

**PRACTICUM FOR MASTER'S
OF MASS COMMUNICATION**

JOUR 777

GUIDELINES AND FORMS

PRACTICUM DESCRIPTION AND GUIDE

A practicum combines fieldwork with academic activities. It allows a student to augment classroom learning by working in a professional organization.

To earn practicum credit, students must:

- Work a total of 450 hours at the organization they choose for their practicum. Generally this is accomplished by working 15 weeks at 30 hours per week.
- Provide evidence of professional work to the faculty member who is serving as practicum coordinator.
- Provide faculty practicum coordinator with an acceptable proposal for completing the practicum. This proposal must include: a) what the position entails and b) assurance that the student will have the organizational access necessary to answer all of the questions on the final practicum paper.
- Complete the following reports as scheduled:
 1. Agreement and Responsibilities Statement to be signed by both student and supervisor
 2. Mid-term Progress Report, to be completed by the student and signed by the supervisor
 3. Final Evaluation form, to be completed by the supervisor for delivery to the faculty practicum coordinator.
- Successfully complete the final practicum paper.

Unless all steps in the process are completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor and the faculty program coordinator, students will NOT receive academic credit for their work. All practicums are graded. The three credit hours for the practicum count as JOUR 777.

The practicum is the final component of the M.M.C. program designed to help prepare students to become media or strategic communication management professionals. Students choose a practicum appropriate to their interests, allowing them to further pursue their concentration in the mass communications field. The practicum experience allows students not only to see how communication organizations work, but also lets them evaluate the effectiveness of the organization for which they are working.

The practicum goes beyond an internship in that students are treated like full-time employees, work full time and complete a final report analyzing the management processes of the sponsoring organization. Students must regularly check in with the graduate office as they complete their program, but are encouraged to work in any location reachable by e-mail. This encourages students to expand their horizons by living in a new area. Former students have worked in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and many other places, including abroad. We have found that the practicum makes M.M.C. graduates more successful media and strategic communication professionals and also gives students the chance to explore the vast array of opportunities available to them.

CHOOSING AND SCHEDULING A PRACTICUM

To find a practicum, students should begin looking for postings of internships, jobs or other professional opportunities as possible practicums at least the semester before enrolling in JOUR 777. There are many sources on campus that can aid students in this search. Students are encouraged to check the advertising, public relations, and journalism internship databases which are available through the Student Services office. Organizations that have sponsored practicums in the past are often good sources as well.

Once a list has been made of possible companies/organizations for which to work, students should contact each company to find out more about the available positions and suitability for a practicum experience.

After contacting the companies and/or organizations, write up a proposal and submit it to the faculty practicum coordinator for approval. This should be done several weeks in advance of starting the semester in which the practicum will be completed, to give the coordinator ample time to review the proposal.

After the faculty coordinator has approved the proposal, students need to contact the supervisor at the sponsoring organization to tell them that the practicum has been approved. Students will need to then be registered for JOUR 777 for the appropriate term in which they will complete the practicum.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE PRACTICUM PROPOSAL?

The practicum proposal should be a detailed description of the work the student will be doing with the company or organization. It should include:

- Organization's name
- Description of job responsibilities
- Assurance that the student will have the organizational access necessary to answer all of the questions on the final practicum paper
- Name and contact information of supervisor at the organization

The proposal may be e-mailed, sent by mail or brought to the School. It does not need to be lengthy, but needs to give a clear description of what the student will be able to accomplish in this position. Most proposals are 1-2 pages.

IMPORTANT: The student must obtain the approval of the practicum coordinator BEFORE registering for JOUR 777. Registration cannot and will not take place without the approval of the practicum proposal.

WHAT IF THE PRACTICUM IS NOT WORKING OUT?

If a student encounters difficulties during the practicum, these problems must be reported to the faculty practicum coordinator so that the situation can be corrected.

