

# Internship FAQ's

## ***DMA 496 Off-Campus Internship in the Media (1 unit)***

### **Does my internship need to be off campus?**

Yes, the purpose of the internship is for you to get real-world experience working in the media industry. Although there are many opportunities to do media-related work on our campus, the purpose of our required internship course is to get you off the campus so that you can network with industry professionals and get a taste of what it would be like to work in the media industry of your choice. Hopefully, you will also be able to acquire letters of recommendation from your mentors as well as professional references to list on your resume.

### **Does my internship need to be related to my DMA major and degree option?**

Yes, again the purpose of the requirement is to facilitate your entry into the media industry of your choice as well as the type of job or professional work you aspire to perform in your career. That is why your internship has to be approved by the instructor before you start work at a site.

### **How many hours are required to fulfill the internship?**

The requirement is for a total of 150 hours based on the formula of *10 hrs per week x 15 weeks*; however, it can be 20 hrs one week and no hours another week, or any combination of hours per week just as long as you end up with 150 hours total.

### **Do all of the 150 hours have to be performed at one site?**

No, you can combine hours from a maximum of three different sites, i.e., *three sites with 50 hours each*, or *two sites with 75 hours each*; however, you will need an *Internship Form* for each site as well as an *Evaluation Letter* from each site to receive 1 unit of credit for the course.

### **Will work at the campus radio station KDHR count toward my internship hours?**

No, you need to log all of your 150 hours at off-campus sites approved by the instructor.

### **How many units of credit will I earn for my 150 hours of internship work?**

You will earn 1 unit of academic credit each time you satisfactorily complete the DMA 496 course. For those who want to extend an internship, or complete multiple internships, the course is repeatable for credit up to three times for a total of 3 units.

### **How will I be graded for this internship?**

The course is graded Credit/No Credit. To satisfactorily complete the course, you need to submit all required materials to the instructor by the stated deadlines:

- 1) Internship Form – completed by your mentor at the site and submitted to your instructor before starting work at the site.
- 2) Release of Liability Form – signed by you and submitted to your instructor before starting work at the site. The release should be stapled to the back of the Internship Form.
- 3) Log of Internship Hours – filled out and signed by you and your mentor at the site, and then stapled to the FRONT of your Evaluation Letter.

4) Evaluation Letter – written on company letterhead and hand signed by your mentor. A hard copy of the letter stapled to the back of the **Log of Internship Hours** must be submitted to your instructor before Dec 10<sup>th</sup> in Fall Semester and before May 10<sup>th</sup> in Spring Semester. In your Evaluation Letter, have your mentor address each of the following criteria listed below.

*\*In your Evaluation Letter, you must meet all three of the following criteria to pass the course with a CR (Credit) grade:*

- A. Punctuality – did you consistently show up to work at the site on time according to the agreed upon schedule?
- B. Work Performance – were you able to perform the work assigned to you at the site in a satisfactory manner?
- C. Professional Image – did you conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with the interpersonal skills and demeanor of the digital media industry? Professional image is the characteristic attitude and demeanor you project to your mentor and co-workers while on the job. It is the REPUTATION you earn based on your: attitude; dependability; willingness to work and focus on the project at hand; ability to cooperate with co-workers as a “team player”; interpersonal skills which allow you to be in control of your emotions during stressful situations; and your resilience to bounce back after failures. It is the image people have about working with you in the future. Professional Image will be based on your mentor’s observations of your work throughout the internship.

Here is a checklist for your Evaluation Letter:

A) It is an original hard copy, and not a photocopy.

B) It is printed on company letterhead instead of plain paper.

C) It is hand signed in pen (actual signature) by your mentor instead of computer generated.

### **Why is it important to start researching potential internships a year ahead of time?**

Media internships are now very competitive and it is increasingly more difficult for students to secure desirable internships in the media. Application deadlines for desirable internships are usually months ahead of the time students want to start their internship, so it’s important to get started long before the deadline instead of waiting until the last minute. Students also need a list of several “vetted” internships as backup sites in case they don’t get their first choice or even second choice at a particular internship site.

