

GEOG 4940/5940
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

I. Purpose

The Geography Cooperative Education Internship is an optional program that allows students to earn credit for off-campus work experiences applying geographical tools to societal, environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural problems. This work experience can take many forms, but most commonly involves working for a private enterprise or government agency. The internship experience can greatly enhance a student's training, knowledge, and preparedness, whether the student goes into the private, public, or academic sectors after graduation. For these reasons, all students are encouraged to pursue an internship.

Geography credit towards graduation requirements is available under the course listings GEOG 4940 (undergraduate) and GEOG 5940 (graduate) and students can earn 1-3 credit hours for a single internship experience and 3 credits maximum overall. The number of credit hours will be determined by the Internship Coordinator, dependent upon the amount and type of work to be completed by the student during the internship (table below). The grade will be assigned by the Internship Coordinator in conjunction with the student's work supervisor and will be based on the supervisor's evaluation of the student intern's work accomplishments, reliability, and effort (evaluation form attached).

| Credit hours available | Hours at internship |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | at least 50 |
| 2 | at least 100 |
| 3 | at least 150 |

II. Sequence of an Internship

A. Before the internship, the student must:

1. Find and secure an internship that meets departmental criteria (see IV below).
2. Review this document with the Internship Coordinator and provide the information requested on a copy of the agreement (Attachment 1).
3. Provide a letter of offer for the internship from the person who will be directly supervising the internship. This letter should include begin and end dates and the number of hours to be worked (per week or total), specific duties/tasks, and educational nature of the position within the business/agency. This letter should also include the contact information of the internship supervisor.

B. During the internship, the student must:

4. Maintain a journal of work-related activities (in word-processed form) that is uploaded weekly to OSU's on-line classroom environment (D2L).

C. After the internship, the student must:

5. Write a 3-5 page paper at the completion of the internship. The paper should be a reflection on the internship experience including responsibilities, tasks performed, experiences, and thoughts about the internship, not just an aggregate submission of all the weekly journal entries. The paper should be typed, double spaced with standard font sizes and margins, and will be uploaded to D2L as well. The paper should be proofread as if it were a course term paper because it will be evaluated as such.
6. Ensure that the internship supervisor submits a performance evaluation form (Attachment 2) by the end of the semester/term. This can be submitted by mail, e-mail, or fax.
7. Submit a copy of the final paper to the Internship Coordinator no later than the Friday before finals week during Spring or Fall semester enrollments or the last Friday of the Summer term of enrollment (generally the last Friday in July for the regular, 8-week summer term).

III. Finding an Internship

The policy of the Department in Geography, in contrast to some other departments on campus, **is not to place students in internships**. This means that the student must find a potential internship opportunity, interview for that position, and decide whether he/she wants to accept the position. Every effort will be made to accommodate students, given the constraints of the availability of internship positions, but the department is unable to create an internship simply because a student wishes the experience. An established position must be available and the agency sponsoring the internship must be willing to supervise the student's internship experience.

The Arts & Sciences Career Services office is an excellent resource for finding an internship. Occasionally, the Internship Coordinator receives unsolicited advertisements for internships, which if appropriate are forwarded to all geography students via e-mail. Faculty members, the Internet, and on-campus job fairs are other excellent sources of information and leads for internships.

IV. Considering an Internship

The goal of an internship is to provide the student with applied experience using geographic methodologies, technologies, tools, or concepts while assisting experienced, trained professionals who are supervising the internship position. Specific requirements/eligibility criteria for the internship include:

- The internship must contain a significant geographic component in order to qualify for credit. Tasks/skills that a geography intern typically might perform include: geographic data collection methods (historical reconnaissance work, spatial analysis), research (library, laboratory, or field), international travel/tourism planning, or use of computer or electronic hardware and software (GIS, GPS, site surveying), etc. Internship supervisors should be explicit in their offer/confirmation letters so the Internship Coordinator and appropriate curriculum committee (Undergraduate or Graduate) can make an approval decision.
- The internship work duties will vary greatly depending upon the agency and project. However, it is expected that all interns are closely supervised and mentored by a trained professionals, academics, or businesspersons. An internship is not an independent study experience, though some interns may be given modest responsibilities and latitude in performing their duties. An intern is usually not expected to engage in problem or research development; rather, the research project should be well-organized and in place, and the intern assigned specific duties to help contribute to or complete the project.

