re-upload your completed assessment. You should also refer back to you PRE-test to chart any changes progress, and growth.

**Submit:** Send a written thank-you note to your site supervisor. You should scan your card or note and submit a PDF under the appropriate assignment on Blackboard.

**Step 13:** The “final exam” for this course is completed in the form of a poster and public oral presentation reporting on your professional field-based experience. At the conclusion of your internship, you have the opportunity to create and submit a draft of your presentation poster and receive feedback from the Department Internship Supervisor. There is a link for a professional poster template under the Blackboard assignment.

**Submit:** DRAFT Internship Poster. See specific instructions for designing, formatting, structuring, and submitting your DRAFT poster on Blackboard. You will submit this as a PowerPoint (PPT) file. DO NOT PRINT YOUR POSTER!
Step 14: The final component of AgEds 412 involves the public sharing of the insights you have gained from your professional field-based experience. Once the regular ISU semester is back in session, you are required to participate in the Agricultural Education & Studies Departmental Seminar and Poster Session.

Submit: Using feedback provided on your DRAFT Poster, you should revise and complete your poster and prepare a brief (10 minute) informal presentation regarding your field-experience, tasks and responsibilities, and (most importantly) what you have learned. The Departmental Seminar/Poster Session will be held in the first month of the new semester. See specific instructions on Blackboard. DO NOT PRINT YOUR POSTER!

Step 15: All items will be graded on Blackboard. Your course grade will be submitted to the Registrar in the semester in which you are formally enrolled in AgEds 412.
AgEdS 412
Professional Agricultural Internship

FORMS

A. Student Contract
B. Site Approval
C. Self-Assessment PRE-test
D. Plan of Work
E. Site Supervisor Evaluation #1: Professional Business Behavior
F. Site Supervisor Evaluation #2: Intern Competencies
G. Self-Assessment POST-test

*NOTE: Each of these forms is also included on Blackboard under the appropriate assignment.*
Student Contract for AgEdS 412
Professional Agricultural Internship
Department of Agricultural Education and Studies
Iowa State University

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY or USE COMPUTER TO COMPLETE

Intern ________________________________ University ID ___________

Last, First, MI

ISU Address ________________________________ Major ________________________

________________________________________ Phone ___________________________

Number of Credits: ________ ISU Advisor ____________ Email _______________________

I would like to do my internship for AgEdS 412 at the following location:

Name of Business/ Organization __________________________________________

Physical address

________________________________________ Street or P.O. Box City State Zip

Site Supervisor ___________________________ Phone ___________________________

Email _________________________________

Exact dates of my AgEdS 412 experience:

Beginning Date ___________________________ Semester I am officially registered:

Ending Date ______________________________

I have visited with the Department Internship Supervisor and:

• I understand that it is my responsibility to return this completed application 2 weeks (minimum) before reporting to the site for my internship.

• I understand and agree that within 4 weeks of the end date given above that I will turn in all completed assignments as outlined in the AgEdS 412 Manual.

• I understand that extended time or incomplete assignments will result in a lower grade.

• I understand that my work is expected to reflect a professional level and that poor grammar and spelling will lower my grade.

________________________________________

Student signature

________________________________________

Date signed
Internship Business/Organization: ____________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________ Email: _____________________________
On-site Supervisor: _________________________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________ Email: _____________________________
Intern: _________________________________ Email: _____________________________
Site Phone: ____________________________ Email: _____________________________

We will participate in the experience program and will supervise the above-named student during the time and days requested. We are willing to provide a variety of learning experiences for the student.

We will not participate at this time. Please do not assign the above-named student to this location.

Please contact the AgEds Professional Internship Program Director with comments or questions: Dr. Kathleen Hunt, 515 294-8943 ● kphunt@iastate.edu

___________________________________________  ____________________________
Site Supervisor Signature                  Date

___________________________________________
Name (please print)

*Please scan signed form and submit on Blackboard.*
The purpose of this self-assessment is:
- To provide feedback to students on assessing their improvement of the competencies
- To allow students to become more reflective of their learning and to express the skills they have gained
- To document competencies so that students can convey them to prospective employers
- To create an opportunity for advisors and the Department internship supervisor to determine whether the internship experience is delivering anticipated skills
- To provide a diagnostic report to advisors and the department internship supervisor regarding the competencies students are gaining through an early field-based experience

For each competency, circle the number in the column that comes close to describing your level of proficiency before you start your internship and submit on Blackboard. At the end of your internship, you will have the opportunity to re-assess yourself and revisit your PRE-test responses.

