

POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

School of Communication

Guide to Undergraduate/Graduate Internships

Point Park University's School of Communication faculty strongly believe that internships are important and valuable components of its undergraduate and graduate curricula. Internships provide a complement for skills and education students obtain in the classroom and offer an insight into the professional world that is invaluable. The faculty encourages all students to seek and complete at least one internship before graduation.

School of Communication undergraduate majors can earn three credits for a supervised, registered internship during their attendance at Point Park after completing 45 credits. Students earn these credits by completing 200 hours in an approved setting at a newspaper or magazine, advertising or public relations agency, television or radio station, public relations or advertising department of a corporation, company or nonprofit organization or agency. Other areas students may also find internships in are: marketing, photography, and design components of corporations, companies and nonprofit agencies. Demand has also increased for online skills in various departments and components of media outlets, agencies, businesses and more. Students can register for two internships during their tenure at the university. See information below for graduate internship requirements.

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The major goal of any internship is to improve students' professional skills.

Student objectives:

- ✍ Enhance skills learned in the classroom
- ✍ Experience real-world work environment
- ✍ Explore future employment possibilities

On-site supervisor objectives:

- ✍ Gain additional professional assistance
- ✍ Interact with students and professors at Point Park University
- ✍ Contribute to the education of future journalism, mass communication, broadcasting, advertising, public relations, photography and digital media professionals

Supervising faculty objectives:

- ✍ Maintain relationships with professionals
- ✍ Uncover job openings for graduates
- ✍ Expand and improve curriculum

II. ACADEMIC APPROVAL PROCEDURE

Undergraduate Students

- To be approved for an internship, the student must have a 2.5 overall grade-point average. The student must be a second-semester sophomore (45+credits) and must first secure an internship using the tools in the School of Communication office, such as posted notices, the internship binder and database or talking with faculty and Career Development. All undergraduate internships are supervised by Dr. Steven Hallock. He is the point person for students to register these internships and then submit all work logs, required papers, portfolios and evaluation forms.

- The student must next complete the top part of the internship contract and have the agreed-upon work-site supervisor sign and verify the bottom half. The student must also complete the legal forms, and then all forms must be returned to the School of Communication office. Lastly, the internship card located in the office must be filled out completely. This card is then taken to the Registrar along with a registration form to be processed during the regular registration period. The school retains a copy of all the forms for supervisory purposes.
- An internship at a place of the student's full-time employment must entail definite changes in responsibility. A second internship (JOUR 413) must be a different site and involve different learning experiences.
- Academic credit is not retroactive for internships. A student may not work for a semester, or a summer, and then petition for academic credit as an intern. No more than six credits for internships may be acquired. All internships must be cleared through administrators in the School of Communication before permission will be given for academic credit. Internships may be paid or unpaid.

Graduate Students

- To be approved for an internship, the student must have the required 3.0 grade average in the Master of Arts program and have completed 12 credits in the program.
- A student must first secure an internship. The student must next complete the top part of the internship contract and have the agreed-upon work site supervisor sign and verify the bottom half. The student gives this form to the appropriate faculty member. The faculty member keeps the original personnel form. Note: The course number is determined by how many internships the student has had with the first JOUR 551 and second JOUR 552. Graduate students may take two internships. They may be paid or unpaid.
- All internships must be cleared with the graduate programs director of the School of Communication before permission will be given for academic-credit enrollment. (The student's adviser, usually the graduate director, must sign the registration form, and the faculty internship sponsor must keep the contract, work logs and papers. A copy of the internship contract and legal form is given to the graduate program director for approval. The director retains a copy of the contract for administrative purposes. The drop/add period is a valid time for students to place internships on their schedules if they haven't had time or confirmation beforehand.
- An internship at a place of the student's full-time employment must entail definite changes in responsibility to be approved.
- A second internship (JOUR 552) must be at a second site. Academic credit is not retroactive for internships. A student may not work for a semester or a summer, and then petition for academic credit as an intern. No more than six credits may be acquired for graduate internships.

III.

INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Graduate and undergraduate students

- Interns must work a minimum of 15 hours per week at a recognized newspaper, magazine or other publication, radio or television station, or advertising or public relations agency, organization or position. At least 200 hours must be logged for each three credits.
- Interns must submit to their faculty supervisor:
 - a. A typed weekly report detailing work activities
 - b. A portfolio or recording of work produced, and
 - c. A final report including a self-evaluation and supervisor's evaluation. Graduate students must devise and prepare, in printed or document form, a work-related project.
The project is to be submitted to the instructor at the end of the term
- The intern's on-site supervisor must submit a copy of the attached evaluation of the intern's work. The intern should point out this requirement to the supervisor and make sure that it is completed. Students review the form with the site supervisor as an exit interview.
- When necessary, the instructor should visit internship sites to examine work conditions and to hear comments from supervisors. The faculty member and intern-site supervisor should discuss the student's progress and appropriateness of assignments, concerns, problems or assets periodically by phone or e-mail.
- Internship problems should be brought immediately to the attention of the supervisor, the faculty sponsor or, in case of unusual circumstances, the department chair or the graduate program director.
- Interns are expected to dress appropriately for their internship positions and inform site supervisors of illnesses, absences or lateness just as in a formal employment situation. Good business etiquette must be practiced. The intern represents the university, the internship site, and he or she is also building professional contacts and habits.