### **What are the most important criteria for students selecting an internship?**

The most important criterion is facilitating the student’s entry into his or her chosen career field. In other words, will this internship look good on your resume and give you a “leg up” on the competition? A student who wants to become a writer should not do an internship as a video editor, nor should a student who wants to become a recording engineer do an internship as a photographer. The most important question should be, which internship will be the most appropriate and helpful in attaining your desired career goal? Next, the more prestigious the internship, the better. Companies with recognizable names such as NBC, Paramount, Capitol Records, etc. have instant credibility and look much better on your resume than companies with little or no name recognition in the industry. The more recognizable the name of your mentor, the better. Names such as John Williams, Steven Spielberg, and Herbie Hancock give you instant credibility. If your mentor does not have a recognizable name, then the more important his or

her job title, the better. Lead engineer, executive producer, or owner of the company are much better than assistant to the producer, runner, or production assistant. Whether or not the internship is close to home or convenient for you to travel to should not be a factor in your choosing an appropriate internship. Whether or not the internship is non-paid or offers a small stipend should not be a factor either. All that should matter is how much the internship will help you in your chosen career field.

### **Are there any types of internships you should avoid?**

Yes, you should avoid “exploitative internships” that are used primarily to benefit the company through the use of unpaid labor by interns. These internships consist primarily of interns performing menial tasks and “grunt work” such as running errands, making copies, answering phones, and cleaning up the site. Of course, it’s acceptable to perform some of these activities at the site as long as it’s not the bulk of the activity of your internship. “Altruistic internships,” on the hand, are set up solely for the benefit of the intern to gain experience and learn the trade from an industry mentor. These internships are “hands-on” and involve working right alongside the mentor and other professionals doing what they do on the job. You should also avoid ***interning with your friends*** who own home video or home recording studios. This is an absolute waste of an internship opportunity because it gives you no industry experience, no industry connections, and no credibility for your resume. It’s the equivalent of taking your sister as your date to the prom. It shows that you have “no game” and that you are unable to garner respect among your contemporaries. It’s an absolute “cop out” and unacceptable for DMA 496 credit.

### **What qualities are internship sites looking for in their interns?**

First, they’re looking for someone who is punctual and dependable. Next, they really appreciate students who are “self-starters” and quick on the uptake, i.e., those who can learn on their own and don’t need to be closely supervised or told what to do throughout the day. The icing on the cake is someone who has good “people skills” and the professional demeanor to get along well with co-workers at the site. They want someone who has a positive “can do” attitude and a sparkle in the eye that reflects excitement and passion for the industry. Students who can make themselves “lovable” with that “puppy dog face” of wanting to please have the best chance of succeeding at an internship and possibly getting hired after the internship. **Mentor evaluations of our student interns are available at [dmatv.net](http://dmatv.net) under *Class Documents, DMA 496, Mentor Evaluations TV Interns and Mentor Evaluations Audio Interns.***

### **What are the main reasons that students are rejected for internships?**

The main reason is failure to follow directions. This is an increasingly troublesome problem in today’s student culture. Many sites will put a hidden filtering device in their directions such as, “*List your favorite movie in the first line of your resume.*” They’re not really interested in learning what your favorite movie is, but rather, can you follow directions accurately? This filtering device was used by one company that had 20 paid internships available to our students. Unfortunately, only one student out of the twenty followed the directions. That student got the paid internship. The other nineteen students were excluded for not following directions. If a site requests a one-page resume, make sure your resume does not exceed this length. Another reason why students are rejected is a bad cover letter. A poorly-written letter full of grammatical errors and misspelled words reflects that you are sloppy, disorganized, and careless. As such, the site will often save itself the trouble of having to interview you. **Samples of good resumes and cover letters for you to use as templates are available at [dmatv.net](http://dmatv.net) under *Class Documents and DMA 496.***

### **What are the best ways or strategies for landing an internship in the industry?**

First, start researching internships a year ahead of the time you need to start your internship. This will give you a variety of choices in your field of interest. Here are the best ways to land an internship in rank order: 1) Talk to someone “in person” at the site and then tour the facilities at the site. This is the best way to “get a foot in the door” because the company can then connect a name to a face, and if you make a good impression, this gives you a definite advantage over an unknown person who just has a resume. If you can’t talk to someone “in person” at the site, then at least try to talk by telephone to a real person at the company. Again, this connects at least a voice and personality to a name. Even though applying online is the new way of doing things, you should still try to find a way to email your resume to a real person at the company because with the automated response you receive from online applications, you never really know if anyone at the company ever actually reviewed your application; however, if you can get an actual person at the company to reply to you via email, then you stand a much better chance of securing the internship. Making “interpersonal contact” is the key. Also, use the instructor’s industry links to get started in your search.