1 = Almost never like me 2 = Occasionally like me 3 = Quite a bit like me 4 = Almost always like me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 2 3 4         | I use logic or reason to sift through available or alternative options then make a choice.
| 1 2 3 4         | I look to credible sources of relevant information.
| 1 2 3 4         | I strive to find inclusive solutions.
| Problem Solving |    |    |    |    |
| 1 2 3 4         | I view problems as opportunities.
| 1 2 3 4         | I deal with obstacles to solutions in an orderly manner.
| 1 2 3 4         | I interpret, integrate, and prioritize information from multiple sources.
| Initiative Taking |    |    |    |    |
| 1 2 3 4         | I analyze opportunities, then take action if warranted without requiring close supervision.
| 1 2 3 4         | I recognize when it is appropriate to be proactive rather than reactive.
| Active Listening |    |    |    |    |
| 1 2 3 4         | I give my total attention to speaker.
| 1 2 3 4         | I notice the speaker’s non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and body language;
| 1 2 3 4         | I listen from a positive point of view without assumptions.
| 1 2 3 4         | I ignore distractions such as other conversations.
| 1 2 3 4         | I listen to the entire message without interrupting whether I agree or not.
| 1 2 3 4         | I realize what is not said may be just as important as what is spoken.
| Leadership      |    |    |    |    |
| 1 2 3 4         | I set goals, implement ideas, establish a clear direction.
| 1 2 3 4         | I seek and am responsive to other Ideas.
| 1 2 3 4         | I am sincere in encouraging, recognizing and complimenting others.
| 1 2 3 4         | I build credibility and trust by my actions.
| 1 2 3 4         | I realize disagreement and dissension may be helpful to clarify issues.
| 1 2 3 4         | I challenge the status quo.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teamwork</th>
<th>Written/Visual Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I see the benefits of building</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I feel comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consensus.</td>
<td>conveying ideas in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I establish and implement</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I am able to assemble,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group rules for working together.</td>
<td>analyze, and display information in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I understand my role in</td>
<td>a compelling fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting tasks done and know when to allow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a more skillful member to do a task.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I value ideas and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contributions of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Communication</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I discuss, clarify, and</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I thoughtfully analyze and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulate my values beliefs or ideas.</td>
<td>evaluate alternative points of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I am able to influence others.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I justify results and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I recognize that cultural</td>
<td>procedures, explain assumptions and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>differences may sometimes confuse messages.</td>
<td>reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I speak so others can</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I separate factual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand,</td>
<td>information from inferences and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I block interference or</td>
<td>opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distractions when communicating.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I integrate multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sources of information to solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I question assumptions and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>look for credible evidence to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4 I consider conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important to decision-making and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creativity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I am able to envision non-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional solutions to situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I persist even when I encounter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barriers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I let my mind wander when I'm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working on a difficult problem.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I don't let criticism stop me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from pursuing a solution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  2  3  4 I feel comfortable working in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an unstructured environment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please respond to the following questions using your scores on the assessment: (each response should be at least 1 well-developed paragraph with specific and concrete detail related to the assessment and/or your internship site).

In what competency area(s) do you believe you are already strong? How will these strengths aid you in your internship?

In what competency area(s) do you believe need improvement? How can your internship help strengthen these?
**AgEdS 412 Professional Agricultural Internship**

**Plan of Work**

Now that you have begun your internship experience, this assignment invites you to take a moment to project how you will achieve each of the AgEds 412 competency areas. For each area below, you should write a short explanation of what you expect to do at your site to apply the competency. Each response should be a short paragraph (3-4 sentences). Be as specific as possible, focusing on the tasks you plan to complete for each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>INTERN RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative Taking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Listening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written/Visual Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
AgEdS 412
Student Evaluation by Site Supervisor #1
Professional Business Behavior

Intern’s Name ____________________________  Site _______________________

The purpose of this assessment is to:
- Provide site supervisors a way to evaluate interns’ professionalism.
- Allow interns to become more reflective of their business behavior.
- Create an early opportunity for site supervisors and interns to discuss strengths and areas of improvement in order to gauge progress at the end of the internship experience.

