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Overview

Northwestern University in Qatar requires all Journalism majors to complete a 10-week professional residency. Journalism Residency is an opportunity for NU-Q students to apply skills from the classroom to a professional opportunity at one of NU-Q’s numerous media partners, giving students real-world experience to propel their career. Residency sites are in Qatar, the broader region, and across the world with an emphasis on placements in the Global South.

Journalism Residency consists of four units of academic credit:
- Two units of five-week immersive pre-residency coursework at NU-Q from January to mid-February
- Two units for a ten-week full-time internship from mid-February to late April

Residencies can be completed in one of four available tracks:
1. News / Online
2. Broadcast / Video
3. Magazine
4. Strategic Communication
   - only open to Strat Comm minors who have completed the prerequisites of STRATCOM 303 and STRATCOM 305

These types of residencies are very competitive, and students must be prepared to put together a high-quality application package and conduct a professional interview. Though it may seem like Spring semester is a long way away, the process of confirming a residency site and applying for a visa is quite extensive and students will need to be participating in this process throughout the year (including during summer and winter break).

Communication

All communication for JR will be done through students’ official Northwestern email account or through the Canvas course. Students are expected to check their emails regularly and respond to relevant emails in a timely manner, including during the summer and winter breaks. Failure to engage responsibly and professionally in the Journalism Residency placement process may impact a student’s eligibility to participate in JR.
## Timeline

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<td>March</td>
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<td>Application Package Due</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>Risk Management Plan Due</td>
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ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Journalism Residency, students must demonstrate that they are making academic progress. They must be in good academic and conduct standing with both NU-Q and the University at large. Students must also demonstrate through the JR placement process that they will engage with the program in a professional and responsible manner.

Students are not eligible for Journalism Residency under the following conditions:

- If a student has been placed on academic or disciplinary probation for the semester prior to the residency or for the semester in which the residency is scheduled.
- If a student has earned a grade below C- in any 300-level Journalism course within two semesters prior to residency.
- If a student has a program GPA below 2.25 at the end of their sophomore year.
- If a student has not completed the following core journalism courses with a grade of C- or higher:
  - JOUR 201-0 Journalistic Storytelling Across Media
  - JOUR 202-0 Journalism in the Digital World
  - JOUR 301-1 News Gathering and Assessment
  - JOUR 303-0 Audience Insight
  - JOUR 370-0 Media Law and Ethics
  - STRATCOM 303-0 Introduction to Strategic Communication
- If a student has an unresolved incomplete (X, Y, or NR) grade.
- Any student who has a case pending against them in Northwestern’s Office of Student Conduct that could result in separation from the University.
- If a student has failed to engage responsibly and professionally in the Journalism Residency placement process in the semester prior to the scheduled residency. A student may be ineligible for the program if he or she routinely misses meetings, arrives late, or does not respond within 24 hours to emails related to residency. Decisions about eligibility based on professional engagement are at the discretion of the Journalism Residency Director, NU-Q’s Journalism Program Director, and the Senior Associate Dean.

Any student who is returning from a leave of absence must be enrolled in NU-Q classes for at least one semester before applying for residency. Students with pre-existing health concerns that have potential
to interfere with success on the Journalism Residency may be asked to work with the Dean of Students’ office to ensure that a treatment plan is in place during the course of the residency.

NU-Q reserves the right to make final determinations about a student’s eligibility to participate in residency for reasons including, but not limited to, health and safety concerns and pending academic integrity and conduct cases against students that do not rise to the level of separation from the University. These determinations are at the discretion of the JR Director, the Journalism Program Director, and the Senior Associate Dean.

Four-Course Alternative

In some exceptional circumstances, students are not able to participate in Journalism Residency. In these rare cases, students may request approval from the Journalism and Strategic Communication Program Director and Senior Associate Dean & Chief Academic Officer to complete the Residency requirement through professional experience. If approved, students must complete a preapproved noncredit professional experience and take four (4) 300-level courses in lieu of the Residency during the term in which the Residency would take place. Three of these courses must be JOUR courses; the fourth may be in another NU-Q program. Any exceptions to this policy require the approval of the Senior Associate Dean & Chief Academic Officer.

Journalism Residency is a degree requirement and so this option is only approved in exceptional situations where a student may otherwise not be able to graduate.
APPLICATION

JR Interest Form

The JR Interest Form confirms a student's intent to participate in Journalism Residency for that year. It is an opportunity for them to declare which track they are interested in and indicate which sites they would be most interested in.

Though students' preferences will be taken into consideration, NU-Q does not and cannot guarantee a spot at any specific site. This is especially true for popular sites that are often a preferred choice for many students.

NU-Q may present a site with multiple resumes and the site will decide which student (or students) they want to extend an offer to. If a student wants to go to a popular site, it is imperative that they put together a competitive application package.

If the Residency Interest Form is not submitted on time, students cannot be considered for a site located outside of Qatar.

To assist in their planning, students can look through the list of all previous internship sites. This information can be found in the Files section in Canvas.

