NRM/GEOG 300

The Internship: A Supervised Occupational Experience

Bridging the Gap between the Classroom and the Professional World

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# Internship Quick Reference

## Steps for Setting Up the Internship

1. Determine eligibility.
2. Identify the Cooperating Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor and confirm with them the viability of the internship.
3. Work with Cooperating Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor to develop an Internship Plan.
4. Complete the Application for Internship (including the Internship Plan) and the Permission to Enroll form.
5. Submit the Application for Internship and Permission to Enroll form (with signatures) to the Instructor of Record.
6. Obtain permission to register and register for class.

**NOTE:** All of these steps are completed prior to the start of the internship. All planning must be completed before registration for the semester in which the internship will take place.

NRM/GEOG 300 credit will not be given for work done prior to establishing the internship.

## Steps for Internship Evaluation and Completion

1. Maintain an accurate record of tasks performed and competencies acquired toward the stated benchmarks and objectives in the Internship Plan.
2. If deemed appropriate, arrange a final evaluation meeting to include both supervisors and the intern.
3. Obtain the Cooperating Supervisor’s Evaluation and use this in conjunction with the original Internship Plan and Benchmark Ledger to help prepare the Intern’s Self-Evaluation.
4. Submit to the Faculty Supervisor the Final Internship Report, which consists of:
   - Internship Plan.
   - Benchmark Ledger.
   - Cooperating Supervisor’s Evaluation (with signature).
   - Intern’s Self-Evaluation (with signature).
5. After reviewing the Final Internship Report, the Faculty Supervisor will write his/her evaluation and submit the final grade to the Instructor of Record.
Introduction

NRM/GEOG 300, Internship in Natural Resources Management or Geography, is an opportunity for students in Natural Resources Management and Geography to gain the practical experience, professional skills, and concepts not necessarily addressed in traditional learning settings. It is an apprentice-type experience, much like a structured, supervised occupational experience for which academic credit may be earned. A well-designed internship provides the student intern with opportunities to apply concepts and techniques learned in previously completed coursework to a professional setting.

Many students, having completed an internship, have found it to be a valuable, practical experience. It is an opportunity to apply theories and principles, become aware of possible disparities between theory and practice, observe procedures and operations of agencies or private enterprises, and become better prepared for professional employment. Fundamentally, internships provide pre-employment occupational experience, which many employers require as a prerequisite to permanent hiring.

Becoming actively involved in the internship program is an excellent opportunity for prospective employers to screen the abilities and potential of students within the Natural Resources Management or Geography program. After sponsoring several internships, the sponsoring organization gains perspective into the general quality and capability of NRM/GEOG graduates as it pertains to the function of that particular agency or business. Likewise, SNRAS faculty can gain from maintaining direct contact with the agencies and businesses by updating the curricula to contain the most recent and relevant information in the field.

The objectives of the internship are designed specifically for each student intern, depending upon the topic of the internship and the occupational goals and particular interests of the student. The topic varies with the individual intern and may involve any aspect of Natural Resources Management or Geography.

The internship is designed similarly to an independent study course. Instruction is individualized and aimed at accomplishing established objectives written specifically for that internship experience. The intern is supervised throughout the internship by a Cooperating Supervisor (an appropriate representative of the sponsoring agency or business) and a Faculty Supervisor (a faculty member of SNRAS with expertise related to the specific topic of the internship). Experiences gained during the internship should be practical, emphasizing hands-on and involvement oriented learning.

Internships are structured just like a formal course, with objectives written prior to the experience and the student intern evaluated on how well the objectives were accomplished. Thus, the intern should approach the internship with the same responsible attitude with which any other course is approached. In reality, more individual motivation on the part of the student may be advantageous. Self-discipline and the ability to work independently are prerequisites to experiencing success in the internship.

NRM/GEOG 300 are variable credit courses. The number of credit hours that will be earned by the student intern is established prior to the initiation of the internship. This number ranges from 1-3 credits per semester. Several considerations enter into establishing credit for the internship: current credit hour load, number of contact hours per week the student can realistically complete, amount of time the Cooperating Supervisor can spend with the intern, and the objectives the student intern desires to achieve during the internship.