Instructions for Site Supervisor:
Please rate the intern by placing an “X” in the box that best represents your evaluation of how the student displayed these characteristics during the internship. Please share your ratings with the student intern, documenting areas of strengths and actions that can be taken in areas that need improvement in the space below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidy, neat &amp; clean, well-groomed, dressed suitably for job requirements &amp; work setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill as presenter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong speaking voice, few fillers or other distractions, organized, used effective methods &amp; materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showed interest, positive approach to tasks, alert, eager to learn, energetic, appropriate conduct</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Took initiative, self-reliant, solved problems, accepted blame if appropriate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative, helpful, approachable, sociable within business setting, tactful, willing to help out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapted to new ideas or changes in plans, looked for alternatives, worked well under pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative duties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exceeded minimum requirements, accurate reports &amp; records w/ few errors, aware of employee hierarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Few absences, called when unable to come in, punctual in completing tasks, little prompting needed to do assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed about duties, asked questions if unsure, grasped instructions quickly, sought to master all phases of job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neatness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orderly work area, took care of property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assembled materials on time, used time efficiently, asked for help if needed, met deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showed consideration for &amp; interest in others, sensitive to others’ feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to Supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively accepted &amp; acted on suggestions to improve, follows instructions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Use this space to document areas of strength and needs for improvement.

Strengths:

Improvements and actions to be taken:
**AgEdS 412**  
*Site Supervisor Evaluation #2*  
*Intern Competencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intern Competencies</th>
<th>Occasional</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Provide site supervisors a way to evaluate interns’ achievement of expected competencies.
- Allow interns to become more reflective of their learning resulting from the internship.
- Create an opportunity for site supervisors, advisors, and the Department Internship Supervisor to determine whether the internship is providing beneficial exposure to competencies.

**Instructions for Site Supervisor:**

Please **CHECK** the box that best represents your assessment of the intern’s level of proficiency for each competency statement. Share your ratings with the student intern, using the comment box below to provide a brief narrative assessment of the intern’s strengths and areas of improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>I observed that the intern ...</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Decision Making       | • Considered how different perspectives affected decisions that were made.  
                       | • Used logic to sort through alternative options. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Problem Solving       | • Dealt with obstacles to finding solutions in a logical manner.  
                       | • Interpreted and integrated information from multiple sources. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Initiative Taking     | • Studied opportunities, and then took action needed w/o requiring supervision.  
                       | • Recognized times when it was appropriate to be proactive. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Active Listening      | • Gave total attention when listening to a speaker.  
                       | • Ignored distractions such as other conversations.  
                       | • Listened to an entire message without interrupting. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Leadership            | • Set goals, implemented plans, established a clear direction.  
                       | • Sought and was responsive to other ideas. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Teamwork              | • Saw the benefits of building consensus.  
                       | • Followed group rules for working together.  
                       | • Valued ideas and contributions of others. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Written & Visual      | • Felt comfortable conveying ideas in writing.  
                       | • Was able to organize, analyze, and display information in a compelling fashion. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Verbal Communication  | • Did not let distractions interrupt thoughts or statements.  
                       | • Was able to articulate beliefs or ideas in ways that others could understand. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Critical Thinking     | • Was able to justify actions, explain assumptions and reasons.  
                       | • Separated factual information from inferences and opinion.  
                       | • Integrated multiple sources of information to solve problems.  
                       | • Appeared to consider alternative points of view. |              |          |        |        |               |
| Creativity            | • Persisted in completing tasks even when encountering barriers.  
                       | • Did not let criticism impede pursuing a solution. |              |          |        |        |               |

*Use this space to comment on the student intern’s strengths and areas of improvement.*
AgEdS 412
Student Intern Self-Assessment POST-test

Intern’s Name ___________________ Site ________________________________

The purpose of this self-assessment is:
- To provide feedback to students on assessing their improvement of the competencies
- To allow students to become more reflective of their learning and to express the skills they have gained
- To provide a diagnostic report to advisors and the department internship supervisor regarding the competencies students are gaining through an early field-based experience

