

ENS 381: Environmental Studies Internship

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An internship is an applied experience in which the student develops practical skills or knowledge that would not be attainable in a classroom or laboratory environment. Contacts made with professional partners outside of the university will provide students with an invaluable experience meshing academic training with real world problem solving. The internship is an “apprenticeship” in which the student is actively involved in the day-to-day application of their discipline’s paradigms, theories, and methodologies in the working world. The internship must add breadth to the student’s understanding of the discipline. An experience in which a student only filed paperwork and washed glassware at an environmental consulting firm for 4 weeks would not be considered a valid internship because this experience does not deepen the students understanding of the real-world application of environmental paradigms, practices, or problem-solving approaches.

ENS 381 is an academic experience and so it differs substantially from a summer job or volunteer position in a student’s major. Internship experiences require pre-planning, prior preparation, and daily reflection during the course of the internship. The search for a suitable internship position in consultation with an Environmental Studies faculty member and the application process are part of the experience. Internships are designed to accomplish a specific set of learning goals and objectives agreed upon by the student and faculty internship sponsor (a set of more general goals and learning objectives are listed below). Interns keep a daily reflective log that documents their work each day and comments upon how it relates to their knowledge of the field to date and their future careers. Interns also must give a poster presentation on their internship experience at an Environmental Studies Internship event. Finally, a brief personal growth essay is required of all interns that comments upon their personal and professional development during the course of their internship. The final grade is determined from all of these requirements and the assessment of the on-site internship supervisor.

Internships (ENS 381) provide experiential opportunities during the regular semesters, winter term, and summer. Internships may be full- or part-time experiences and they may or may not be paid experiences. Each semester hour of internship credit corresponds to a minimum of 40 hours of on-the-job experience. Consequently, a student would have to work full-time for 4 weeks to log enough on-the-job experience for 4 semester hours of credit. For students completing the B.A. degree, the Environmental Studies Department’s experiential requirement is satisfied with a 1-credit internship (40 hours of on-the-job experience). Students completing a B.S. degree (Environmental Studies major or Environmental and Ecological Science major) may enroll in a 2 s.h. internship (80 hours) or 2 s.h. of undergraduate research (ENS 499).

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COURSE GOALS

- Experience the day-to-day working routine of an environmental professional
- Apply your academic knowledge to real-world problems and develop a better understanding of the utility of the paradigms, theories and approaches acquired in the classroom
- Develop personal insight into your own strengths and weaknesses that qualify you for a particular area of the environmental profession
- Develop professional contacts and relationships within the environmental profession

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Learn how to search for, apply to, and compete for a professional environmental position.
- Gain familiarity with the state-of-the-art or state-of-the-industry practices, technologies, and instrumentation used by today's environmental professionals.
- Enhance your social and technical skills to work as an effective team member in a non-profit or for-profit environmental organization/company.
- Develop the daily habit of reflection on your activities and their effect on your professional development.
- Cope with the day-to-day challenges and expectations of environmental professionals
- Develop a professional presentation describing the internship experience.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

The eligibility requirements of an internship are:

- Sophomore, junior or senior standing (students who wish to complete an internship during the freshman year must petition the Environmental Studies Department Chair for permission)
- minimum GPA of 2.0
- approval of the full-time faculty member supervising the internship

GRADING:

The specific grading criteria for an internship may be individualized for each experience at the discretion of the faculty mentor. The specific grading criteria will be discussed and clearly stated on the Experiential Education Form/Contract which is signed by the student intern and the faculty mentor. The Experiential Education Registration Form/Contract can be obtained at the Career Services office. The internship must be defined and agreed upon by all partners PRIOR to the start of the experience. It is the responsibility of the faculty sponsor to maintain communication with the student's on-site supervisor throughout the course of the internship. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain communication with the faculty sponsor back on campus. Typically, the minimal requirements for an Environmental Studies Internship (ENS 481) will include:

- A journal with daily entries throughout the period of the internship. The first entry is made prior to starting the experience and should be a substantial, reflective assessment of how the internship will facilitate attaining your future career goals. The daily entries must not simply be an account of the day's activities but also include comments relating your activities to your academic experiences at Elon and your career aspirations. Your journal should also document your number of hours of on-the-job experience;
- communications with your faculty sponsor regarding your internship plans, progress, and final assessment. One contact should be made to design the internship experience and complete the Experiential Education Contract prior to starting the internship, additional

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contacts should be made during the course of the internship, and a final contact at the end of the internship experience;

- a formal poster presentation at an Environmental Studies Internship event or other appropriate venue agreed upon by the faculty sponsor and student;
- a personal growth essay written soon after the end of the internship experience. This essay is a reflective assessment of the value of the experience to your development as a professional. It should not be written until you have had time to mull over your feelings and impressions away from the job. It should draw connections with your previous academic experiences and your future career aspirations. It may be written as the last entry in your daily journal if your faculty sponsor permits;
- assessment from the on-site supervisor of the job performance of the intern. The faculty sponsor should communicate with the on-site supervisor at the end of the internship experience; and
- other criteria determined by the faculty sponsor as defined in the Experiential Education Contract.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

“An Elon student’s highest purpose is academic citizenship: giving first attention to learning and reflection, developing intellectually, connecting knowledge and experiences, and upholding Elon’s Academic Honor Code.”¹ Intellectual honesty forms the foundation for all academic disciplines and it is the responsibility of each individual from students to teachers to practitioners to keep that foundation solid.

Elon University’s honor code is based on upholding four fundamental values: honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect. Adherence to these values is expected from students in and out of the classroom, on and off campus and in and out of the country. Breaches of these values will result in an academic or social honor code violation report. In this class, honor code violations that may result in a lowering of your grade or your failure of the class include the following offenses: **plagiarism, lying, cheating, stealing or vandalism, and facilitating academic dishonesty**. Students should be familiar with these policies and should know that while “intent” may be considered in assigning sanctions, it is not a factor in determining responsibility for an offense. Students may learn more about the honor code, including definitions of violations, the process for adjudication and possible sanctions at <http://www.elon.edu/honor>. Students who are uncertain about whether specific behaviors or activities in this class are violations of the honor code should contact the instructor immediately.

Students will be expected to repeat the honor pledge on papers, tests or other assignments as the student’s affirmation that the values have been and will be followed: **“On my honor, I will uphold the values of Elon University: honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect.”**²

Each student should also consult the following sources for assistance in recognizing plagiarism: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html> and/or Charles Lipson’s book *Doing Honest Work in College* which is available in Belk Library. Additional information about citations and attributions can be found at the following web site: <http://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/>

¹Elon’s Academic Message presented in President Leo Lambert’s address to the freshman class during the Fall 2000 New Student/Parent Convocation, August 26, 2000.