

Environmental Studies Department
Procedures for Internships

Why participate in an environmental internship?

At WWC, an alumni survey in 2001 showed that even though 60% of ENS graduates participated in internships, 69.8% of them wished they had participated in more internships. The Environmental Careers Organization published a report in the mid-1990's called Environmental Studies 2000 from a survey of 1,393 environmental studies alumni from 29 U.S colleges. They found that:

- The single most important factor beyond the curriculum for helping environmental studies graduates find environmental employment was experience in an internship.
- 77% of alumni who had paid internships entered the environmental field in their first professional positions compared with 58% without internships
- Twice as many alumni without internships took over a year to obtain their first professional position as those with paid internships
- Alumni who had unpaid internships fared better than those with no internships, but not as well as those with paid internships in both environmental position attainment and length of job search.
- While completion of a senior thesis and projects may prove valuable with individual employers in the job search, they do not offer the same level of benefits in environmental career attainment as internships.
- Only 52% of environmental studies alumni, nationwide, participated in internships.

Where can I find out about internship openings?

- The Environmental Leadership Center in the basement of Sunderland offers several paid summer environmental internships every year. Applications are usually due in December or January for the following summer. Visit the center to find out more information.
- The Career Resources Center has some information on internships.
- The Environmental Careers Organization publishes a weekly green-colored newspaper with listings of internships and job openings. The newspaper is available in the library.

How can I get academic credit for an internship?

An internship is required for concentrations in Environmental Education and Environmental Policy within the ENS major. Course credit can be obtained through ENS 485 Environmental Studies Internship. An internship may be taken for up to 16 credits. In general, for each 40 hours worked in which the student is doing new (as opposed to routine or repetitious) work and there is close supervision, one academic credit can be earned. Thus, a student working eight 40-hour weeks and doing something relatively different each week could earn up to eight semester-hour credits. However, most students choose to register for only 1-2 credits because they already have 16 credit hours in regular classes and do not wish to go over the 18 credit hour maximum.

Schedule of procedures and paperwork:

- Secure an internship and discuss credit with an Environmental Studies faculty member.
- Register for ENS 485 either before the internship or during the next add/drop period.
- Before you start the internship, fill out the learning contract with the help of an ENS faculty member.
- At the end of the experience, the intern should prepare a report as specified by the internship faculty advisor. It should be a summary of the work completed and an analysis of what you learned. The report must be typed. As guideline, aim for 10 double-spaced pages.
- Follow any other requirements specified by the faculty advisor or the requirements of the ENS concentration.