

Practicum in Mass Communication – MCOM 464

The University defines a practicum as generally a one-time work or service experience completed by a student as part of a class for academic credit. Some practicum offer pay, but many do not. Experiences are usually for less than 50 hours of work per credit hour and may take place on or off campus.

Prerequisite: A 2.0 overall GPA in coursework at Winthrop and acceptance into the major. Students also must have completed MCOM 241 and an additional nine hours of mass communication courses. This course is evaluated using the satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) evaluation process.

Course Description:

1. Mass communication-related work experiences focused on information gathering, writing, editing, photography, design, infographics, databases, website creation and/or updating, video or audio, or social media development and planning.
2. Will apply technology appropriate to the medium of communication. Hands-on experience in journalism, broadcasting, public relations, event planning, advertising, or other mass-communication-related field.
3. May be paid or unpaid, on-campus or off-campus and could link a student with a potential employer.

Requirements: A practicum requires the student to 1) submit an application for the Practicum (MCOM 464) and a resume prior to beginning the process; 2) submit the Practicum Learning Agreement Form (available on the department's website) outlining the objectives, learning outcomes, mission of the practicum, hours of work, etc. The instructor of record and the department chair must approve this proposal. 3) The student must meet with the advisor regularly over the course of the semester. 4) The student must make a final presentation in the course concerning accomplishments. 5) The student must be evaluated by the practicum supervisor using the appropriate evaluation form. 6) The faculty supervisor will communicate with the practicum supervisor in a face-to-face meeting concerning the student's progress in the practicum.

A student may have up to three hours total credit in MCOM 464, MCOM 461, 462, and 463 or any combination of the above toward the 124 hours in the degree program.

How does an internship differ from a practicum: Practica are generally project-related experiences and do not have to be onsite work experiences. Practica may be on-campus work experiences but are not limited to such experiences. Integrated marketing communication students may take a practicum but it is not a substitute for an internship and must follow the rules above concerning maximum amount of credit as discussed

above.

Placement: Placement opportunities will be publicized in the department and a list of acceptable practica will be kept on file or in manuals. Students may secure placement on their own but the practicum instructor must approve the placement. Supervisors must be willing to sign a practicum agreement, meet with students on a periodic basis, and be willing to evaluate the student at the end of the experience.

Examples of practica:

- 1) Producing of a video for an annual meeting
- 2) Working with the Athletic Department to cover sports activities (video, sports information, photographer, etc.)
- 3) Developing, creating and maintaining a newsletter for a non-profit organization
- 4) Working on the MCOM Department's alumni newsletter
- 5) Developing and implementing publicity for MCOM events including MCOM Week
- 6) Using social media tools to enhance or empower and organization's visibility in the community
- 7) Conducting research with a faculty member for a potential publication/presentation at Big SURS or at a professional meeting.
- 8) Working in some capacity with the Winthrop Poll.
- 9) Carrying out a project for the University Relations or Alumni offices