A minimum of four contact hours per week is recommended per credit hour of internship. Thus, for a three credit hour internship, the student intern should arrange approximately 12 clock hours per week to spend working on the internship. A student may take as many as 6 credit hours of internship, but no more than 3 credits during any given semester. Internships are letter graded.

Some internships are paid positions, while
others are unpaid. These arrangements are made depending on the sponsor's willingness and ability to pay for the services to be rendered by the student intern. The depth of previous experience the student intern brings to the situation may affect whether the position is paid or unpaid. Regardless of whether pay is received or not, the university charges the standard fee per credit hour.

An internship can be a rewarding and beneficial experience. Over the last several years the internship program has grown and opportunities for eligible students to participate have greatly expanded.

**Internship sponsors have included the following:**

- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. National Weather Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources; Division of Agriculture, Division of Land and Water Management, Division of Forestry, Division of Mining, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- University of Alaska Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Cooperative Extension Service, Office of Land Management
- Various Alaska Native corporations
- City of Fairbanks
- Fairbanks North Star Borough

Along with the variety of sponsors, topics of internships have varied as well. The following are some examples:

- A wildlife profile of the Wood River Lands,
- Development of the Central Yukon Plan and the Tanana Basin Area Plan,
- Preparation of timber sales,
- Soil conservation planning,
- Preparation of mining permits, and
- Preparation and analysis of public information.

If you think you are eligible for an internship, talk to your academic advisor. In addition, it may be worth your while to talk to a fellow student who has completed an internship.

**Who is Eligible for an Internship?**

- NRM/GEOG 300 is open to students pursuing either a major or minor degree in Natural Resource Management or Geography.
- The prospective intern must be at least a junior (60 credit hours toward the degree already completed). Exceptions to this rule may be granted upon review of a student’s application for NRM/GEOG 300.
- A prospective intern should have at least a 3.00 GPA and/or be a student in good standing with qualities indicative of the ability to work independently and with self discipline.
- The prospective intern must have career goals and a particular interest associated with the topic of the proposed internship.
- The student must be able to perform well in and benefit from the internship program and fulfill the sponsor's needs.

**What's the First Step?**

Entrance into an internship is by permission of the instructor only. The Application for Internship and Permission to Enroll forms must be completed prior to registering. Students who have not completed these forms and obtained all necessary signatures will not be allowed to register. Permission to enroll is required because the success of the program depends on the careful selection of qualified students, quality internship experiences, and selecting Faculty Supervisors with adequate time and expertise to effectively coordinate the internship.

**Student Intern Responsibilities**

- One of the primary responsibilities of the student is to maintain communication with both the Cooperating Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor to ensure a successful and beneficial internship experience.
Prior to registering for the internship class, you should work with your Cooperating Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor to develop an Internship Plan (see guidelines below). In some cases this may involve acquiring a statement from the Cooperating Supervisor indicating a commitment to the objectives or responsibilities of the proposed internship. For example, some agencies require an official agreement to be signed, which specifically defines the relationship between the agency and the university.

**Internship Plan Guidelines**

The Internship Plan should be a concise presentation of specific objectives (tasks to be carried out, skills to be learned, etc.), job responsibilities, and benchmarks that will be used to determine whether the objectives have been met.

The objectives and responsibilities must be realistic and within the ability of the intern. They should be challenging but not overwhelming.

The objectives and responsibilities should be sequential, with the knowledge and skills learned in one objective applied and built upon the pursuit of subsequent objectives.

Objectives should contain three components to be an effective evaluation factor at the end of the semester. The three components are:

1. **Task**—what the intern is to accomplish.
2. **Condition**—the circumstances under which the objective will be met (e.g. with or without supervision).
3. **Outcome**—the quality the work or degree of competency to be acquired by having accomplished the objective.

The following is an example of an objective used in a previously completed internship:

Assist Forester I or Technician IV in laying out timber sale boundaries and road locations in the field including the measurement and recording of bearings and distances. Perform these skills to the satisfaction of the Forester I or Technician IV in charge.

Design a specific, non-conflicting, schedule for working with the Cooperating Supervisor and meeting periodically with the Faculty Supervisor. This should be agreed upon before the internship starts. These meetings are to determine the progress of the internship and for making any necessary revisions. If deemed appropriate by the supervisors, hours used to confer with the Faculty Supervisor may be included in the total hours worked for the internship.

