

Department of Communication: Internships for Credit COMM 495

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Is an internship really worth it?

Answer: Absolutely. An internship can be a crucial part of your career preparation while in college due to its ability to provide: (1) networking opportunities, (2) access to a professional workplace, and (3) a stage for you to demonstrate your talents and soft skills.

There is a 1 in 16 chance of securing a job by connecting with people, so networking is critical. Internships provide a great environment to meet professionals in the career field you want to pursue, as well as other interns who have similar interests ([Maio](#), 2018).

According to a [2016 National Association of Colleges and Employers \(NACE\) survey](#), more than 56 percent of graduating seniors reported taking part in at least one internship. Seventy-two percent of those internships were unpaid, credit-earning internships.

In a [LinkedIn Skills Report](#) (2018), 57% of people rated soft skills as being more important than technical skills. Skills, such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork can all be learned through an internship and utilized beyond that experience.

Question: Can I apply for an internship next semester if I am taking a prerequisite to COMM 495 this semester?

Answer: Yes! Simply apply for the internship as usual and when the prerequisite grades are registered, if you have earned the grade you need, you will be accepted into the COMM 495 class. If you do not receive the grade you need, you can still do the internship, if the organization agrees, but you will not receive college credit for the experience.

Question: Can I do an internship at a relative's establishment? Can a relative oversee or supervise my internship in any way?

Answer: No. The university will not allow a relative to supervise you since that person will be asked to evaluate your performance as part of a credit-earning course.

Question: Can I do an internship with an organization where I currently work or volunteer or have worked or volunteered in the past?

Answer: No. You must do an internship at a new and novel organization.

Question: Can I get college credit now for an internship I did in the past?

Answer: No. An internship is a highly supervised, contracted activity that is overseen by the university and the organization. You cannot get credit for an internship you did in the past that was not approved and supervised by the Communication Department prior to you embarking on the internship.

Question: Can I do an internship over the summer, for example, but sign up for the COMM 495 class credits in the fall semester (during the regular school year)?

Answer: No. Students must be enrolled in COMM 495 during the semester in which they are doing their internship.

Question: What are “Preferred Submission” and “Late Submission” deadlines?

Answer: There are periods during the year when internship placements at organizations are very competitive. The spring and summer semesters are two such times. Organizations prefer to select their spring interns early due to the Christmas holiday and their summer interns early due to vacation schedules. Thus, the “preferred submission” deadline is the deadline for students who want to be in the running for those early internship considerations. The “late submission” deadline is for students who may not have been able to find an internship early or for organizations that set late intern selection deadlines.

Question: Can I intern at an organization that is not in my communication track?

Answer: Absolutely! An internship is a terrific opportunity to explore various career paths to see if you are interested in pursuing that line of work. For example, we have had media production students explore careers in sales and marketing and public relations students do internships in broadcast news.

Question: Are there paid internships?

Answer: Yes! Although most internships are unpaid, many corporations do pay their interns. When you call or interview for the internship, be sure to ask if there will be any compensation. Sometimes, the internship is unpaid but the organization will pay for specific things during the internship (parking, metro passes, concert tickets, etc.). It is worthwhile to ask these questions during the interview process.

Question: Can I earn college credit for a virtual/remote internship with an organization?

Answer: Yes! More and more virtual/remote internships are accepted by the Communication Department. There are special considerations that must be met by both the organization and the student, however. If you’re interested in this type of internship, carefully read over the guidelines in the internship application packet and be sure the organization is willing to meet the conditions.

Question: Can I earn credit for more than one internship during my college years?

Answer: Yes! Many students take an internship their junior year, as soon as they become eligible, and another their senior year, just before they graduate. In these cases, the first, COMM 495 course credits they earn satisfies their COMM Core requirement. The second set of COMM 495 credits they earn are counted toward their 120 elective credits for graduation.

Question: What are typical tasks for students completing internships in communication?

Answer:

- Creating materials for social media and mass media
- Marketing projects
- PR releases
- Event planning
- Interviewing clients, donors, and others
- Organizing programs and fundraising campaigns
- Learning new software programs
- Getting certifications
- Attending workshops
- Analyzing reports
- Networking
- Filming
- Recording
- Writing tasks like articles, scripts, feature stories, others
- Data gathering/research projects
- Other tasks that match your professional interests