

Journalism and Media Studies Centre
Internship Handbook
Bachelor of Journalism

The Journalism and Media Studies Centre has developed one of the most wide-ranging and popular internship programmes in Hong Kong. Since its founding in 1999, the JMSC has placed hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students in internships. Local and international internship partners include Chinese- and English-language companies in Hong Kong, the United States, Asia and elsewhere.

In order to graduate from the Bachelor of Journalism programme, students must complete a minimum eight weeks of full-time internship work in journalism or media-related fields. Students must file a report to the internship co-ordinator within two weeks of the last day of work. Before undertaking an internship, students are required to participate in pre-internship training usually in May of the first year of study.

Past JMSC students have interned at leading news organizations, including the Cable News Network (CNN), Agence France-Presse (AFP), *NBC News*, Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters, Associated Press (AP), NOW TV, Phoenix Television, *South China Morning Post*, *TIME*, *Ming Pao*, *The Standard*, Hong Kong Cable Television Limited (iCable News Channel/HKIBC), *Caixin*, *Sixth Tone*, *Financial Times*, *China Daily*, *The Initium*, *Quartz*, *The News Lens*, Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), *Nikkei Asian Review*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *VICE*, *Coconuts Hong Kong* and more. After graduation, some moved onto fulltime employment at those same companies.

INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

JMSC student interns are defacto representatives of the programme and the University of Hong Kong. The faculty expects students to behave accordingly when interning at local and international media companies.

Some JMSC students have completed multiple internships or previously worked as journalists. Others may be pursuing their first internship in the media industry. Regardless of prior work experience, all students have the potential for being model interns.

JMSC interns should follow a four-part (common sense) formula for success:

1. Demonstrate diligent work habits
2. Exhibit good ethical standards
3. Behave professionally
4. Pay attention

In order to maintain the high standard of its internship programme, the JMSC expects students to follow these guidelines and others explored in-detail below:

Performance expectations

- **Demonstrate diligent work habits**
Work hard! A good work ethic allows students to maximize on-the-job learning. Your efforts reflect positively on the JMSC. The positive intern reputation you help to establish will assist future intern applicants from the JMSC.
- **Exhibit good ethical standards**
Follow the fundamental journalism ethics taught at the JMSC: No inventing sources, quotes should be accurate, do not plagiarize, etc. If a student is found guilty of any serious ethical breach during an internship, the JMSC reserves the right to pursue disciplinary action, which could result in failure of internship credit (when applicable) and expulsion from the programme.

- **Behave professionally**

Personal communications: Do not surf the Internet for non-work related matters during office hours (no personal e-mailing, reading, online shopping, or using social media—i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Weibo, RED 小紅書 (Xiaohongshu), Tiktok (Douyin) et al unless it is part of your duties).

Do not make personal phone calls during office hours.

Professional attire: Follow appropriate office dress code.

Timeliness: Be punctual. Do not take unnecessary leave from work. Meet deadlines.

- **Pay attention**

Internships allow real-life application of journalism studies. Challenge yourself to develop your skills, and develop new proficiencies. Heed advice from editors/supervisors, and implement suggestions/criticisms during your internship. Be proactive in coming up with ideas, stories and assignments useful to your media company. Think of what you can do for the company and not just what the company can do for you.

Administrative requirements

- **Intern feedback**

Participants in the JMSC Internship Programme are required to submit a report of their experiences. BJs must submit a portfolio, internship report, a student evaluation form and the supervisor's assessment report, upon completing credit-bearing internships. See the "Internship Programme Schedule" for more details.

- **Submit required portfolio, documents and paperwork**

See the schedule outlined in "Internship Programme Application/Schedule."

- **JMSC-arranged internship precedence**

The JMSC will assist you in finding an internship only if you are committed to accepting the internship. If you are querying internship or jobs independent from JMSC networking efforts, and you are seeking placement assistance from the JMSC as well, then we expect the JMSC-arranged internship to take precedent over other offers. Violation of this rule may result in the student being asked to withdraw from the JMSC internship programme.

- **No simultaneous applications**

The JMSC can assist each student in applying for only one internship at a time, to avoid potential conflict with internship providers, and to maximize the number of intern placements for our students.

- **No guarantees**

Internship placement is not guaranteed. Placement depends on the individual student's skills and interests, and whether the intern provider can accommodate the applicant.

