



School of Communication & Journalism

Internship Packet

FMDA/MDIA Majors

Overview

Internships are structured, supervised, short-term educational training programs that provide students with practical experiences in career settings. These experiences allow interns to apply knowledge gained through coursework to professional situations. Academic and practical instruction are vital parts of the education process and should complement and support each other.

Internships must be appropriate to the major. The internship should provide the opportunity for hands-on, practical experience, in a professional setting. An intern must not be merely running errands or performing clerical duties. The work should be appropriate for a college senior nearing completion of the degree. In addition, the on-the-job supervisor should be an expert in the field, capable of providing proper guidance. The supervisor may not be a relative.

Remote or blended internships will be accepted, but should maintain the rigor and expectations of an onsite internship.

Students planning an internship must remember that the “employer” invests time and effort supervising and training interns. Services of value are expected in return. The internship is a reciprocal arrangement: students exchange their work in return for on-the-job training, work experience, and contacts. Interns are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

It is the student’s responsibility to arrange the internship. The School continually works to enlarge the number of internship opportunities. Internship opportunities and other essential information is available on the internship website. (www.cla.auburn.edu/cmjn/students/current-students/internships/). Students may intern with any organization in any city as long as the position satisfies the requirements for the internship.

In general, students apply directly for an internship in the way they would apply jobs. Students typically go through an interviewing process and present resumes and portfolios. Students are encouraged to talk with the faculty supervisor or Career Services for assistance at any time.

Accommodations: The School of Communication and Journalism is committed to working with students covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during my office hours during the first week of class to discuss their accommodations. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT). Faculty, staff or students with questions about academic accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility. More information can be found at accessibility.auburn.edu

Title IX: Auburn University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, which includes all forms of sexual misconduct. The Title IX website ([link here](#)) provides comprehensive information resources and support for students, faculty and staff, including how to report incidents of discrimination, harassment or gender-based misconduct. Please note that university policy designates all faculty and administrative staff as mandatory reporters.

The School of Communication and Journalism hopes every student has a positive experience while attending Auburn. There are avenues for reporting incidents of harassment or discrimination that you may experience or witness. Please visit the [webpage](#) for additional information:

Learning Objectives

By the end of the internship, the student intern will have:

Connected academic theory to practice in the professional environment.

Applied and developed knowledge, skills, and experience relevant to the workplace.

Developed mutually beneficial networking and mentoring relationships.

Identified and clarified professional goals.

Developed self-understanding, self-discipline, maturity, and confidence.

Registration Instructions

During the registration period, students should register for the internship course even if the internship location has not been finalized.

All COMM interns must be registered for COMM 4920 during the term when the work is performed. The internship course is for three hours of academic credit. For Fall and Spring semesters the total course load (internship plus other courses) cannot exceed 15 credit hours. For Summer term the total course load cannot exceed 12 credit hours. If you intern without taking other courses, the University will bill you for three credit hours based on the University billing schedule. You should not be charged a student services fee when interning only.

Students may withdraw (with a W on transcript) until mid-semester. However, please be aware of your professional obligations to your internship supervisor. Do not withdraw without first talking with the faculty supervisor.

Internships typically run between the first day and last day of classes, ending prior to final exams. The intern should work throughout the term for a minimum of 200 total hours. For fall and spring, that typically averages 15 hours per week for the full term. For summer, internships typically average 20 hours each week for the full 10 week term. Internships are not allowed for the 5 week summer mini-sessions.

The requirements listed for course credit are minimum on-the-job hours. The student and the supervisor may agree that additional hours will enhance the internship experience; therefore, the student has the option of working more than the required minimum. Reasonable accommodations may be made for special circumstances, but they must be approved—in writing—prior to the beginning of the internship.

Assignments and Grading

Grades will be based on a 10 point scale:

A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69 or F: Below 60

Final grades are based on four requirements:

10 percent: Group Discussion Posts.

10 percent: Mid-Term Report

30 percent: Final Report and Portfolio.

50 percent: Evaluation from the Internship Supervisor.