IV.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERNS

- Be dependable and on time for your internship. Report any necessary absenteeism to your supervisor beforehand, but remember minimal absenteeism is permitted.
- Dress professionally. Dress slacks and casual clothes may be acceptable in some offices. Judge by the supervisor and professional employees. Neatness is the primary concern.
- Adopt a professional attitude. Represent the intern affiliation and the university responsibly.
- Do not use the internship-site telephone for personal calls or computers for personal use without permission
- Leave your problems at home or at school. Don't discuss your personal life at your internship be professional.
- Understand the organizational ladder at you internship. Be sure to follow it carefully. For example, check your assignments with your supervisor first, not with his or her boss. Your supervisor is your mentor.
- Ask questions. Show curiosity, interest and enthusiasm. Take initiative when necessary and appropriate. Show ambition, but try to be a team player.
- Take criticism without getting upset: It's not meant personally and it will help improve your skills.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT OF INTERNSHIPS

Grades for the undergraduate internships are based on three areas: weekly logs submitted by the student documenting the work completed, a self-assessment paper and a work portfolio turned in at the end of the internship, and an evaluation of performance completed by the internship supervisor. The faculty supervisor will also make random checks of the student's progress during the internship period.

The grade weight for each of these areas is as follows:

⇒ Weekly logs	30 percent
⇒ Paper and portfolio	20 percent
⇒ Performance evaluation	50 percent

Graduate students must also complete a project to receive credit for an internship. The grade weight for each of these areas is as follows:

⇒ Weekly logs	20 percent
⇒ Student project	10 percent
⇒ Paper and portfolio	20 percent
⇒ Performance evaluation	50 percent

Internships taken for academic credit receive grades based on:

Weekly work reports: Dates and hours worked with a description of the work completed.

A sample log report form is enclosed. Students also can type their own version of this form to permit more space for comments.

Documentation of work accomplished via a portfolio: Interns must supply all published clips or published work, recordings and/or other documentation of work accomplished during the internship.

Students' final report and self-evaluation: Evaluation is based on the quality of the content which is based on the answers to the questions posed in Section VI. This paper is turned in to the faculty supervisor only.

(NOTE: THE FINAL SELF-EVALUATION MUST BE TYPED AND SUBMITTED BEFORE THE END OF THE TERM FOR A GRADE TO BE ISSUED).

Professional supervisor's evaluation: The supervisor's evaluation will be based on the intern's attitude, conduct, professionalism and skills. A form is attached to this information for interns to give to their supervisors for completion.

Graduate student project – An additional work-related project, with the faculty supervisor's prior approval, in addition to those requirements listed above.

To assess performance, the student intern must ask:

- Am I being as professional as possible and using the experience to learn?
- Am I developing and sharpening my skills, knowledge and professionalism?

The on-site supervisor should ask:

- Are interns given real work to do and am I providing instruction and help?
- Do some interns have potential for future employment with our organization?
- Are the interns well prepared for the work assigned?

VI. CRITICAL SELF-EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS REPORT

The final assignment of the internship is a detailed, thoughtful paper, at 8 (full) to 10 pages in length, in which the intern addresses the following points:

- Was the job associated with the internship what you expected? Why?
- In which ways did your communication skills/courses help you accomplish tasks associated with your internship?
- What assumptions you had about the working world have changed as a result of your internship? How and why?
- What did you learn about yourself through the internship?
- What new technical skills did you learn during your internship? How did you apply this knowledge to fulfill your internship responsibilities?
- If you were to engage in this internship experience again, which of your duties would you change and why?
- What would you tell other students to do to maximize their participation in their internship?
- Evaluate the supervision received: How helpful was it? In which areas was it good or bad? Why? Be candid. Your site supervisor will NOT see your report, and your faculty supervisor would appreciate your suggestions.
- What type of work did you most enjoy? Why?
- Discuss your most unusual assignment.
- Discuss your most difficult assignment.
- Explain any mistakes you made. Why did you make them, and how did/would you avoid repeating them?
- What differences did you find between what you had read about the media in your textbooks and what you experienced during your internship?
- During your internship what observations did you make about the changing role and changing environment of the media?
- What type of work provided you the most valuable experience? Why?
- If offered a permanent job after graduation by the employer or a similar firm, would you be interested? Why or why not?