
Environmental Practicum

Coordinators: Viktor Lagutov, Anastasia Kvasha

Credits: 2

Duration: 11 weeks (January-March)

Pre-requisites: none

Course e-learning site: <http://ceulearning.ceu.edu>

Aims, objectives and learning outcomes

The course allows students to get first-hands experience in dealing with environmental challenges in international, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant institutions. Students will tackle contemporary environmental issues assisting professionals and experiencing real-life context and practical application of their theoretical coursework. Through such experiential learning students enhance their research, critical thinking, problem-solving and presentation skills. The course can be used to get acquainted with potential host institution to conduct thesis research as well as to get familiar with potential research topic. Students are supervised jointly by a representative of host organization and departmental faculty member. Passing the course requires a student to intern a minimum number of hours, to successfully complete assignment given by host and to report the experience.

The participation in the course would allow students to get various competencies (Knowledge and understanding, intellectual and practical skills) depending on host organization and assignments given. At the same time having completed the course a successful student should obtain the following general transferable skills and personal qualities: a) Engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently; make written and oral presentations to specialist and non-specialist audiences (D2); b) Effectively work in multidisciplinary, multicultural groups as leader or member. Clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of group members. Negotiate and handle conflict with confidence (D3); c) Continuously improve professional skills through planning, time management, critical reflection and self-evaluation, and adoption of individual learning strategies (D5); d) Reflect on own and others functioning in order to improve practice (D6)

Educational Approach

The course consists of 1) professional activities at host organization; 2) interim group discussions with course participants undertaking internships at other institutions; 3) personal reflections on internship experience throughout the course; 4) consultations with supervisors; 5) submitting progress reports and making final public presentation of internship achievements and relevance, discussing and analyzing this experience in a group. Specific timeframe, deliverables and milestones are defined by the internship plan endorsed by the department and a host organization.

Internship placements are based on offers collected by both faculty and students. To be eligible a placement's offer should secure proper use and development of student's research, writing, analytical and presentation skills through accomplishing a specific project or task within a designated time frame. Students can propose potential internship placement based on their own professional networks, but these offers should be pre-approved by the Department. Any recognized international, nongovernmental, public, private, etc. environmental organization can be a host. Selection of interns is made by host organization.

An internship plan should be negotiated by student and host organization. The plan should feature specific academic goals to be achieved and milestones/deliverables for progress reporting. While the cooperation between student and host might continue after the course, specific tangible internship outcomes should be presented by the end of the course. The course enrollment is conditional upon approval of internship plan by the end of winter enrollment period. The internships can be both local- and remote-based.

Educational activities, assessment and estimated workload

Learning Outcome	Assessment	Activities	Estimated Workload, h
Fostering communication skills in professional arena and workflow planning	Internship workplan	Formulation and negotiation of internship topic with host	15
Practical hands-on experience in dealing with daily work of environmental organizations and tasks tackled; Getting acquainted with professional communities	Interim progress report; written reflective exercise	Intern hours according to the approved internship plan	90
Presentation, writing and communication skills in a specific professional area (vocabulary, etc)	Final presentation; personal reflection; Hosts' feedback	Interim group discussions and final public presentation of internship achievements	15
Total hours			120

The internship progress and experience will be facilitated by interim and final reports, as well as through guided reflection. The Practicum is concluded with public presentation on internship achievements, challenges, feedbacks, etc. Students must be able to communicate their experience to other course participants.

Grading policy:

The grade is based on successful completion of all three course stages: 1) internship proposal development (10%); 2) interim evaluations (progress reports confirmed by internship supervisors) (10%); 3) final report (80%).

The final report consists of written summary and public presentation, corresponding to initial proposal internship plan and featuring at least the following:

- 1) Description of the host organization (structure, function, mission, impact, etc);
- 2) Summary of activities performed during practicum and impact thereof to the organization;
- 3) Critical self-assessment of performance, experience and achievements.

Limitations: The number of students is limited by available internship placements and hosts' selection of candidates.