

ENVS-191 and ENVS-291

ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICUM

ENVS-191 and ENVS-291 are the Environmental Program's course numbers for independent research, supervised field studies, and internship and practicum projects. ENVS-191 is for activities done at the intermediate level; ENVS-291 is for senior level activities.

PLANNING

The University guidelines for independent studies are clearly detailed in The University of Vermont Catalogue. Any student considering independent studies at the University of Vermont must be thoroughly familiar with these guidelines.

The Environmental Program places a high value on experiential education and encourages its students to engage in such experiences as an integral part of their undergraduate education. Thus, it is pleased to enroll students in ENVS-191 and 291 and offer assistance wherever possible. The Environmental Program insists on rigor and quality for individualized studies. Each student should expect no less preparation by her/himself than would be expected of a professor in developing a traditional course. The onus is on you, the student, to carefully initiate and prepare your independent study.

It is imperative that a student thinking of undertaking an independent study clearly understand that:

- > It is up to the student to come up with the idea for the research, field study, practicum, etc.
- > Much preliminary groundwork in planning and preparing for the activity is required before enrollment is approved. Often several weeks of preparation are necessary. The planning usually is initiated during the semester or summer prior to enrollment.
- > Much more self-initiative and responsibility is required of the student than is expected in most traditional courses.
- > Grading standards will be higher and work loads greater than traditional courses.
- > Credit is not granted for the ENVS-191 or 291 experience in and of itself but for the learning growing out of and resulting from all aspects of the activity.
- > It is the student's responsibility to insure in advance that all library, research, facility, and other necessary resources for completion of the study are readily available.
- > To receive ENVS-191 or 219 credit, the planned activity must have a significant environmental component; ENVS-191 or 291 is not for projects better done in other departments, nor is it an automatic "course of last resort" for projects unaccepted in other departments.

SUPERVISION

Several persons are involved with any ENVS-191 or 291 enrollment:

- the student
- the student's academic advisor
- a Faculty Supervisor (sometimes called "sponsor")
- a Practicum Supervisor (sometimes the same person as the Faculty Supervisor)
- the ENVS-191/291 Course Coordinator

The student's ACADEMIC ADVISOR assists the student in locating a suitable Faculty Supervisor and determines the appropriateness of an independent study in the student's curriculum. An advisor's approval, as always, is required for any course enrollment.

No student may enroll in ENVS-191 or 291 without obtaining a FACULTY SUPERVISOR. The Faculty Supervisor oversees the entire practicum learning experience, makes sure the activity is academically sound, offers assistance (as agreed upon by the Faculty Supervisor and student prior to enrollment), evaluates the practicum, and submits a course grade to the Course Coordinator. Except in very exceptional circumstances the Faculty Supervisor is a member of the Environmental Program faculty.

The PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR directly oversees the work being done, and is often someone off-campus, or from another university department. The Practicum Supervisor may provide an evaluation or grade which is passed on to the Faculty Supervisor. The Practicum Supervisor and the Faculty Supervisor can be the same person.

The ENVS-191/291 COURSE COORDINATOR typically has no direct involvement with the student or study. The Course Coordinator is responsible for overall administration of ENVS-191 and ENVS-291, seeing that project plans are properly submitted, grades are sent to the registrar, etc.

ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll in ENVS-191 or ENVS-291 approval must be granted. It will be granted only if the above considerations and the following requirements are met:

- ✓ A suitable faculty member, one who can assist in overseeing the activity from both educational and academic aspects, must be found who will agree to serve as the Faculty Supervisor.
- ✓ A detailed project plan must be approved. This word-processed plan of at least 4-8 pages includes the sections listed below.

PROJECT PLAN

The Project Plan contains at least:

- I. The *project title*
- II. A statement of *justification*
Why are you choosing to do an independent study and why this particular project? What is the importance of the work; how does it relate to your curriculum?

