

# **MINIMIZE PRODUCTION IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

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# PURPOSE

- Standardize the production process for departmental minizines, replacing previously inconsistent workflows.
- Establish a unified process with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Improve clarity, consistency, and efficiency across the project.
- Help the design team and campus partners understand each step of the process.
- Clarify requirements and timelines from concept through production



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# PEOPLE INVOLVED

- Minizine Designers
- Integrated Outreach Project Coordinator
- Minizine Client
- Subject matter expert conversations:  
Printer, Photographer
- AVP Creative Services (Project Sponsor)





# DISCOVERY

## 5 Minizines:

1. **Gamecock Pharmacist** (Fall/Spring)
2. **USC Lawyer** (Fall/Spring)
3. **Gamecock Nursing Nation** (Fall)
4. **Carolina's Future** (Summer, Fall)
5. **InterCom** (new: starting Aug)

## PROCESS DIFFERENCES:

- Number of steps in process (15-23)
- Photo intake/assignments
- Word count guidelines
- Approval process
- Number of proofs (int: 1-2) (client: 2-7)

## PRODUCT DIFFERENCES

### Page counts:

28 pages + cover - Gamecock Pharmacist  
16 pages + cover - USC Lawyer  
24 + cover - Gamecock Nursing Nation  
8 pages self cover - Carolina's Future

### Quantity:

5,000+ - Gamecock Pharmacist  
12,000 - USC Lawyer  
3,000 - Gamecock Nursing Nation  
40,000 - Carolina's Future

### Remittance Envelopes:

YES - Gamecock Pharmacist  
NO - USC Lawyer (2024 stopped using)  
NO - Gamecock Nursing Nation  
NO - Carolina's Future

**Size** (3 different sizes)

**Paper** (3 different papers)



# EARLY KEY IMPROVEMENTS MADE

Some changes were needed before we could standardize the production process for departmental minizines.

1. Same Size
2. Same Paper
3. Same style sheets
4. Same word count guideline



**Extra Bonus:** *The standardization of minizine printing specs reduced the time needed for USC Printing to provide cost estimates.*

## MINIZINE WORD COUNT GUIDELINE

*Word counts for USC minizines (as of Jan 2026)*

Deans Letter	200-350 words
TOC features	20 words
Half page article	250-300 words
1-page article	310-500 words
2-page article	750-1000 words
4-page article	1,000-1,200 words
Back cover ad	100-150 words
Alumni news	30 words per person

*Note: Ideal word counts allow our designers the most flexibility with layout and photo placement.*



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# COMMON PROBLEM AREAS

- Content changes after the design phase has begun
- Photography: poor quality visuals provided, or lack of visuals altogether
- Content length exceeds allocated page space, leading to extended internal editing
- Additional reviewers are introduced late in the proofing process
- Content revisions exceed the standard two client proof rounds
- Printing and mailing forms are not ready on time or are incomplete when supplied



# NEXT STEPS

- Review and compare workflows across all minizines, to consolidate and refine them into one unified, end-to-end process from design through to final print.
- Define clear roles, responsibilities, and timelines for each stage of the process.
- Document the standardized workflow along with supporting resources (e.g., content word count sheet).
- Share the final process, training materials and reference documentation in **Minizine Basecamp** for team use, client visibility, and onboarding.



# REFLECTIONS

- Reviewing the process revealed **improvement opportunities across teams**. Example: faster print estimates and potential cost savings through bulk ordering.
- Having a **client on the team** was valuable for both sides - giving them visibility into the work while helping us better understand upstream processes, timelines and reviews.
- Involving the **right small team** and including subject matter experts gave a clearer view of the current process and where improvements are needed.
- **Teamwork builds buy-in** and ensures stronger alignment and support.
- These improvements will streamline the process and support **onboarding** with clear resources and a community to rely on.



# THANK YOU!

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