ENVS 191 / ENVS 291 Environmental Practicum Guidelines

ENVS 191 and ENVS 291 are Environmental Studies course numbers for a practicum that may be in the form of independent research, supervised field studies, apprenticeships, internships and academic projects. It may also be used as a mechanism to take an existing course at a higher level (ex. 095 as 191 or 195 as 291.) ENVS 191 is for activities done at the intermediate level. ENVS 291 is for senior or advanced level activities. The Environmental Program places a high value on experiential education and we encourage our students to engage in such experiences as an integral part of their undergraduate education. You may earn a minimum of a 0.5 credit to a maximum of 9 credits in either course in a single semester or for a single project. We expect a minimum of 50 hours of effort for each credit hour earned. No more than 20 percent of the 50 hours may be non-intellectual labor work (i.e., weeding farm beds.) You may design and enroll in more than one ENVS 191 or 291 experience to earn credits toward your ENVS degree. ENVS 291 is also acceptable for graduate credit toward advanced degrees.

CHOOSING a PRACTICUM and PLANNING CREDIT

A student considering an independent study should understand that it is up to the student to design the idea for the practicum. Much preliminary planning and preparation is required before enrollment is approved. The environmental Program insists on rigor, self initiative and quality for individualized studies. Credit is not granted for the ENVS 191 or 291 activity in and of itself, but for the learning that results from all aspects of the activity. To receive ENVS 191 or 291 credit, the activity must have a significant environmental component. The student should consider and plan what level of time commitment, and therefore credit request, is realistic for their semester schedule. Before registering for ENVS 191/291 the student must establish a Faculty Sponsor, a Practicum Supervisor, develop a project plan and have a signed learning contract. This includes students wishing to take an existing course at a higher level. Credit will not be administered for practicum work completed without a prior approved project plan and learning contract in place.

LEARNING CONTRACT and SUPERVISION

In planning and carrying out your ENVS 191/291 practicum, you will be responsible to both your Practicum Supervisor and your Faculty Sponsor. You may consult with Environmental Program faculty and staff to find a suitable Faculty Sponsor. The Student, Faculty Sponsor, Practicum Supervisor, and Course Coordinator must sign the Learning Contract (see page 3) indicating final approval and consensus of the Project Plan before it is formally approved.

- The ENVS Faculty Sponsor oversees the practicum learning experience from proposal to evaluation, making sure the activity is academically sound and appropriate to the student’s capacities. This person must be a full-time ENVS faculty member. Students are encouraged to choose a faculty sponsor who knows the most about the activity and check in with them throughout their practicum experience. It may be suitable to create a schedule of check-in dates throughout the practicum process. Upon final review, the Faculty Sponsor will assign a grade based on your final reflection paper.

- The Practicum Supervisor directly oversees the work of the student and is often someone off-campus or from another university department. The Practicum Supervisor is asked to complete a grade report based on the work completed during the practicum process (you do not need to send them your final reflection paper). If you are doing a practicum with an full-time ENVS faculty member they may act as your Practicum Supervisor and your Faculty Sponsor.

- The ENVS Course Coordinator is available to answer questions regarding the practicum process, but generally will have little direct involvement with the student. The Course Coordinator is responsible for overall administration of ENVS 191 and ENVS 291, assuring that project plans and grades are properly submitted for those enrolled. They will receive grade reports from the Faculty Sponsor and the Practicum Supervisor and communicate with students as practicum end dates approach.

PROJECT PLAN

The project plan should be written with attention to proper grammar and spelling, good organization and quality writing. It is to be written in consultation with the Faculty Sponsor and Practicum Supervisor and submitted to your Faculty Sponsor and Course Coordinator with a cover sheet to include the following elements:

- Title of practicum
- Name of the organization (if applicable)
- Your name
- The Date
- Number of credits requested
- Faculty Sponsor’s name
- Practicum Supervisor’s name
- Estimated start and end dates of practicum


- **Justification**
  The project justification should state your practicum’s purpose and rationale. Why are you choosing to do a practicum and why this particular project? What is the importance of the work; how does it relate to your curriculum? Be sure to identify the site location and primary project supervisor’s name and title. Identify if and how practicum credits can fulfill a requirement for your major or concentration. Indicate the number of credits you are requesting as well as the number of hours you intend to work. Include a projected weekly work schedule, the semester(s) in which credits will be enrolled, and the semester the work will be completed. For example, you may complete the work of an internship over the summer but wish you receive credit in the following fall semester.

- **Learning Objectives**
  List each learning objective as a bulleted item with specific methods for successful completion below each one. What do you hope to learn or gain from this project? What will you know, or be able to do, at the end that you don't know, or can't do now? i.e skills and knowledge gained. How will you demonstrate the degree to which you were successful in meeting your learning objectives.

