

**Internship FAQ**  
Department of Environmental Studies  
Gettysburg College

**Overview**

The Department of Environmental Studies strongly encourages majors to take part in internships as part of their educational experience at Gettysburg College. Internships can provide useful windows into the daily tasks, required skills and working environments comprising a variety of environmental-related careers. Some students find their internship experiences provide a launching pad to a career with the same organizations.

**When do students typically participate in internships?**

Most students that conduct internships do so during the summer vacation months. These are often with federal or state environmental agencies (e.g., EPA, US Forest Service, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service), private environmental consulting firms, or non-profit environmental organizations (e.g., Nature Conservancy, National Aquarium in Baltimore, National Wildlife Federation, etc.) However, some also find opportunities during the academic year in local venues (e.g., Gettysburg National Military Park, Adams County Agricultural Center) including the campus (e.g. as recycling, energy, sustainability, or garden interns).

**Are all internships paid positions?**

It all depends on the specific internship. In some cases, they do provide a salary or stipend. In other cases, only living expenses are covered. And in still others, they are on a volunteer basis. While most students might prefer paid positions, it is important to understand that even volunteer-based internships provide valuable ‘real world’ experience that can lead to future employment opportunities.

**Can I receive academic credit for an internship experience?**

Yes. However, students should note that academic credit based on an internship cannot count toward requirements for a major at Gettysburg College. Nor can they count towards courses fulfilling requirements of the general Gettysburg Curriculum. So they can only be used as ‘extra’ credits that count toward the 32 course graduation requirement after major and GC requirements have been satisfied. For this reason, many students choose to forego the academic credit option, since the internship experience will be documented in greater detail on their resume. It is also possible to take an internship for 0.5 credit, which does not count for the 32 course graduation requirements, but will appear on your transcript.

### **If I wish to pursue academic credit, what are the necessary steps?**

Once students have been granted an internship, they should first identify and discuss the details with a potential faculty advisor in the ES Department. Once the faculty advisor has agreed to oversee the project, the student must go to the Career Development Office to pick up an internship agreement form. Once filled out, this form states the expectations for academic credit as laid out by the faculty advisor. The on-site internship supervisor must also spell out her/his expectations on the form.

For 0.5 credit you must write a short reflection paper (around 5 double spaced pages) where you describe the experience and tie it into your learning and/or other classes you have taken.

For full academic credit, an internship experience may consist of no less than 160 hours of work time. Generally speaking, expectations for the ES Department include the following:

1. Weekly reports sent from the student to the faculty advisor outlining activities conducted and skills or lessons learned.
2. At the end of the internship, a discussion with the faculty advisor to discern how to use the experience as a basis for an academic paper. For most students, this implies additional reading and research into one aspect of their internship experience. The paper must be equivalent in scale and scope to that researched and written for a seminar class. Generally speaking, no less than 20 pages of text. It must be linked to academic literature, include scholarly references, and meet the expectations identified by the faculty advisor.

For either 0.5 credit or full credit summer internships, papers are typically due at the end of the fall semester. However, the specific date is set by the faculty advisor. The ES Department recommends as good practice for the papers to be due **early** in the semester (e.g., 30 September) to avoid conflicts with final exams and other papers due at the end fall semester. Credit for summer internships appears on transcripts for the following fall semester.