
MxCC Media Internship Guide

Your Key to Future Success

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*Prepared by
Richard Lenoce, Program Coordinator
Broadcast-Cinema
Internship Coordinator for
BC & Multimedia*

Welcome to the COM295/296 Internship

Middlesex Community College's media programs offer 3 internship classes. COM295 Internship I, COM296 Internship II and an in-house learning experience COM287 Corporate Media Practicum. COM287 is not a required internship as it gives students experience producing projects for the college as opposed to being in a work organization.



Defining an internship can be somewhat difficult but this is what's generally accepted:

An internship is a supervised temporary position that reflects your field of study emphasizing on-the-job training rather than merely employment, and it can be paid or unpaid. If you wish to get a job in media, you normally have to have participated in an internship before you are qualified for an actual job. Typically, 120 hours of internship experience equals three college credits and internships are usually performed the last semester of a college education.

- **Supervision.** Internships are supervised. The company or organization you are interning with will assign you an internship site supervisor. The site supervisor acts just like any job supervisor, working with you on your work schedule, assigning tasks, evaluating your work, etc.
- **Temporary Position.** Internships are temporary positions in that you are in that position for a given period of time. To earn 3 college credits you must complete 120 hours of on the job work experience but depending on the work site you may be required to do more. The internship is done at a time in your education, usually at the end, when you have the confidence to perform well in the work place and the knowledge and skills to meet employer expectations.

- **Educational.** An internship is a 3-credit class, COM295 or COM296, which you enroll in during the semester you'll be working on-site. This is a learning experience where you'll be able to practice what you have learned in your classes, as well as learn new skills through on-the-job-training related specifically to your assigned tasks. Being in the work environment itself is an important educational experience because you'll learn about a media company's culture, hierarchy, workflow and can use that information to network and find a more permanent position.

- **Payed and Unpaid Internships.** Some internships are paid, others are not. When internship sites do pay, they pay either

- o a wage, weekly or bi-weekly income.
- o a stipend, a single payment at the end of the internship
- o a scholarship, similar to a stipend but intended to cover educational expenses

Each internship site is different. Large corporations like ESPN or local TV stations tend to pay a wage. Smaller companies and organization often don't have the resources to pay an intern. *Remember you aren't performing an internship for the money but to gain experience for your resume, material for your portfolio and develop a network of professionals who can assist you in a future job search.* Internships in either the short or long term can lead directly to full-time employment and a higher wage then you might expect without the internship. Also, if an internship site does pay, don't expect to get more then minimum wage.

- **Internships are required.** In the graphic arts, printing and journalism fields, prior to electronic media, there were apprentices, uneducated young people, who didn't go to school but learned their trade on the job for little or no pay until they were accepted into the trade union or guild as a full-time employee. We are long past the days of movable type, printing presses, and news reported via teletype, but the apprentice model has remained through the evolution to electronic media. The saying *I can't get a job unless I have a job (i.e. internship)*, is really true in media. It's almost impossible in many media fields to be offered that important first job without an internship as it demonstrates that you have professional skills and contributes to a sizable portfolio. Yes, internships can be listed as *Professional Experiences* on your resume as opposed to Education or Educational Opportunities.

Selecting an Internship

The internship process starts ONE SEMESTER BEFORE you enroll in the internship class and perform the internship. For example, If you wish to perform a spring internship you should start looking and applying the beginning of the fall semester! Why? The process for the companies and organizations start early. Internship application announcements are posted early the semester before with a deadline sometimes during the middle of that semester giving management enough time to review the many applications and schedule interviews. Starting the process early also benefits you. Internships are competitive so the more preparation you do up front and the earlier you submit your application, the better chance you have of getting the internship you want. You'll need to create a cover letter/email that you can easily tailor to each internship application. You must also put together a solid resume. Our counseling office or your faculty advisor can assist you with this. Make sure you have a portfolio online either a website or Vimeo channel. Avoid YouTube or a Facebook page as using these is not considered professional.

