

Department of Public Relations

Internship Policies and Procedures

(Available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr/internships.asp)

General Information

An internship is an important part of career preparation. According to curriculum studies, internship experience and writing skills are the two most important elements in finding your first job.

Academic credit for internships is available by enrolling in PUR 4940 – Public Relations Internship. The course is a Professional Elective that fulfills Block 3 requirements. It can be taken for one to three credits. (Students taking less than three credits will need to take a second course in Block 1 or 2 to meet the requirement of nine total credit hours of Professional Electives). Noncredit internships may be taken at any time and do not require department approval.

PUR 4940 is offered every fall and spring semester, as well as during summer C session. The course is graded S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory). The instructor is the department chair, Dr. Spiro Kiouisis.

Internship credits must be taken through the Department of Public Relations (PUR 4940) to fulfill graduation requirements. No more than three credits for internships can count toward graduation, regardless of the department awarding the credit.

To qualify for academic credit, an internship must be an on-the-job **learning experience in public relations**. The intern must be supervised by a full-time employee of the sponsoring organization who is knowledgeable about public relations. The intern must physically work at the organization's office, at the same location as the supervisor. Telecommuting is not allowed.

Enrolling in PUR 4940

MEET

PREREQUISITES

You must be classified as a junior (60 credits or more) or a senior in the Public Relations Department. Have earned at least nine semester hours of credit in professional courses, including PUR 3000 and JOU 3101; and have a 2.5 or higher overall GPA and a 2.5 or higher professional GPA.

IDENTIFY

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Search for two or three potential internships that would interest you and further your public relations education. Several sources of information on internships include the Public Relations Internship Binders in Weimer 2085, the Knight Division in Weimer 1080, the Career Resource Center in the Reitz Union, and the internships list in the "Resources" section of the PRSSA web site <http://grove.ufl.edu/~prssa>. Contact the "contact person" listed for the internships you are interested in to schedule an interview.

**DRAFT A
WORK
SCHEDULE**

Since you will be enrolled in an academic course, your internship must follow the academic calendar, meaning that you must start and finish your course requirements in the regular weeks of the semester. Internships cannot overlap semesters, and you must register and pay tuition for PUR 4940 as you would for any other course.

Confirm with your potential internship employer the number of hours you will work, which affects the number of credits you can earn. The following guidelines apply:

1 credit hr = 100 hrs minimum, 2 credit hrs = 200 hrs minimum, 3 credit hrs = 300 hrs minimum

| <u>Fall/Spring Semester</u> (15 weeks) | <u>Summer C</u> |
|---|---|
| 1 credit hr = 7 hrs/week | Varies by Start and End Dates |
| 2 credit hrs = 14 hrs/week | Generally 20 hours/week |
| 3 credit hrs = 20 hrs/week | (Final reports due Friday <i>before</i> the week classes end) |
| (Final reports due on Friday of week classes end) | |

The deadline for completing all course requirements for PUR 4940 - Public Relations Internship is the Friday of the week classes end for the fall and spring semesters and the Friday *before* the week classes end for the Summer C Session. NOTE: PUR 4940 is not offered Summer A or Summer B, only Summer C.

This does not prohibit you from starting and ending your internship on dates agreed upon by you and your internship employer, as long as you are registered for the course before the beginning of the semester in which the internship will take place and you fulfill all requirements, including submitting all reports and completing necessary hours, by the set deadline.

For example, a student wishing to take PUR 4940 for one credit in Summer C might start their actual work hours in June, rather than in May when Summer C begins. Regardless, he or she must be registered for the internship at the beginning of Summer C. Likewise, a student might start a two-credit internship in May and end it in June, long before the end of Summer C in early August. He or she can submit all final reports early, but the reports are not due until the Friday before the week Summer C classes end.

**SUBMIT
APPLICATION**

You must submit an application packet by 5:00 pm EST on the deadline listed below. **The packet must be submitted in person or by U.S. Mail, to the Department of Public Relations. Earlier submissions are encouraged.** Allow time to modify the application in case the internship is denied.

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| Spring 2010 Deadline - Thursday, January 7, 2010 | Summer 2010 Deadline - Friday, May 7, 2010 |
| Fall 2010 Deadline - Tuesday, August 24, 2010 | Spring 2011 Deadline - Thursday, January 6, 2011 |

The packet consists of two parts:

- Completed and signed PUR 4940 Internship Application Form (available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr/internships.asp). The **Application Must Be Typed!** After completing the application, you will need to print and sign.
- Written description of your proposed job responsibilities and tasks **in a business letter** signed by the intended supervisor of your internship on organizational letterhead. (Please see the website for a sample letter.) The letter should be addressed to the department chair as follows:
Dr. Spiro Kioussis, APR
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and Communications
PO Box 118400
Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

Since both documents require signatures, **e-mail/faxed versions are not acceptable**. Mailed packets should be sent to Dr. Kiouisis at the above address. Hand-delivered documents should be brought to the Department Office in Weimer 2085. A meeting with Dr. Kiouisis is not necessary. **Applications will not be accepted or reviewed until both documents have been received by the department.**

PICKUP PROCESSED APPLICATION Students are responsible for picking up a copy of their application from the department after it has been processed. They are required to sign the processed application to acknowledge receipt. Once your application is approved by Dr. Kiouisis **and** you have picked up a copy of the approved form, you will be registered.

