

Michigan State University Media and Information Internship Program

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Excellent internships require the best from both companies and interns. We have compiled Best Practices/Expectations that convey what we, at MSU, expect from both parties for an optimal internship experience.

Companies' Expectations of Interns

- Before starting the internship, learn as much about the company as possible by doing extensive company research.
- Do more than you are required to do. Be productive and stay busy. Demonstrate initiative.
- Observe everything. Watch how the “seasoned” employees operate. Analyze why some individuals are more effective and efficient than others.
- Some of the work you do will be routine - but important. Do the routine things as willingly and professionally as you do the more complex, challenging, and interesting work.
- Read and follow the company rules/policies. They are usually posted; if not, ask.
- Work with your supervisor to find out what your work includes, what your responsibilities are. Ask questions.
- Listen carefully and take notes when you are given verbal instructions. This eliminates asking again at a later date and insures accuracy during completion of assignments.
- When you are ready for more challenging work, approach your supervisor with some **suggestions** of potential new responsibilities rather than waiting for the supervisor to suggest new ones.
- Set high standards for yourself. Work as accurately, safely and quickly as you can.
- Learn from your mistakes; do not try to cover up.
- Have confidence in your ideas. Present them at appropriate times.
- Be tactful; do not offend others. Be friendly, show respect, be honest, be polite.
- Learn to accept constructive criticism and implement strategies to improve performance.
- At the end of the internship, develop a draft of your updated resume listing the internship and discuss it with your supervisor.

MSU Expectations of Companies

Below is a list of the types of activities in which we would like our interns to be involved. Of course, no one internship can offer every experience listed below and we do not expect that. What we do expect is that each company will offer the intern **challenging and meaningful experiences** that allows the intern to grow but also allows the intern to demonstrate skills already developed or practice concepts learned in their classes. It should be a mutually beneficial experience.

- Conduct an official introduction of the Intern to the management team, identifying the Intern's role, position and responsibilities so other employees are aware and understand his/her role.
- Meet with the Intern weekly to discuss training progress/concerns, project status and developmental opportunities. Provide Intern with specific examples of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Ask Intern for feedback on the internship experience.
- Train Intern related to company systems (computer, receiving, etc.).
- Provide Intern with opportunities for the analysis and understanding of company/departmental records.
- When possible, prepare Intern to communicate with key stakeholders.
- Include Intern in company management and district/regional management meetings.
- Include Intern in the process of management/scheduling of team members.
- Expose Intern to media and/or information activities.
- Assign the Intern responsibility for specific projects or departments
- Provide Intern with exposure and experience in all functional areas of the company.
- Involve Intern in client meetings whenever possible / appropriate.
- Involve Intern in the development and execution of strategies and tactics.
- Involve Intern in decisions regarding data analysis.
- Involve Intern with the hiring/selection process.
- Provide the Intern with training in web/database/mobile/social media/video/audio/game production techniques (or other appropriate functions) and the opportunity to eventually help in the training of new hires.
- At the end of the internship, assist the Intern in developing a list of appropriate responsibilities to use when updating the resume with the internship experience.

Special Project Description

We require the development of a “special” project to be completed during the internship period. **The special project proposal (signed by your internship supervisor) must be submitted to the Faculty Advisor by the end of the third week of the internship.** Below is an outline for the proposal/final project. If the project changes during the course of the internship, supply the MSU Advisor with a revised proposal.

Proposal:

Title of project
Brief Explanation of Project
Learning Objectives for the Project
Benefits to the Company

Final project (5-12 pages):

Title of project
Brief Explanation of Project
Learning Objectives for the Project
Benefits to the Company
Explanation of Project Activities
Outcomes of the Project (results)
Reflection and connection to content and theories studied in classes

Examples of Project Possibilities:

- Client/account/productivity analysis and implementation of new plan
- Development of internship (or other appropriate) training program
- Marketing research project (with analysis of primary or secondary data)
- Analysis of web/mobile/social media/big data
- Identification of new target segment/s and development of targeted campaign/s
- New media message development (concept, copy, creative)
- New media message testing and evaluation
- Website or social media development (tracking/analysis)
- Social media monitoring and issue
- Team building/motivational activity

Weekly Journal

(send MS Word journal to advisor every week during the internship)

Include the following in the heading area:

Date of Journal (e.g. May 21-25)

Your Name

Name of Company

The journal should use **subheadings** and provide a written description:

- 1) **Types of Activities** in which you are engaged
- 2) **Academic Application** explain what classroom concepts/theories you can apply to this week’s activities
- 3) Types of activities in which you would like to be engaged (**Desired Activities**) before you finish the internship
- 4) **Key People** you have met, worked with, etc. (give name, title, company, and nature of your contact with the person)
- 5) Your **Feelings and Reactions** to the week

