

The ABCs of Interning

Benefits of an Internship

Participating in an internship:

- is a great experience, the more experience you attain through internships the better .
- can provide you with the opportunity to make contacts and network; which could help you get your foot in the door for a job
- will give you a more realistic perspective on the nature work and a potential career
- will allow you to apply academic course work to work and professional life to create a broader understanding of communication.
- processes at work will help define your specialties and communication expertise and allow for sharper and more realistic career goals and aspirations.

*Benefits provided to students vary depending on the internship host; some hosts offer, in addition to course credit, a wage and or a stipend for meals and travel. These details must be negotiated with your internship supervisor.

Internships

If you are headed directly toward a career in a Communication–related field, one of the most important things that you can add to your program of study is an internship experience. Our department strongly encourages students to pursue internship opportunities!

However, there are a few things to know about the internship process...so please read through the following information before you start planning for your internship experience! After you have reviewed this information, feel free to contact the Speech Communication Internship Coordinator, dr. linda pysher jurczak.

Dr. jurczak's office hours are posted on her office door, Nevins Hall 1005. She is also available at other times by appointment. Her office number is 229-333-5826 and her cell number is 865-591-0673.

Internship Basics

An internship is a great way for you to get some entry-level experience in your area of interest by fulfilling basic roles in an organization. However, an internship is much more than “practical experience.” Internships are opportunities for students to integrate their academic studies with a specific profession, in order to show the strong connection between theory, research, and practice within the field of Communication. They are also a great opportunity to network.

Internship Opportunities

The Communication Arts Department has a list of updated information regarding host organizations that have internship opportunities available to undergraduate students, but the exact number and variety of openings changes each semester. In addition, you should look through the information available in the office of Cooperative Education.

Assistance in selecting the internship is available, but each student is welcome to find her/his own internship that suits her/his individual needs and career objectives. It is a good idea for you to pursue internship opportunities on your own, through personal networking, via the web, or by talking to faculty members here at VSU.

Interning for Credit: Getting Started

You should start by setting up a meeting with dr. jurczak. She will be able to talk to you about the internships that best fit your specific interest in Communication. She can also help you determine whether you meet the requirements for internships and assist you in taking the next step in the application process.

Interning for Credit: Qualifications

Students interested in receiving academic credit for their internships may choose to earn this credit in any semester, including summer, fall, and spring. Typically, depending upon the hours worked, an internship earns 3 or 6 credits, but more extensive, semester-long internship programs may earn students 9 credits. However, regardless of the number of credits desired for the internship, there are academic requirements that must be met before a student is allowed to register for an internship—which means that you must meet these requirements before you apply for an internship that requires you to receive

academic credit. The qualifications are as follows, and the Communication Arts Department does not grant exceptions to these minimum qualifications:

- **Grade point average of 2.5** in all core curriculum areas, senior core, and communication emphasis area;
- At least 6 credit hours completed in the major; for some internships (such as many in public relations) you must also have introductory coursework in that specific area of Communication. As a result, most internships are advanced openings for which special skills and/or preparations in specific academic courses are expected. Opportunities for students who are just beginning communication courses are usually not available;
- Internships are permitted in organizations that perform communication functions that match the emphasis area of a prospective intern. PR students may only serve with PR professionals. IOC interns and GS students must serve in supervision/management of an organization. Only PR students may do internships that have PR as their primary focus;
- Students may not do internships with or for relatives;
- You cannot receive academic credit for a job you already have;
- Before students are permitted to report to their host organizations, the departmental **INTERNSHIP CONTRACT** must be completed and submitted by the announced deadline to be considered for approval. Misrepresentation of the internship contract or agreement will result in termination of the internship with a grade of "unsatisfactory;"
- Before the student is permitted to report to the host organization, the student must have **registered** for either **COMM 3670** or **COMM 4670** for the selected number of hours.
- Student interns are responsible for all of their own living arrangements during the internship period. It is recommended that prospective interns have assurance of accommodations before discussing a possible internship position with any organization.

Interning for Credit: Academic Component

Once you've been registered for your internship, you need to make sure that you fulfill the academic requirements for receipt of internship credit. For the Speech Communication Area, this means that, in addition to completing the duties central to your internship, you must:

- Keep a weekly log of internship activities;

- Ensure that the supervisor completes the internship evaluation form about your job performance;
- Complete a professional presentation about the experience on the assigned date. This meeting is on Dead Day unless otherwise indicated. Please put this in your planner immediately as there is no excuse for missing the final day;
- Submit your required 6–8 page paper directly to the Internship Coordinator by the last day of class for the semester.

Once all of these have been completed and assessed by our Department's internship coordinators, then you will receive a satisfactory grade for your internship credits!