

The Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources Internship Program

Guidelines for Faculty and Employer Sponsors

Natural Resources Internship Program is designed to assist students in identifying, securing, and successfully completing an internship. Your involvement, as a Faculty Sponsor or an employer sponsor, is essential to the success of this program and your continued support of the program is greatly appreciated.

Relevant experience is critical if our students are to be competitive in today's job market. Internships are an excellent way for them to get that valuable experience. Internship experience is important for all majors, and students are strongly encouraged to incorporate 3-6 credits of internship experience when planning their curriculum. Our goal is to develop a program that provides meaningful internship experiences while maintaining the high standards of academic quality associated with the University of Vermont.

To achieve these goals, the following points are key if we are to succeed:

- Development of a learning contract that accurately reflects the responsibilities of all parties to the contract.
- Strong communication between all parties to insure that contract agreements are being met.
- Preparation of students to maximize their marketability through creation of their resume, development of interviewing techniques, and other job search skills.
- Consistency and equality in the granting of credits, as well as in the expectations for the completion of internships.
- Evaluation of the internship experience to insure the continuation of quality internship placements.

Internship postings and full-time job listings are available to students on both The Rubenstein School's Job Board located in the Aiken Center and on the Home Page located at: www.uvm.edu/envnr. Through this website, students can also access the web pages of many environmental organizations to learn more about their specific internship and job openings.

Questions? Contact Marie Vea-Fagnant at (802) 656-3003.

LEARNING CONTRACT

Each intern seeking academic credit for an internship must complete a Learning Contract that clearly outlines the responsibilities of the student, employer sponsor, Faculty Sponsor, and the Career Services Coordinator. The purpose of this contract is to insure that all parties clearly understand their commitments and the expectations of the internship. It is essential that the Learning Contract be developed before the internship begins. The Learning Contract includes these components:

- Information identifying the student and employing organization.
- Position responsibilities and a description of the supervision and training to be provided.
- Student-described learning objectives that identify the accomplishments the student plans to achieve during the internship.
- Contract requirements as developed by the student and the Faculty Sponsor. These requirements must include the internship hours necessary for the credits planned, and tasks required of the intern to complete the internship and receive a letter grade. Deadline dates should also be included.
- Signatures are required from the student, the employer sponsor, the Faculty Sponsor, and the Career Services Coordinator.

Once completed, the contract should be returned to Marie Vea-Fagnant, the Career Services Coordinator, who will finalize arrangements and provide each party a copy of the contract.

FACULTY SPONSOR

The Faculty Sponsor will work closely with the student and the Career Services Coordinator to develop the Learning Contract. The contract requirements should be clearly defined so that the student knows exactly what is required for the successful completion of the internship.

The requirements (in addition to the total hours for the credits planned) might include keeping a journal of activities related to the internship, field notes, the writing of a specified number of papers, the completion of a project, a classroom presentation, or perhaps the preparation of a photo portfolio about the internship that can be reviewed by other interns. Where applicable, deadlines should be established for submission of completed work.

It is important that the requirements be equitable and that the completion of the assigned tasks be closely monitored. The Faculty Sponsor's role is critical in maintaining the high quality program we envision.

Use the Guidelines for Academic Credit in this brochure as a basis for determining the credits to be awarded for an internship. A letter grade will be awarded by the Faculty Sponsor once the contract requirements are met. It is suggested that the Faculty Sponsor request feedback from the employer sponsor regarding the intern's performance when determining the grade.

Communication between all parties to the contract throughout the internship is vital to its success. Contact the Career Services Coordinator if you would like to discuss any issues related to the development of the Learning Contract or an internship in progress.

EMPLOYER SPONSOR

Working with the student and the Career Services Coordinator, the employer sponsor identifies the internship project and defines the responsibilities of the student during the internship placement. These responsibilities are listed on the Learning Contract along with a description of the supervision structure and any training to be provided by the organization.

It is the employer's responsibility to:

- Develop a challenging, meaningful internship opportunity that will both fulfill a need for your organization and provide an educational experience for the intern.
- Provide supervision and guidance for the intern so they may put their knowledge and skills to work - developing skills, refining techniques, or learning new processes.
- Monitor the progress of the intern throughout the internship to insure that the learning objectives and the contract requirements are being met.
- Evaluate the intern and provide positive suggestions for future professional growth.
- The employer will work with the intern to complete and submit a Supervisor Evaluation at the end of the internship

A well-planned internship can be a valuable asset to your organization. Communication between the employer sponsor, Faculty Sponsor, and the Career Services Coordinator during the internship is very important. Successful internships result from a partnership of all parties in which communication is the key link.

CAREER SERVICES COORDINATOR

The Career Services Coordinator will work with all parties involved in developing, finalizing, and evaluating the internship. Potential internships will be developed with local, national and international employers in government, corporate, private sector and nonprofit organizations.

Working directly with individual students, the Coordinator will help develop resumes and cover letters to provide a professional presentation of the student to potential employers. Research strategies for internships will also be developed.

Once an internship has been identified and the employer sponsor portion of the contract is completed, the Career Services Coordinator will work with the student and Faculty Sponsor, as needed, to develop the learning objectives and contract requirements for the contract.

When the Learning Contract is completed, the Coordinator will finalize all arrangements and will communicate with all parties involved to insure that everything is in order for the internship.

If you have any questions regarding the internship process, or would like to discuss the development of the internship, please contact:

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The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources
The University of Vermont
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Burlington, Vermont 05405
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INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Environmental Science majors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who are in good academic standing will be considered for internship placement. Generally, students should have completed their sophomore year, and have demonstrated motivation, dependability, and a willingness to accept responsibility.

Students wishing to obtain an internship must meet with the Career Services Coordinator to initiate the process. At this time, a resume will be developed and job search strategies will be formulated. Once an internship opportunity is identified, the student must work with a Faculty Sponsor to develop the learning objectives and requirements of the Learning Contract.

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTING ACADEMIC CREDIT

Internships may be paid or unpaid, but if a Learning Contract is established, credit will be granted for the internship. The general time commitment for credits to be granted is:

- 3 credits.....150 total hours
- 4 credits.....200 total hours
- 5 credits.....250 total hours
- 6 credits.....300 total hours

The maximum credits granted for one internship is 6 credits (even if the hourly commitment exceeds 300 hours). In addition to the hours performed, the intern must complete the contract requirements as specified in the Learning Contract. The Faculty Sponsor will assign a grade upon satisfactory completion of the Learning Contract requirements.