



UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
INTERNSHIPS, PROJECTS, RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP, or INTERNATIONAL STUDY
Used for Experiential Learning Credit

Purpose:

Both AEC—Applied Economics majors (ABM—Agricultural Business Management, and EEP—Environmental Economics and Policy) require that students complete an Experiential Learning (EL) activity. Historically, internships have been the most widely used activity, but a special project, faculty supervised research/scholarship, or international study can also qualify. The main objective is for students to participate in an opportunity to learn about their field of study beyond and outside of the standard classroom experience.

An **Internship** (AEC 410) is a supervised work experience with an employer (private business, non-profit, government agency or other entity). An internship provides students with the opportunity to apply classroom learning and gain important entry-level job experience. Ideally, students will be able to identify problems or issues that can be solved or addressed using economics or management techniques they have learned during the course of their studies in their ABM or EEP major. Or, alternatively, students may learn *beyond* what they were exposed to in classes.

A **Project** (AEC 406) is an **independent research, analysis, development or service project** within a business or organization that has a specific output or product as an end goal. Historically, these have been conducted within the framework of the student's family business, but that need not be the case.

Another EL activity is to collaborate with a faculty member on a **Research and/or Scholarship project** (AEC 401) in which the student would have clearly defined areas of responsibility and ultimately be a contributing author of a scholarly publication or report.

Some students wish to participate in an **International Study Experience** as part of their undergraduate program. While many students complete part of their program abroad, in order for that to satisfy the experiential learning requirement, the student must document how their foreign study will contribute to knowledge and experience *relative to their major* in ways that could not have been obtained by following courses here at OSU.

Arranging an Experiential Learning Assignment:

Responsibility for arranging an EL activity placement ultimately rests with the student. Faculty advisors can be, and often are, helpful in identifying opportunities, making contacts and outlining realistic learning objectives. The AEC 310 course, Exploring Experiential Learning, is designed to help students locate, prepare and compete for, and plan their EL opportunity. A number of businesses regularly take interns from our program and others advertise opportunities with us. If you have an idea for an internship or project, you should discuss it with your faculty advisor and/or an EL coordinator before making a commitment. The organization or provider must be willing to enter into an agreement to provide a meaningful educational experience and to evaluate the student's performance. For their part, students must be willing to undergo any application and interview process required by the provider and should commit to work a specific number of hours per week for a specified time period. As a general rule of thumb, an EL opportunity involves 200 or more hours of experience. Any arrangements

regarding funding, pay or costs related to the EL are to be negotiated by the student and the organization providing the EL opportunity.

Appropriate Timing for an Experiential Learning Activity:

The best time to do experiential learning is sometime during the final six quarters of coursework. Students tend to be well into their major coursework at that stage, but still have the flexibility to adjust coursework plans should the experiential learning provide the incentive. Most students try to arrange it for the summer because it tends to fit into coursework schedules easily. However, the experience can be set up during any quarter. Experiential Learning during the school year may require careful academic planning to ensure that non-elective coursework is completed in a timely fashion.

Experiential Learning Requirements:

There are separate course numbers for each of the four types of Experiential Learning for on-campus classes (410, 406, 401, and 402), but for Ecampus all four types of experiential learning are offered through AEC 406.

1. Internships, AEC 410, up to 6 credits, graded P/NP: A standard internship is comprised of 200 hours of “on-the-job” experience followed by preparation of a written report of the internship experience and finally an oral presentation to faculty and fellow students. Students earn a maximum of six credits of AEC 410 Internship. The course is graded Pass/No-Pass.

While there is great flexibility in developing the structure of an internship experience, a basic requirement is that all signatures on the **Internship Agreement Form** *be obtained prior to the start of an approved internship*. Furthermore, students will not be permitted to complete the oral presentation portion of their internship until their written report has been approved by their faculty advisor or the EL coordinator. To ensure time for needed corrections and additions to a written report, it is strongly recommended that internship papers be submitted no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled oral date. *Unless there are mitigating circumstances, this policy will be strictly enforced.*

2. Independent Special Projects, AEC 406, up to 6 credits, graded A-F: An independent special project is a research, planning or development effort conducted for a business or organization. It is not a traditional *job or employment* experience like an internship where one learns by doing typical employment tasks. Rather, the student is given responsibility to carry out a single, purpose-driven project. Examples could include a financial or marketing analysis, or the development of a written business plan for a new product launch. In a non-business organization (an NGO, for example) it might be a feasibility analysis for a new service or responsibility by the NGO. The student will be expected to write a 2-4 page proposal, containing elements similar to the Internship Agreement Form, which **must be approved prior to beginning the project**.

The end product of such a project should be a written Project Completion Report that fulfills the objectives of the organization for which the project was conducted. The preparation of that report is the analog of the work/employment that internships require. Students completing a Special Project will also be required to complete a written EL report and oral presentation that describe what was done, what was learned, etc. (See reporting section below).

