

# FIELD EXPERIENCES AND INTERNSHIPS

The Department of Environmental Studies places a high value on experiential education and applied learning. We strongly encourage students to engage in **internships, service learning, field research, or study abroad** as an integral part of their undergraduate education.

**ENVR 391 is the field experience course for the Environmental Studies major.** Students participate in a self-designed field project or internship for a non-profit or government organization. It is planned by the student, in cooperation with the Field Experience Coordinator and Site Supervisor, and may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid, on campus or off-site. ENVR 391 can be completed in the fall, spring or summer semester.

This is a structured educational work experience for which you receive academic credit. Students must complete a total of four credits (160 hours) to satisfy the skills requirement for the major/minor. As a service-learning project, the field project provides students with hands-on experience in the environmental field while providing service to the organization where they work. Students will reflect on the relationship between their academic and field experiences as well as the application of these experiences to possible future careers.

- Gain valuable hands-on experience in the environmental field
- Explore human-environment interactions and develop an understanding of contemporary environmental issues
- Enhance critical thinking and communication skills through field experiences

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## **SIX STEPS FOR COMPLETING ENVR 391 (FIELD PROJECT)**

### **1) LINE UP AN INTERNSHIP / FIELD EXPERIENCE**

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**Students are responsible for researching, applying for, and securing an approved field experience or internship. The Field Experience Coordinator is here to help.**

Environmental Studies students have completed field experiences and internships from the North Country to Alaska, with public agencies in the Adirondacks and non-profit organizations in Washington DC. Student field experiences and internships have spanned across several Environmental areas including but not limited to:

- Natural Resource Conservation
- Parks and Recreation
- Environmental Policy and Planning
- Education and Communication
- Sustainability
- Environmental Science

[View Stories from the Field](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/AAS/EnvrStudies/internships/stories)

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### **Helpful Resources**

[Job / Internship Search Site Resources](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/AAS/EnvrStudies/internships/jobsearchsites)

<http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/AAS/EnvrStudies/internships/jobsearchsites>

## **2) PREPARE THE "INTERNSHIP / FIELD EXPERIENCE PROPOSAL"**

**The "Internship/Field Experience Proposal" is to be completed after you have secured an approved position. Discuss your plans with the Field Experience Coordinator.**

Use the format in the document below to complete the proposal, then submit a draft to the Coordinator. You will get feedback and comments on the draft. Then consult with your field supervisor and complete a final proposal. Submit a copy of the final "Internship / Field Experience Proposal" to the Coordinator.

## **3) REPORT AN INTERNSHIP FOR CREDIT THROUGH APPLIED LEARNING**

**Once the Final Proposal is approved, you will then report the internship to the Center For Applied Learning using the online Bear Tracker form.**

The online form includes information on items such as your internship site, site supervisor, faculty sponsor, learning objectives, and contact information (see Bear Tracker Info document for a list of the info you will need before going online to complete the form).

Information on how to access the online form and to "Report an Internship for Credit on BearTracker" is explained on the Center for Applied Learning website

Grants and Scholarships are also available, particularly unpaid internships. See the Applied Learning Site for info, or discuss with the Field Experience Coordinator.

## **4) COORDINATOR REGISTERS STUDENT FOR ENVR 391 (4 cr)**

**ENVR 391 is a 4 credit "Skills" options for the Environmental Studies major or minor.**

Once your Proposal is finalized and you have completed the Internship Information on BearTracker, The Field Experience Coordinator will contact the Registrar to register each student for the appropriate ENVR 391 section (4 credits, Internship Paid or Internship Unpaid). Note that the course can be taken for up to 6 credits with permission.

## **5) COMPLETE YOUR INTERNSHIP / FIELD EXPERIENCE**

**This is the time you actually complete your internship / field experience. Each student will participate in a self-designed 160 hour feild project and meet common class requiements. It is intended that this service-learning project will provide students with hands-on experience in the environmental field.**

**INTERNSHIP SITE:** The organization providing the internship opportunity.

**SITE SUPERVISOR** directly oversees the work you are doing, which is usually off-campus. The site supervisor is immediately responsible for the intern and his/her performance. You will

be completing the duties as required by the organization you are working with, as outlined in the Field Project Proposal.

**SUPERVISOR EVALUATION:** The SUNY Potsdam Experiential Education Director, Toby White, is in charge of coordinating all internships. His office will contact the site supervisor for an evaluation at the completion of your internship/field experience. This evaluation will be shared with the Instructor.

**FACULTY SPONSOR** oversees the academic component of the internship/field experience. The faculty sponsor, Bill Brown, awards a grade and credit for the completed internship based on the student's performance and completion of assignments. To provide evaluation and reflection, you will be completing the required academic component during the experience.

