

# Guidelines for the Professional Experience

## Computer Science

This document describes guidelines and procedures that Computer Science students should follow to fulfill the Professional Experience requirement. As part of the Common Experience, all students in the classes of 2010 and beyond must participate in a project-based Professional Experience following their first year. The project must be clearly related to the student's professional goals. In Computer Science, typical activities include internships and co-ops, directed research, and suitable semester-long class projects.

Note that the forms and letter mentioned below are available for download from the department's web pages.

### **Step 1: Decide what type of professional experience you want to get.**

For most students, the ideal professional experience is a summer internship or a co-op. A directed research project is equally good for students who are considering a career in research. This can take many forms such as a project done for credit on campus (e.g., CS497, Honors Thesis) or a summer project done on campus or at another university or research lab.

Another option is a semester-long class project. To qualify, the project must be of sufficient scope and quality to truly represent a professional experience. In addition, the project should help you meet certain learning objectives of the Common Experience related to life-long and independent learning, teamwork, leadership and service. Projects done as part of CS350 may qualify but the instructor will have to certify your particular project once it is completed. A minimum grade of C in the project is normally required.

### **Step 2: Obtain pre-approval for your professional experience.**

This step is optional but recommended. Fill out the required form and submit it to the department office.

### **Step 3: Inform your supervisor of the objectives of your professional experience.**

At the beginning of your professional experience, give to your supervisor a copy of a letter that details the Common Experience learning objectives related to the professional experience. (This step is not necessary if your supervisor is a Clarkson faculty member.)

### **Step 4: Obtain final approval for your professional experience.**

Near the end of your professional experience, fill out the required form. You will need to obtain your supervisor's signature. Once you return to campus, submit the form to the department office.