

## Internships as an Assessment Tool In a U.S. Journalism and Mass Communication Program

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As noted in the Declaration of Principles of the World Journalism Education Council, most undergraduate and many graduate programs in journalism have strong experiential components, including classroom laboratories and on-the-job internships. Journalism curricula consist of a wide variety of courses, including the study of ethics, history, media structures, critical analysis of content, as well as an array of skills courses (WJEC, 2010). "Journalism should serve the public in many important ways, but it can only do so if its practitioners have mastered an increasingly complex body of knowledge and specialized skills," state educators from six continents in the preamble to the Declaration (WJEC, 2010). How well are students mastering the knowledge and skills that journalism programs seek to teach? As programs respond to the seismic changes within the field, can feedback from internships be utilized to assess program effectiveness and to update curricula? Can internships be used to help measure student learning of specific values and competencies? What challenges, if any, occur during implementation of internships as an assessment tool?