

INTERNSHIPS, VAC JOBS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SCHOOL POLICY ON INTERNSHIPS, FREELANCE WORK, VAC JOBS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

JMS 2

It is a DP requirement that all JMS2 students complete 40 hours of observation work at an approved media organisation in their second year (this needs to be done in 2016, so work done in JMS1 will not count). This work must be completed by the end of the September vacation 2017, as it feeds into the SA Media Institutions course assignment, which is submitted in the third term. The work must take place in an organisation that deals primarily with journalism in a commercial environment: daily and weekly newspapers, TV and radio news broadcasters, community newspapers (including freesheets) and community radio stations which produce their own news broadcasts are all acceptable.

Work in student media organisations (Activate/ Oppidan Press/RMR) will not count, nor will work on Cue or Rhodos. We respect our local student media and believe that the experience you gain there is invaluable, but they are simply not “institutions” in the sense that the fourth term course requires. The one exception is CueRadio, which for all intents and purposes is run as an SABC satellite under the direction of SABC editors. Work here will count.

If you have any doubt as to whether a particular organisation would be approved or if you are struggling to find a placement, please consult with

the JMS2 co-ordinator. Please note the requirement is simply that you be present at the organisation and get to observe how it operates. If the only way you can gain access to a particular newsroom is by offering to make coffee and run errands for the week, then be prepared to do this. Obviously, it would be good if you could do some journalistic work, but this is not a requirement and you will not be penalised if you are unable to do so. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a diary of their observation work. Guidelines for participant observation work, a letter for prospective employers and an evaluation form will be available early in the first term.

JMS 3

Although there is no formalised programme for internships, some courses might require it. Approaches to extracurricular work vary from specialisation to specialisation, and you are advised to consult the lecturer in your media specialisation about vac work.

JMS 4

At this level, internships are included as a component of some of the practical specialisations. You will need to find out from the lecturer in charge of your specialisation whether you will have to do an internship. The School also allows fourth year students to set up and complete an internship at a media institution as their fourth term intensive course. This has to be arranged by the student, and the media institution has to be approved by JMS.

Any internship, volunteer work, or freelance work, in which you become involved while studying at the School of Journalism and Media Studies, whether through your own initiative or not, has to be cleared with the appropriate staff. This applies even when such work does not formally count towards your course requirements, because the host organisation will inevitably link you with Rhodos. Also, the school needs to be aware of where students are placed, so that it is possible to identify cases in which students are placing too heavy a burden on one particular host.

Please note that as a School, we do not require organisations that you work for to pay you for your time.

SO ALL STUDENTS HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES:

- » You are required to inform your year co-ordinator of work arrangements once you have agreement from the host organisation, so that the school has it on record. This has to happen before the job takes place.
- » If you intend such work to be considered as part of your applications for courses in future, or hope to receive extra credit for such work, it needs to be approved by the year co-ordinator or lecturer. (See specific details for each year below.) Such approval has to happen before the job is undertaken.

JMS 1

Vac work is not a credit requirement for JMS1. *However, students wishing to apply for entry to JMS2 must complete vac work in order to meet the application criteria (see the application conditions on page 31).* If you do undertake vac work, you are not required to become actively involved in the production of media. Instead, the emphasis should be on observing the processes that inform media production at your host organisations.

You should provide your host with a letter explaining this policy, to ensure that they are aware that the school is placing no pressure on them to provide you with practical assignments. You are required, however, to write up your observations about your experience of such work and include this in the portfolio that forms part of your application for JMS2.

You also need to ensure that an appropriate person at your hosting organisation assesses your performance on the evaluation form provided, and submit this with your JMS2 portfolio. Also note that while you are not required to produce news articles during your vac work, any and all media that you do happen to produce during the course of the year will help to bolster your portfolio.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Unlike other universities that are in vast metropolises, Rhodes University and JMS form an integral part of a very particular context – the community of Grahamstown and surrounds. Here, JMS students as media practitioners have the unique advantage of direct access to, and the ability to dynamically interact with and contribute to, this context because of its immediate proximity. Indeed, because of the naturally explorative and inquisitive nature of journalism, and its inherent need to find and share the story, JMS has always been a community engagement pioneer. At the time we use various media platforms such as involvement with local community radio to make a positive contribution to the lives of the people of Grahamstown and the Makana area as a whole. JMS is also currently engaging with a variety of communities further afield – using the School's extensive skills base to assist these communities in developing their own community media platforms and outlets. As students, remember that there are amazing stories to tell and awesome contributions to make, within a vibrant environment that in many ways is a microcosm of what South Africa faces as a whole – and we encourage you to engage constructively with it as part of the pragmatic aspects of your studies.