The Application Package

The Application Package consists of three parts:
1. Resume
2. Portfolio
3. Passport and QID

All three parts will be submitted in Canvas and students should carefully follow all the submission instructions listed there.

It is important to note that NU-Q does not simply place students at residency sites. Sites often request multiple resumes and site, we will be assisting students as they apply for internships. Though NU-Q has relationships with some sites that makes it more likely they will accept an NU-Q student, it is extremely important that students have a high-quality application package if they want to secure a high-quality residency site.
Resume

When writing their resume, students should keep their target audience in mind. A potential site may receive dozens of residency applications so they’re looking for a resume that stands out. Sites may decide whether to select a student or not, based solely on their resume, so students should make sure that it represents them well. A poorly-crafted or out-of-date resume will make it difficult to secure a quality residency site.

NU-Q holds bi-weekly resume-writing workshops and JR students are encouraged to attend at least one before submitting their resumes for JR. The dates of these workshops can be found in the Wildcat Weekly Newsletter as well as on social media. For further questions about their resumes or portfolio, students should reach out to the Career Services Manager.

Students should keep their resume up-to-date throughout the application process. For example, if a student has additional work experience over the summer, they should update their resume and submit a new one to Canvas.

Passport and QID

Many countries will not issue a visa unless the passport is valid for six months after the proposed travel date. As a result, students interested in completing their Journalism Residency overseas, must have a passport that is valid until six months after JR (the following October). Students with passports expiring before then should start the renewal process as soon as possible.

Portfolio

A professional portfolio is a collection of work samples that provides an overview of an applicant’s abilities and potential by showcasing their experience and skills. For JR, student’s portfolios should support the resume in showing why they would be an asset for this specific organization. The portfolio is perhaps the most important part of the application because potential sites want to see what a student can actually do. Students should make sure to select their best work and present it in a way that represents them the best.

If a student has no published work, they can include class work in their portfolio. However, students should make sure to present their work as professionally as possible. There is no set format for portfolios, but this is a good opportunity for students to be creative in how they present their work. If students have an online portfolio, the link should be clearly presented in their resume. If not online, the portfolio should be submitted as one document.
SITE REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Overview

Once a student has submitted their Interest Form and complete Application Package, the site review and selection process can begin. This process takes many months and typically follows the below steps:

1. Based on the information provided by each student, the JR Director reaches out to NU-Q’s media contacts and shares the application package of potential students
2. Sites will review the resume and portfolio of potential students
3. A site may request a cover letter or an interview
4. Interviews are conducted (typically through Zoom)
5. The site decides whether to host a student for their residency
6. If a site declines a student, the JR Director starts the process again with another site

Cover Letter

Some sites request a cover letter along with the resume and portfolio. Students should be prepared to write a personalized cover letter for the sites that they are interested in. The cover letter is an opportunity for students to tell the sites what they can do for them, instead of what the site can do for the student.

These may be requested on short-notice so students are encouraged to prepare cover letters for their top sites beforehand, in case they are requested later.

Interview

If a site is interested in a student after seeing their resume and portfolio they will often ask for an interview. These are typically held on Zoom and students should be prepared to make themselves available at whatever time works for the site. This may mean an early morning or late evening meeting if the site is in a different time zone.

Students should make sure to come prepared for any interviews. They should research the organization beforehand, know what work the organization is currently doing, and be able to confidently and specifically state how they will be an asset to the site.
Proposing a New Site

Journalism Residency is an established program with many approved sites. If a student has a specific interest and wants to propose a new site they must complete the JR - New Site Request form (found on Canvas) and submit it to the JR Director no later than the Fall registration deadline. This request will include a brief description of the site, information for a specific contact at the site, and email confirmation from the site stating that they are interested in hosting an NU-Q student for their residency. Requests will be evaluated by the JR Director and students will be notified of the decision by email. Requests for alternate sites submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

If students are considering this route, they are encouraged to inform the JR Director as early as possible.
PRE-DEPARTURE

Finances

Since Journalism Residency is a degree requirement, Northwestern University in Qatar funds the experience. Specific amounts will vary based on location and students will be informed of the specifics once their site is confirmed.

Accommodation

Students completing their residency in-person outside of Doha will receive a stipend calculated based on the city their site is located in and are responsible for finding an appropriate apartment. In the past, many students have had success by choosing to live with another student and combining their stipends. It is important to note that affordable options are often booked early so to get the most for their money, we recommend housing be finalized by December at the latest.

For students staying in the Education City dorms during their residency (working remotely or in-person in Doha), Northwestern will cover their housing fees for the ten-week period of JR.

Living Costs

Students will receive their living stipend in the week before JR starts. The amount is calculated based on the city their site is located in. This stipend is intended to cover incidentals directly related to your residency.

One of the purposes of this experience is to prepare you for the real world, both professionally and personally. Learning to manage your finances and budget appropriately is part of that. If managed properly, your stipend is sufficient for the entire 10-week residency as long as you cut costs with things like doing your own laundry, taking public transportation, or buying groceries instead of going to restaurants every day.

