

WHY TAKE AN INTERNSHIP?

Simple answers: To gain professional newsroom experience. To see if this kind of work is right for you. To make contacts who might help you find jobs once you graduate.

Two key questions that recruiters and hiring managers ask applicants for entry-level journalism jobs are: Did you work for a campus news organization? Where did you intern?

Getting involved with a campus news organization is straightforward. Show up at the organization's weekly staff meeting, get an assignment (preferably, one that you propose) and get going. You'll need campus news experience to be eligible for JRN 488: Off-Campus Internship.

Students are responsible for finding their own internship opportunities. The best approach is to go on the websites of news organizations that interest you and see what internships are available. Also, students in JRN 115 and above will get emails from the internship coordinator about internship opportunities.

ARE INTERNSHIPS REQUIRED FOR THE JOURNALISM MAJOR?

Off-campus internships are not required for the journalism major – but they are highly recommended. For students who intend to pursue a career in the field, they're essential.

Approved journalism internships taken for credit satisfy the experiential requirements of both the School of Journalism and the university.

HOW CAN THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM HELP ME PREPARE FOR AN INTERNSHIP?

Professor Barbara Selvin is the SOJ's coordinator of internships and careers. She offers multiple resume/interviewing workshops. Watch the weekly SOJ announcements for more information.

The SOJ holds an Internship and Career Fair early each semester. See "Internship Fair FAQs" below.

This important annual event lets you meet the recruiters who have the strongest relationships with our school in a relaxed, friendly environment. It's never too early to start building your individual relationships with these very nice people. Over the years, they get to know our students and look forward to seeing them at these events.

WHAT IF I NEED TO GET ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR MY INTERNSHIP?

If you wish to take an internship for credit and haven't previously done so, make an appointment to meet with Professor Barbara Selvin, coordinator, internships and careers. Write to her at barbara.selvin@stonybrook.edu.

- To be eligible for academic credit, students must first work with a campus news organization. Bring three to five examples of work published or aired on campus to your meeting with Professor Selvin. Also required: an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher, JRN GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Students receive credit by enrolling in JRN 488 with the internship coordinator's permission.

It is the School of Journalism's decision, not the employer's, whether to award academic credit.

Upon request, Professor Selvin will prepare a letter to prospective employers confirming that an eligible student will receive academic credit for an internship.

Many employers require that interns receive academic credit, especially employers that don't pay their interns. The unpaid internship remains a feature of the journalism landscape, to the shame of wealthy employers that could afford to pay. The School of Journalism encourages employers to pay their interns or, at a minimum, to provide a transportation stipend, but, too often, our pleas go unanswered.

Both paid and unpaid internships with news organizations are eligible for credit toward your journalism major.

Students enrolled in JRN 488 may apply to the SOJ for a transportation stipend covering a portion of their commuting costs. The employer should cover transportation expenses on the job. The application form is posted on the JRN 488 Blackboard site, Documents page.

WHICH INTERNSHIPS QUALIFY FOR JOURNALISM CREDIT?

The internship must be with a news organization, not an advocacy group or a commercial enterprise that needs writers, such as a sports team. The intern's work must involve journalistic skills—not marketing, public relations or advertising. The internship must include time in a newsroom. Internships where all work is done remotely do not qualify.

Students wishing to take an internship that doesn't qualify for journalism credit should visit the Career Center to learn about EXT 488. Students who enroll in EXT 488 will need to find a campus sponsor outside the journalism program. The School of Journalism supports journalism internships only.

Up to six credits of JRN 488 may be applied toward the journalism major. Additional internship credits, whether through JRN 488 or EXT 488, may be applied to your graduation requirements. No more than 12 JRN/EXT 488 credits may be applied toward graduation.

IS ONE INTERNSHIP ENOUGH?

Not really. Most employers like to see at least two internships on a resume.

Internship Fair FAQs

Q. Who should attend?

A. The School of Journalism holds an Internship and Careers Fair every semester, and we get the same core group of recruiters each time, with occasional appearances from other employers. This allows all journalism students, even those in the early stages of the program, to develop relationships with these recruiters over time. It's fine to come down and introduce yourself, ask a few questions about what each internship offers, smile, shake hands and go on your way. As you move through the program, you'll talk more about what you're learning and doing journalistically.

Q. What is the internship fair like?

A. Tables are set up in the SAC with chairs on both sides. On the table are wire baskets where students place their resumes and clip packets. Usually there are copies of the employer's news product and the recruiter's business card, and sometimes there's swag--pens or other useful office items--for students to take home. Some recruiters work alone, others in pairs. Some like to talk to one student at a time while others like to speak to groups. Some conversations last five to 10 minutes, others longer. In the fall, employers are recruiting for both spring semester and summer internships. In the spring, it's mostly summer internships and jobs.

Q. Wait, I need a resume? I don't have one. I don't have anything to put on a resume.

A. You'd be surprised. Professor Selvin, the SOJ's internship and careers coordinator, can help you put together a professional-looking resume that highlights your potential. You have more going for you than you think, just by being in the program. And she offers multiple resume/interview workshops in the weeks before each semester's Internship and Career Fair. Quick tips: Resumes should be one page. List an email address you check regularly. Make sure your voicemail message includes your name, not just your phone number.

Q. Do I really need an internship? Is it required for the journalism major? Do I have to get credit? Are these paid or unpaid?

A. Yes to the first question. Very few employers these days will hire journalism grads without one or more internships. Experience on a college news organization is also a must. No to the second question. Internships aren't required for the major, but they are highly recommended, and they do count for SBU's and SOJ's experiential course requirements. Many employers insist that you get academic credit, in which case the prerequisites are active participation in a campus news organization, an overall GPA of 2.5 and a JRN GPA of 3.0. Sadly, many journalism internships are unpaid, but the School of Journalism offers stipends to cover transportation costs.

Q. What do I wear to the fair?

A. You should look professional. Men should wear a collared shirt, a nice pair of pants (neat jeans are okay) and a nice belt. Shoes are better than sneakers, but don't let that hold you back. It's fine to wear a jacket and tie. A suit is unnecessary. Women should wear nice outfits, not too dressy, either pants or a skirt or dress. Nothing too short or tight, go easy on the makeup, no super-high heels. Everyone should be neatly groomed. Minimize your piercings.

Q. What do I bring?

A. Bring copies of your resume and packet of clips, one for each recruiter, just in case. Meeting each recruiter is highly recommended. Why not? What have you got to lose? You may learn something, and talking to the recruiters can simply be fun. These are nice people who are interested in helping talented young prospects understand the news business.

Q. How many clips should I put in each packet? What is a clip?

A. "Clips" are published pieces of work. They may be photocopies of actual newspaper clippings, copies of PDFs or copies of screen shots. Bring only your best published work, five to 10 clips if you have that many good ones with no typos or errors, otherwise fewer. If you don't yet have published work, bring neat copies of stories you wrote for class, but no more than two of these. Use a binder clip to hold your materials together. Don't put them in plastic sheets or folders. You may certainly include work published on thesprey.info or longislander.info.

Q. What else should I do to prepare?

A. The companies that are sending recruiters to the fair will be listed in the SOJ weekly announcements. Research the companies. You'll make a good impression if you are familiar with what the news organization does, who owns it, and any stories about the company that have appeared in the news over the past couple of years. Also, create a portfolio website using Wordpress, wix.com, squarespace.com or about.me and post your best photos, videos and multimedia, and PDFs of your best written work.

Q. I still have questions.

A. If you still have questions, write to Professor Selvin.