

Department of Mass Communications

STUDENT INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

The Mass Communications Department has adopted the university internship program which permits eligible juniors and seniors who are majors in the department to earn credit for full or part-time work experience with a cooperating agency. In any given semester, a minimum of one credit and a maximum of 12 credits of MC 469: Internship can be earned. Students may repeat an internship experience. No more than 12 credits of internship may be applied to the department's degree requirements.

Objective: The purpose of the internship program is to provide opportunities for students to supplement classroom learning with on-the-job experience in a cooperating private or public agency whose functions relate generally to the field of mass communications. The program is designed to supplement and enhance information acquired, skills developed and understanding achieved in classroom situations. The internship offers opportunities for students to work with professionals in an environment consistent with their area of concentration. For the student, it should open a door that would not otherwise be opened. At the same time, a cooperating agency should benefit from the student's energy and creativity.

Eligibility: Only juniors and seniors who are majors in the Mass Communications Department are eligible. Because the success of the program depends very much on the relationship that exists between the student, the department and the cooperating agency, only those students who have demonstrated competence in the classroom and whose performance and attitude indicate they are motivated toward careers in Mass Communications can be accepted as interns.

Cooperating Agency: For the kind of internship described above, a cooperating agency is understood to be an established commercial firm or government or private agency. These include weekly or daily newspapers, radio and television stations, advertising agencies, trade publications or the separate departments in commercial firms or public or private agencies whose functions relate to advertising, journalism or public relations. The Mass Communications Department reserves the right to approve or disapprove of a site as an acceptable internship.

Applications: Eligible students who wish to engage in the internship opportunity must file an application with their academic advisor and the chairperson in the Mass Communications Department. Students are advised to locate a site choice and make application well ahead of the established deadlines. In many cases, after your application to intern has been approved, you will need to contact employers directly and finalize some of the details of the internship.

Opportunities: Information about internship opportunities is available in the M.S.U.M Career Service Resource Room and also online at <http://www.mnstate.edu/career>. For example, the yearly "Student Guide to Mass Media Internships" is an excellent overview of opportunities in broadcast and print throughout the United States. If you are looking for an internship in the Fargo-Moorhead area, you should check the departmental bulletin boards for leads, and talk to the faculty in the department.

Credit Hours: Internships are usually approved for one academic semester (15 weeks) or for a similar period in the summer. The amount of credit that can be allowed is based on the following formula:

12 credits require 40 hour work week
9 credits require 30 hour work week
6 credits require 20 hour work week
3 credits require 10 hour work week

When it is in the best interest of the agency and the student, internships may also be approved for two semesters with a proportionate adaptation in weekly working hours.

Supervision: Before an internship can be activated, a student's application must be approved by the Mass Communications Department, and an agreement completed with the cooperating agency, signed by the student, the agency supervisor and the internship coordinator. This agreement will specify the hours of work, the credit hours permitted, job description, learning objectives and evaluation procedure of the student's duties at work.

The student agrees to the following: One week prior to the end of the internship to provide the Mass Communications Department with a written report summarizing the work he or she has been engaged in, and, when possible, including selected samples of work. The report should discuss learning outcomes achieved and/or not achieved. The report should be double-spaced and be three to five pages in length.

The agency supervisor agrees to the following: To submit a letter to the Mass Communications Department evaluating the student's work, attitude and potential. Only "S" or "U" grades are given for internships.

The internship coordinator agrees to the following: Periodically to check in person or by telephone with the agency supervisor on the student's progress.

If, at the end of eight weeks, both the internship coordinator and the agency supervisor agree the student is not benefiting from the internship and is performing below average, the student, after department review, will be advised to withdraw from the program and accept a "W" on her/his record. A student whose internship is interrupted for compelling personal or health reasons will be permitted to re-register.

Salary and/or Expenses: Some internships may not provide for any compensation other than experience and credit. Others will offer salary and/or expenses. Before a student begins work, it is essential that all parties the student, the agency supervisor and the internship coordinator -- clearly understand any provisions for compensation, whether this includes some wages, some expenses, some wages and expenses, or no wages and no expenses. This understanding should also extend to the normal conditions of employment, such as working hours, protection, if any, in case of injury, etc.