The first step in selecting an internship is deciding what your goal is for the internship and then meeting with your advisor or Professor Lenoce to discuss the realities of you obtaining these goals while at an internship. Is your goal to get a job at the completion of the internship? Is it to add work experience to your resume and material for your portfolio? Is it to further your skills? Is it to assist an agency doing important social work in the community? Is it to aid you in your transfer goals? If your reason for enrolling in an internship is to just meet a graduation requirement, it might be difficult to get the internship you want as your lack of passion won't come through so give serious thought about defining a goal. Depending on the answer to these questions, your advisor or Professor Lenoce can advise you on the worksites that can best meet your goals. For example, if your goal is to obtain a position after graduation, but you desire to intern at a small company with a few devoted employees, the odds of getting a job at the end of the internship might be impossible. Selecting the right internship is very important to meeting your goals, and starting early and getting good advice is key.

The internship list can be found at the Center for New Media student website under Internships. On that spreadsheet are all the organizations we have internship affiliations with. These organizations have formalized internships. There may be opportunities at other

organizations but please discuss it with Professor Lenoce first. Just because you want an internship at a certain company, doesn't mean they are set up to manage interns or may not offer opportunities at the college level. In fact, many companies don't want to be bothered with interns as managing the internship process can be a drain on internal resources.

Applying for an Internship

Employers and college's treat applying for an internship like applying for a job. The student usually has to contact the employer either over the Internet, through email or by phone. Many internships locations have websites that list and describe the available internship positions and may have online applications. With most internships, an application must be filled out, a cover letter and resume submitted and, if the person responsible for internships likes what they see, an interview will be scheduled. At the interview it's always wise to have handy your portfolio, usually on a tablet or web link, for the interviewer to access while you are there or at a later date. Does applying for all internships work this way? Though this is typical, there are some internships that don't follow this model. Some will jump right from phone inquiry to the interview. One local TV station has an intern night where there's a *cattle call* of internship applicants and each applicant gets 10 minutes to pitch themselves to producers and station management. Small businesses and non-profit organizations with few employees tend to be more casual, while larger organizations tend to be more business-like. Internships are usually competitive especially in the Spring and Summer when many college students return home to Connecticut looking for internships. Competition means you may not get your first choice, so apply to 3, 4 or 5 internship sites in case one or more fall through.

Students often complain that the college does not assist them with acquiring the internship. Once the internship sites are selected our counseling office or faculty can work with you on preparing a resume, cover letter and provide advice on interviewing skills. In some instances we can provide a reference or make a phone call when appropriate, or confirm your enrollment in the internship course. However, the worksites do not want faculty involved in the application and selection process. They are not engaging in an internship with faculty but with the student and feel after two-years of a college education a student should be able to stand on their own two feet and present themselves and their skills

in the best possible light. They want to see that you are a “good fit” for their organization. You have to consider the application process as part of the internship experience.

Throughout the application and interview process, always keep in mind that it’s not what the internship site can do for you, but what you can contribute to that organization. Internships are reciprocal, the organization feels they are supporting education and a student’s future by offering internships but there are also expectations they have about an intern’s contribution to their organization. Maybe your knowledge of software, hardware or technology can be beneficial to them. Perhaps it’s a unique aesthetic that you bring to projects. Maybe your understanding and use of social media can be beneficial. Often times, it may have less to do with your skills (lots of people today can shoot and edit video, design graphics, etc) but they find that you are professional, on-time, hard working and willing to learn, a plus in any organization. Demonstrating commitment to an organization is often a determining factor in getting an internship. Don’t hesitate to mention long term employment wherever it might be, volunteer work or your involvement in organizations like scouts, band, sports, etc as these often demonstrate the kind of commitment and involvement employers seek.

Quality of Your Work and Professionalism

Getting an internship can be challenging. A company’s expectations might be different than your professors. Example, a professor may deduct points for typographical errors. In the communication professions a misspelling on your resume, cover letter or portfolio website can be the difference between getting an internship or not. Spell checks and grammar checks plus a review by a peer or instructor can avoid such mistakes. We’ve all seen typos on video graphics while watching TV so imagine how that graphic operator’s boss must feel?

