



## COVID-19 Internship, Field Placement and Service-Learning Protocol

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*The University has adopted this protocol to comply with applicable state and local public health orders and to be consistent with applicable federal and state guidance. The Provost's Office may issue updated protocols, which become effective upon adoption, to respond to changes in state and local public health orders, to be consistent with new federal and state guidance, and/or to adapt to changing conditions on campus. Please watch for updates to these protocols and regularly check the [DU COVID-19 website](#) for news and other important information.*

### **University of Denver COVID-19 Internship, Field Placement and Service-Learning Protocol**

The University of Denver (DU) demonstrates its commitment to experiential learning by requiring or recommending field placements, internships, or service learning in certain programs to help students bridge academic course work with community based or industrial work experiences in a supervised manner and to teach students how to think and act in their chosen professional fields prior to graduation. Because students can secure these opportunities on their own and/or students may need to fulfill a certain number of hours for licensure, DU has facilitated arrangements to allow students to work either virtually or in-person to gain course credit and/or satisfy program requirements. DU has developed this protocol to promote safety, to advise students of certain risks, and to empower students to make informed decisions in pursuing these opportunities. This protocol aligns the participation in such work with the [seven-tiered alert levels](#) that DU developed to guide its operations ("Alert Levels").

#### **Vaccination**

Students who participate in-person in internships, field placement and service -learning as part of their DU role or program must be Cleared for Field Experiences/Clinical Work (as defined in the [COVID-19 Protocol for Phased Campus Access](#)). This level of clearance involves compliance with campus testing requirements set forth in the [Mandatory Testing Protocol](#), documented full vaccination, and a signed acknowledgement of risk. Students who have an approved vaccination exemption may not participate in person in internships, field experiences or service learning as part of their DU role or programs. However, students with a medical exemption to the vaccination requirement approved through the Health & Counseling Center may make a request for accommodation through the Disability Services Program regarding the vaccination requirement for clinical work. If experiential participation in-person is a normal requirement for degree completion, programs may consider offering remote participation options where feasible.

#### **Internships and Field Placements**

Program administrators should make decisions regarding field work/internships consistent with public health orders and guidance and applicable regulations from accrediting bodies, while also supporting students seeking field work or internship hours needed for their degrees. Every field placement or internship program has a designee who oversees partnerships with industrial or community organizations. These program experts are the best source for advice on finding creative solutions to optimally train students to prepare for their careers, while balancing safety precautions and concerns, personal risk tolerance, and academic needs.

During Alert Level Purple, DU prohibits all programs from offering, and students from participating, in any field work/internships as part of their DU program or employment. Should Alert Level Purple occur for a sustained period during academic year 2021-22, the University will provide additional guidance for students needing in-person hours for graduation.

Depending on the Alert Level, some programs may choose to prohibit most in-person field work/internships, especially during times of resurgence of the virus (i.e., during Alert Levels Yellow, Orange, and Red), and/or allow students to request alternatives to in-person placement requirements. For programs that do not prohibit all in-person field work/internships, the University encourages exploring options for remote work; allowing informed student choice about in-person work (i.e., not requiring students to do in-person work and supporting student choice around alternatives to in-person work); and requiring appropriate documentation that agencies providing in-person work options for students agree to abide by applicable state and local public health orders and guidance. During Alert Levels Blue, Green, and Clear, programs may choose to resume all in-person field work/internships as conditions improve. Programs shall continue to require that agencies providing in-person work options for students agree to abide by applicable state and local public health orders and guidance. If a program receives a complaint regarding the conditions of a field work/internship site related to COVID-19 safety, the program must promptly contact the COVID Coordinator team at [covidcoordinator@du.edu](mailto:covidcoordinator@du.edu) for assistance in addressing concerns with partnering organizations.

Programs cannot prohibit students from working for pay regardless of Alert Level. If students work for pay and may earn hours for their field placement/internship as part of that work, programs should consider counting those hours toward the students' degrees. If additional hours are required for credit at the same work site, programs have the discretion of approving in-person work.