Discussion Posts (10 total points)

Twice each term (5 points each), interns will make a post on the Canvas Group Discussion tab. These posts should summarize internship activities and observations. Write a minimum of 250 words for each post. Entries should include assigned tasks, efforts, successes, failures, the environment, and a sense of how the experience is developing. Critical reflection (both positive and negative) is an essential element of the group discussion. Consider the most important lessons learned in relation to the overall experience. Be specific and give examples. You may include work samples as appropriate. No late work will be accepted

Excellent (5 points)

Thoroughly addresses all components. Information is well organized and constructed.

Samples/Descriptions provided as directed. No grammatical/technical errors.

Good (4 points)

Sufficiently addresses all components. Information is organized and reasonably constructed.

Samples/Descriptions provided with limitations. Minimal grammatical/technical errors.

Satisfactory (3 points)

Addresses components with weaknesses. Information lacking in organization and construction.

Samples/Descriptions less than as directed. Grammatical/technical errors.

Poor (1-2 points)

Components not sufficiently addressed. Information is disorganized and poorly constructed. Samples/Descriptions not provided as directed. Grammatical/technical errors.

Mid-Term Report (10 points)

The midterm report consists of a 1,000-1,500 word essay addressing your internship experiences. This is a private report emailed to the faculty supervisor (Ric Smith smithrw@auburn.edu). You will discuss what you are doing, how things are going, and what you hope to accomplish in the second half of the internship. Be specific. Give examples. Address any concerns you are having.

Excellent (9-10 points)

Thoroughly addresses all components. Information is well organized and constructed. Samples/Descriptions provided as directed. No grammatical/technical errors. Report submitted by deadline.

Good (8 points)

Sufficiently addresses all components. Information is organized and reasonably constructed. Samples/Descriptions provided with limitations. Minimal grammatical/technical errors. Report submitted by deadline.

Satisfactory (7 points)

Addresses components with weaknesses. Information lacking in organization and construction. Samples/Descriptions less than as directed. Grammatical/technical errors. Report submitted after deadline.

Poor (1-6 points)

Components not sufficiently addressed. Information is disorganized and poorly constructed. Samples/Descriptions not provided as directed. Grammatical/technical errors. Report submitted after reminder from faculty supervisor.

Final Report and Portfolio (30 points)

The final report and portfolio will be submitted no later than the last day of class for the term. Failure to submit the final report and portfolio by the last day of class for the term will result in a penalty of 10 points off the report/portfolio grade for each day late.

The final report should include sections that address each of the following items in detail:

- I. Review of Internship Activities
- II. Analysis of the Value of the Internship Relative to Personal and Career Goals
- III. Analysis of Level of Preparedness.
- IV. Suggestions for Improvement of the AU Internship Program
- V. Portfolio (see description below)

Failure to include any of the required information will lead to a reduction in grade. The final report should be a minimum of 1,200-1,500 words long. The final report and portfolio are due no later than the last day of class. Specific details will be provided on Canvas.

Your report should:

Provide a clear thesis.

Be well organized.
Use headings to help readers easily identify relevant material.
Have proper formatting and page numbers.
Be free of grammatical and spelling errors.
Provide easy to understand definitions of technical terms.
Maintain a professional tone.
Provide a clear connection between classroom learning and internship experiences.
Provide sufficient examples from class and your internship to define, support and clarify your observations.

The use of headings to identify each section is expected. You will provide a clear thesis statement for each section and provide examples from the internship and theories and concepts from a variety of your communication classes to define, support, and clarify your claims. It should be written using a professional tone of voice, edited, and spell checked. The best reports provide a clear connection between classroom learning and internship experiences and use a variety of communication theories/concepts.

For the portfolio, the student will provide a link to a personal website that professionally displays the work, attach a Power Point presentation, include samples and links as part of the report, OR submit a hard copy of internship work in a notebook for evaluation. The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate what you have learned and contributed during your time in the internship. Choose the portfolio option that best highlights your work. The pieces included will vary from student to student depending on the internship. Some students will have more examples than others.