These problems must be reported as soon as they occur. Examples of such problems might be if a sponsor assigned excessive work, hours, or unreasonable deadlines that conflict with other academic responsibilities.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PRACTICUM SPONSORS

It is the School's intent to provide sponsoring organizations with graduate students who have completed the majority of their course work in strategic communication management (advertising, public relations, marketing or IMC) or multimedia journalism. A complementary goal is to provide our graduate students with on-the-job experience in their field before graduation. For these reasons, it is important that both practicum sponsors and students read and observe the following terms:

Practicum Sponsors:

By signing the Agreement, the practicum sponsor agrees to provide students with professional work that merits the awarding of three hours of graduate-level academic credit. The organization should designate an individual to be the student's supervisor who normally would be the person assigning work to the student.

Students completing their practicum in your organization are expected to learn on the job by discussing work procedures with employees, performing professional tasks with appropriate supervision, attending organizational meetings, working with clients and any other tasks deemed appropriate. If it develops that the sponsor cannot provide a work experience of this nature, the practicum regretfully will be terminated.

Practicum Students:

By signing the Agreement, the student is obligated to complete a minimum of approximately 450 hours on the job during the time period of your practicum. While working for the sponsor, a student is expected to adhere to the organization's policies.

Students must turn in the Agreement and Responsibilities Statement, the Mid-term Progress Report, and the Final Evaluation, completed by your supervisor, and your Final Practicum Paper at the specified times. If the sponsoring organization has just cause for terminating a student's practicum (tardiness, unauthorized use of office equipment, inability to complete assigned work and so forth), it may do so. Should this happen, the student will receive a failing grade for their practicum (JOUR 777).

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

JOUR 777, Three credits, graded. Counts as Journalism/Mass Communications requirement.

AGREEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The Agreement and Responsibilities Statement form is due on the Monday following the first full week of the practicum. Please make a copy of the form for your own record prior to forwarding the original to the Graduate Studies Office.

MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

The Practicum Mid-term Progress Report should be completed by the student and signed by the supervisor. The progress report should be returned no later than the mid-point of the time period in which you are completing your practicum. Please make a copy of the form for your own record prior to forwarding the original to the Graduate Studies Office.

FINAL EVALUATION AND PRACTICUM PAPER

The Final Evaluation form and the final practicum paper are due on the last day of classes of the semester in which the student is enrolled for practicum credit (JOUR 777), unless designated otherwise by the practicum coordinator. The Final Evaluation must be completed by the supervisor, reviewed with the practicum student and signed by both the supervisor and student before the student submits the original form to the School's Graduate Studies Office. The final practicum paper can be sent via email to the practicum supervisor.

NOTE TO PRACTICUM STUDENT: Please complete this form during the first week of the practicum and submit/send to the Graduate Studies Office, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Fax 803-777-1267. It can also be scanned and sent via email. Practicum Student and Supervisor should keep copies for future reference.

AGREEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

Name of Practicum Student _____

Address (in practicum location)

Phone _____ E-mail _____
Home Cell

Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

PROPOSED WORK SCHEDULE (approximately 30 hours per week)

Days and hours: Mon. _____ Tues. _____ Wed. _____ Thurs. _____ Fri. _____

Starting date: _____ Ending date: _____

Describe projects and/or duties practicum student will undertake:

The practicum student named above acknowledges that the supervising organization named above is under no obligation to offer said practicum student a paid position following completion of the practicum.

Signature of Practicum Student Date

Signature of Supervisor Date

STUDENT PRACTICUM MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

Student _____ Phone _____

Emphasis Area _____ Term Registered _____

Sponsoring Organization _____

Supervisor's Name/Title _____

NOTE TO PRACTICUM STUDENT: Please complete the following and retain a copy for your records. Return the signed original to the Graduate Studies Office, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208 at the mid-point of the semester/practicum experience. This form can also be scanned and sent via email.

1. What have you been working on during the past several weeks?

2. Is the practicum experience meeting your expectations? (If no, please explain.)

3. Are there additional comments you would like to add?

Signature of Practicum Student Date

SUPERVISOR PRACTICUM MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

Student _____

Sponsoring Organization _____

Supervisor's Name/Title _____ Phone _____

NOTE TO PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR: Please complete the following and return it to the Graduate Studies Office, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208 at mid-point of the semester/practicum experience. This form can also be scanned and sent via email.