DU understands that students often desire to gain work experience by independently seeking internships. Where the student is not working with an official University partner through a credit-bearing or academic program requirement, students should consider the Offsite Safety Protocols set forth below.

### **Service Learning**

Service-learning courses (also called community-engaged classes) at DU incorporate activities and projects that are mutually beneficial to student learning and the community. This sort of reciprocal work is often based in the community – but not always; community-engaged classes frequently tackle projects that advance student learning and meet community needs without in-person service. For example, classes have carried out remote research, such as conducting video or phone interviews, designing surveys, or analyzing historical documents or existing data. Classes have also developed products, such as marketing or other communication plans and/or materials; research or evaluation plans; online materials for partners' websites, such as blog posts or newsletter content; annotated bibliographies and literature reviews; workshops, lesson plans, or class curricula; digital and graphic design or artwork; videos. Often classes that pursue these kinds of community-engaged (but not community-based) projects invite representatives from community partner organizations to some part of classes. These kinds of important exchanges may be very well suited to Zoom or another online platform and are well suited to support continued community engaged courses during Alert Levels Purple and Red.

Many service-learning activities can be reimagined as community-engaged instead of community-based. Several resources are available to support adaptation of activities to community-engaged instead of community-based. For example, CCESL's Portfolio site has a folder with a handful of curated articles relevant to online community-engaged teaching. To access, visit here (if you have difficulty accessing, please login to Portfolio first or contact [ccesl@du.edu](mailto:ccesl@du.edu)).

During Alert Levels Yellow and Orange, if instructors are considering community-based activities, the University strongly encourages discussion with community organizations about COVID-19 safety protocols, recognizing that community-based activities may not be possible in the current environment and not desired by community partners. If there is mutual desire by both faculty and community organizations to offer community-based activities, the University continues to require that all partners abide by state and local public health orders. For programs that do not prohibit all in-person field work/internships, the University strongly encourages exploring options for remote work; allowing informed student choice about in-person work (i.e., not requiring students to do in-person work and supporting student choice around alternatives to in-person work); requiring appropriate documentation that agencies providing in-person work options for students are complying with applicable state and local public health orders and guidance, and that students choosing in-person community based activities are doing so willingly and acknowledge the risks of such activities. During Alert Levels Clear, Green, and Blue, instructors may resume community-based activities without any additional restrictions.

**Offsite Safety Protocols**

To mitigate health risks, programs that decide to permit some in-person field work, community-based research, service learning, or internships during alert levels Yellow, Orange, or Red must comply with the following conditions:

- a. The student must discuss their rationale for working in-person with a member of their DU field/internship team or service-learning instructor.
- b. The field/internship/service-learning program should consider the following prior to the program agreeing to apply in-person field hours or credits toward degree:
  - Whether remote work is practicable for, or desirable to, the student intern
  - Whether the organization has determined that it can remain open based on state and local public health orders
  - Whether the organization has the capacity for supervision and back up supervision should the supervisor be unable to complete the field placement/internship/service learning
  - Whether the organization is committed to taking all necessary precautions to follow, and remain in compliance with, existing state and local public health orders
  - Whether the student has safe transportation to and from the community organization
  - Whether the student's position is intended to replace or substitute for any organization employee, which is not permissible; no student will replace or substitute for any organization employee.
- c. If the DU field/internship/service learning program vets the organization and agrees to apply in-person hours or credits, the student must acknowledge and confirm that they have considered all of their options and discussed their decision with the program designee; that they will remain in compliance with state and local public health orders; that there is a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 as a result of in-person field work, internships, or service learning; and that they understand the fluidity of the public health crisis.
- d. Students should be encouraged to contact their program designee at any time with questions or concerns about their in-person work.

**Appendix: Information regarding Workers' Compensation applicability**

The University's Workers' Compensation policy – both in and out of state – only applies if the internship is unpaid and it could only cover a claim if the workers compensation insurer determines that the coronavirus was contracted through work-related duties of the internship (i.e. direct transmission from/by a known, identifiable, infected person).

If an intern is working for pay and receiving internship credit from their employer, the intern would direct any workers' compensation claim to the employer and not the University.