Excellent (27-30 points)

Thoroughly addresses all components. Information is well organized and constructed.
Samples/Descriptions provided as directed. No grammatical/technical errors.

Good (24-26 points)

Sufficiently addresses all components. Information is organized and reasonably constructed.
Samples/Descriptions provided with limitations. Minimal grammatical/technical errors.

Satisfactory (21-23 points)

Addresses components with weaknesses. Information lacking in organization and construction.
Samples/Descriptions less than as directed. Grammatical/technical errors.

Poor (18-20 points)

Components not sufficiently addressed. Information is disorganized and poorly constructed.
Samples/Descriptions not provided as directed. Grammatical/technical errors.

Failure (Below 18 points)

Components are missing. Information poorly organized and constructed. Samples/Descriptions not provided. Grammatical/technical errors unacceptable for senior level work.

Supervisor Report (50 points)

The on-the-job supervisor will be asked to complete a performance evaluation. The evaluation form will be sent directly to the supervisor by the CMJN internship director.

As part of completing the larger performance survey, the supervisor will be asked to rate the student across five categories on a scale of 0-20 in order to suggest a grade for the experience. The CMJN internship director will consider all factors when assigning the final course grade.

Quality of Work: The degree to which the student accomplished the objectives as agreed upon in the internship agreement. Consider if the work was thorough, accurate, timely, and completed in a professional manner. Did the student demonstrate attention to detail? Consider also the degree to which the student developed and applied technical skills (as appropriate to the internship setting).

Professionalism: The degree to which the student was positive, self-motivated, sought out work, behaved in an ethical manner, and was sensitive to issues of diversity. Consider how the student demonstrated leadership, maturity, and integrity as compared to other interns. Was the student reliable and punctual?

Communication: The degree to which the student was able to develop and construct oral, written, and/or electronic forms of communication. Consider also the student's interpersonal skills and ability to work successfully as a member of a team. Did the student develop mentoring and networking relationships?

Critical Thinking: The ability of the student to apply analytical and critical thinking in the context of the work environment. Consider the degree to which the student was able to think creatively, work independently, and solve problems.

Development & Growth: The degree to which the student matured over the course of the internship experience. Consider the student's ability to receive direction and correction and the degree to which the student asked relevant questions, sought out advice, and incorporated new concepts/ideas. To what extent did the student respond to needed changes and improvements? Was the student responsive to advice and criticism? Did the student develop a better understanding of the requirements and culture of the workplace?

Grading Scale for Each Category:

Excellent: 18-20 (A level work)

Good: 16-17 (B level work)

Average: 14-15 (C level work)

Poor: 12-13 (D level work)

Failed to Meet Expectations: Below 12 (F level work)

Supervisor Grade (based on total of five questions):

A= 90-100 total points

B=80-89 total points

C=70-79 total points

D=60-69 total points

F=Below 60 total points

These total points will count as 50% of the final grade.

Completing the Internship Agreement

This Internship Agreement, signed by the student, the faculty supervisor, and the on-the-job supervisor, is due in the School of Communication & Journalism office no later than the first day of class. The internship is not approved until the packet has been submitted, pre-requisites confirmed, and objectives/responsibilities accepted. If the packet has not been turned in by the first day of class, or if an e-mail has not been sent to smithrw@auburn.edu explaining the exception, the student will be dropped from the course. No student will be added to the internship after the 15th class day for Fall and Spring Semesters or 5th day for Summer Term.

The final report and the evaluation by the on-the-job supervisor are due to the faculty supervisor no later than the last day of class. It is the responsibility of the intern to follow up on reports and evaluations.

Supervisor Requirements

Host organizations are seen as educational partners. We require that interns be engaged in practical, hands-on work, in a professional setting, that is appropriate to the major. The work should be appropriate for a college senior nearing completion of the degree. The experience must be an extension of the academic setting: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.

The on-the-job supervisor must have education and/or significant professional experience in the field in order to properly mentor the student.