1. Is the practicum student meeting your expectations? ___ YES ___ NO (If no, please explain.)

2. Are there additional comments you would like to add?

Signature of Supervisor Date

PRACTICUM FINAL EVALUATION

A major benefit of the practicum is the opportunity for supervisor and practicum student to spend time toward the end of the practicum period to review the practicum student's performance and to make recommendations for the future. Please arrange a meeting with your practicum supervisor at least one week before the end of the term to have this discussion and to complete this form. Students will not receive academic credit until this form is returned with the proper information.

PRACTICUM STUDENT _____

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION _____

SUPERVISOR _____

1. Did the practicum student meet your expectations? ___ YES ___ NO (If no, please explain.)

2. What are the practicum student's most significant strengths?

3. What, if anything, does the practicum student need to improve to advance in his or her professional career?

4. If there were an entry-level position in your organization, would this practicum student be a viable candidate for this position? If not, what would the practicum student need to do in terms of acquiring knowledge or skills to become such a candidate?

THANK YOU. PLEASE GIVE THE COMPLETED FORM TO PRACTICUM STUDENT FOR PROCESSING.

Signature of Practicum Student

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date

REQUIREMENTS FOR FINAL PRACTICUM PAPER

Please answer all questions. Note page limitations following each question. These limitations presume double-spaced, 12 pt. type, using one-inch margins. The limits mentioned below are general guidelines and some sections may be shorter, depending on the nature of the organization; please do not exceed the specified limits. Your paper must be submitted via email no later than the last day of regularly scheduled class for the term in which you are registered.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

1. Write a brief description of the organization in which you are doing your practicum. Be sure to include such items as: general purpose of the organization, number of employees, location(s) of headquarters and any subsidiary facilities, and sources of revenue. (Limit: two pages)
2. Provide a reasonably comprehensive report on the history of the organization including founding dates and other important events in the organization's history, the names and backgrounds of the founders of the organization, biographical information about any other individuals of importance and any significant changes in the structure or purpose of the organization that have occurred since its founding. (Limit: two pages)
3. Provide a copy of the organization's overall mission statement. If no mission statement exists, please prepare a draft of such a statement that reflects your understanding of the organization's mission. (Limit: one page)

II. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

1. Write a brief description of the specific department in which you are doing your practicum. Be sure to include such items as: general purpose of the department, specific programs and/or responsibilities of the department as delegated by the organization's senior management, number of employees, and location and physical facilities of (or available to) the department that enable it to carry out its responsibilities. (Limit: two pages)
2. Explain how your department contributes (or should contribute) to the organization's overall mission statement. If it helps, prepare a draft of a mission statement that reflects your understanding of the specific purpose and role of your department within the larger organization. (Limit: two pages)
3. Provide a flow chart that describes the positions and reporting responsibilities of your department and places the department within the overall structure of the organization. (Limit: two pages)

III. MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

1. Based upon your graduate course work in Strategic Communication, Issues in Mass Communications Management, Marketing, and/or other relevant courses, think about your experiences working within your department and/or the organization, and identify and discuss concepts and theories of management and communication that seem to apply to your workplace. Evaluate, using specific examples, how successful the department is in using or applying these theories and concepts. If it is impossible to determine a theoretical approach in your situation, what management theory/model should be used and why? What are your ideas for the department's enhancement of management of its employees and/or communication? (Limit: four pages)
2. How does the department budget for the communications function in which it is engaged? Include budgeting for personnel, programs and capital expenditures. (Limit: three pages)

IV. MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AREA OF EMPHASIS

1. In terms of your specific professional area (e.g., strategic communication management or multimedia journalism), evaluate the use or non-use by your department of each of the following. Feel free to make comparisons to coursework or lessons learned in program courses if/when applicable.
 - a. research
 - b. ethical approaches
 - c. strategic approaches(Limit: two pages each for a, b, and c above)
2. Based upon your professional area of emphasis and your graduate-level course work, what is your overall assessment of the performance of your department? What recommendations would you make to senior management of the organization for improvements and/or enhancements, and why? Please be specific and provide examples when possible. (Limit: five pages)

You may attach any supplementary materials, such as projects or examples of your work.