Internship supervisors are busy people. ESPN can receive 40,000 internship applications so don’t make your cover letter and resume more than one page each and put all of your best video clips, animations or photos in your e-portfolio in the first 60 seconds. Many people won’t watch more than that and if they do it means they like what they see. 2-3 minutes max on a video portfolio. If designing websites, a link to the website allows the employer to explore your site at their leisure, but list only your best sites on a very short list (5 or less). Whether it’s graphics, videos or websites only use examples that are at a professional level

with professional content and aesthetics. Don't include offensive material. You can use examples with humor, everyone likes a good laugh, but make sure it's at higher level than simply being gratuitous. Fix things you might not have had time to do in class. Re-edit your portfolio as needed to target the internship position. If you're going for an internship in news, focus your video sampler reel on those news and documentary pieces you've produced in class.

Interviews

Interviews can often seem intimidating but they rarely are. Relax. Some interviews are one-on-one while others might be in front of a committee. Everyone in that interview room has been in your shoes so they will try to make you as relaxed as possible. Show up a few minutes early. Dress professionally, use good manners, greeting the interviewer with a firm handshake and look them directly in the eye when speaking. Be sure you've done your homework about their company and the position. Be prepared to answer questions about what software you've used (including versions) and what the make and model numbers of the hardware you learned on. Just because you haven't used their software or hardware doesn't mean you should count yourself out. For example, many video companies edit using Avid Media Composer, we use Adobe Premier Pro and the differences are minimal with almost identical operation. Some sites might use Ikegami cameras while you might have used Panasonic or Sony at MxCC but you'll find the operation and controls are identical. You may have used Dreamweaver to build a website but this company may use the more template oriented WordPress, which is in fact easier to use. Present yourself as a quick learner, ready to step up to the challenge of quickly learning new software, hardware and techniques.

After the interview don't forget to send a professional thank you letter or email to each member of the interviewing team. Be sure to get their business cards before you leave. It may be several weeks or a month before you hear back. If you don't hear anything, a follow-up call in 2-3 weeks is always appropriate. Don't ask "Did I get the Internship," just ask if there's any further information they need from you and casually ask when they might be making their decision.

Once you get an Internship

After the interview, if all goes well, you'll be notified to come in to discuss work schedule, verify your student status, etc. You'll need to bring with you a copy of the registration form or letter from Professor Lenoce that acknowledges that you are enrolled in the Internship course for credit as well *Internship Information Form*, which must be completed BEFORE you start and a copy of your registration. This is an informal contract between you and the work supervisor that I keep on file that records the supervisors contact information, schedule, sets goals/objectives, etc. During your internship you'll need to keep a weekly log of hours and activities that you'll turn in at the end.

Deciding on your internship hours is between you and your internship supervisor. In a 15 week semester it's often 8 hours per week totaling 120 hours at the end of the semester. With some internship it may vary week to week based on the workload and deadlines of the organization. If you do not complete the internship by the last week of the semester, an incomplete grade (I) can be issued and you'll have another 6 weeks to complete the work until the "I" grade changes to an "F". But don't worry, grades can be changed at any time, once you turn in the paperwork. If you are doing a summer internship and graduating as a "summer completer" you will have a firm deadline, usually in early or mid-August, to complete the internship before the diploma is released to you.

Throughout the internship you'll keep a *Weekly Log* detailing what you did that week and the number of hours. It must be initialed at the end of the week by your work supervisor. Professor Lenoce, reviews these usually mid-semester and again at the end of the semester.

Assessment

At the end of the internship your supervisor will evaluate your skills and send Professor Lenoce the evaluation. A grade can then be issued. Professor Lenoce usually speaks to the internship supervisor and you during the internship and may perform a site visit.

Your assessment of the internship work site is also important and there is an evaluation form for that. You'll get to evaluate your experience, which will be used to recommend other students to the internship.

Conclusion-HAVE FUN!

You should have by now gotten the point that an internship may be the single most important experience in your college education. The experience is both transitional and transformative, bridging college and career and will likely turn you into a true professional. You will experience a media organization from the inside and contribute to their—and your—success. Take it seriously, but also have fun.

