

## INTERNSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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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 PUR4940 – Public Relations Internship. The course is a Professional Elective that fulfills Block 2 requirements (Block 3 for students admitted prior to Summer B 2012). It can be taken for one to six credits. No more than six credits are allowed for the internship course. Noncredit internships may be taken at any time and do not require department approval. **No internship credit will be assigned unless the application is received and accepted by the end of the drop/add period, which are always the first week of the semester in which the internship will be completed. No credit will be assigned for any internship work that is completed before approval of the application.**

PUR4940 is offered every fall, spring and summer C semesters. The course is graded S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory). The instructor is Department Chair Dr. Marcia DiStaso.

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**.

### GOOD TO KNOW

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- More than one internship may be completed for academic credit in different semesters if each internship is with a different employer, or housed under a different department at the same company or organization. More than one internship may also be completed in the same semester as long as the internships are with different employers and do not exceed six total academic credits combined. No more than a total of six hours of internship credit may be earned for the Bachelor's of Science Degree in Public Relations, either from the Department of Public Relations or other departments.
- Submitting an internship application signifies that you will complete the internship with the organization specified. You may not change your organization without approval from Dr. DiStaso. If you wish to change your organization at any time, you must submit a new acceptance letter to the Department of Public Relations immediately.
- The intern must physically work at the organization's office, at the same location as the supervisor. Internships where students will be working remotely may be considered, but are not guaranteed for approval.

- Credits are earned by working a set number of documented hours at your internship. A list of credits and their corresponding hours are below:

<b>1 credit = 65 hours</b>	<b>4 credits = 260 hours</b>
<b>2 credits = 130 hours</b>	<b>5 credits = 325 hours</b>
<b>3 credits = 195 hours</b>	<b>6 credits = 390 hours</b>

Fall/Spring Semester 15 weeks of class	Summer C Semester Duration varies by start and end dates
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**All hours that need to be completed to satisfy your requirement must be done *before* the last day of class.**

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 the semester. No hours completed prior to the start of the semester or following the end of the semester will be counted toward academic credit during the semester which you are registered for PUR 4940.

It is important to keep in mind that academic 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. Any changes made in the number of credits must be approved by Dr. DiStaso.

- **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.**

## COURSEWORK

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Once approved for an internship, students will be enrolled into an online course on Canvas. Each week students will be required to submit a “quiz,” entering their total hours for the week and a description of the work they did. Because interns must work a select number of hours for each academic credit, it is crucial that proper tracking of hours and summaries are submitted each week.

At the end of the semester interns will be expected to submit a self-evaluation of their internship and have their supervisor submit an evaluation form and an evaluation letter.

These requirements will be explained in greater depth in the course syllabus on Canvas.

## REQUIREMENTS & HOW TO APPLY

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1. You must be classified as a **junior (60 credits or more) or a senior in the Public Relation 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. The 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**.
3. Submit a completed **internship application\***.

- a. Internship applications are due by noon on the following dates for each semester:

<b>Spring 2017 Deadline– January 10, 2017</b>	<b>Fall 2017 Deadline – August 25, 2017</b>
<b>Summer 2017 Deadline – May 9, 2017</b>	<b>Spring 2018 Deadline – January 12, 2018</b>

- b. Before turning in an application, check ISIS for any holds. All holds must be lifted before an application for internship may be reviewed.
  - c. The application can be found online here: **Internship Application**
4. Submit an **acceptance letter\*** from your supervisor.
    - a. Your supervisor must write an acceptance letter for you to submit with the internship application. The letter must be addressed to Dr. DiStaso, written on organizational letterhead and explain that you were hired as an intern for the company or organization. The letter must explain your public relations duties as an intern. The letter must have your direct supervisor’s official title and must be signed in ink by your direct supervisor, who will be your main supervisor for the duration of the internship.
    - b. Please note: Your supervisor must be a public relations or communications professional who will facilitate the work you will do as an intern. It is crucial that your direct supervisor is well-versed in public relations.
    - c. An example acceptance letter can be found online here: **Example Acceptance Letter**

\*Both the **internship application and acceptance letter must be dropped off** in the Department of Public Relations in **Weimer 2085**.

## ENROLLMENT

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Upon submission of an internship application, Department Chair Dr. DiStaso will review, and accept or deny your application. Once an application is accepted, the Department staff will enroll the student in the course. The student does not need to add the course on ISIS.

We encourage students to submit applications early, which will allow for ample time to resubmit if any issue arises with the application.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**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?**

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.

**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?**

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

**If I have a problem completing enough work hours to fulfill the number of credits for which I am registered can I request that my credit hours be reduced?**

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 and your on-campus presence to process the necessary paperwork. Late fees may be associated with this change.

**Do I have to find my own internship?**

Yes. The Department announces internship opportunities to students via weekly announcement emails. The Knight Division in the PATH (Weimer 1060), MyCJC online, and the Career Resource Center in the Reitz Union provide help with finding internships.

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

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.

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

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 have ranged from minimum wage up to \$16 per hour. Most paid internships fell in the \$10-\$12 per hour range.

**Should I take an unpaid internship?**

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.

**Are there any advantages to doing unpaid internships?**

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.

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