3. Faculty Supervised Research, and Scholarship AEC 401, up to 6 credits, graded A-F: Students may wish to work with an Applied Economics (or possibly other department) faculty member as advisor to pursue academic research, collaboratively as a contributor to an existing research project. The research project, or the student's contribution, should be clearly defined with a problem or issue statement, a proposed scope of work, and proposed research methods or tools. The student will be expected to write a 2-4 page proposal, containing elements similar to the Internship Agreement Form, which **must be approved prior to beginning the project.**

The end product of such a research project would be a formal research report (or for collaborative projects, a defined section of a more comprehensive report). This paper should follow the format and style of the intended publication outlet. This report would be analogous to the Project Completion Report of the Special Project in that it reflects the actual work of conducting the research.

4. International Study Experience (ISE), up to 6 non-duplicated credits registered under AEC 402, Independent Study, graded A-F: Students may consider structuring an international study experience (AKA, Study Abroad) to fulfill their EL requirement. It should be made very clear that not every Study Abroad opportunity will qualify. Generally, the ISE will need to be a part of an official university program (OSU or other accredited institution). It will not suffice to merely complete an academic course(s) in another country. The onus will be on the student to show how that particular program will contribute to their broader, major-related learning outside of an OSU classroom experience. That documentation will be in the form of a 2-4 page proposal which describes the nature of courses or program, specific learning objectives and how it reinforces, extends or applies what the student learns in their OSU major. Again, this proposal **must be approved prior to beginning the international study.**

If credit is already given for the international coursework under some other department or program, the student would not be given additional credits merely for completing the courses. However, the reporting of the ISE as experiential learning may lead to one or two credits under AEC 402, Independent Study. Students who are unable to arrange transferrable credits for their international coursework may, with AEC approval, receive additional AEC 402 credits up to a total of 6 credits.

As in the other three options for EL, students will be expected to complete a written a paper and an oral presentation outlining what they did and what they learned during their international study.

Faculty Advisor Responsibility:

The department has a committee of faculty advisors who oversee internships and other EL activities. A member of this committee will meet with the student prior to beginning the internship to discuss the internship or project, the paper, and the oral presentation. In conjunction with this process, the advisor may possibly contact the business, agency, faculty member supervising the student during the EL to ensure that the activity can be done and to clarify educational goals. After the agreement form has been reviewed and signed by the on-site individual supervising the activity and by the student, the faculty EL advisor signs the agreement on behalf of the department.

At times, faculty members outside the Internship Committee may agree to supervise an EL activity, especially in the case of Independent Projects and Faculty Research Projects. The same guidelines as presented here are the foundation for such an agreement. In essence that faculty member becomes an ad hoc member of the Experiential Learning Committee until the EL project is completed.

After the EL activity is completed, the advisor may meet with the student to review the internship experience and discuss the focus and organization of the final report. Once the written report is completed, the faculty supervisor will review the report and approve the scheduling of an oral presentation. The committee of faculty advisors may jointly determine whether additional work is needed on the written report and whether a Pass or No-Pass grade is warranted for the internship, or the grade awarded for a Special Project.

On-site Supervisor Responsibility:

The primary responsibility of your on-site supervisor is to ensure that the student has a worthwhile educational experience. This responsibility represents an additional time and effort commitment that may not be present in a normal employment situation. For internships, the student is joining the employer for learning purposes that may or may not exceed the normal training activities of the employer. If the student's immediate supervisor is willing to make this commitment, the EL project has an excellent chance of success.

Experiential Learning Written and Oral Reporting:

All students must submit a concise, well-written report following completion of their EL activity. These reports should be from 5-7 single spaced pages long with standard margins and font sizes. The report **MUST** follow the outline provided here (unless a separate format has been approved). Please use the appropriate headings and number the pages.

REPORT OUTLINE

- A. General Description of your internship or project (with whom, when done, hours/week, individuals involved, description of responsibilities, etc.). *This section is one page or less.*
- B. Learning Objectives (taken from your Agreement Form or proposal) -- provide a detailed discussion and critical analysis of planned versus accomplished. If accomplished, what contributed; if not accomplished, what were the barriers. *This is the heart of the paper*
- C. Summary and Conclusions (*make sure you discuss each element*)
 - In one paragraph, summarize what you gained from the internship and how it will influence your career path.
 - What educational areas or courses were particularly useful to you and what additional studies do you need to be better prepared for career employment (be specific)?
 - From your perspective, how, if at all, was this experience different from a regular job?
 - How will you be able to use this experience in an interview for employment in the future?
 - How, if at all, did your employer benefit from your internship?
 - If you had to do it all over again, what modifications would you suggest?

Papers that are deficient will be returned for corrections and/or additional material.

An **oral presentation** will be scheduled after the EL paper is submitted. The faculty advisor may suggest revisions in the report to be made before or after the presentation. The presentation itself will be 30 minutes in length, including about 10 minutes for discussion and questions. Typically, the presentation will follow the basic guidelines for the paper. It is expected that students will augment their presentation with the appropriate use of visual aids. In some cases, the oral presentation may be made to a class or some other College of Agriculture gathering that would showcase student Experiential Learning.

