

## Internship Policy

### School of Communication & Journalism

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An internship is a structured and supervised professional experience, within an approved agency, for which students earn academic credit and may receive financial compensation. Internships engage students in unique relationships between the work place and the academic institution -- three-way partnerships where interns, site supervisors, and academic coordinators/advisors are key players in these learning opportunities.

Students may intern in any off-campus business, government agency, educational institution, social service agency, or other organization that accepts interns. Students interested in on-campus projects should consider the department's special projects courses.

### **Benefits of an Internship**

Students who complete an internship have the potential to achieve the following benefits:

- Provide opportunities for hands-on experience. While students learn a great deal of information in their courses, there is no substitute for direct experience in a professional environment. Furthermore, such experiential learning provides opportunities for students to augment theory with practice.
- Allow students to explore potential career options, enabling students to start determining their best fit in professional environments.
- Earn academic credit counting towards their major requirements.
- Improve marketability upon graduation.
- Build a network of employment contacts that may lead to securing employment during job searches.
- Enhance the maturation process. Since internships require a great deal of personal responsibility, the experience provides an important step in an individual's personal and professional maturation process and intellectual growth.
- Aid in the identification of knowledge and skills essential for doing well in a particular position. Furthermore, students may return from internship experiences better able to select additional coursework appropriate for their career choices.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

The following eligibility requirements reflect departmental policy.

- Students must be officially declared as a major in Communication Studies.
- Students shall be of junior or senior standing and not be on probation or suspension.
- The student shall find a faculty member in the department who will agree to serve as the Faculty Internship Advisor. This person works closely with the student and site supervisor, before and during the internship, to facilitate the planning of the internship, the communication, and the reflective process.

## Application Procedures

- Ideally, students should start planning with Faculty Internship Advisors two semesters before taking the internship. Final plans are made in the semester prior to the internship.
- An Internship Agreement must be completed by the student (see enclosed form) and signed by the student, Faculty Advisor, and Site Supervisor, the person at the host agency who is designated to supervise the student's work, evaluate performance, and provide feedback to the student and the educational institution.
- The Internship Agreement is submitted to the Department Chair.
- Number of credits for the internship should be calculated on the standard of 40 hours of work for each (one hour) academic credit. Students may register for 3 to 12 internship credits. Generally, credit is earned in three hour blocks. Per university guidelines, internships are always graded on a pass/fail basis.
- Students who intern for a company in which they are currently employed need to specify how the goals and objectives of the internship and the final project are beyond the scope of their present position.
- Once an internship is approved, the student will enroll in CMST 469 for the negotiated number of hours as specified in the internship agreement. Enrollment takes place through the Arranged Class Permission form.

## Evaluation Procedures

As with any other academic course, faculty members must evaluate learning outcomes. Grades for the internship experience will be assigned by the Faculty Internship Advisor. In assessing the nature of the internship experience, the following items will be considered: Journal entries completed by the student, the final application paper or portfolio completed by the student, and feedback provided by the site supervisor.

- 1) **Journal Entries:** Students need to complete journal entries every two weeks that describe their concrete experiences (i.e., activities completed) including their reflections on those experiences (i.e., reactions, questions, observations, and judgements with regard to the activities).
- 2) **Final Application Paper:** Students may choose to complete a final application paper in which they review the activities performed during the internship and reflect on how relevant concepts, theories, and information from their coursework relate to the internship activities. This paper requires students to reflect on connections between theory and practice.  
OR  
**Portfolio:** Students may create a portfolio that serves as a collection point for the written materials or products (e.g., video/film) prepared during the course of the internship. A memo should be included in the portfolio providing enough information to allow the portfolio to stand alone (without explanation) when students leave it with Faculty Internship Advisor.
- 3) **Feedback from Site Supervisor:** At midterm, the on-site supervisor needs to complete the "Midterm Feedback – Site Supervisor Feedback" form, returning the evaluation directly to the Faculty Internship Advisor. At the end of the internship experience, the site supervisor needs to complete the "Final Feedback – Site Supervisor Feedback" form, returning the evaluation directly to the Faculty Advisor (see enclosed forms). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the supervisor has copies of the evaluation forms in a timely fashion. Faculty Internship Advisors will take this feedback into consideration when assigning a grade to the internship experience. The Faculty Internship Advisor may request more frequent reviews from the site supervisor.