For each competency, circle the number in the column that comes close to describing your level of proficiency after completing your internship and submit on Blackboard. Respond to the reflection questions below referencing your PRE-test.
1 = Almost never like me 2 = Occasionally like me 3 = Quite a bit like me 4 = Almost always like me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Decision Making</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Initiative Taking</th>
<th>Active Listening</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I use logic or reason to sift through available or alternative options then make a choice.</td>
<td>I view problems as opportunities.</td>
<td>I analyze opportunities, then take action if warranted without requiring close supervision.</td>
<td>I give my total attention to speaker.</td>
<td>I set goals, implement ideas, establish a clear direction.</td>
<td>I see the benefits of building consensus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I look to credible sources of relevant information.</td>
<td>I deal with obstacles to solutions in an orderly manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I notice the speaker’s non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and body language;</td>
<td>I seek and am responsive to other ideas.</td>
<td>I establish and implement group rules for working together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I strive to find inclusive solutions.</td>
<td>I interpret, integrate, and prioritize information from multiple sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I listen from a positive point of view without assumptions.</td>
<td>I am sincere in encouraging, recognizing and complimenting others.</td>
<td>I understand my role in getting tasks done and know when to allow a more skillful member to do a task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I ignore distractions such as other conversations.</td>
<td>I build credibility and trust by my actions.</td>
<td>I value ideas and contributions of others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please respond to the following questions comparing your scores on this POST-assessment to those on your PRE-assessment: (each response should be at least 1 well-developed paragraph with specific and concrete detail related to the assessment and/or your internship site).

In what competency area(s) do you believe you are strong? Are these the same/different as those you rated highly in your PRE-test? Why/not?

How did you expect your strengths to aid you in your internship and how did they actually aid you?

In what competency area(s) do you believe need improvement? Are these the same/different as those you rated highly in your PRE-test? Why/not?

How did you expect your internship to help strengthen your areas of improvement and how did it actually help you?
AgEdS 412
Professional Agricultural Internship

Appendix

H. Reflection Cues
I. Writing & Media Center
J. Examples of Plan of Work
K. Example of Competency Narrative
L. Example for Poster
Reflection Cues* to help in Writing about your Internship Experience

- After observing/participating in your EFE, what questions remain unclear?
- If you have a chance to speak to your friends about this EFE, what would you say?
- What suggestions would you give other students/employees about ways to get the most out this EFE?
- How do you feel about yourself as a communicator in your [major, discipline, profession]?
- What are your strengths as a communicator in your [major, discipline, profession]?
- What have you learned in this EFE that will help you continue to grow as a communicator?
- What was the one especially useful or meaningful thing you learned in this EFE?
- What specific improvements(s) did you make? How did the improvement(s) affect your feelings about yourself?
- Describe something critical/significant that you’ve learned about yourself in this EFE?
- What was your favorite part of this EFE? Why?
- What was your least favorite part of this EFE? Why?
- Complete the following sentences about your EFE:
  - I need ...
  - I wonder ...
  - I wish ...
  - I didn’t realize ...
- If you could do this EFE over, what would you do differently?
- What strategies did you use to learn the materials/tasks in this EFE? Why did you choose those particular strategies?
- What risks did you take in this EFE? Why did you take them?
- If you could change any one of the assignments/tasks you did for this EFE, which one would it be? What would you change about it? Why?
- What problems did you encounter in this EFE? How did you handle them?
- What about this EFE would you like to learn more about?
- After experiencing this EFE, in what area would you like to strengthen your skills? Why?

* Adapted from Rebecca E. Burnett, Ph.D., former member of ISU Department of English, Rhetoric & Professional Communication.
ISU Writing & Media Center

The Writing & Media Center at ISU offers a comfortable environment where ISU undergraduate students from any discipline can collaborate with peer tutors on all facets of written, oral, visual and electronic communication. The Center helps with ...

- Understanding your audience
- Brainstorming
- Organization and style
- Research methods and citations
- Document design
- Cover letters and résumés
- Personal statements
- Proposals
- Speeches and presentations

Take advantage of this valuable resource as you develop your portfolio and prepare your presentation.

Writing & Media Center
300 Carver Hall
515 294-5411
Email: writectr@iastate.edu
Website: www.dso.iastate.edu/wmc/
Example 1: Detailed Plan of Work

AgEdS 412 Professional Agricultural Internship
Dept. of Agricultural Education and Studies

Major: ________________________________

The first week that I was here I was given the duty of taking care of the guinea fowl and other game birds that were arriving every week. Because my employer lives about 2 hours away he is not able to be here every day and so I am on my own usually 2 days out of the week and the weekends. The second day that he was gone more of the guinea started hatching. I was not given directions on what to do because the issue of them hatching soon never arose. I was able to develop my initiative taking skills and my decision making and problem solving skills to figure out where the birds needed to go and make sure they had food and water and heat.