- **Project Goals**
  List each project goal as a bulleted item with specific methods for successful completion below each one. What are the specific tasks to be completed throughout this practicum? What are the specific outcomes intended? What will you do for this activity? You may wish to include the internship description as written by the organization, company, non-profit etc. Your project goal outcomes may be directly associated with achieving a certain learning objective.

- **Methods**
  State exactly what you expect to be doing. How is each learning objective and project goal to be accomplished? How will you learn what you want to learn and do what you intend to do? Provide as much detail as possible, linking specific methods to each learning objective and project goal. We recommend keeping a journal/log of your activities during the practicum to keep track of your hours, activities and learning and to help you review your experience when the time comes to write your final reflection paper. Define the exact time frame of the experience and the number of hours per week you will be engaged. Describe your anticipated timeline for meetings with supervisors and submission of final products and evaluation.

**Courses taken at a higher level for ENVS 191/291 credit** need not write a full project plan. Include the course syllabus, a written explanation and description of the additional assignments, or higher level work to be completed to achieve the higher level course credit. Upon completion, a final reflection paper will not be necessary, only a grade report from the course professor.

**APPROVAL and ENROLLMENT**
The project plan, complete with a signed learning contract, must be submitted to the Course Coordinator before enrollment in ENVS 191/291. Provide a copy of the signed contract to your Practicum Supervisor, your Faculty Sponsor, and the Course Coordinator, so all individuals have documentation of the agreement. You may enroll in ENVS 191 or 291 at any point in the semester once approval has been granted.

**FINAL REFLECTION**
At the conclusion of the practicum we require a final reflection paper as a culmination of your completed activity. The reflection should include a description of your activities and the time spent completing them. Describe the degree to which you were successful in meeting your learning objectives and project goals. If they changed over the course of the experience, explain why. If your project goals included generating products, please describe and include them in an Appendix. Finally, this reflection should “dive deep” into your experience. How did it impact you? What did you gain from the experience? What was the meaning of this work for you? What did you learn about yourself and about this field of work? How does it help you consider your future plans/goals? The reflection paper for a 3-credit practicum experience should be between 5-7 pages and sent to the Course Coordinator and Faculty Sponsor. You do not need to send your final reflection to your Practicum Supervisor unless you wish to do so.

**GRADES and EVALUATION**
After your activity is finished, you will provide a grade report (found on the website or on paper at Bittersweet) to both the Practicum Supervisor and the Faculty Sponsor to be completed and returned to the Course Coordinator by email or hard copy. The grade report from your Faculty Sponsor will be based on your final reflection, your communication throughout your practicum, your general efforts and engagement throughout the process, and the degree of learning achieved during the practicum. Your Practicum Supervisor will submit a grade report based on their experience working with you and the quality of your practicum work. The Course Coordinator will post your final grade, determined by an average of the grade reports from your Practicum Supervisor and Faculty Sponsor. Copies of the final reflection, any products and grade reports are to be submitted to the Course Coordinator to be retained by the Environmental Program in your student file.
ENVS 191 AND ENVS 291 LEARNING CONTRACT

**STUDENT**
I have read the requirements for enrollment in ENVS 191 or 291. I understand what is expected of me.

Student name ____________________________ UVM ID# and NetID: ____________________________

Number of credits requested _______ For semester/year _________ Projected start and end dates ____________

Student Signature________________________________________ Date _______________________

**PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR**
I agree to serve as the Practicum Supervisor of the above named student as described in the attached Project Plan. I have read and understand the plan; I assess the planned work to be realistic. I agree to provide guidance and direction for the student and to be available should difficulties arise. At the conclusion of the project, as described in the Project Plan, I will complete a grade report to evaluate the work and determine the extent to which the learning and project objectives were reached. I will forward my grade report to the Course Coordinator. I understand what is expected of me.

Practicum Supervisor name_________________________ Title ________________

Practicum Supervisor E-mail ____________________________

Projected start & end dates __________________________ Hours per week _______ Anticipated total hours of work _______

Practicum Supervisor Signature________________________________________ Date ____________

**FACULTY SPONSOR**
I agree to be the Faculty Sponsor of the above named student as described in the attached Project Plan. I have read and understand the plan; I assess the planned work to be realistic and to confirm with UVM guidelines for Independent Study. I agree to provide guidance for the student and to be available should difficulties arise. At the conclusion of the project, as described in the Project Plan, I will complete a grade report based on my evaluation of the final reflection and determine the extent to which the learning and project objectives were reached. I will forward the grade report to the Course Coordinator. I understand what is expected of me.

Faculty Sponsor name ____________________________________________

Faculty Sponsor signature________________________________________ Date ____________

**COURSE COORDINATOR**
The above named student has permission to enroll in [ENVS-191] [ENVS-291] for _______ credits according to the terms of the attached Project Plan.

Course coordinator name ____________________________________________

Signature of Course Coordinator________________________ Date ____________