

Internships and Field Experience

ENV-301, Field Experience is a required, 3-credit-hour course in which our majors participate in a professional experience or internship with an independent, external agency. It is understood that that experience will consist of a minimum of 120 hours of work in some aspect of environmental science. It is further understood that that work experience will be closely related and fully supportive of the goals and objectives of the Environmental Science academic program.

Students who will have completed at least 60 credits of their academic career and who think they are ready to take on a field experience should consult with their advisor and/or the department chair. Ideally this consultation should take place during the registration period prior to the semester in which the Field Experience is to take place. Students can either initiate the search for an appropriate field experience on their own or ask their advisor or other faculty for suggestions and pointers. Don't leave the arrangements for Field Experience until just before a semester begins.

Procedures:

(a) Prepare a resume and cover letter for presentation to an external agency. The resume and cover letter should be composed according to the guidelines found in handouts provided by Career Services. The student must submit the resume and cover letter by a specific date or no placements will be allowed. The resume and cover letter become part of the student's written report.

(b) Preliminary description of the Field Experience:

A detailed description of the assignment as agreed upon by the student and their agency supervisor must be completed during the first week of the placement. This description will be written and will become a part of the student's Field Experience written report.

This description should consist of:

1. A general statement of the internship. Forms are available from the Department secretary.
2. An outline of a plan and methodology necessary to perform the internship.
3. A description of how their internship is related (or, if it is not, why not) to the work of the external agency.
4. The signature of their agency supervisor agreeing to the preliminary description.

(c) Upon completion of the Field Experience, the student will make an oral presentation before an open meeting of the faculty and students of approximately 15 to 30 minutes summarizing all of the item contained in the written report as listed below.

(d) The final written report should consist of:

1. The student's resume and the name of the agency, address and name(s) of immediate supervisor(s).

2. Introduction and Statement of the Field Experience.

a. A brief presentation of relevant background information concerned with the proposed intern project.

b. Statement of purpose of the project.

3. Materials and Methods

A description of the tasks, procedures, experimental design, etc. of the project written in a style that a non-specialist can be expected to understand.

4. Bibliography

A list of references pertinent to the work described in sections 2 and 3.

5. Significance of the work in context of the agency.

6. Your recommendations and/or comments.

7. A letter from the field supervisor evaluating the performance of the student.

Assessment:

The primary goal of Field Experience is to provide students with "real world" experience as environmental professional. The extent to which a student meets that goal will have a significant effect on a student's final grade. Students must be aware that the judgment of field supervisors, who are not compensated for the role they play in this course, are critical in the overall evaluation of a student's performance in Field Experience. While the written and oral presentations are a factor in the determination of the final grade, negative reports from the field may result in an unsatisfactory or even failing grade. It is the responsibility of the student to report to the faculty supervisor any problems or difficulties they may encounter during the conduct of a Field Experience.