- III. A clear and complete statement of *learning objectives*
What do you hope to gain from this project? What will you know or be able to do at the end of the project that you don't know or can't do now?
- Be specific as possible. At the same time be aware that one of the joys of independent study is serendipitous, unexpected learning.
- IV. A clear and complete statement of *project goals*
What are the end products of the project? How will you know when the activity is complete? In what ways will you know the work is successful?
- V. A concise statement of the *methods*
State in detail exactly what you expect to be doing. How is each learning objective and each project goal to be accomplished?
- This section needs the detail and precision of a cookbook!
- VI. A means of *evaluation*
How will you be able to convince yourself, another student, your Faculty Supervisor, the Course Coordinator, the Provost, a UVM Trustee, or anyone else who might be interested, of the degree to which you were successful in meeting your learning objectives?
- State who will do your evaluation. Typically it is the Practicum Supervisor along with the Faculty Supervisor.
- VII. A description of the *final product*
A final product is necessary that, at the barest minimum, documents the work done. It should clearly demonstrate the achievement of both learning and project goals. The university catalogue requires that completed materials are to be retained by the Environmental Program.
- VIII. A *time frame*
Include in this calendar a time plan for all aspects of the activity, including dates for meetings with the Practicum and Faculty Supervisors, and the submission of final products, evaluations, and grade.
- IX. *Number of credits* requested, and justification
To determine your activity's credit hour worth, compare what you anticipate learning and the amount of time you'll be spending with the learning and time associated with typical courses. The minimum expectation is 45 hours of endeavor per credit hour. Determine the number of credits with your Faculty Supervisor.

APPROVAL

The project plan, complete with the Faculty Supervisor's approval signature, must be submitted to the Course Coordinator for final approval before enrollment.

Students who register in ENVS-191 or 291 without all necessary signatures cannot expect that approval will be forthcoming. You will be dropped from ENVS-191 or 291 if not your plan is not approved. Note also, requests to add ENVS-191 or 291 after the add/drop period require dean's approval; some deans are exceedingly reluctant to approve adding independent studies courses after the add/drop period.

Give a copy of the signed plan to your Practicum Supervisor, your Faculty Supervisor, and the Course Coordinator and anyone else concerned; of course keep a copy yourself.

EVALUATION

Each student must meet with their Faculty Supervisor on a timely basis throughout the project. You are encouraged to call upon other knowledgeable persons (other faculty, off-campus experts, etc.) for assistance with various aspects of your activity.

If your activity will extend beyond the end of a semester you may choose to receive an XC as a grade for that semester and receive the letter grade at the conclusion of your work, or you may spread the credits over more than one semester. This should be worked out with your Faculty Supervisor and included in your plan.

If no evaluation is submitted to the Course Coordinator by the end of a grading period, an XC will automatically be given.

The learning objectives stated in your plan form the basis for your grade. Your learning plan states who will grade you. In any case, your Faculty Supervisor makes the final grade determination, sends it to the Course Coordinator, who then sends it to the registrar.

Copies of final products and evaluations are to be retained in the files of the Environmental Program, and are to be submitted to the Course Coordinator.

ENVS-191

APPROVAL CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to see if you have completed all items necessary for your Project Plan.

ITEM	COMPLETED
Learning Plan	
Title	_____
Justification statement	_____
Specific Learning Objectives	_____
Specific Project Goals	_____
Methods to Achieve Learning Objectives	_____
Methods to Achieve Project Goals	_____
The precise way you are to be Evaluated	_____
Description of Final Product (for submission to Env. Prog.)	_____
Time Frame for completion	_____
Credits requested	_____
Justification for credits	_____
Your signature (Signatures go on attached signature form)	_____
Signature of Practicum Supervisor (often the same person as the Faculty Sponsor)	_____
Signature of Faculty Supervisor	_____
Signature of Course Coordinator	_____

ENVS-191 or ENVS-291 CONTRACT

STUDENT

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

Signature of Student

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 evaluate the work and determine the extent to which the learning and project objectives were reached. I will forward my evaluation and a copy of each final product to the Faculty Supervisor.

I understand what is expected of me.

Signature of Practicum Supervisor

Date

FACULTY SUPERVISOR

I agree to be the Faculty 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 and to conform 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 evaluate the work and determine the extent to which the learning and project objectives were reached. Based upon my evaluation and the evaluation of the Practicum Supervisor, I will determine a grade for the student. I will forward the grade, the evaluations, and a copy of any final product to the Course Coordinator.

I understand what is expected of me.

Signature of Faculty Supervisor

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.

Signature of Course Coordinator

Date