

Journalistic Writing

STORY APPROVAL PROCESS

In order to get your story idea approved, please follow these steps:

- ❑ **Brainstorm** – Seek input from a variety of sources for potential news story ideas. Talk with sources, Hawkeye staff and editors. Read previous issues of the Hawkeye. Read other papers. Talk with readers. Put your news antennae up. Get out of the newsroom. Think like a reader. Etc.
- ❑ **Focus** – Select an idea that you believe is newsworthy and relevant to your audience. Make sure your focus is narrow enough to be attainable given your available resources, level of expertise and time available within deadlines.
- ❑ **Proposal Memo** – Fill out or write your own story proposal memo and submit it to the appropriate supervisor or editor. Make sure you provide the following information:
 - ✓ Identify yourself and anyone else who will be working with you
 - ✓ Identify the target audience and why they will be well served by this story
 - ✓ Suggest the section of the paper/website where your story would be best suited
 - ✓ Clearly explain the proposed story idea
 - ✓ Identify as many primary and secondary sources as possible
 - ✓ Outline some rough ideas for questions
 - ✓ List any potential difficulties or areas of concern that you might have
 - ✓ State the “KILL” date and the story due date
 - ✓ Suggest any photo, graphic or layout package ideas
- ❑ **Confirmation Conference** – Meet with the instructor/editor to seek approval of your proposal memo. Make any necessary changes to your plan as discussed with the instructor/editor. Keep your approved proposal with you as a guide as you work through the story.
- ❑ **STOP! DO NOT CONTINUE UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN SIGNED OFF.**
- ❑ **Research** – Seek background information on your approved idea so that you may intelligently present your findings to the audience and prepare for interviews.
- ❑ **Interview** – Set up interviews with your sources. Professionally contact sources to establish and/or confirm interview meeting times. Conduct professional interviews. Transcribe your notes into a meaningful outline. Clarify any quotes and other information. Follow up on any questions or incomplete interviews. Thank your sources and find out how to get a hold of them in the future.
- ❑ **Draft** – Write a draft story. Seek input from your editor or instructor. Make sure that you write a great lead ¶ to anchor your story.
- ❑ **Edit** – Seek input, criticism and feedback from your peers, editors, instructor, etc. Use your copy editing skills to identify changes.
- ❑ **Revise** – Rewrite until you are satisfied that you have produced your best work on deadline.
- ❑ **Submit for Publication** – Meet your deadline. Submit your work following the proper story format standards. You **must** submit final drafts via the www.DropItTo.Me/DeMiero site. The file **must** be properly formatted and named [E9Px_News Story_Last Name.xxx]
- ❑ **Portfolio** – Keep a printout of your work in your writing portfolio. If it’s published, clip your story from the HAWKEYE and place a copy into your portfolio.
- ❑ **Reflect** – What did you learn? What can you do again that you did really well this time? What can you work on to improve? Does your work need a follow-up? Did you give a copy to your sources? What feedback did your sources give you about your final, published copy?
- ❑ **Repeat** – Begin working on your next project while working on the previous one.