

# PR 489: Internship in Public Relations

## Fall 2022

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### **KEN PAYNE**

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### **Course Description**

The Public Relations major offers students the opportunity to earn college credit while gaining valuable work experience. The internship course, PR 489, is a supervised internship in a professional position with a designated for-profit or nonprofit organization of the student's choice. The internship should provide students with responsibilities and experiences similar to those expected in a first job after college graduation. Experiential learning outside of the classroom provides numerous benefits, including the ability to:

- Explore the public relations career field,
- Gain experience in a professional public relations environment,
- Improve your public relations skills and knowledge,
- Apply public relations principles and theories to real-life work situations,
- Meet and network with working professionals in public relations, and
- Build a portfolio of your public relations work

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The following Student Learning Outcomes should be mastered by each internship student:

- Apply principles, skills, and theory taught in the classroom to real-life projects in a professional setting.
- Build a portfolio of accomplished work in the public relations field.

### **Prerequisites**

To be eligible for the Public Relations Internship Program, students must have:

- Attained Junior or Senior class standing;
- Declared a major in Public Relations
- Completed 18 hours of credit within the Public Relations major and
- Permission of the Internship Coordinator for Public Relations

### **Internship Standards**

The Department of Communication Internship Program defines an internship experience as one that meets the following criteria:

- The student works a minimum of 200 hours;



- The student assists in and/or performs the majority of work in a professional setting, preferably not remotely or in a home office setting – virtual positions will be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis;
- The main purpose of the work is both educational AND contributing to organizational goals, thus benefiting both the student AND the employer;
- The student engages in meaningful public relations-related activities in which s/he contributes to organizational processes and outcomes;
- The student's position is a temporary placement or entails new responsibilities (i.e., it is not the student's regular job);
- The student reports to a site supervisor (may not report directly to a close relative, such as a mother/father, brother/sister, aunt/uncle, or grandparent);
- The student may or may not receive a salary or other compensation; and
- The student completes all PR 489 course requirements in a timely manner, including the submission of periodic reports in which s/he analyzes, reflects on, and makes sense of his/her work experiences.

### **Employer Commitment**

To ensure a successful internship experience, the host organization and site supervisor should make the following commitments:

- Offer a professional work environment in which the intern can participate and interact with other organizational members; if working virtually, the site supervisor must ensure the intern is integrated into working teams and is actively involved and supervised while participating in daily operations;
- Offer opportunities for the intern to engage in substantive work that contributes to organizational goals (i.e., not simply clerical work);
- Provide the appropriate workspace, tools, and any other resources necessary for the intern to complete assigned tasks;
- Provide direct supervision and offer regular feedback to help the intern understand expectations and make improvements;
- Formally evaluate the intern's performance by completing the midterm and final evaluation forms found at the bottom of this webpage:  
[https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate\\_program/internships/internships.php](https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate_program/internships/internships.php); and
- Carry business and liability insurance that covers student interns while working both on organizational premises and off-site on behalf of the host organization.

## Application Process

To apply for acceptance to the Public Relations Internship Program, the following materials must be submitted to the Internship Director:

- The online Internship Application (completed by the student) found at [https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate\\_program/internships/application-for-internship.php](https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate_program/internships/application-for-internship.php)
- The online Employer Learning Contract (completed and submitted by the internship supervisor) found at [https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate\\_program/internships/learning-contract\\_employer.php](https://www.wku.edu/communication/undergraduate_program/internships/learning-contract_employer.php)
- An unofficial copy of your WKU transcript printed from iCap.

All internships are subject to approval by the Internship Coordinator. Upon approval, you will be cleared to register for COMM 489.

## Required Course Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. However, you will need the following:

- An active WKU email account registered on TopNet
- Regular access to Blackboard

## Professor Communication

The best way to contact me is via email (rather than phone) at [ken.payne@wku.edu](mailto:ken.payne@wku.edu). I will make every effort to respond to your email in a timely manner. However, email may not be checked after 5 pm each day, so plan accordingly.