Interns should not be selected in order to fill a position as an expert in the field. The internship must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform. While we do expect our interns to contribute their knowledge and abilities to the organization, the primary objective is experiential learning.

The experience should have a defined beginning and end. There should be clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework, including a job description explaining the desired qualifications, expectations, and outcomes.

Internships must include orientation, training, supervision by a mentor, and evaluation.

The supervisor must work directly with the intern. The internship must be within a traditional professional setting appropriate for the business. Remote or blended internships will be accepted, but should maintain the rigor and expectations of an onsite internship.

We consider the internship supervisor to be an educator and mentor. We ask that the supervisor meet with the student on a regular basis to offer direction and feedback.

The direct supervisor cannot be related to the student.

The internship organization must provide the student with all of the resources necessary to complete the internship.

The supervisor will be asked to complete a performance evaluation and meet with the student for an exit interview at the end of the term.

The Internship program is a part of the curriculum of the School of Communication & Journalism at Auburn University. Interns will receive 3 hours of degree credit.

Students may be compensated during the internship, but it is not required. Unpaid internships should meet the requirements of the United States Department of Labor.

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires “for-profit” employers to pay employees for their work. Interns, however, may not be “employees” under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work. Courts have used the “primary beneficiary test” to determine whether an intern or student is, in fact, an employee under the FLSA. In short, this test allows courts to examine the “economic reality” of the intern-employer relationship to determine which party is the “primary beneficiary” of the relationship. Courts have identified the following seven factors as part of the test:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee—and vice versa.
2. The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.
3. The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern’s formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.
4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern’s academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.
5. The extent to which the internship’s duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.
6. The extent to which the intern’s work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.
7. The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

Courts have described the “primary beneficiary test” as a flexible test, and no single factor is determinative. Accordingly, whether an intern or student is an employee under the FLSA necessarily depends on the unique circumstances of each case.

For an overview of federal rules regarding internships see: [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act.](#)



School of Communication & Journalism

Internship Agreement

FMDA/MDIA MAJORS

Student's Name:

AU E-Mail Address:

Student's Telephone Number:

Internship Term:

On-the-Job Supervisor:

Title:

Agency or Organization:

City and State:

E-mail:

Telephone:

Please indicate:

Internship will be onsite

Internship will be remote

Internship will be blended

Prerequisites for Admission to the FMDA Internship

These prerequisites require that you apply for an internship after you have completed a substantial part or all of the relevant course work for your degree at Auburn University. Students often take an internship in their final term before graduation. Students should complete all prerequisites prior to enrolling in the internship.

Interns must be FMDA majors. Pre-majors are not eligible for MDIA 4920.

CMJN 2100 Concepts in Communication and Journalism

MDIA 2350 Introduction to Film Studies

MDIA 3300 Foundation of Media Studies

Either of the Following:

FILM 2420 Introduction to Filmmaking

FILM 2700 Introduction to Visual Media

By signing and submitting this internship agreement, the student confirms that all prerequisites have been completed prior to beginning the internship experience.

Will you be enrolled in other Auburn University courses while interning?

If yes, provide schedule here:

Description of Internship Objectives

This internship is designed to provide the intern professional and practical experience in the advancement of the student's college education. List objectives for the internship below. Please be specific and thorough in writing the description. This section should be coordinated between the student and the on-the-job supervisor. If internship is remote, indicate how supervisor will work with intern through electronic platforms. Please explain the schedule and plan.

A job description provided by the internship organization may be substituted for this written description.

The intern shall first report for the internship on this date:

The internship terminates on this date:

Indicate basic work schedule (days and hours) with the understanding that adjustments may be made during the term.

Is the internship paid?

If yes, at what rate?

I agree to all requirements given within this Internship Packet and recognize my responsibilities as the intern, on-the-job supervisor, or faculty supervisor. I confirm the supervisor is working directly with the intern in a professional setting appropriate for the business.

Intern Signature

Date

On-the-Job Supervisor Signature

Date

Faculty Advisor Signature

Date

Ric Smith

Sr. Lecturer/Internship Director

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