

INTERNSHIP POLICY UPDATE
Spring, 2021 Internships & Coronavirus

Given the public health crisis, the UofL Department of Communication will make a number of changes to its Communication 417 Internship Program for the spring semester, 2021 in order to accommodate the needs of as many students as possible.

1) Previously, internships that consisted of a substantial number of remote/virtual work hours have not been allowed because qualitatively, those experiences don't equal face to face internships, nor do they meet the interpersonal communication objectives of the Department. Given the current situation, the Department will allow remote/virtual internships during spring 2021. Should the public health situation improve, the Department will encourage students to obtain, or in the case of students having started remote internships, switch to, as many face to face internship hours as possible. Any such positions will need to adhere to other internship program policies including prerequisite Communication courses specific to each position.

2) Positions with other departments/programs within the University will be allowed whether face to face or remote. Again, any such positions will need to adhere to other internship program policies including prerequisite Communication courses specific to each position.

3) Department and faculty projects will be allowed provided there is someone from the Department offering some element of supervision to the experience. Approved projects will need to have a practical work element matching with the student's Communication coursework, and some kind of project output that can be evaluated at the end of the work experience.

4) The possibility exists that students needing a Communication 417 internship for their BS degree may have difficulties obtaining any kind of position. All Communication 417 students will be encouraged to find some type of position in order to have the kind of meaningful, applied Communication learning experience the Department seeks. But in order to accommodate students who are having particular difficulties in finding a position, the Department will consider a variety of alternatives including, but not limited to:

- * Starting some kind of business or project that benefits the community in some way. Examples might include podcasts, blogs, websites, fundraisers, events, etc.
- * Practical project work. This could include things like a hypothetical strategic plan to foster awareness of some kind of organization or cause with executions, a coronavirus communications plan, social media plans, communication audits, crisis plans, a case study (for example how organizations are handling internal communication during the coronavirus crisis), etc.,
- * Independent/research study on some aspect of Communication-related positions or job/employment marketplace, for example news coverage of the coronavirus (a number of Communication students are interested in news and journalism), the impact of coronavirus on internships and entry-level employment opportunities, etc.
- * Other proposals as detailed by students.

For any of these alternatives, students will be asked to write a proposal detailing activities and output as well as the direct relationship to past upper level Communication coursework. Student proposals will be considered on a case by case basis and approved at the discretion of the internship director in consultation with one of the Department's academic advisors.

As in the past, Communication 417 experience that has an employer/supervisor/internship orientation, whether face to face or remote, will be graded based on the work site supervisor's evaluation and the professionalism and quality of written internship materials (contract, diary, portfolio, final paper). 50% of the internship grade in these situations will result from the supervisor evaluation with the other 50% evaluated by the Department of Communication Internship Director.

For any other approved Communication 417 project not involving a work site and employer/supervisor, 90% of the grade will be based on the quality of the agreed upon output as evaluated by the Internship Director, and 10% will be based on student "professionalism" including meeting all deadlines and timely responses to director communication/inquiries.