My employer is a level 3 archery instructor. He was teaching a level 1 class the second day that I arrived and invited me to take the class. He was able to have the camp cover my expenses and in return now he has a certified level 1 instructor on site so that he does not always have to be around the archery range. Taking the class helped me to develop my teamwork and leadership skills through working with others during the training and now being able to teach younger campers how to shoot archery properly.

One of my job titles here at the ranch is administrative assistant. My employer has me doing regular office work like answering emails and phone messages on a daily basis. I am in the office about 5 hours everyday. Being involved in the office helps me expand my written and verbal communication skills. I am learning to answer emails more professionally and how to properly write down the phone messages that my employer receives.

Another job of the administrative assistant here is to review and update the bylaws and articles of incorporation. I had to read a lot of documentation that I had never seen such before and update the material. This task was challenging because I am unaccustomed to doing such work. This task has helped me develop my written communication and problem solving skills because I had to do a lot of searching and asking questions to make sure the document was worded correctly.

Another aspect of my job includes developing a business plan for the educational services. My employer has had me reading through such books as The Art of the Start by Guy Kawasaki and Hurdle: The Book on Business Planning so that I may be more informed of how to write a business plan. This task of reading the books and being given the chance to develop a business plan is helping to develop my decision making skills and my critical thinking skills. It also is helping me with my active listening because I need to know my employers goals for the ranch.

My employer has also put me in charge of making sure that we have all the documentation to be able to be accredited. Every week I am assigned a different section of the material to look over and write up the document for. This has helped me develop my written communication and creativity in order to create these documents for the camp.

A task that I was assigned right away was formulating rules for the waterfront area. I was given the opportunity to make up the rules at my discretion. This has helped in developing my decision making and critical thinking. I was given the choice of what rules I wanted to enforce so that it would be a safe area.
Besides the normal day to day activities, I have also been involved with various other aspects. For example I help the owner with the large animals when the need arises and assist in various chores with the rabbits like cleaning out the nest boxes. *This helps me to develop my ability to work in a team or with others and also my active listening skills.* I do not always know what I am doing so have to be sure to pay attention so that I get all the directions clearly. Also I am usually working with people that I have not had the opportunity to work with before so I get experience working with new people all the time.

One day I was asked to help set up for a wine tasting event. This was a very interesting and different task then most that I had taken on. *I believe that this task helped me to develop my active listening skills because I was in a new situation taking directions in a different setting.*

The ranch feeds the campers products from the ranch itself. One of the items they feed the campers is goat meat. I was able to help slaughter and butcher 3 of the goats for the said purpose. It was definitely a learning experience. *I believe that I was able to develop my verbal communication and active listening skills because it was all very new to me. Also there were some parts that I decided not to take part in so I was able to effectively communicate that without coming across as if I did not want to help at all.*

My employer knows that I am interested in opening my own camp, so he is willing to let me in on everything we do. He is going to have me help with the staff training. I am going to be leading various leadership activities and instructing the junior staff. *This is helping me with my creativity for coming up with staff training for the junior staff. It is also helping me develop my teamwork abilities and leadership skills to be able to lead the group in the various challenge activities.*

One of my main duties is to be the waterfront supervisor. I am in charge of lifeguarding for the campers and also explaining and enforcing the rules at the waterfront. *This helps me to develop my leadership skills because I am in charge of the camper’s safety and also need to maintain order and keep the children happy and having fun. While at the waterfront it is my duty to make sure the rest of the staff is setting a good example and helping the younger campers while they are in the water.*

While I am in the office I also get to help register the campers for camp. It is my job to keep myself updated on which camps are open and which are not so that I may relay the information to the parents and enroll the youth in the right week. *This helps me to develop my critical thinking and problem solving skills. I believe this because I need to be able to decide if we can let the child into the camp without going over capacity or if they would be able to find another week that is more suitable.*

When the campers are here I am needed to assist the other staff in their areas of expertise. For example when the youth are doing crafts or riding horses I am needed to be there to take youth to the bathroom or to supervise so that they do not start to act up. *This helps me with my creativity and leadership skills because I need to be able to lead the child in the right direction without causing them to be upset or be uninterested in the activity any longer.*

Another one of my jobs during camp will be to help set up and tear down the tents that we use. The rest of the staff and I will be doing this job every week once campers show up because we are only renting the ground that we camp on during the week. *This will help me develop my teamwork abilities because I will be working with the other staff on a job that is not so favorable.*
Example 2: Detailed Plan of Work

*AgEdS 412 Professional Agricultural Internship*
Dept. of Agricultural Education and Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Intern Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative Taking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written/Visual Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Example: Competencies Narrative