For students doing independent (AEC 406) or scholarly research (AEC 401) projects, the final research or project paper may actually contain elements of the outline above. In that case, the EL report can make reference to the “product” paper, which can be included as an appendix and the EL report may be somewhat briefer as a result.

Process:

Credits may be spread over two or more terms as necessary. Please work with Tjodie Richardson to plan enrollment for credit either in the term you are doing your EL or in later terms. Please do not enroll for credit in any term prior to the time that your Internship Agreement Form is approved. Students normally receive credit for Study Abroad irrespective of whether they use it to fulfill the EL requirement and they should not expect double credits by using the ISE for the EL requirement. We will approve 1 additional credit for the completion of an EL paper and oral presentation. The following summary outlines the steps required to complete the Experiential Learning requirement:

1. Locate a business/agency/organization willing to sponsor you as an intern or assign a supervisor willing to oversee your special project.
2. Initially contact Larry Lev (ABM) or David Lewis (EEP). By mutual agreement, you may select another AEC faculty member as your Faculty Advisor but the requirements and responsibilities would remain as defined in this document.
3. Prepare a draft of the appropriate EL Agreement Form or a narrative, 2 to 4 page Project Proposal for review by the on-site employee or project supervisor and your faculty advisor.
4. Visit with your faculty advisor to discuss your internship or special project, your paper, and your oral presentation.
5. After any needed modifications are made, the Agreement Form or Proposal must be signed by the student, the on-site internship supervisor, and lastly, your faculty advisor.
6. Complete the internship or project; contact your faculty advisor if there is a need for major changes in duties or plans for the report during the course of your EL activity.
7. When you have finished your internship or project, contact Tjodie, who will schedule the oral presentations for every term. Complete the written EL report and submit it to your faculty advisor at least 2 weeks prior to your scheduled presentation.
8. Your advisor will return your paper noting any editing or content changes that are needed in the final paper. These changes should be completed and the revised paper submitted prior to your oral presentation. While not required, it is appropriate to invite your on-site supervisor to your oral presentation if you wish to do so.
9. A final grade is assigned after completion of your oral presentation. Internships are currently graded P/NP; special projects are graded A—F.

Questions about EL procedures and policies can be directed to the following faculty advisors/coordinators:

Larry Lev (ABM)
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221C Ballard Extension Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-3601
Phone: (541) 737-1417
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Applied Economics Experiential Learning (EL), Summary of Description and Requirements

| Type of EL (across)¹ ----- Item (down) | Internship (AEC 410) | Special Project (AEC 406) | Research & Scholarship (AEC 401) | International Study Experience (AEC 402) |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| What is it? | Learn by doing job(s) and/or training as an intern/employee in a business or organization | Complete an independent research, analysis, development or service project within/for a business or organization | Collaborate with faculty supervisor on a scholarly research project, with clearly defined area(s) of responsibility for student | Pursue course(s) in a foreign college or university, with supplemental individual research, work or analysis that relates the coursework to student's major |
| Agreement² and signatories? | Internship Agreement Form listing tasks, student learning objectives and provider responsibilities. Student, internship provider's supervisor, faculty advisor or EL coordinator | Proposal/agreement form outlining task, scope of work, end product (deliverable), and major related learning objectives. Student, organization's contact or supervisor, faculty advisor or EL coordinator | Proposal/agreement form identifying overall research project, student's responsibility in it, tasks to be performed, report expectations within project (the deliverable), and learning objectives related to major. Student, faculty supervisor, faculty EL coordinator | Proposal/agreement form identifying study abroad program and/or institution providing coursework, courses (brief titles) , additional work/experience outside of classes, and learning objectives related to major. Student, study program contact, faculty advisor or EL coordinator |
| Deliverable Product/Report? | Work/job performed as directed by employer/supervisor | Completion report as directed by firm or organization contracting for the project | Academic paper or report(s) as directed by faculty research supervisor | Transcript of completed courses |
| Experiential Learning (EL) Report? | 5-7 page report summarizing and analyzing what was done (work responsibilities) and what was learned | Report summarizing what was done (method and scope) and analyzing what was learned, 5-7 pages not including product report as appendix | Report summarizing what was done and analyzing what was learned, 5-7 pages not including academic report(s) as appendix | 5-7 page report summarizing content of coursework and additional extra classroom experience, and analysis of learning related to major |
| Oral Presentation? | 15-30 minute presentation | 15-30 minute presentation | 15-30 minute presentation | 15-30 minute presentation |
| Credits and grading | Up to 6 cr., P/NP | Up to 6 cr., A-F | Up to 6 cr., A-F | Up to 6 cr. but no dual credit for coursework. 1-2 credits for EL report and Oral Presentation |

¹There are separate course numbers for each of the four types of Experiential Learning for on-campus classes (410, 406, 401, and 402), but for Ecampus all four types of experiential learning are offered through AEC 406.

²For all types of experiential learning, the agreement must articulate attainable learning objectives that are clearly related to student's major field of study, either by applying concepts taught in classes, or by acquiring additional, major-related knowledge not covered in the classroom.