## Technical Assistance

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with Blackboard, call WKU's IT Help Desk (270-745-7000) IMMEDIATELY. You may also visit the online IT [Help Desk](#). If the issue is not resolved and may affect your ability to complete an assignment, email me immediately to explain your situation.

# POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

## WKU COVID-19 Guidelines

All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. [www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill](http://www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill)

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The student should visit The Center for Career and Professional Development, Downing Student Union, Room 2001 (745-3095) to pick up a Co-operative Education packet. This packet of information includes a learning plan, address report, data sheet, final work report and employer evaluation forms. Please Note: The learning plan (job objectives) and data sheet will be due at the beginning of the internship. Both forms should be submitted to the PR internship coordinator, who approves the internship, as well as the Center for Career and Professional Development.

1. Required learning plan contract. The contact plan sets concrete objectives, responsibilities, and the number of work hours for the internship. It must be signed by the student and the employer and approved by the faculty internship coordinator before the internship or co-op begins.

2. A total 240 work hours required for internships. During the fall/spring semesters, this equates to approximately 16 hours weekly for 15 weeks. Summer internships are based on 12 weeks at 20 hours weekly, but other timeframes can be considered. Timeframes should be discussed with faculty.

3. A biweekly online journal is required. The journal should include a brief, but complete, description of daily activities on the job. (What the student has observed/learned and work activities.) The journal should also document the number of hours worked. Interns will submit their journal entries every two weeks to the designated wiki site (Google Drive). At the end of the internship, all journal entries also should be submitted with the final report.

4. A final written report. At minimum, the report should convey how the internship related to professional goals, relationship of internship to academic studies, a general discussion of the work experience and observations, and your recommendations for future students in this internship. The report is also due at the conclusion of the internship (see bullet 6).

5. Employer evaluation is required. A standard evaluation will be given to the employer. The blank evaluation form comes in your Career Services packet and completed copies of evaluations should be included in your binder.

6. A collection of several public relations work samples produced during the internship should be submitted to the faculty along with required evaluations in a three-ring binder at the end of the internship. These work samples may include, but are not limited to, brochures, designs, PR campaigns, blog entries, social media examples, content for webpages, newsletter content, etc. The binder also should include your journal entries and total work hours, your final report, your learning plan contract, a copy of the data report (student evaluation), and copies of the employer evaluation(s).

7. The internship coordinator will issue a letter grade. The final grade will be based on paperwork meeting deadlines, quality of work submitted and the employer evaluation. "A" represents excellence, "B" represents above average, "C" represents average, "D" represents

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below average accomplishments and "F" means failure. The grading process also includes a required meeting with the internship coordinator.

8. University student policies will apply during the internship. Students and employers are encouraged to report any actual or suspected harassment, misconduct or negligence to the appropriate WKU authorities for investigation.

#### Deadlines

Specific deadlines for these activities will be provided by the internship coordinator.

### **Regular and Substantive Interaction**

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Individual advising and assistance with securing an internship prior to the course beginning
- Weekly announcements/email reminders
- Clearly communicated schedule of assignments and deadlines
- Direct, oral instructions for major assignments through videos
- Detailed grading rubrics
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments
- Timely response to student emails

## **STUDENT ASSISTANCE**

### **Student Disability Services**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a Faculty Notification Letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

### **Title IX**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (#0.070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive

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Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

**Student Academic Assistance – Get extra help if you need it!**

*If you have problems with writing (and many people do), please take advantage of the following resources, especially the Writing Center and/or The Learning Center.*

- **Writing Center Assistance** - *The Writing Center on the Bowling Green campus* will have writing tutors available to offer advice to current WKU students on any stage of their writing projects. In-person tutoring is available in Cherry Hall 123 from 10-4 Monday through Friday and in the Cravens Commons (at the horseshoe-shaped reference desk) from 5-9 on Sunday through Thursday evenings. WKU students may also request feedback on their writing via email or arrange a real-time Zoom conference to discuss a paper. See instructions and how-to videos on the website ([www.wku.edu/writingcenter](http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter)) for making appointments. Walk-in feedback is available unless we are booked up. Students may also get short writing questions answered via email; just put “Quick question” in the subject line to ([writingcenter@wku.edu](mailto:writingcenter@wku.edu)).