AgEdS 412 Professional Agricultural Internship
Dept. of Agricultural Education and Studies

Problem-solving

Big or small every workplace has its share of problems. The … office is no exception. I have to give the staff a lot of credit in this competency area, as I was able to learn so much about problem solving by simply observing the day-to-day processes and how each staff member confronted and overcame problems. One of the first things I noticed about …’s problem solving strategies is that some departments are more willing to help out other departments. The helpful departments were always great resources when you found yourself in a jam and could be counted on to pitch in and make things run smoothly. I found that I, too, utilized my problem solving skills regularly at the office. I realized that is was simple. Things come up and if you over plan for everything it will only stress you out. I soon learned to take a more flexible approach, especially when planning large events, to minimize my stress and optimize my success.

I regularly used my problem solving skills to successfully complete a variety of projects throughout my internship. From volunteers backing out at the last minute to charter bus services not showing up on time there were never a shortage of problems to solve. Some problems resulted due to fault of my own, but I found that most problems stemmed from unforeseeable sources. I used problem solving to help keep a level head and a positive attitude. I realized that if I was more flexible to change, others that I was directing would be too.

My problem solving skills were really strengthened this summer. Prior to this internship the slightest change in plans would tend to really stress me out. I soon learned that the more willingness I had to be flexible, the less stress I would incur. This however, does not mean that I flew by the seat of my pants and did not put in the proper amount of planning the outreach events I was in charge of. I worked hard to ensure I had all my bases covered and ducks in a row, but I was accepting of the fact that something may not go exactly to plan far before anything went wrong. I feel that I have come a long way this summer and although I am far from being any master problem solver, I am much more confident that I can handle these situations as they arise and do so with confidence and poise.

As I mentioned, problems occur at every workplace. Having solid problem solving skills is essential to success in not only an ag communications career, but any career one decides to pursue. I truly feel that my ability to be flexible and conquer problems as they arise is a skill that will save me a lot of stress and worry. I recognize that there will always be unforeseeable barriers to any given goal that will create some stress but I feel that this summer has properly equip me to effectively manage that stress and hurdle those barriers.

The problem solving competency has blessed me with a very large skill set. Some of these skills include: confidence, stress management, flexibility, time management, communication, leadership, and initiative-taking. I was amazed just how many skills tie into problem solving, but I soon realized that problem solving is just that. Problem solving is about aggregating your skill sets in order to come up with a viable solution to a problem. I am very happy about how far I have come in this competency area and I look forward to building upon it in the years to come.

Active Listening

Active Listening played a huge role in my internship. I worked with multiple people within …, numerous cooperatives, and a handful of growers during the summer. Verbal communication was the primary form of communication with these individuals. With that being said, I had a lot of conversations this summer with individuals and I had to be very tentative during these conversations. It wasn’t just them talking the whole time either. They would ask me questions and I would have to listen very closely in order to give them the appropriate answer. I needed to understand what they were asking.
It was very important for me to make them feel like I was passionate and knowledgeable about the topics we talked about which primarily consisted of … and what it has to offer. I also wanted the individuals I had conversations with to think that I really cared about what they thought and concerns if they had any, because I truly did. I wanted them to feel like they could talk to me about anything. When I’m talking to someone and I feel like they aren’t engaged in the conversation or really care about what I’m saying, I will be less apt to talk to them again or tell them everything I had initially planned on. I wanted the exact opposite conversations with everyone I interacted with this summer. I knew I would be much more successful if I could have those types of conversations.

By getting to meet so many people, and them seeing what kind of person I was, I started building relationships with people. I found people just venting to me about things. Guys would talk to me about problems they would be having with farmers or even staff that they work with. Sometimes they would just flat out tell me that they didn’t like one of our products and they were going to quit using it. People felt like they could be honest and open with me. Some of that may have had to do with me being an intern and not a full-time employee. I enjoyed listening to what everyone I came in contact with had to say. However, at the same time I would give feedback in those conversations, but I know there is always that fine line of what you should and shouldn’t say. It’s always important to keep those conversations professional as well.

Being a wholesale representative this summer, active listening was so crucial. I was constantly communicating with people. … employees all did a good job with active listening and I loved that. I felt like if I ever had something I wanted to discuss they were engaged in the conversation and had great feedback. I never had been in a work setting before where active listening had to do with how much money you could potentially make. With being in a business where there are a lot of other companies that offer the same thing, you almost have to win people over. They need to like you, respect you, trust you and confide in you. That all starts with active listening. If you can accomplish all those things, you will most likely have a lot of fans which will result into a lot of sales.

