FAQ: Journalism Internship Program

How many internships do I need to graduate with a journalism degree?
All journalism majors must successfully complete one internship for course credit in order to graduate. Journalism certificate students also must complete one internship for course credit. Any journalism student may choose to complete more internships than the required number. Professional experience in an internship setting looks excellent on a resume and puts you one step ahead of the competition when you're applying for jobs after graduation, so we do not limit the number of non-credit internships you pursue while you’re at UC.

Does the journalism department place me in an internship?
It is your responsibility to find an internship, but we will help. The first step is to meet with your assigned journalism adviser to discuss your options. Your adviser can tell you about local, regional and national opportunities that may interest you. You can also choose to meet with a professor in your specialized subject track (newspaper, magazine or photojournalism) for assistance with contacts in that field. Also, pay close attention to the bulletin board in the journalism department, to the journalism internship blog (see http://ucjournalisminternshipinfo.wordpress.com/) and to email messages you receive through the journalism majors list-serv. If you have not received any email messages from the list-serv, contact your adviser to make sure that the email address we have on file for you is correct.

When should I seek an internship?
Ideally, you will complete an internship when you are a junior or senior—after you've taken the introductory journalism courses JOUR-1010 (Career Explorations in Journalism) and JOUR 2010C (Reporting and Writing) and subsequent journalism courses in your chosen track. (For example, you should complete JOUR-3075 Magazine Writing before you seek an internship at a magazine, and JOUR-3010 Advanced Reporting before pursuing an internship at a newspaper.)

Internship deadlines vary from publication to publication, and some media outlets have limited application periods throughout the year. Other internships – especially competitive summer internships – have notably early deadlines (Jan. 1 or earlier). To be safe, you should plan on applying for an internship at least a semester (15 weeks) before the date you hope to start interning.

What are the requirements for a journalism internship?
To qualify for credit, an internship must involve journalistic work: researching, reporting, writing, editing, photography and/or videography. You must bring a completed, signed internship agreement form to the intern supervisor before the start of their internship. During the internship, you must work at least 150 hours during the grading period in order for it to qualify for credit. And you must make sure that all the necessary paperwork is turned in to the UC intern supervisor before the end of the semester.

Can I work as an unpaid intern?
Yes, you may pursue an unpaid internship. With unpaid internships, it is especially important that your goals and responsibilities be spelled out at the beginning of the internship. We want you to get as much as possible out of the experience.
What’s the deadline for enrolling for internship credit?
The optimum time to enroll for internship credit is final week of the semester before you plan to do your internship. Please plan ahead and be aware of registration deadlines.

How do I prepare for an internship?
First, perform well in your classes. Many internships require that you have at least a 3.0 GPA in your major. Next, get involved in student media, such as The News Record or Verge Magazine, and at least one student organization where you can put your communication skills to work.

What materials will I need to apply for an internship?
It’s routine for employers to ask for a résumé and at least four examples of your best work – preferably published work, not work produced in class. If you are a photojournalism major, your portfolio should include least 20 digital images with captions. Many employers require cover letters, which should be tailored to the opening. See the document, “Tips and Tricks: Resumes and Cover Letters,” for more information.

What is the internship workshop, and why am I required to attend it?
The free internship workshop provides information about applying for an internship. It offers tips and advice for preparing your resume, writing a compelling cover letter and understanding the culture and expectations you’ll find in a workplace. The workshop will be offered several times during the fall and spring semesters. Look for information about it on the listserv.

I’ve got an interview. How do I get ready for it?
Here are few suggestions for setting yourself apart from other candidates:

- Research the company or organization. Find out as much as you can about the company and people with whom you are interviewing. Then demonstrate your knowledge with your questions, answers and comments during the interview.
- Prepare a list of common interview questions, and practice your answers.
- Ask each person you meet during your interview for a business card. After the interview, write a thank-you note or thank-you message to each person. Thank-you notes or messages should be sent that evening or the next day. Be sure to carefully edit notes and messages.

What advice can you give me while I’m doing my internship?

- **Arrive to work on time.** Showing up late or not at all could be grounds for firing.
- **Keep busy and show initiative.** Be a self-starter. Go beyond what is expected of you.
- **Ask questions and take notes.** Demonstrate your problem-solving abilities.
- **Strive to bring your solutions to your supervisor – not problems.**
- **Exhibit professionalism.** Dress for the position you aspire to have. Speak respectfully to your supervisors and colleagues. Don’t gossip. Avoid talking about your personal life, or making personal calls, texts and social media updates during work hours.
- **Take your internship as seriously as you would a post-graduation job.** It just could lead to full-time employment.