

The Communication Internship Questions and Answers

1. What is an internship?

An internship is a supervised, on-the-job, learning experience for academic credit. It involves an agreement among the student, his or her faculty sponsor and a site supervisor to establish learning goals, learning experiences and evaluation of both the learning experience and the student's performance. Internships provide students with the opportunity to apply the skills, knowledge and theories learned from courses, to acquire new knowledge and skills, to work and network with communication professionals, to explore career options and to provide service to the community.

2. When should I start thinking about an internship?

Your freshman year. Many of our sites are very competitive. They want the best students and have many colleges that send them potential interns. Work hard to maintain a strong GPA. Get involved in campus organizations. For example, if you want to intern with a news organization and you spent four years at Westfield with no involvement with the student newspaper, radio station or tv club the site supervisor will wonder why.

3. What semesters can I do an internship?

Any semester, including winter and summer sessions. If you chose winter or summer sessions, you register and pay per credit through the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education.

4. When is the best time for me to do an internship?

The Department of Communication requires at least 30 hours in the major and completion of the WSC Common Core. Most students are ready by the first semester of their senior year. The last semester of the senior year offers the best potential to be hired at your internship site, because you can start the job right away.

5. How do I get started?

Meet with your advisor and the Internship Coordinator. If you qualify, fill out the **ONLINE internship application form** at <http://www.com.wsc.ma.edu/>.

6. When Should I Apply?

Deadlines for internship applications will be posted every semester. Generally, your deadline is advisement week of the semester preceding your internship semester. You do not need to have an internship site confirmed when you apply.

7. Do I get academic credit for the internship?

Yes, one credit for 40 hours work as follows -
3 credits = 8 hours x 15 weeks = 120 hours
6 credits = 16 hours x 15 weeks = 240 hours
9 credits = 24 hours x 15 weeks = 360 hours
12 credits = 32 hours x 15 weeks = 480 hours
15 credits = 40 hours x 15 weeks = 600 hours

8. Can internship credits count toward my major?

No. They are applied to graduation credits as general electives.

9. What are the maximum internship credits permitted?

WSC permits a maximum of fifteen (15) credits for internship experiences.

10. What do I need to be approved for an internship?

- complete the college's common core
- complete 30 credits in the major
- a minimum of 3.0 GPA in the major
- a minimum of 2.5 GPA overall
- approval from the Department of Communication faculty.

11. What if I don't meet the above requirements?

You must attach to your application form a letter explaining how you plan to rectify any problems and why the requirement(s) should be waived.

12. How do I find a site?

The Internship Coordinator and your advisor will help you, but the responsibility to locate possible sites, interview and confirm a placement is yours. Listings of sites are available from the Department of Communication. Once possible sites are determined, you will contact those sites for an interview.

13. What if my choice is not on the department's list of approved sites?

We add new sites all the time. Before any new site is added to the list, the Internship Coordinator will contact and receive information about that site. In most cases, the site will receive approval.

14. Can I apply to more than one site?

Yes. However, once you have informed one site that you will be interning there, it is unprofessional to cancel out in favor of another site. Do not commit until you have made your final choice.

15. Can I do more than one internship?

Yes. You may intern at more than one site per semester or per year. However, total internship credits may not exceed fifteen (15).

16. Will I need a resume?

Yes! You should be preparing a resume and a portfolio of your work whether you seek an internship or not.

17. Will I need a cover letter?

Probably. Increasingly, you may be able to apply on line for internships. Regardless, you should be working with WSC's Career Services office to develop your job application letters, resume(s), and portfolios.

18. Will I be required to interview for the position?

Yes. You and your potential internship site supervisor will want to assess that you are mutually compatible and if so to agree on your specific duties, work hours, and grading criteria. This information will become part of a contract that you and your site supervisor will sign. This is a job search. You should arrange a meeting and arrive dressed appropriately, with a resume and relevant work samples if you have them.

19. How will I be graded?

Your college faculty sponsor will award a final letter grade, based heavily on your site supervisor’s assessment of your work and on your own reporting. The grade will be based on the evaluation forms provided as part of the internship documentation, your reporting and final report and portfolio and your faculty sponsor’s assessment of your work, professionalism and learning.

20. Are there assignments?

Yes, you are required to keep a daily/weekly log and submit -

- a midterm report
- a comprehensive final report addressing questions set out in the internship handbook.
- a portfolio showing and explaining samples of your work
- a list of readings recommended by the site
- an interview with your site supervisor
- a confidential site evaluation
- An internship exit survey.

21. How do I keep in contact with my faculty sponsor?

You are expected to check in every week or two by phone or e-mail as arranged with your faculty sponsor. Your faculty sponsor will contact your site supervisor at least four times during the semester and schedule at least one site visit when feasible.

22. Can I get paid for my internship experience?

College policy allows for payment but there may be advantages to an unpaid internship. Competition can be high for many sites and applicants willing to intern for no pay may have a competitive edge. If you are on a payroll, you may have less control over what you may be expected to do at the site. Most sites have to cover employee's insurance and benefits. Non-profit agencies simply may be unable to afford your services. Some sites offer a small stipend to cover travel. The department has no problem with that.

23. What if things don't go well at the internship site?

This rarely happens. The Internship Coordinator and your faculty sponsor will make every effort to solve on-site problems. If the problems cannot be resolved, then an alternate site or academic experience will be found, if possible.

24. Do you accept late applications?

Only if you meet all the criteria in point 25 below and you attach to your application a letter explaining why your late application should be accepted.

25. So, what do I do now?

➔ Check that you qualify for an internship, as follows -

- College core completed _____
- 30 communication credits completed _____
- 2.5 GPA over all courses* _____
- 3.0 GPA in the communication major* _____

➔Talk to your advisor or the internship coordinator.

➔ Look at the listing of internship opportunities available from the Dept. of Communication.

→ Apply **ONLINE** at <http://www.com.wsc.ma.edu/>.

26. How do I get registered for an internship?

- For fall and spring semesters, the Internship Coordinator will register you into your internship (COMM 0305).
- For summer and winter sessions, you will register directly with the Graduate and Continuing Education office. See the Internship Coordinator for help with this.
- For Washington, DC internships through the Washington Center (TWC) you will be registered for COMM 0386 by WSC's office of Career Services.

* Your overall GPA will be on your transcript. See the Department of Communication secretary for help with computing your GPA in the major.

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