

## 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. Students may receive 1 credit for performing 65 hours of internship, 2 credits for performing 130 hours of internship or 3 credits for performing 195 hours of internship. Students may receive up to 3 internship credits.

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 in which the internship will be completed.** No credit will be assigned for internship work that is completed before approval of the application.

PUR4940 is offered every fall, spring and summer and runs for the full semester. 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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- 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.
- In addition to the requirements outlined below, credits are earned by working the required number of documented hours at your internship:

**1 credit = 65 hours**

**2 credits = 130 hours**

**3 credits = 195 hours**

**All hours needed to satisfy your requirement must be completed *before* the last day of classes.**

**After drop/add the number of credits that you are registered for cannot be changed.** This means that if you register for 3 credits and do not complete 195 hours, you will receive a U. This also means that if you register for one credit and work 300 hours you will only receive the one credit.

You can start and/or end your internship on dates different from the first and last days of class, but this needs to be agreed upon by you and your internship employer. Remember that you need to be registered for the course **before** the beginning of the semester in which the internship will take place. You will also need to submit all reports by as specified on Canvas. No hours completed prior to the start of the semester or following the end of the semester will be counted toward academic credit for that semester.

- **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 to receive credit for an internship, the Department of Public Relations will enroll all students in PUR4940 on Canvas. Each week, you will be required to submit a “quiz,” entering your total hours for the week and a description of the work you did. Because you have registered to participate in your internship for academic credit, it is crucial that you properly track your hours and submit detailed summaries of your work each week. Remember that this is for credit, so you will want to complete the weekly “quizzes” accurately and on time.

At the end of the semester, you will be expected to submit a self-evaluation of your internship and have your supervisor submit an evaluation form and an evaluation letter. All of this is required to receive a “Satisfactory” for the course.

## REQUIREMENTS & HOW TO APPLY

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1. You must have passed PUR 3000 and JOU 3101 with a C or better. You also need an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher.
2. You are responsible to get your own internship. 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 appropriate dates for each semester:

<b>Spring 2020 Deadline – January 10, 2020</b>
<b>Summer A &amp; C 2020 Deadline – May 12, 2020</b>
<b>Summer B 2020 Deadline – June 30, 2020</b>
<b>Fall 2020 Deadline – August 28, 2020</b>

- b. Before turning in an application, check to make sure you don't have any holds on your registration. All holds must be lifted before the Department can enroll you in the PUR4940 course.
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:
      1. Be addressed to Dr. DiStaso
      2. Written on letterhead from the organization and explain that you were hired as an intern
      3. Explain your public relations responsibilities as an intern
      4. Have your direct supervisor's official title and must be signed by your direct supervisor, who will be your main supervisor for the duration of the internship

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.
    - b. An example acceptance letter can be found online here: [Example Acceptance Letter](#)
  5. The internship application and acceptance letter can be dropped off at the Department of Public Relations in Weimer 2085 or submitted by email to [purintern@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:purintern@jou.ufl.edu).
  6. If approved, you will be enrolled in PUR4905 and you will need to start participating in the Canvas class the first week of the semester.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Yes. The Knight Division in PATH (Weimer 1060) and the Career Resource Center in the Reitz Union provide help with finding internships. The Department will also occasionally post opportunities on Twitter.

### **How do I register for the credits?**

Upon submission of an internship application and acceptance letter Dr. DiStaso will review and accept or deny your application. If the application is accepted, we will enroll you in the course. You do NOT need to register for the course on you own. If your application is denied, Dr. DiStaso will email you. We encourage students to submit applications early to allow time to process or incase issue arises.

### **Can I wait until I get home over summer to find an internship and then submit the paperwork for earning credit?**

Yes, but it is highly unlikely that you will be able to find an internship in such the short amount of time. All applications for summer internships must be turned in by the end of add/drop. Use spring break and other visits home to identify internships early.

### **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. The internship must be the same semester you are enrolled in PUR 4940.

### **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.

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

Yes. In fact, paid internships are strongly encouraged by the Department, as well as the Commission on Public Relations Education, the PR Council and PRSA.

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

The rate of pay varies by organization and your experience. Pay for recent internships have ranged from minimum wage up to \$20 per hour. Most paid internships fell in the \$10-\$12 per hour range.

### **Should I take an unpaid internship?**

Over half of recent internships were unpaid. 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.