

Department of Public Relations
Student's Guide to
Internship Policies and Procedures
(available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr)

Revised July 2006

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.

Faculty of the Department of Public Relations strongly urge all majors to complete at least one internship prior to graduation. Noncredit internships may be taken at any time and do not require department approval. 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 a total of nine credit hours of Professional Electives).

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.

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

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.**

Here are the steps you must follow to enroll in PUR 4940:

1. Check to see if you meet the 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.

2. Identify internship opportunities. Search for two or three potential internships that would interest you and would further your public relations education. There are several sources of information on internships within the College. First, examine the *Public Relations Internship Binders* in Weimer 2083. You can ask to look at the binders any weekday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Visit the Knight Division in Weimer 1080. Check out the internships list in the “Resources” section of the PRSSA web site at <http://grove.ufl.edu/~prssa>. Locate internship opportunities through your personal networks, but remember that the internship must be a learning experience in public relations, under a supervisor knowledgeable about the function.
3. Schedule interviews. Contact the “contact person” listed for each internship to schedule an interview (a business letter with an enclosed résumé, sent by U.S. Postal Service, is most effective). Bring an extra copy of your résumé and a portfolio of your work to date to the interview. Also bring a copy of these guidelines to give to the potential employer so organizational representatives are aware of time constraints and reporting obligations.

If you are offered more than one internship, decide which one suits you best and inform all organizations with whom you interviewed of your decision. Also thank them for their time and consideration.

4. Set a draft work schedule. 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 hour = 100 hours minimum
2 credit hours = 200 hours minimum
3 credit hours = 300 hours minimum

Fall/Spring Semester (15 weeks)

1 credit hour = 7 hours/week
2 credit hours = 14 hours/week
3 credit hours = 21 hours/week
(Final reports are due the Friday of the week classes end.)

Summer C

Varies by Start and End Dates
Generally 20 hours/week
(Final reports are due the Friday *before* the week classes end.)

Because 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.

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.

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: 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to Drop/Add.

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.

For example, a student wishing to take PUR 4940 for only one credit in Summer C might start his or her 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.

5. Submit application. You must submit an application packet, in-person or by U.S. Postal Service, to the Department of Public Relations no later than the Wednesday prior to Drop/Add for the semester in which the internship will take place. Earlier submissions are encouraged. Allow time to modify the application or submit another one in case the internship is denied. The packet consists of two parts:

- Completed and signed PUR 4940 Internship Application Form (attached to these guidelines and available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr).
- Written description of your proposed job responsibilities and tasks in a business letter signed by the intended supervisor of your internship on his or her letterhead. The letter should be addressed to the chair of the department as follows:

Dr. Spiro Kiouisis APR
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
PO Box 118400.
Gainesville, FL 32611-8400.

A sample letter from the internship supervisor is available at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr.

Because both documents require signatures, e-mail 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 (Weimer 2083) and given to an office assistant, who will check to see that you have appropriately completed the application form. A meeting with Dr. Kiouisis is not necessary. Applications will not be reviewed until both documents have been received by the department.

6. Pick up application after processing. 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 form to acknowledge receipt. Approved copies are a record of the agreement between the student and the department regarding duties, dates, and hours. Copies of denied applications provide information about why the internship is unacceptable and suggestions for revising the application (for example, the number of credit hours requested is unrealistic given proposed start and end dates). Applications generally are processed in 24 hours.

Once your application is approved by Dr. Kiouisis **and** you have picked up a copy of the approved form, the department secretary will register you for the course. Registration is done by groups, usually every two weeks.

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 p.m. on the Friday prior to Drop/Add for the semester.

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 late fees.

Here are the steps you must follow to successfully complete PUR 4940:

1. Submit weekly reports. You must complete and submit a written report at the end of each week you work, starting with the first week. Sending in multiple 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. A sample weekly report, PUR 4940 Internship Weekly Report – Sample, is available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr.

Weekly reports must be submitted on the required form, PUR 4940 Internship Weekly Report, which is attached to these guidelines and available online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr. The reports must be sent as attachments to e-mails addressed to purinterns@jou.ufl.edu. Reports sent to any other address may be lost and could result in a “U” grade for the course. To verify that your report has been received by the department, request a “read receipt” from purinterns@jou.ufl.edu (in Microsoft Outlook, go to “Options,” then to “Voting and Tracking Options”; select “read receipt”). 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) by the deadline—the Friday of the week classes end for the fall and spring semesters or the Friday *before* the week classes end for Summer C. Students are responsible for tracking their hours.

2. Submit internship evaluation. The last week of the internship, write a two-page evaluation of the internship and comment 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).
3. See that the supervisor’s evaluation is submitted. At least two weeks before the deadline, remind your internship supervisor that he or she must write a letter evaluating your performance and work and complete the form, Evaluation of Values and Competencies (available at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr). 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 letters are not acceptable. Letters may be faxed to the department at (352) 273-1227 as a temporary measure, but must be replaced by the original letter within one week. The supervisor’s evaluation letter should be addressed and sent to Dr. Kiouisis. It is due by the set deadline.

The deadline for all internship reports – the last weekly report, the internship evaluation, and the supervisor’s evaluation letter – 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.

Some additional information you need to know:

- 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. Kiouisis and after a written agreement to complete the course requirements has been signed by the student and Dr. Kiouisis. 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 a 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 Department or other departments.
- If you experience any situations during your internship that you perceive as uncomfortable or of potential harm, please contact Dr. Kiouisis directly. Students will not be penalized for refusing to carry out inappropriate duties assigned by their supervisor or another employee of the sponsoring organization.

Further information is available in the document, Frequently Asked Questions about Internships for Credit, available in the department office (Weimer 2083) and online at www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/pr.

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.