Media organizations are likely very different than other places you've worked and that can be intimidating. Don't worry, media people are used to dealing with the public and collaborating with co-workers and that makes media professionals very accessible—and friendly. Several years ago, an intern just starting at ESPN was in line in the cafeteria and in front of him was George Bodenheimer, Executive Chairman of ESPN (now former Chairman). The student felt intimidated and nervous but then thought, "Why would the Chairman of ESPN be in line at an employee cafeteria?" The intern surmised that Mr. Bodenheimer *choose* to have lunch with fellow employees. Upon that realization, he introduced himself as an intern and thanked Mr. Bodenheimer and ESPN for the opportunity. He received a warm greeting and a "welcome to the team" from what many would consider the most powerful man in sports. What that student found out later was that Mr. Bodenheimer started in the mailroom at ESPN. Throughout the rest of his internship, he felt a part of that team knowing everyone from the people in the mailroom to the Chairman, were all contributing to the company's success. Students at small organizations can feel even more so since there are often more opportunities to contribute and be noticed.

You will be a member of a team, do your best and collaborate with your co-workers. Offer to perform other tasks in any downtime you might have. If you see something that needs to be done, ask if you can do it. Your efforts will be appreciated and you will hopefully develop lasting relationships. The media business in Connecticut is very small, everyone knows everyone or if they don't they know someone who does. That's an important network to be a part of. The good works of interns can travel fast in that network and by using the social media connected to that network it can help you land a job, climb the career ladder and contribute to your future success. Becoming part of that network of people that may be the

highest professional compliment and biggest advantage you can attain. It will serve you well beyond your internship and first job.

Richard Lenoce, COM295 Internship Coordinator

Chapman Room 606

rlenoce@mxcc.edu, (860) 343-5796

Appendix

Forms

- 1. Internship Information Form**
- 2. Log Sheet**
- 3. Evaluation Forms**

COM295/296 Broadcast Communications/Multimedia Internship Information Sheet

Student Information:

Student Name Phone Email

Course: COM 295 COM 296

Semester Internship registered: Fall Spring

Semester Internship to take place: Fall Spring Summer

Internship Hours: 150 hours 120 hours with reflective essay

Work Site Information

Organization Name _____

Department _____

Address _____

Supervisor's Name Phone Email

Supervisor's Position/Title _____

Approximate Work Schedule (Day/Time) _____

Start Date _____ Expected Completion Date _____

On the other side of this form, please provide a detail list of the Goals and Objectives of this position and the duties to be performed in meeting those goals. Supervisor and Student must sign

List: Goals and Objectives of this Internship:

Briefly describe duties to be performed:

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

Student Internship Log Sheet

Attach Additional Sheets if necessary

Instructions: Please complete weekly and have your supervisor initial the appropriate box. At completion of your internship, please return this form along with your Student Internship Form to the Broadcast Communications Department, Middlesex Community-Technical College, 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

Date (s)	Description of Duties Performed	# of hours	Supervisor's Initials

Student Internship Log Sheet

Attach Additional Sheets if necessary

Instructions: Please complete weekly and have your supervisor initial the appropriate box. At completion of your internship, please return this form along with your Student Internship Form to the Broadcast Communications Department, Middlesex Community-Technical College, 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

Date (s)	Description of Duties Performed	# of hours	Supervisor's Initials

Total Hours this Page_____

**MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM**

INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be filled out by the student's intern supervisor at the completion of the internship and returned to: Broadcast Communication Dept., Middlesex Community-Technical College, 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, CT 06457

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT:

Name: _____ Course No.: COM295 COM296

Place of Internship: _____ Evaluation Period: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR:

Department or area of internship: _____ # of hours completed by student: _____

Please describe the duties and activities performed by the student during the internship:

Please give a brief descriptive evaluation of the student's performance (e.g., dependability, initiative, cooperativeness, aptitude, etc.).

How would you rate the student's overall performance (circle one):

above average

average

below average

Name and Title

Date

Phone #: _____ Date: _____

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA PROGRAMS
Student Intern Report

Name: _____

Date: _____

Place of Internship:

Semester: _____

Course No.: COM295 COM296

Please give a brief but thorough summary of your internship experience (e.g., what duties did you perform? What did you learn? Did you consider it a valuable experience? Were there any problems?). Use the back side of this form for additional space if needed.

How would you rate this place for internship experience? Would you recommend it for other students?

How would you evaluate your supervisor?

Name and Title

Date