The ENVS Senior Capstone Internship:
Thinking Strategically About Your Choices

Much consideration and planning should be involved in designing what you are going to do for your capstone. Take time to read the information in the guidelines for all of the capstone options, and read especially all the forms and links for the capstone internship. Then read through this guidance and answer these questions for yourself as you begin to develop your capstone internship.

SELF-EVALUATION AND ACADEMIC REVIEW

1) It is best if you are excited and highly motivated for your capstone work. Each option has its particular challenges, responsibilities, and benefits. It may be that one capstone option is better for you to pursue for one reason or another. Think through the options and your reasons for choosing a capstone internship.
Why do you feel that the Capstone Internship is the best choice for you out of the three capstone options?

2) Your Capstone Internship should relate well to your ENVS concentration, and the courses you have taken. If you are a Sustainability Studies concentration whose course work has been focused on energy use and renewable energy, an internship on a farm is not an appropriate choice, even if that has become a growing interest and you want some experience with farming.

Given the courses you have taken thus far, or plan to take, what sort(s) of internship are you considering?

3) Think through your past high impact learning experiences from high school, college courses, extracurricular activities, summer jobs, internships, study abroad, service learning, etc.
What particular skills, realms of knowledge and experience do you have to offer as an intern? How could you serve an organization?

Skills:

Knowledge:

Experience:

4) This internship should be at the advanced level and consist of high impact learning opportunities.
What skills, knowledge, and/or experience do you still want or need before you graduate that could come from your internship? What would you want to learn or do as a part of this ENVS 202 experience?
GETTING STARTED
SOME CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE SECURING AN INTERNSHIP

1) It is possible for you to earn credit and get paid for your senior capstone internship. How important is it for you to get a paid internship?

2) You may have previously done an introductory- or intermediate-level internship that could be developed into a more rigorous senior-level internship with increased responsibility and greater reward? Any ideas here to draw from?

3) Timing is an important matter. Consider when you are taking your capstone course. Doing your internship after completing your capstone course is best. Also consider when your course load can accommodate extra work for an internship. Sometimes it’s a practical matter. For example, farming internships are often best done during the summer months, whereas teaching internships are best undertaken during the traditional school year. Is there a particular semester, or time of year, that is best to do your 200 hours of internship work?

4) You may do an internship here in Burlington, or go elsewhere. You might have some flexibility, or constraints, due to housing, transportation, timing, or other considerations. Considering the relatively short nature of this experience, might you be able to live with a friend or relatives to open up your range of possibilities for the location of this internship? Think outside the box for some new, unexplored options. If you could go anywhere, where would you like to intern? What new ideas for location might you pursue? Strategically, where might it be best for you to intern?

5) Consider how an internship could enhance your networking for future employment, grad school, etc. What is your academic or professional trajectory after graduation, and how could this internship assist in realizing those goals?

6) Your senior internship should be enjoyable and inspiring. What kind of work would you most enjoy doing? Inside or Outside? With what sorts of people? Etc…

7) Mentoring and supervision you receive during an internship can be valuable, and even life-changing. It may be that an activity that allows you to test and practice your own decision-making and creativity would be best. Or, you may prefer more structure and guidance. What kind of mentoring would serve you well at this point in your life? Would you thrive in a more structured learning environment, or would a more independent internship be a better fit for you?

8) This capstone internship should be a challenging, interesting, gratifying, and rewarding experience. What would be some very good ideas for organizations and internship activities for you? What would bring the most satisfaction?
SECURING AN INTERNSHIP
HELPFUL GUIDANCE

1) It takes effort to explore possibilities with potential organizations. Rarely does an opportunity simply land in your lap—but it does happen on occasion. Keep your eyes open for those lucky breaks. And, **meet with people** who can help you consider ideas and suggest people, organizations, and possibilities for you to consider: your academic advisor, Career Services staff, Ibit Getchell, faculty members who teach relevant courses, staff members who know about what you would like to do. **Of course, search thoroughly on the internet.**

2) **Network** as much as possible with people whom you know and who know you. Talk through your ideas.

3) **Informational interviewing**, as you did in 151, can be helpful in finding a fitting internship for you.

4) **Research the organization** thoroughly before you interview. Go with a prepared set of questions. Be ready to answer questions of you. Be really clear about what this capstone internship is about. **Do your homework.**

5) **Interview them as they interview you.** Is this where you would want to work, with that person/those people, doing the kinds of work they do?

6) **Be clear about the possibilities** for work with a potential organization. Be sure they know what they are getting into with you. Give your prospective supervisor a copy of the Guidelines for Organization supervisors. Read it yourself.

7) **After you apply and/or interview follow-up. Thank them.** Send an email, make a phone call, keep in touch. Don’t go too long without checking in with your prospective internship supervisor.

8) After you interview **take some time to think through the reality** of working with them for 200 hours in the capacity you have discussed with them.

9) **Keep a number of options on the table.** Even if there is one particular “perfect” internship that you really want, keep pursuing other options.

10) **Examine personalities.** You ought to be working closely with your internship supervisor. As you explore and interview and develop a relationship with your prospective internship supervisor, be sure there is a good match and that you will get along well, with good communication.

11) Just because an organization is interested in having you work with them on a project doesn’t necessarily mean you ought to take that opportunity. **Be discriminating.** Be sure that is what you want to do, and that it fits your ideas about what you want your capstone experience to be.

12) Don’t take the first offer you get just because you need an offer. **Be sure there’s a fit with your ENVS concentration, that there will be rewarding work which you will enjoy and feel confidently challenged by.**

13) When you and your prospective Organization Supervisor come to an agreement that you will be working there, have a discussion about the actual tasks, projects, and learning. **Get really clear with them.** Be sure you can write your proposal with all of the necessary pieces. If you can and need to, ask for adjustments so that you will be as happy, challenged, and rewarded with the situation as you can be, and so that the organization will get the most from the service you provide them. **This should be a mutually beneficial contract.**

14) For your internship **Faculty Supervisor,** choose the ENVS full-time faculty member whose expertise best fits your internship. The **Site Supervisor** should be the person with whom you will work most closely.

15) **Write your proposal and seek approval** from your faculty and site supervisors before you begin your internship work.