I saw how all of this works at first hand this summer. I know what it takes to be an effective active listener and I know what kind of rewarding outcomes you can get if you are one. Whatever career path I choose to take, I know that because of all of the experiences I’ve had with … and seeing the outcome from active listening from my supervisor and his relationships, I will be more successful in my future career. I’ve gained knowledge and grown as I’ve used this competency.

Critical Thinking

Working in the corporate offices for a company whose majority of employees and customers work out “in the field” requires a great deal of critical thinking. One must continually be in the mindset of those who are benefiting from your service or product. How will what I am doing affect the customer? Is this what those outside of the corporate office are thinking? How will this look or sound to the guys in the field? These questions are just a sample of those that had to be asked to successfully accomplish most tasks.

Critical thinking was an extremely valuable tool in the __________ work setting. My supervisor was definitely a master at being able to think critically. Whenever I would present him with an idea, he would never shoot me down. Instead he would ask me questions such as “What will the energy sales people think about that?” He was always thinking about whom __________’s true customers are. As my internship progressed, I realized that most of the staff did the same. They had to. If they did not then the messages they were attempting to convey or the goals they were trying to meet would not happen. Just because a particular style of communiqué would work for the employees in the home office, did not mean that it would also work for those other employees in the system outside of __________. The majority of the time, it appeared to me that the intended audience was outside of the corporate offices and much critical thinking was done to ensure that they were targeted appropriately.

It did not take me long to realize just how important this critical thinking actually was. As I mentioned earlier, the way we would communicate with the home office employees was much different than how we would communicate with the FS employees. This had to be done for a number of reasons. First and foremost was the reason that the FS employees were truly __________’s customers. If we did not target our customers effectively than we should expect them to go elsewhere for their needs and so in turn __________ would lose money. So it
seems relatively easy to me to see just how important critical thinking can be, especially in the ____________ system.

I cannot read minds, but I would like to think I can do the next best thing, critical thinking. If I plan to get a career in Agriculture Communications, which I do, then I will always be forced to put myself in my intended audience’s shoes. I will also be required to “think outside the box.” This in depth thought process is necessary to determine and decide the best means of transmitting one’s message. Even interoffice memos require thought into how a fellow coworker will respond to the words you type. This falls back to the standard that quality communication can make you successful in any job. Regardless of what I do, I cannot consider myself an excellent communicator simply because I think I have a large vocabulary or that I speak well in front of an audience. Total communication includes thinking about how to best present your information according to the response you believe your audience will have. If I can do that then I think I will be successful no matter what my job title is.

**Initiative-taking**

Many employees would not wait to be told what to do but instead would do what they knew it would take to better the company. I never saw any employees step beyond their bounds. They were aware of what type of initiatives they could take and those they were not sure about they would ask their supervisors. I thought this was a great because it showed the supervisors that the subordinates were thinking outside the box and not simply following orders. On the same regards, many of the supervisors, my own included, would guide their subordinates towards taking the initiative. He would often discuss with me the various tasks that the Marketing Services staff needed to accomplished for a certain event. He would also then inform me of the various other projects he was working on and so I knew then that I needed to step up and get to work on those tasks without having to be told.

I must admit that early in my internship I was hesitant to initiate too much from fear of stepping beyond the bounds of my internship. But as the weeks progressed, my confidence rose and so did my initiative-taking. I realized that _______ was giving me all of the information I needed to begin work on my projects, so it seemed pointless for me to wait for him to tell me to begin. By taking the initiative on many of my projects, I hoped that I would have the opportunity to add more of my own flare and style into them. And, I hoped that I would either be able to finish them sooner and proceed onto another project, thus getting that much more experience, or have more time to ensure that they were completed on time and to the best of my abilities. This turned out to be quite true. At the beginning of my summer I found myself simply performing the tasks as assigned to me. By the time I began working on my special project, though, I knew what needed to be done and so started doing it. I believe the finished result showed a great deal of me in them because of it.