- The internship position must be of limited and fixed duration. Students may not receive credit for an internship position at a business or agency at which they have already worked (or are still working), even if the position has been renamed as an internship. Although students sometimes land full-time jobs as a result of internships, it must be explicitly clear in the supervisor's initial letter that the position for which the student is earning credit is a true internship in terms of educational focus, direct supervision, limited duration, and fixed start and end dates. Simply obtaining a job with a company with geographic projects is not acceptable for internship credit; the position must be clearly identified as an internship, designed to provide an applied learning experience. So long as the experience is clearly an internship, paid and unpaid internships are viewed equally.
- Students may receive pay for their internship experience. This is dependent on the agency's or business' budget or policies on such matters. If an internship experience is a paid one, however, the supervisor must make clear in his or her initial letter that the position is in fact an internship, rather than a regular or temporary position in the company.
- Generally, only geography majors typically enroll in GEOG 4940 or 5940. However, any OSU undergraduate or graduate student can obtain internship credit if the internship adheres to these guidelines and is inherently geographic in nature.

V. Formalizing an Internship

Students who accept an internship position and wish to earn credit in either GEOG 4940 or 5940 must consult with the Internship Coordinator and submit an agreement form (Attachment 1) for approval. For GEOG 4940 credit, the Undergraduate Committee will also be consulted for approval; for GEOG 5940, the Graduate Committee will be consulted. If all approvals are obtained, the student will then be permitted to enroll in the appropriate number of credit hours.

Students may not enroll in the internship course unless they can complete all assignments within that semester's timeframe. All assignments and materials must be submitted by the final day of regular classes – the Friday before finals week. Students who cannot complete and submit all work by this date must enroll for the following semester/term.

VI. Evaluating an Internship

Upon completion of the internship, students enrolled in GEOG 4940/5940 must submit a written summary or report of appropriate length listing the work they did, how it fit into the overall project, how it related to their geographic training, and what benefits they gained from the internship. An evaluation form (Attachment 2) from the supervisor is also required, confirming that the student completed the internship and giving an assessment of the intern's performance on the project. On the basis of the student's documentation (weekly logs and final report) and the supervisor's evaluation, a letter grade will be assigned for the GEOG 4940/5940 course. Grades are based on the overall performance as adjudged by the supervisor and the coordinator; all grade decisions by the coordinator are final as they are based on a holistic, qualitative evaluation.

VII. For More Information

Some internship opportunities may not perfectly fit the criteria listed above. This document is intended to cover the majority of situations and internship opportunities that typically occur. If you have an internship opportunity and wish to find out whether you can receive credit, contact the Internship Coordinator in the Department of Geography:

Jonathan C. Comer, Professor & Graduate Coordinator
Internship Coordinator
Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University
337 Murray Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078
Phone: (405) 744-9176 Fax: (405) 744-5620
E-mail: Jon.Comer@okstate.edu

ATTACHMENT 1

Student/Coordinator Agreement Form

Internships in Geography ► GEOG 4940/5940

Student Contact Information:

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Supervisor Contact Information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Internship details:

Dates: _____

Total Working Hours: _____

Location: _____

Student position title: _____

Number of 4940/5940 hours requested: _____

I have read this document and discussed my internship and the expectations for receiving credit for GEOG 4940/5940 with the Internship Coordinator.

Student signature

Date

Internship Coordinator signature

Date

***Jonathan C. Comer, Professor & Graduate Coordinator
Internship Coordinator
Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University
405 - 744 - 9176
Jon.Comer@okstate.edu***

ATTACHMENT 2

Internship Performance Evaluation Form

Internship Performance Evaluation Form

The student intern working with you is enrolled in a course at OSU to earn college credit for this internship experience. Prior to assigning a grade, we are asking for your input about this student's performance during his/her internship with you. Please complete the following:

Student Intern: _____

Intern Supervisor: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Email and phone: _____

Number of Working Hours Completed: _____

Please rate the intern's performance in the following areas listed below by using a 0-4 rating (0 = unacceptable, 1 = below average, 2= average, 3 = above average, 4 = excellent)

| Characteristic | Rating | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Punctuality and attendance | | | | | |
| Reliability | | | | | |
| Initiative and Attitude | | | | | |
| Ability to work with others | | | | | |
| Completion of assigned tasks | | | | | |
| Quality of work | | | | | |
| Overall performance | | | | | |

Did the student meet your expectations? Why or why not?

Please comment on the intern's overall performance, including any strengths or weaknesses you think are important. Attach documentation if desired.

May I discuss specifics from this form with the intern? Yes / No

Intern Supervisor: _____ Date: _____
Signature

Please return this form to the Internship Coordinator:

Jonathan C. Comer
Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University
337 Murray Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078
Phone: (405) 744-9176 Fax: (405) 744-5620
E-mail: Jon.Comer@okstate.edu

Thank you for your cooperation!