



School of Journalism and Communication

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GUIDE TO PRACTICUMS AND INTERNSHIPS FOR STUDENTS

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Value of Practicums and Internships

Many graduates point to their internship or practicum experience as the most practical “payback” for their educational investment. It is here that students grow their skills in the professional media, journalism, public relations, or communication world. The School of Journalism and Communication recommends all students participate in this experience. Public Relations and some Mass Communication majors are **required** to complete an internship.

Student Instructions

- Before arranging for an internship or practicum, students should become familiar with the procedures for the following:
 - securing a position,
 - requirements for obtaining university credit,
 - online contract and evaluation forms.
- Students must choose an approved communication-related job at a newspaper, magazine, broadcast station, public relations or advertising department/firm, or in a nonprofit administrative setting. Other positions, however, may be arranged.
- Internship-specific requirements:
 - An internship (XXXX 392, 492, 493) normally lasts 8 to 12 weeks during the summer between the student’s junior and senior year at a time when no other courses are taken.
 - It is taken for 1-3 credit hours, **off campus**, after a student has completed at least half of his or her major’s coursework.
 - Some degrees require internships that mandate 300 "on the job" hours. Others, like the BA in Comm Studies, require only 100 "on the job" hours. Consult with your faculty advisor to determine the number of semester credit hours to enroll in.
 - All internships require a full-time professional supervisor in an established department matching the internship course number.
 - Students must submit an online [Internship Contract](#), signed by their work supervisor.
 - All internships must be approved by the SJC faculty as a whole **before** the internship begins. No retroactive credit is available for past work done.
- Practicum-specific requirements:
 - For a practicum (XXXX 291, 391), students normally spend 6 to 15 weeks on the job.
 - It may be taken for 1 to 3 credit hours in any year of a student’s program.
 - A minimum of 50 clock hours work is required for each semester hour of credit.
 - Practicums require professional field supervision, but because it is often a shorter time commitment and can be easier to accomplish during the school year, it is more flexible in comparison to an internship.
 - Students must submit an online [Contract](#) that has to be approved by the student’s faculty advisor **before** the practicum begins. No retroactive credit is available for past work done.

- The [Internship/Practicum Contract](#) describes the student’s work responsibilities and gives the length of service. Once the online Contract is submitted to the faculty advisor for approval and signature, a copy will be forwarded to the emails of the faculty advisor, work supervisor, and student.
- The student will keep a daily log of hours and activities, summarizing the tasks and activities performed (see the example attached).
- At the end of the internship/practicum, the student must write a 300-500-word evaluation of the learning experience for the faculty advisor. The evaluation discusses the following:
 - Projects the student managed, worked on, or assisted with
 - Positives and negatives of the experience
 - Overall summary of the internship
 - Recommendation on whether this internship is good for SJC students

Procedure for Registering

1. Your faculty advisor can help generate ideas for potential positions. It is your responsibility, however, to find an organization and work supervisor that you believe will be a good match with your degree and coursework.
2. Inquire with the organization about their requirements, such as submitting a resume and scheduling an interview.
3. **Completing a CONTRACT.**
 Officially apply for the internship/practicum by completing the Internship/Practicum Contract form <https://www.cognitoforms.com/SAUJournalismAndCommunication/InternshipPracticumContract> the link is also available on the SJC website <https://www.southern.edu/journalism/> in the *For Students / Internship / Forms* section.
 - a. In consultation with your work supervisor, fill in all information requested, including the list of job responsibilities.
 - b. Double-check the accuracy of all email addresses as the completion and approval of the form depend on it.
 - c. Upload relevant materials such as job description, work contract, etc.
 - d. You may save the form and return to it at a later time to complete it. Make sure to save or email yourself your “Form Link” which will be available to you after you hit the “Save” button.
 - e. When the form is complete, **email your “Form Link” to your work supervisor.** A sample letter to a supervisor is included in the email sent to you as you hit “Save” and email it to yourself.
 - f. Have your work supervisor sign, date, and submit the Contract to your faculty advisor by clicking the “Submit to Faculty Advisor” button. A copy of your contract will be emailed to all three parties (student, work supervisor, and faculty advisor) to the email addresses listed on the form.
 - g. Follow up with your work supervisor and/or faculty advisor to assure your Contract has been submitted¹.
 - h. Follow up with your faculty advisor about the approval timeframe of your Contract.

¹ In addition, you may try accessing your Contract via “Resume Now” link included in the email with your “form link”. If the form is not accessible, the Contract is likely had been submitted.

4. Your Contract must be approved **before** your practicum/internship begins. **No retroactive credit is available for past work done.**
5. If approved, check your Southern course registration online (in MyAccess) to confirm that your internship/practicum shows up on your course list for the appropriate semester.
6. Go to work! Keep your appointments and be a pro. Keep a log of your work hours as well as daily activities summarizing the activities performed, including your reflections.
7. At the end of the internship, write a 300-500-word evaluation of the learning experience for your faculty advisor. Include a summary of the projects you worked on, discussion of helpful experiences and assignments, benefits and negative outcomes of the experience overall, and suggestions for future student placements in this organization.
8. As your internship nears completion, your faculty advisor will email your work supervisor a link to fill out an online Internship Evaluation. The form must be submitted before the last day of the semester. **No grade will be recorded until all paperwork is in.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I required to get an internship or practicum?

In the current SJC curriculum, an internship is required for the B.S. in Public Relations and the B.S. in Mass Comm-Media production degree. For other degrees it is not required but highly recommended.

Will I pay tuition for academic credit?