I am confident that I will obtain a job in the agricultural communications realm. Communicating is a timely process. If you communicate too late, the information or message you are sharing could be outdated or irrelevant. Most of the bosses or supervisors I will have will probably not want to tell me what to do all of the time. And quite honestly, I don’t want them to constantly be telling me what to do either. As I said, communications is timely, especially in the agriculture sector, if I cannot start my own work without being told then I will most definitely be unsuccessful. Fortunately, I feel I will not have a problem initiating projects that need to be done. With a little guidance from my superiors as to what goal our organization is striving for I believe, I will have no problem starting to work towards that goal, without being told to do so. Another reason I think this should not be a problem for is that by being able to take the initiative on tasks, I will enjoy my job all the more. I will take ownership in what I am doing and think of my work as a career as opposed to a means to earn a living. It is likely that I will also feel much more apart of the organization and strive all the more to ensure its success.

Like many of the other competencies I gained throughout my internship, initiative-taking helped me gain some additional skills. Those additional skills developed included my skills in working with people as well as my computer skills.

**Creativity**

This is one competency I have really tried to improve on this summer. I have never been a creative person to be completely honest. At the beginning of the summer I was nervous because I wasn’t sure how I was going to be able to improve on this particular competency. I can officially say my internship experience
definitely forced my creativeness to show! This summer I was in charge of monitoring several fields that had ... product applied to them. My boss wanted me to go to these fields about every two to three days to see if I could see visual differences.

One of the biggest ways to market chemical products and even corn or soybean hybrids, is for the grower to be able to see a visual difference showing why it is better than another product such as the competitor product. One of my responsibilities was to take pictures in a creative way while still being able to show a visual difference as to why our product was working better than our competitors. Sometimes this wasn’t the easiest thing to do especially considering there wasn’t always a visual difference, but hopefully there would be come harvest season (yield time). I would come up with a creative way to picture the corn or soybean plants. For example, I would have a field and half of it would have our product applied while the other half would have our competitor’s product applied. I needed to be creative and somehow take a picture to show why a grower should apply our product instead of the competitor’s. I would dig up six plants from each side. I would cut off the roots of the corn plant that had our foliar product applied on six plants and then cut the roots off of six corn plants that had our competitor foliar product applied and then lay the plants in the bed of my truck on their side. Then you could really tell which plants had the biggest stalk and which plant was bigger in overall size. I would then place a quarter in between each set of six plants so you could get an idea of what size the stalk was in comparison to a quarter. Then I put a marker board behind it with all the field and product information on it. After all this was completed, I took the photo!

Everyone I worked with at ... thought this was such a great, creative idea. The photo was very intriguing because you could see a great visual difference that showed our product being much better than our competitor’s product. My special project this summer was to launch a new product called .... I created two brochures that were advertising pieces. This also was a great opportunity for me to be creative because there is a lot that goes into making a brochure and I wanted them to catch people’s attention. I also learned how to run a program that you can create brochures in that I had never had any prior experience using. I’m thankful I got to learn this skill because it will be beneficial for me in my future career to know how to do. I put a lot of time and thinking into these brochures and one main reason was because I wanted them to be different than most brochures that ... had. I wanted to be really creative and make the brochures extremely eye appealing. I definitely accomplished that. The brochures turned out awesome and my boss was very proud of me.

At the beginning of the summer I knew I had a long way to go as far as improving my creativity competency. I feel that my internship gave me some of the greatest opportunities to be creative and I have grown so much in this area because of it. Being creative is a way to set yourself apart from other people and/or employees. I know this first hand now because this summer my creativity set myself apart from other interns. I feel like there is always more room to grow with being creative, but I can for sure carry this skill with me into my full-time career.
AgEdS 412 Internship Poster

This Appendix provides extra information on creating your poster.

*See Blackboard for specific instructions on formatting, designing, structuring, and submitting your DRAFT and final poster.

*Remember: What you did technically in the internship isn’t as important as informing viewers how the internship benefited your growth and value as a professional in the agricultural sector.

Your internship poster should be created in PowerPoint as one slide. You can find a poster template at [http://www.print.iastate.edu/templates.aspx](http://www.print.iastate.edu/templates.aspx). Use the 48” x 36” poster template.

Below is an example of the layout for your poster. The colors are official ISU colors. You don’t need to stick with them, but be sure to use font and background colors that have good contrast. Use photos if you have them (be sure to obtain a signed photo release from anyone in your photos; email the Department Internship Supervisor if this form is needed).

**You are not responsible for printing your poster.** Be sure to save your poster as a PowerPoint slide, not a PDF file, and send me the PowerPoint format.

![Example Poster Layout](image-url)
Below is an example of a former AgEds 412 student’s complete poster. Please do not COPY this, it is only an example to prompt your thinking and spark your creativity.