### **Once I have landed an internship, when can I start working at the site?**

You cannot start work at the site until you receive **email approval** from the DMA 496 instructor for your proposed internship. As soon as the instructor has a hard copy of the *Internship Form* filled out by your mentor and your signed *Release of Liability* stapled to the back of the Internship Form, you will receive an email notification stating whether or not you can start work at the site, so don’t start work until you receive email approval from the DMA 496 instructor. If you don’t receive email approval for your internship in a timely manner, don’t be shy about emailing the instructor to make sure you have approval before starting work.

### **When should I plan to seek approval for my proposed internship?**

Preferably, weeks before you plan to start working at the site. This will give the instructor time to evaluate and investigate the proposed internship to determine if it is appropriate for academic credit in our DMA program.

### **What if my proposed internship is not approved by the DMA 496 instructor?**

Then you will need to find another internship that meets the criteria for credit in the DMA 496 course. That is why students are encouraged to arrange their internships as early as possible. In case your proposed internship is not approved, you will still have time to secure one of the other internships on your list.

### **What if my proposed internship is not approved until several weeks into the semester that I’m enrolled in the DMA 496 course?**

Then it is unlikely that you will be able to work enough hours in the remaining weeks to complete the internship. To realistically be able to complete the required number of hours of an internship in a single semester, you should receive email notification of “official approval” no later than the **2<sup>nd</sup> week** of the semester. If not, then you need to drop the DMA 496 course to avoid getting an NC (No Credit) grade and then enroll in the course in a later semester.

### **What is the recommended schedule for working internship hours during a semester?**

Because a student is usually taking a full load of courses while also doing an internship, a realistic expectation is for the student to work about 10 hours a week for 15 weeks, or possibly 15 hours a week for 10 weeks. The goal is always to make sure that the student’s internship hours never interfere with or detract from the student’s other courses and assignments.

### **How do I fill out the *Log of Internship Hours*?**

The purpose of the *Log of Internship Hours* is to accurately record the times and hours you worked each date at the site. At the conclusion of the internship, your mentor must stipulate by his or her signature on the document that you did, in fact, work the reported hours at the site. You must also stipulate by your signature on the document that you worked the reported hours at the site. This document is then stapled to the FRONT of the *Evaluation Letter* and delivered to the DMA 496 instructor. Email copies will NOT be accepted.

### **Can hours worked BEFORE the date that the internship was “officially approved” still be counted toward the 150 hours?**

No, only hours logged after the date of instructor approval can be counted toward the 150 hours. For example, if you receive an email notification from the instructor that your internship was officially approved on January 4<sup>th</sup>, then any hours you worked before January 4<sup>th</sup> cannot be listed and counted in the *Log of Internship Hours*. Only the hours worked after January 4<sup>th</sup> can be listed and counted in the *Log of Internship Hours*. That’s why students are instructed not to start work at the site until they receive an **email approval** from the DMA 496 instructor.

### **Why is it important to serve an internship while in school instead of after graduation?**

The vast majority of internship sites want you to be enrolled in school, i.e., earning academic credit for internship hours, because of insurance liability issues. In other words, they want you covered under the school’s liability umbrella as a student instead of under their liability as an employee. Unfortunately, after you graduate you will no longer be eligible for the vast majority of desirable internships (unless you can enroll in an internship course to earn academic credit at a college somewhere). Because of this issue, some students decide to delay their graduation especially when they have an opportunity to serve a prestigious internship during the summer months following the Spring graduation of their classmates. Instead of graduating in the Spring semester of their senior year, they opt to graduate in the Summer semester, just three months later, so that they are still eligible to serve an internship. If this allows you to serve a valuable internship that would otherwise be unavailable to you, then this is a smart decision to make as well as a good career choice.

### **Top 10 Reasons Students Fail the DMA 496 Internship Course**

1. Failed to secure an internship by Week #2 of the semester they are enrolled in DMA 496.
2. Failed to submit completed *Internship Form* and *Release of Liability* documents by Week #2.
3. Did not submit mentor’s *Evaluation Letter* by the May 10<sup>th</sup> or Dec 10<sup>th</sup> deadline.
4. *Evaluation Letter* was an electronic copy instead of an original hard copy.
5. *Evaluation Letter* had a computer-generated signature instead of an original hand signature.
6. *Evaluation Letter* did not address the criteria for credit in the course.
7. *Log of Internship Hours* for a non-split internship did not add up to 150 hours.
8. The mentor did not sign the *Log of Internship Hours*.
9. The student did not sign the *Log of Internship Hours*.
10. Started work at the internship site before obtaining official approval from the instructor.