If you fail to pick up a copy of the approved form, you will not be registered in the course. Registration must be completed by 5:00 p.m. EST on the Friday prior to Drop/Add for the semester.

Regardless of agreed upon work period with the employer, all students must be registered for PUR 4940 **(not just submitted an application)** before the end of regular registration for the semester in which the internship will take place.

It is important to keep in mind that **credits cannot be increased or decreased after you are registered without dropping and adding the course with different credit hours and paying any associated fees.**

Successfully Completing PUR 4940

WEEKLY REPORTS You must submit a typed weekly report to purinterns@jou.ufl.edu every Friday by 5:00 pm EST, starting with the first week of the semester your internship is taking place. If you do not work a week during your internship (ex. Spring Break), **you must still send in a report stating, "I did not work this week"**. This will ensure accurate tracking of your weeks and hours. Sending in multiple weekly reports at one time is prohibited and could result in a "U" grade for the course.

The weekly reports (maximum of two pages) must describe your activities during the previous week. **Both style and tone should be business-like. Reports should be well written and free of grammatical and spelling errors. Sloppy reports will be returned for rewriting.** Submitting consistently sloppy or incomplete reports will result in a "U" grade for the course.

Weekly reports must be submitted on the PUR 4940 Internship Weekly Report Form, available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr/internships.asp. Reports sent in on any other form will be returned for correction. Reports must be sent as email attachments to purinterns@jou.ufl.edu. Reports sent to any other address may be lost and could result in a "U" grade for the course. Keep a copy of your reports in case you are asked to submit duplicates.

Each report must be numbered (for example, Week 1) and include dates of the work week, the number of hours worked each day, and the total hours worked that week (see PUR 4940 Internship Weekly Report). The hours reported on weekly forms must total the number of hours required for the number of credits for which you are registered (each credit = 100 hours). **Students are responsible for tracking internship hours. Reports submitted with incorrect calculations or missing information will be returned for correction.**

SUBMIT INTERNSHIP EVALUATIONS The last week of the internship, write a two-page evaluation of the internship commenting on its value to you and its potential value to future interns. Submit the evaluation to purinterns@jou.ufl.edu no later than the set deadline (the Friday of the week classes end for the fall and spring semesters or the Friday *before* classes end for Summer C).

See that the supervisor's evaluation is submitted. **Two weeks prior to the deadline**, remind your internship supervisor that he or she must write a letter evaluating your performance and work as well as complete the form, Evaluation of Values and Competencies (www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr/internships.asp). The letter must be on the organization's letterhead and signed by the supervisor. Because the letter requires a signature, **it must be sent by U.S. Postal Service**. E-mailed/Faxed letters are not acceptable. The supervisor's evaluation letter should be addressed and sent to Dr. Kiouis.

The deadline for all internship reports – the last weekly report, the internship evaluation, and the supervisor's evaluation letter and evaluation form – is the Friday of the week classes end for the fall and spring semesters or the Friday *before* classes end for Summer C.

Any missing reports will result in a grade of "U" for the course. Grades for the course are submitted during the week following the deadline.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No retroactive credit will be awarded for work you completed prior to the beginning of the semester in which you are registered for PUR 4940.

- Hours worked at an internship site after the set deadline for completing PUR 4940 requirements will not be counted toward satisfactory completion of the course.
- An "I" (incomplete) grade will be given only in circumstances deemed exceptional by Dr. Kiouis and after a written agreement to complete the course requirements has been signed by the student and Dr. Kiouis. **Ignorance of rules or inability to complete an overly ambitious work schedule set by the student will not be deemed exceptional.** All incompletes must be rectified during the next semester or session. An "I" grade will not be changed to an S/U grade until the end of the next semester or session.
- More than one internship may be completed if each is with a different employer during different semesters. No more than a total of three hours of internship credit may be earned for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Relations, either from the Public Relations Department or other departments.
- If you experience any situations during your internship that you perceive as uncomfortable or of potential harm, please contact Dr. Kiouis directly. Students will not be penalized for refusing to carry out inappropriate duties assigned by their supervisor or another employee of the sponsoring organization.