Maintain an accurate record of the tasks completed and competencies acquired throughout the internship. This record should coincide with projected goals and benchmarks outlined in the Internship Plan.

Submit a Final Internship Report, summarizing what was accomplished, to the Faculty Supervisor prior to the final exam period for the semester. A checklist of topics to address in the final report is included at the end of this handbook.

**Cooperating Supervisor’s Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility of the Cooperating Supervisor is to provide a structured, supervised occupational experience for the student intern, including. Specific responsibilities include:

- Help the student intern develop a set of objectives, job responsibilities, and benchmarks, and ensure that they are appropriate for the internship.
- Ensure that the experience will appropriately address the needs and goals of the student and the business or agency.
- Supervise the student intern. The intern is a student and not an employee in the traditional sense. Thus, specific instruction and direction may be required beyond that which is normally given to regular employees.
- Strive to provide a meaningful learning situation. Individual skills and knowledge brought to the internship will vary from intern to intern; this should be kept in mind in developing the Internship Plan.
- If possible, arrange an opportunity for the intern to become acquainted with the overall function of the agency or business.
• Be available to offer assistance when needed.
• Review as necessary progress reports submitted by the intern for evaluating their own progress toward attaining the established objectives or job responsibilities. The Faculty Supervisor will be available as a consultant in the event that the Cooperating Supervisor identifies concerns with which they are unfamiliar or uncertain.
• Prior to the internship, the Cooperating Supervisor should notify the intern and the Faculty Supervisor if it is necessary to complete a formal agreement for the internship. This should be drawn up and mutually acceptable to all parties involved, and then channeled through the appropriate authorities for approval. This usually involves the Dean for SNRAS and the sponsor’s designee.

**Faculty Supervisor Responsibilities**

The Faculty Supervisor provides the overall coordination for the internship. This involves providing the necessary leadership to promote the instructional aspects of the internship, providing the linkage between SNRAS and the sponsor, making the job of the Cooperating Supervisor as easy as possible. Specific responsibilities include:

• Initially contacts the sponsor prior to the internship, approves the Permission to Enroll form, and coordinates all other activities as deemed appropriate.
• Assists the Cooperating Supervisor and student in the development and writing of realistic objectives and job responsibilities.
• Assists the intern in translating the objectives and job responsibilities into measurable benchmarks to facilitate the evaluation process.
• Arranges for periodic meetings with the student to determine the student’s progress.
• Arranges periodic contact with the Cooperating Supervisor to determine their perspective on the intern’s progress. A committee meeting involving the intern, Cooperating Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor may be arranged, especially if a mid-course change in direction of the internship appears necessary.
• The Faculty Supervisor is ultimately responsible for awarding the final grade for the internship.

**Evaluation of the Internship:**

Evaluation will be based on how well the intern met the objectives and responsibilities specified for the internship. The evaluation is usually completed near the end of the semester.

A meeting with both supervisors and the intern regarding a final evaluation should be arranged. The outcome of this meeting is specified in the Final Internship Report.

Once the intern’s Final Internship Report has been completed and submitted to the Faculty Supervisor, the internship is completed. The Faculty Supervisor should then notify the instructor of record for NRM/GEOG 300, who will submit the final grade.

**Initiating an Internship**

**Student-initiated:** The student may consult with their academic advisor or other member of the teaching faculty. The student and faculty work together to contact a given agency or business and investigate the possibility of creating an internship.

**Faculty-initiated:** A faculty member in SNRAS may arrange an internship through an agency or business. Specifications for the internship are drawn up and an announcement for application is circulated to students.

