FAQ: Journalism Internship Program

How many internships do I need to graduate with a journalism degree?
All journalism majors and certificate students must successfully complete one internship for course credit to graduate. Journalism students may choose to complete more internships, but only two can be used for journalism credit – one as a required course and the other as an elective. Each journalism internship course is pass/fail and three credit hours.

Does the journalism department place me in an internship?
It’s your responsibility as a student to find an internship, but we will help. The first step is to meet with your assigned journalism adviser or the journalism internship coordinator to discuss your options. They can tell you about local, regional and national opportunities that may interest you. You can also choose to meet with a professor in your specialized subject track (newspaper, magazine or photojournalism) for assistance with contacts in that field. Also, pay close attention for internship opportunities posted on the bulletin board in the journalism department, on the journalism internship blog (see http://ucjournalisminternshipinfo.wordpress.com/) and in email messages you receive through the journalism majors list-serv. If you have not received any email messages from the listserv, contact your adviser to make sure that the email address we have on file for you is correct.

When should I seek an internship?
Ideally, you'll complete an internship when you're a junior or senior—after you've taken the introductory journalism courses JOUR-1030 (Principles of American Journalism) and JOUR 2010C (Reporting and Writing) and subsequent journalism courses in your chosen track. For example, you should complete JOUR-3075 Magazine Writing before you seek an internship at a magazine, and JOUR-3010 Advanced Reporting before pursuing an internship at a newspaper.

Internship deadlines vary from publication to publication, and some media outlets have limited application periods throughout the year. Other internships – especially competitive summer internships – have early deadlines (Jan. 1 or earlier). To be safe, you should plan on applying for an internship at least a semester (15 weeks) before the date you hope to start interning.

What are the department’s requirements for a journalism internship?
- You must complete JOUR-1030 (Principles of American Journalism) and JOUR-2010C (Reporting and Writing) and receive a C- grade or above.
- The internship must involve journalistic work: researching, reporting, writing, editing, photography and/or videography.
- You must have a supervisor, preferably from a communications background, who will mentor and evaluate you during the internship.
- You must work a minimum of 150 hours during the semester.
- An internship can be unpaid, but it must meet be for your benefit. The internship should meet the criteria outlined in "The Test for Unpaid Interns" by the Department of Labor: http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm
What are the requirements during the internship?

- Your site supervisor submits an intern progress report five weeks into the internship and a final evaluation of you at the end of it. The internship coordinator will send links to the forms, which are online, to your supervisor.
- Midway through the internship, you submit a reflection paper of at least 500 words.
- At the end of the internship, you submit a portfolio. It should be in a binder, folder, CD, DVD or on a website, and include a title page, a contents page, at least six examples of your best work, a log of hours or time sheets, an up-to-date resume, the mid-internship reflection paper and a final reflection paper. More information about the portfolio can be found on the internship syllabus, which will be on Blackboard.

All materials must be submitted to the internship coordinator, as requested, for you to pass.

What's the deadline for enrolling for internship credit?
The optimum time to enroll for internship credit is final week of the semester before you plan to do your internship. You may register after the semester begins, but don't wait too long... remember, you must work at least 150 hours to meet the requirements. We recommend that students work no more than 15 hours a week at the internship while taking classes.

How do I prepare for an internship?
First, perform well in your classes. Many employers require that you have at least a 3.0 GPA in your major. Next, get involved in student media, such as The News Record or Verge Magazine, and at least one student organization where you can put your communication skills to work.

What materials will I need to apply for an internship?
It's routine for employers to ask for a résumé and at least four examples of your best work – preferably published work, not work produced in class. If you are a photojournalism major, your portfolio should include at least 20 digital images with captions. Many employers require cover letters, which should be tailored to the position.

I've got an interview. How do I get ready for it?
Here are a few suggestions for setting yourself apart from other candidates:

- Research the company or organization. Find out as much as you can about the company and people with whom you are interviewing. Then demonstrate your knowledge with your questions, answers and comments during the interview.
- Prepare a list of common interview questions, and practice your answers.
- Ask each person you meet during your interview for a business card. After the interview, write a thank-you note or thank-you message to each person. Thank-you notes or messages should be sent that evening or the next day. Be sure to carefully edit notes and messages.

What advice can you give me while I'm doing my internship?

- **Arrive to work on time.**
- **Keep busy and show initiative.** Be a self-starter. Go beyond what is expected of you.
- **Strive to bring solutions to your supervisor – not problems.**
- **Exhibit professionalism.** Dress for the position you aspire to have. Speak respectfully to your supervisors and colleagues. Don't gossip. Avoid talking about your personal life, or making personal calls, texts and social media updates during work hours.
- **Take your internship as seriously as you would a post-graduation job.** It just could lead to full-time employment!