Neither the Department of Public Relations, nor the department faculty, nor the University of Florida is responsible for any personal injury, loss, or death while you are engaged in the internship or while traveling to or from it.

Frequently Asked Questions about Public Relations Internships for Credit

Q: Can I do an internship in the summer, but get credit for it in the fall, when my Bright Futures scholarship will pay for the tuition?

A: No, credit is not granted retroactively. It must be earned – and tuition for enrollment in PUR 4940 paid – the semester in which the internship is done.

Q: I live in Miami. Can I wait until I get home after spring semester to find an internship and then submit the paperwork for earning credit?

A: No. All summer internships must be approved before the beginning of Summer C. Use spring break and other visits home to identify internships early.

Q: If I have a problem completing enough work hours to fulfill the number of credits for which I am registered (example 300 hours for three credits), can I request that my credit hours be reduced?

A: No. Credit hours cannot be changed. You must drop the course with the original credits and add the course with different credits. Doing so requires the department chair's approval, usually a late fee of \$100, and your on-campus presence to process the necessary paperwork.

Q: Do I have to find my own internship?

A: No. The department office maintains binders of local, state, and national internships, separated by paid and unpaid. Visit the office (Weimer 2085) to review the binders any weekday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The Knight Division for Scholarships, Career Services and Multicultural Affairs (Weimer 1080) and the Career Resource Center in the Reitz Union also provide help with finding internships.

Q: Can I get credit for an internship that pays me a salary?

A: Yes. In fact, paid internships are strongly endorsed by the department, as well as the National Commission on Public Relations Education. Because you have some training in public relations, your internship work will add value to the sponsoring organization.

Q: How much should I expect to be paid for an internship?

A: The rate of pay varies by organization and usually the student's class status; seniors command higher salaries than juniors do. Pay for recent internships ranged from \$7.25 per hour (minimum wage) to \$16 per hour. Most paid internships fell in the \$10 per-hour range.

Q: Should I take an unpaid internship?

A: The decision is entirely yours. Pay is not a factor in approving internships. At the same time, keep in mind that you are paying tuition to do the internship.

Q: Are there any advantages to doing unpaid internships?

A: Few, if any. Some students report that sponsors of unpaid internships are more flexible about work schedules. In contrast, sponsors of paid internships are more likely to treat their interns as regular members of their staff.

Q: I would like to be paid, but I want to do my internship at a nonprofit organization, and nonprofits cannot afford to pay salaries to interns. What do I do?

A: Some nonprofits can afford to pay interns. Go to www.guidestar.org to look up information about the nonprofit organizations in which you are interested. Many large, national nonprofits have multimillion-dollar incomes. However, it is true that small, local nonprofits often have limited budgets. You might want to consider doing a for-credit internship at a large nonprofit and doing a noncredit internship or serve as a volunteer at a small nonprofit to gain experience.

Q: What does it mean when an organization says that it does not pay interns, but does grant academic credit?

A: The department is responsible for granting academic credit for internships, not the organization. Internships at all appropriate organizations are eligible for academic credit. Some organizations with a no-pay policy can only have student workers who are enrolled in an academic internship course due to legal, union, and insurance issues.

Q: Why are some internships denied?

A: The most common reason for denying internships is the internship does not deal primarily with public relations. Positions as sales representatives, reporters, and restaurant greeters are not considered public relations. Internships must be educational experiences in public relations. Another common reason for denying internships is that the sponsoring organization has no one on staff knowledgeable of public relations to supervise the intern's work and provide a learning experience.

Q: I believe my proposed internship does deal with public relations and that I will be supervised by a qualified employee; what can I do to ensure that my application is approved?

A: Talk with representatives of the sponsoring organization in advance about requirements of the internship. Show them this and other documents. Work with them on a description of your proposed responsibilities and duties. The required letter from the sponsoring organization, which must accompany your application form, should clearly demonstrate that you would be working in public relations under a qualified supervisor. Well-formulated letters expedite the approval process.

Q: I work part-time in a public relations job; can I receive internship credit for my job?

A: Generally, no. You cannot receive credit for work in which you already are experienced. Remember, an internship is a learning experience. However, you may be approved for internship credit if you are assigned new responsibilities and duties in your job for the internship period and you are supervised by someone knowledgeable in public relations. Keep in mind, though, an internship may be a great opportunity to explore career options in settings different from your current job.

Q: I don't have time to do a three-credit internship (300 work hours) to fulfill requirements for Block 3 of the Professional Electives; what can I do?

A: You can take a one-credit (100 hours) or a two-credit (200 hours) internship and a second course in either Block 1 or Block 2. You are required to take nine total credits of Professional Electives and one course in each of the three blocks, but you do not have to take three credits in each block.