**NOTE:** During the Internship/Field Experience we do not meet as a class, however, you are required to maintain regular contact with the ENVR 391 faculty sponsor.

## **6) COMPLETE EVALUATION AND REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS**

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**Triple-Entry Reflective Journal** During the Internship / Field Experience students must keep a regular, dated, triple-entry journal that documents their observations of the work, environmental setting, and professional interactions at their field setting. A triple-entry journal includes observation-reflection-application. Recommended Field Journal: "Rite-in-the-Rain" All-weather Journal No.390; 4 3/4 x 7 1/2; 160 pg Note: While a physical field journal is recommended, students have the option of keeping an electronic field journal if they chose.

**Reading** Students will select a book appropriate to their particular field experience and area of study to read as part of the academic learning for the field project, then write a "Book Review". The idea of a professional book review is to give your critical analysis of the book.

**Field Experience Reflective Paper** Students will write an eight page paper about their field experience. The reflective paper will detail your experience, share stories, and describe how you met your learning objectives. The paper should also include the challenges you faced, and how you will apply the experience to future academic and non-academic life.

**Field Project: Materials and Photos for ES Webpage** Students prepare materials that capture the field experience and allows it to be shared with other Environmental Studies majors and the Campus community on the Environmental Studies webpage.

## **FIELD EXPERIENCE/INTERNSHIP PROPOSAL**

Approval of the Final "Field Experience / Internship Proposal" is required before completing the "Field Experience / Internship Learning Agreement" and Registering for ENVR 391.

***\*Please use the format below to complete the proposal – be sure to use the same numbering, headings and subheadings.***

**Field Experience / Internship Proposal**  
**Position, Organization**  
Environmental Studies Field Project (ENVR 391)  
Your Name, Date

## I. INTRODUCTION

- **Overview**  
Present your plan for the proposed field experience / internship.
- **Relation to Environmental Studies Major**  
Describe in detail how the proposed field project relates to your environmental studies major and associated minor. What is the importance of the work? How does it relate to your curriculum?

## II. ACADEMIC INFORMATION

- **Field of Study: Background Information**  
This is to provide, in one or two paragraphs, the general academic background to the field project you will be completing. You should be familiar with general terms and key concepts that are relevant to particular field you propose to work in for the project (e.g. for working with an organization in environmental planning, you might discuss “smart growth”, “economic development”, or “climate action plans”).
- **Learning Objectives**  
Establish 4 learning objectives for this field project. List them 1,2,3 etc. These objectives address what you hope to gain from the field project. What will you know or be able to do at the end that you don’t know or can’t do now? What are the specific outcomes intended? What do you intend to learn and do for credit during this experience?

## III. FIELD PROJECT and SITE INFORMATION

- **Detailed Description of Duties**  
Describe in detail what you will be doing for the field project (Keep in mind 70/30 Rule – 70% of field project duties should include skills related to your environmental studies, 30% can be other general duties).
- **Link to Objectives**  
How is each learning objective and project goal to be accomplished? This is to ensure that your duties you’re your objectives correspond. List each 1,2,3 etc from above. Provide as much detail as possible linking specific duties to each learning objective project goal.
- **Contact Hours**  
Starting and ending dates for the field project. How many hours per week will you be working on the site. Be sure to include how many total hours for the project (this is needed to calculate credits). Additional info may include schedule of days of the week and times during the day you will be working.
- **Training and Mentoring**  
Who will your site supervisor be, and when will you meet with your supervisor during the project? Describe training and professional development opportunities.
- **Transferable Skills**  
Describe what transferable skills you hope to develop by completing this field project.

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## IV. EVALUATION and REFLECTION

- Explain how you will demonstrate the degree to which you were successful in meeting your learning objectives.
- **Reflective Journal**  
During the Internship / Field Experience students must keep a regular, dated, triple-entry journal that documents their observations of the work, environmental setting, and professional interactions at their field setting. A triple-entry journal includes observation-reflection-application.
  - **Reading**  
Identify a book appropriate to your particular field experience and area of study to read as part of the academic learning for the field project, then write a "Book Review".
  - **Final Paper**  
Students will write a six page, double spaced paper about their field experience. The paper will detail how you met your learning objectives for the field project. The paper must include an overview of why you have learned, the challenges you faced and how you overcame them, and how you will apply the experience to future academic and non-academic life.
  - **Photos and Written Materials for Website**  
Students must prepare written materials that captures the field experience and allows it to be shared with other Environmental Studies majors and the Campus community. Specifically, include in your document information for each of three components of the field experience: the organization; the position, and your personal experience. Note that picture and resources should be obtained during the course of your field experience/internship.