*The WKU START Centers* will be offering writing tutoring sessions via Zoom as well as in person in their Glasgow and Elizabethtown locations. More information on how to make appointments and what to expect from your appointment will continue to be posted at (<https://www.wku.edu/startcenter/>).

- **The Learning Center** (DSU A330) - provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. TLC @ Downing Student Union and TLC @ FAC offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects and eight academic skill areas by appointment or walk in. Online tutoring is offered to distance learners. TLC is also a quiet study area (with side rooms designated for peer-to-peer tutoring) and offers a thirty-two machine Dell computer lab to complete academic coursework. Additionally, TLC has four satellite locations. Each satellite location is a quiet study center and is equipped with a small computer lab. These satellite locations are located in FAC, Douglas Keen Hall, McCormack Hall, and Pearce Ford Tower. Please contact TLC @ Downing Student Union for more information or to schedule a tutoring appointment. For more information, visit the [TLC Website](#) or to schedule a tutoring appointment, please call TLC at (270) 745-6254.
  - **The Learning Center Peer Tutoring Services** - The Learning Center (TLC) provides free tutoring services that empower students to achieve academic
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success. Trained peer tutors are available to review course content, answer questions, and demonstrate effective study strategies. TLC offers individual appointments and group sessions (PASS) for hundreds of undergraduate courses. For more information or to make an appointment, visit [www.wku.edu/tlc](http://www.wku.edu/tlc).



- **WKU Center for Literacy** - located in Gary A. Ransdell Hall 2066. At the Center for Literacy, students can receive assistance in developing strategies to help with **reading/studying to learn** and **writing for evidence and argument**. The Center for Literacy offers both individual and small group sessions throughout the semester. Please email [literacy.center@wku.edu](mailto:literacy.center@wku.edu) to schedule an appointment or ask questions, visit the [Center for Literacy Website](#), or stop by GRH 2066 for more information.
- **Purdue Online Writing Lab** – Online assistance with APA formatting and other writing/grammar can be found at the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#).

*NOTE: The procedures and schedule in this course are subject to change as needed. **Please check the course Blackboard site regularly.***

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## COMM 489 COURSE SCHEDULE

Date *	Assignment Due
<b>WEEK 1</b> <b>Friday 8/26</b>	COMM 489 Course Begins Check in and introduce yourself on the Blackboard Discussion Board
<b>WEEK 3</b> <b>Friday 9/9</b>	Reflection Paper 1: Introduction to Your Organization
<b>WEEK 5</b> <b>Friday 9/23</b>	Reflection Paper 2: Socialization Process
<b>WEEK 7</b> <b>Friday 10/7</b>	Theory Application Paper 1
<b>WEEK 9</b> <b>Friday 10/21</b>	Weekly Time Reports Student's Midterm Evaluation Supervisor's Midterm Evaluation
<b>WEEK 11</b> <b>Friday 11/4</b>	Theory Application Paper 2
<b>WEEK 13</b> <b>Friday 11/18</b>	Promotional Video
<b>WEEK 15</b> <b>Friday 12/2</b>	Student's Final Evaluation Supervisor's Final Evaluation
<b>WEEK 16</b> <b>Friday 12/9</b>	Final Weekly Time Reports ** Reflection Paper 3: Lessons Learned

**\* DEADLINES:** You may submit assignments early but **MUST** submit by 11:00 pm CST on the due date listed above to be considered on time. Please plan your time accordingly. Late submissions may receive point deductions for missed deadlines.

**\*\* WORK HOURS:** If you are unable to complete the 200 work hours required to receive course credit for the Communication internship, you will receive an *Incomplete* for the course until the hours and all coursework have been completed.