Yes, either a practicum or internship will cost the normal tuition charge, either as a summer class or as part of your course load during the regular school term. You must pay the tuition cost in order to receive academic credit for the internship or practicum. Please note: tuition for all classes is lower in the summer. Your account will be checked for any financial holdings before registering.

Can I be paid for my internship or practicum?

Yes, you can, if the organization's policy supports paid interns. Some do, and some do not. Some organizations provide a stipend that may at least help defray tuition expenses. Even if you are not paid, however, remember the greatest value in an internship is the added confidence you will gain, an expanded portfolio, and references for future job opportunities.

When should I take a practicum or internship?

Practicums are commonly arranged during the school year as well as during the summer months, depending on the location, nature of the work, and the student's schedule. Internships are most frequently done in the summer, for a more immersive experience, but may occasionally be arranged during the school year. The ideal time for an internship is normally the summer after your junior year, but not always. Upper-division course status is required, though, and you should be at least halfway through your major classes. Consult with your adviser about the best timing for you.

Can I do my practicum or internship on campus?

A practicum may be done in a relevant department on or off campus, but an internship must be done away from the campus in an organization other than Southern Adventist University.

Can I do a practicum or internship at summer camp?

If your duties align with your degree track (e.g. photography/video work), up to two hours of practicum (not internship) credit may be granted for summer camp work, one time during your program in the SJC.

Can I do a practicum or internship in a student media job at Southern?

Again, assuming your duties fit with your degree, one hour of practicum credit per school year may be granted for jobs carrying key responsibilities on *Southern Accent*, *Southern Memories* or *Strawberry Festival* staff. Up to 3 hours of practicum credit may be earned per school year for the top editor or producer position. No internship credit is granted for these campus media positions.

What if I encounter a problem during my internship/practicum?

While not common, unfortunate circumstances occasionally interfere with the successful completion of an internship. If a major personal problem develops in your own life that prevents you from completing an internship, or if the field organization should default on delivering the internship experience you bargained for or take advantage of you, contact your faculty advisor immediately. Accountability, both ways, is our priority for your field experience.

Will my internship lead to a job?

It should never be assumed that completing an internship earns a student the right to be offered a job upon graduation. At the same time, such happy outcomes do occur sometimes. The School of Journalism and its partner field organizations offer no expectations of hiring former interns, but you will be better qualified to enter the broader professional marketplace for having successfully completed an internship.

Sample of Log Entries

June 7 (8 hrs)

8 am – 12 pm, 1 pm – 5 pm

I spent the whole morning sending out invites for the book reading by Kate Jennings. I checked RSVPs for the Zakaria luncheon, and copied a coloring book for the embassy adoption program that we are involved in. I typed and organized the USIA briefing notes I had taken. I put the packages together for Andrea and Jill to have for reference. We were supposed to meet and go over the information together, but we never had time. I actually started typing names in the ArtExpress invitation list. I have to enter each person that someone has submitted for the guest-list. I had computer problems. I gave up until tomorrow.

June 11 (5 hrs)

8 am – 1 pm

Do morning show and make phone calls to book “Consumer Line.” Accompany reporter and photographer to Murfreesboro. Did a standup for future package.

June 23 (8 hrs)

8 am – 12 pm, 1 pm – 5 pm

Help with “Morning Line.” Prepare and edit rundown for “Call in Against Crime.” show. Email information to guests. Help set up studio. Floor direct 2nd hour of “Call in Against Crime.”

June 24 (8 hrs)

8 am – 12 pm, 1 pm – 5 pm

Help with “Morning Line” again. Set up guests on “Consumer Line.” Record special “CL” on MAC Cosmetics. Ran Switcher for live “Consumer Line” in the afternoon.

June 25 (8 hrs)

8 am – 12 pm,
1 pm – 5 pm

Help with taping of “The Plus Side of Nashville” and the live version of the show. Also get guests for “Consumer Line” and switch show. Stay for later programs “Sports Line.”

Internship/Practicum Checklist

PREP WORK

- Meet with your faculty advisor (learn about internship/practicum requirements)
- Find and/or apply for a job(s)
- [*If your job looks promising*] Talk to your faculty advisor (does the job match your degree and coursework and is suitable for your internship/practicum?)
- You are offered a job

COMPLETE THE INTERNSHIP/PRACTICUM CONTRACT (detailed instructions are above)

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/SAUJournalismAndCommunication/InternshipPracticumContract>

You will be able to Save your form and complete it later

- Open the form, get familiar with it, and fill out sections you already know
- Save or email your “Form Link” to yourself (the link will be available to you as you hit the “Save” button)
- Consult with your work supervisor about the information requested in the form; pay special attention to the list of job responsibilities – it must be well explained
- Assure the accuracy of all email addresses (*completion and approval of the form depend on it*)
- Attach relevant materials (job description, work contract, etc.)
- [*When the form is complete*] **Save** the form and **email** your “Form Link” to your work supervisor. A sample email is included (see instructions above)
- Your work supervisor has reviewed, signed, dated, and **submitted** the Contract to the faculty advisor
- Follow up with your faculty advisor about receiving the form and the timeframe for approving your Contract. **No retroactive credit is available for past work done.** Date
- Your Contract has been Approved
- Confirm your internship/practicum shows up on your course list (MyAccess course registration)
- Confirm it is for the appropriate semester

GO TO WORK – BE A PRO!

- Log your work hours and activities daily
- [*At the end of internship/practicum*], write a 300-500-word evaluation of the learning experience
- The Internship Evaluation has been completed by your work supervisor at least one day before the last day of the semester – the earlier the better
- Review your Evaluation with your work supervisor (*optional but highly recommended*)
- A grade is assigned