- **Internship commitment and communication**

The JMSC expects students to honor commitments. Once committed to an internship, JMSC students must complete the entire duration of the internship period and document their participation in the Internship Logbook. Regardless of whether the internship is half-complete or it has not yet begun, termination of a set internship (without proper communication) is unacceptable.

If unforeseen circumstances prevent internship completion, students should maintain open communication with intern supervisors and the JMSC.

Some media companies rely on a regular stream of interns to fulfill essential tasks. The companies allocate resources to consider intern applications, and to supervise interns on the job. Unexpected internship termination can leave the companies without adequate time to find a replacement intern;

however, with proper advance notice, another qualified JMSC student might be recommended as an alternative intern candidate.

Early termination will result in failure of internship credit (when applicable), and the credit-bearing internship must be retaken during the subsequent term(s).

INTERN CONSEQUENCES

Positive:

Hard-working interns demonstrate the high caliber of journalism education provided at the JMSC. A positive attitude and pro-active work ethic ensures that media companies will again offer internship opportunities to future JMSC students.

Internships are an invaluable educational resource. They offer a means to continue developing your journalism skills beyond the classroom. A positive internship experience will also create new professional opportunities. You can evaluate whether you would like to pursue a particular field of journalism (broadcast vs. print, multimedia, etc.) without committing to a fulltime job. Similarly, the company can evaluate you as a potential employee.

Some internships may turn into fulltime jobs. Other companies do not guarantee post-internship employment. Knowing that an internship will not turn into a fulltime job does not justify lowering professional standards. Remember that your intern supervisors could provide essential references in your career path. A successful internship—and a positive relationship with your supervisor—leads to more opportunities in the industry.

Negative:

Hong Kong is a highly competitive media market. Other local universities' journalism students, along with applicants from abroad, compete every year for a limited number of internships in Hong Kong.

Poor intern performance or failure to comply with JMSC's common sense internship guidelines can carry negative consequences for future JMSC students seeking internship opportunities. The JMSC reserves the right to initiate academic disciplinary action against any student found to be in severe breach of our internship guidelines.

BJs pursuing credit-bearing internships will receive a "fail grade" if they fail to comply with the internship guidelines.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME APPLICATION/SCHEDULE

Bachelors of Journalism (summer credit-bearing internships)

- Summer internship workshop (prerequisite)
Bachelors of Journalism students must complete a pre-internship workshop that will prepare students for internships and workplace expectations (Details will be announced by the JMSC in May/ June during first year).
- JMSC meeting with individual students
JMSC staff will conduct interviews with students to assess student internship goals and media preferences.
- Criteria for credit-bearing internships
Students are allowed to secure credit-bearing internships through efforts independent from the JMSC, or the JMSC can assist students in applying for one internship at a time. The JMSC can only assist students in seeking other intern options after the first application proves unsuccessful. If students have

independent internship applications pending, JMSC-arranged internships are expected to receive priority.

Credit-bearing Internships must fulfill the following four criteria: (1) a minimum of eight weeks, 40-hours per week (or the equivalent spread over a longer time period); (2) intern duties must require a degree of journalistic work. This could include writing, editing or other tasks that require students to hone practical journalism skills. Administrative chores (fetching coffee, stuffing envelopes, etc.) should not be the intern's primary responsibility; (3) Students must be working in a role that requires a degree of editor supervision/guidance. The credit is granted because this is an experiential learning experience; (4) Students and intern supervisors must complete assessment reports.

- Portfolio and evaluations

The JMSC will e-mail two evaluation forms—one for the student to complete, and one for the supervisor to complete. Students should forward the digital form to their supervisor directly, and we request supervisors to return assessment reports by email. Student evaluation forms and portfolios must be submitted to the internship co-ordinator along with portfolios during the final week of the internship, or at a date to-be-determined by the officer.

Submission directions: Portfolios should be sent through email with links to online portfolio, YouTube or GDrive containing: (1) internship work samples (2) a one-page summary of the experience and (3) the student's evaluation form.

- Credit approval.

Internship credit is granted on a pass-fail basis. JMSC staff will evaluate the student portfolios and supervisor evaluations to assess a grade of "pass" or "fail." Those who follow guidelines outlined in this handbook are assured a passing grade.