Though we recommend that sites hire our students as unpaid interns, some companies have internal policies that require them to pay interns. In this situation, NU-Q pays the site and the student is paid bi-weekly by the site instead of in one lump sum from NU-Q.

Flights

All JR flights will be arranged and purchased by the university. Students do not have the option of booking flights themselves and getting reimbursed.
Visas

All standard visa fees are fully reimbursable so make sure to submit your receipts to Business & Finance. Please note that fees for expedited applications may not be eligible for reimbursement and must be approved by the JR Director prior to the payment.

The Visa Process

Northwestern Qatar provides full support for visa applications, but cannot submit visa applications on a student’s behalf. The JR Director will work with each student to make sure that they have what they need to meet the visa requirements of the country where their site is located. This can be a tedious process with many moving pieces so it is imperative that students start the visa process as soon as their site is confirmed.

It is important to note that in most countries students cannot complete their residency while on a tourist visa. For example, this means that even if a student has a 10-year B1/B2 visa to the US, they still need to go through the entire application process for a J1 visa. The JR Director will work with the students and the site contact to get any documents required for the visa application.

Travel Requirements

For students working at sites outside of Qatar, Journalism Residency is considered independent student travel and students should familiarize themselves with the Student Travel Protocol found in MyNU-Q. If students do not complete all the pre-departure requirements, they will not be eligible to travel.
DURING RESIDENCY

Communication

After their first day, students should check in with their faculty advisors to confirm the name and contact information of their site supervisors. If students have any concerns throughout their residency, they should bring it to the attention of their faculty advisor immediately.

Workplace Expectations

Journalism Residency is a fantastic opportunity for students to get real-world experience and students are encouraged to volunteer to be involved, propose new ideas, and take every opportunity to get more experience.

Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the workplace. Things like arriving on time, wearing business attire, and treating colleagues respectfully are a basic expectation. Students must also adhere to any professional codes or social media guidelines specific to the company where they are working. If a student violates the policies of their site in a way that results in the termination of their residency, the student will receive a failing grade.

While on JR, students are still enrolled at NU-Q and must follow the Northwestern University in Qatar Integrity Code. Additionally, any work they produce is subject to the Northwestern Academic Integrity Code. Any breach of these policies may result in a student being removed from the residency and receiving a failing grade. Detailed information about academic integrity can be found in the NU-Q Catalog.

Evaluation

Prior to the start of JR, each student will be assigned to a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will oversee the evaluation of your ten-week residency. You will be graded using pass/fail and will be evaluated three ways.

1. Weekly Logs
   - Students must submit a log each week detailing what you did each week and linking to any published work. Your faculty advisor will read these reports.
2. Mid-Term Evaluation
   - Halfway through your residency, your site supervisor will complete an evaluation of your internship and submit it to your faculty advisor. They will evaluate you on your communication, professionalism, self-management, working relationship with others, and quality of work. This evaluation will then be discussed in a meeting with you, your site supervisor, and your faculty advisor.

3. Final Evaluation
   - At the end of your residency, your site supervisor will complete a final evaluation and submit it to your faculty advisor.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will I get my first choice of site?
It is important that all students keep an open mind and don’t get fixated on doing their residency at one specific site. There are many factors that determine which site a student gets confirmed at and we cannot predict which companies will be able to take interns. The best way to increase your chance of being at your preferred site is to make sure you submit a high-quality application package.

Can I stay in the country where my site is for a holiday after my residency ends?
This depends on the immigration rules in the country you are placed in. For example, a J1 visa in the U.S. will typically be valid for 30 days after your internship ends. However, if you choose to stay abroad, you will be responsible to pay for your own accommodation, living costs, health insurance, and any difference in flight costs. Also, note that if you are graduating in the same semester as JR, you are required to be in Doha to attend the graduation ceremony.

Should I apply for regular housing for spring semester?
When the housing application opens, make sure you select “short term” housing for the spring semester. You will be charged a weekly rate, and per usual, NU-Q can pay on your behalf and add the charge to your student account. Be sure to inform the Student Experience team so they can send Housing a note to make sure they know to expect you as a “short term guest.”

Additionally, if you will be returning to Doha at the end of your internship, please plan to stay at The Campus - Guest Housing in Janoubi. Unless you have an academic commitment to remain in housing over the summer, Housing cannot accommodate short term housing. If you would like to arrange a stay at The Campus, please let Student Affairs know as soon as possible.

Can I leave my belongings in my dorm room while I’m away on residency?
No. Students must move out of their dorms if they are completing their residency out of Qatar.

If I can’t find accommodation near my site within the set budget, will the budget increase?
No. The budget has been set very specifically. The earlier you finalize the booking, the more affordable the housing options will be. Do not wait until the last minute! All accommodation should be booked by December at the latest.

Can I work while on my Journalism Residency?
Students are expected to make their residency a priority and will work 40-hour work weeks. As a result, students are not permitted to work during Journalism Residency.
I already have a valid tourist visa for the country where my site is located, can I just use that for my JR?

In most cases, no. Since you will be working, most countries require some type of business or intern visa. If you have any questions, please get in touch with the JR Director.