

Overview for Placement Employers
Undergraduate Internships for Academic Credit
2018-19

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Thank you for helping round out the education of a senior journalism student by offering an internship placement!

This document outlines our expectations and your obligations regarding the placement of our Ryerson University journalism student at your organisation. It confirms the placement is eligible for academic credit. The course to which the credit applies is “JRN850 Undergraduate Internship”. It counts toward the fulfillment of academic requirements for the Bachelor of Journalism degree from Ryerson University.

What is expected of the intern?

When students are seeking internship placements, they are expected to make a proper, professional approach to any potential employer they have identified. After their initial contact, you may reasonably request a standard application package consisting of a cover letter, a CV, and work samples. If you have specific requirements beyond or apart from those, please make them known. Students must make themselves available for interviews, writing tests or other screening mechanisms (see ****NB**** below).

Once on board, student interns are expected to show up every day (or as otherwise required) on time and ready to go. Their work should provide value to the placement employer, and must be satisfactory both to the workplace supervisor(s) as well to Prof. Jagg Carr-Locke, the internship coordinator in the School of Journalism. Employers are welcome to contact Jagg at any time during the internship. Contact information appears at the end of this document.

What is expected of the employer?

The placement employer is to provide the intern with **meaningful participation** in activities compatible with the journalistic or communications role for which the student's education has prepared them.

The intern should be made to feel welcome at story meetings, strategy sessions, or other organisational gatherings appropriate to their entry-level placement. Clerical, coffee-schlepping, or other “go-fer” responsibilities are not permitted. If tasks such as shotlisting and teleprompting are part of the intern’s responsibilities, they should be combined with other less tedious and more editorial responsibilities. No one denies that shotlisting and teleprompting are valuable and important skills at the entry level, but they ought not constitute the lion’s share of the intern’s responsibilities. Nor should the greeting of guests, the preparation of swag bags, or the picking up of the talent’s dry cleaning.

The placement employer should provide students with regular, constructive feedback. At the end of the placement, the employer or the intern’s supervisor(s) are required to fill in and submit a performance evaluation.

As well, once a placement is completed, each student is required to review for us the placement in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. They will report on the quality of supervision and mentorship during the placement, the nature and value of the tasks assigned to them, the level of knowledge or skills acquired, and whether they would commend the placement to any student coming after them. This enables us to judge whether the placement meets the standards we expect and require, and serves as an extremely useful tool for incoming students who have a broad range of placements from which to choose. To ensure students’ privacy even long after the placement has ended, we are under no obligation to share these reviews with the placement employer.

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Our senior-level students have taken a variety of specialised courses intended to prepare them for the rigours of the professional working world, which in many cases begins with their internship placements. These courses build on the skills already imparted in the foundational courses they took earlier in the program. Yet, as any of us who have ever attended school at any level already know, some students do brilliantly well, while others only just get by. **You are expected to conduct your own screening before taking on board an intern from the Ryerson School of Journalism.**

WE WILL, IN CONSULTATION WITH YOU, permit students to **fail** this course. We have done so in the past (rarely of course), and are always prepared to do so again when things go badly wrong and the student’s performance is the root cause.

We do stand by our students; if we did not think they were ready for prime time, they would not be allowed to take the Internship course. That said, on those rare occasions when things do go pear-shaped, there will be no recrimination, only hope on both sides for a better mutual experience the next time.

Please contact Jagg Carr-Locke, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Internship Coordinator, for anything pertaining to internships: jagg@ryerson.ca