**Sponsor-initiated:** An agency or business that has expressed an interest in providing an internship may contact faculty members. A job description is prepared, approved for its instructional value, and circulated for application by students.
## APPLICATION FOR INTERNSHIP

**NRM/GEOG 300 Internship in Natural Resource Management or Geography**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intern Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mailing Address</td>
<td>Email Address</td>
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<th>JR. SR. (circle one)</th>
<th>Semester Enrolled</th>
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<th>Faculty Supervisor Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<td>Office Location</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cooperating Supervisor Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency/ Business Address</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship Title</th>
<th>Address</th>
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Description of Internship (attach a copy of Internship Plan)
PERMISSION TO ENROLL IN NRM/GEOG 300

Student is Eligible (check one)  □YES  □NO

Topic is Approved (check one)  □YES  □NO  Number of Credits ______

Other Comments:

Student Signature __________________________ Date

Faculty Supervisor Signature __________________________ Date

Department Head Signature (HLA-Mingchu Zhang; Forestry-Yarie;
NRM-Greenberg; GEOG-de Wit) __________________________ Date

Instructor of Record (Stephen Sparrow in Fairbanks for NRM and GEOG;
Norman Harris in Palmer) __________________________ Date

Return the completed APPLICATION FOR INTERNSHIP and PERMISSION TO ENROLL FORM to Martha Westphal 474-7188 (mmwestphal@alaska.edu) 303 O’Neill or Wanda Tangermann 474-7494 (wrtangermann@alaska.edu) 182 Arctic Health Research Building. Contact Martha or Wanda if you have any questions.
Print on Pink Paper

This form is to be completed by the faculty and given to the student for submission to the Office of the Registrar. This form must be used with a registration form, or drop/add form unless student has been wait-listed for the course.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student's Name</th>
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<th>(M.I)</th>
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| Student ID Number: |

Please indicate the course you are giving permission for:

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<th>CRN</th>
<th>DEPT</th>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Sec. No.</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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Faculty: Please initial next to the types of permission you are giving this student.

- [ ] Instructor Approval
- [ ] Registration Restriction (Class, Degree Major, Level)
- [ ] Time Conflict Approval
- [ ] Permission to Add from waitlist

Authorized By: ____________________________ Print Name____________________

Note: Internships must be authorized by the “Instructor of Record”
(Stephen Sparrow in Fairbanks or Norm Harris in Palmer)

Title/Dept: ________________________________________________________________

Date ____________________________

Office Use Only

Processed by: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Entered in: SFASRPO   SFAREGS
BENCHMARK LEDGER

Use this ledger to succinctly list skills and activities performed towards attaining the desired benchmark.

(Attach additional pages as necessary)

Intern Name _______________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Activities Performed</th>
<th>Skills/Competencies Acquired</th>
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COOPERATING SUPERVISOR’S EVALUATION

(Attach additional pages as necessary)

Intern Name ___________________________________________ Date ________________

Internship Title ___________________________________________

Degree to which benchmarks were completed:
(O = Outstanding  S = Satisfactory  P = Poor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Cooperating Supervisor's comments</th>
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Cooperating Supervisor Signature _____________________________ Date ________________
Cooperating Supervisor's additional comments and evaluation:

1. Strengths and weaknesses of performance:

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the internship as designed:

______________________________  ____________________
Cooperating Supervisor Signature  Date
FACULTY SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION:

Intern Name_________________________ Internship Period __________________________

1. Strengths and weaknesses of performance:

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the internship as designed:

Faculty Supervisor signature

Date
INTERN'S SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following are provided as a guide for the intern to use in preparing the self-evaluation. Items may be deleted or added as appropriate.

1. Review of Objectives and Responsibilities
   a. Degree of competency attained
   b. Degree to which they were realistic
   c. Impending constraints
   d. Modifications applied during the internship
   e. Other comments

2. Strengths of internship performance
   a. Depth and breadth
   b. Degree of difficulty
   c. Structure
   d. Supervision
   e. Other comments

3. Weaknesses of internship performance
   a. Depth and breadth
   b. Degree of difficulty
   c. Structure
   d. Supervision
   e. Suggestions for improvement
   f. Other comments

4. Strengths of the internship as designed
   a. Depth and breadth
   b. Degree of difficulty
   c. Structure
   d. Supervision
   e. Other comments

5. Weaknesses of the internship as designed
   a. Depth and breadth
   b. Degree of difficulty
   c. Structure
   d. Supervision
   e. Suggestions for improvement
   f. Other comments

6. Relationship of the internship experience to:
   a. previous course work and experience
   b. potential future course work
   c. personal career goals

7. Overall value of the experience