

Internship FAQs for Ecampus Students

Ecampus students in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife generally have non-traditional internships in terms of time and timing because they generally are non-traditional students who juggle full-time jobs, children, pets, and mortgages with their education; they are not able to take seasonal jobs in distant locations like traditional campus-based undergraduates.

What is the goal of FW410 Internship?

Students gain professional level skills and references to support them in seeking jobs after graduation. Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences is a hands-on profession and the internship is essential for Ecampus students to gain hands-on experience. Ecampus students don't have a strong peer network thus need a local professional network to get job referrals.

What is FW 209 Career Skills in FW Sciences?

FW 209 is a precursor to FW410 Internship. It helps students identify local organizations that may offer internships that align with their academic/professional interests and time/geographic constraints. The course also helps them prepare internship and job application materials specific to the FW field. The Internship Coordinator teaches FW209 and works individually with each student in the course to explore current training realities in their geographic and interest areas, refine their resume and cover letter to show transferable skills and build skills to network locally.

When should FW209 be taken?

Take FW209 two terms before you plan to seek internships so that your resume, cover letter and information are current when you begin to apply to internships. If you take FW209 too far in advance of interning, organizations may change, your interest may change and your qualifications may change. Most Ecampus students take FW209 after they have completed several 200-level FW courses; FW107 is an enforced prerequisite to FW209. Most students take FW410 Exploratory Internship within a few months of completing FW209 and take FW410 Intensive Internship after completing FW307 Specialization Development. The Internship Coordinator continues to assist students in revising resumes, cover letters and other internship/job application materials during their tenure at OSU and has responsibility to approve internships located by a student. FW209 should provide every student with the capability to locate appropriate internships but the process works best if students continue to coordinate with the Internship Coordinator while applying to internships.

What if I found an internship prior to taking FW209?

Email the Internship Coordinator to describe your academic/professional goals, share the internship position description, describe how the position supports your goals and request approval to take FW410 Internship. Include your resume if you have a current one.

When can I register for FW410 Internship?

Your internship must be approved by the Internship Coordinator. Once approved, you may register for FW410 Internship. We are extremely flexible in how the internship requirements are fulfilled (see examples below) and when you register for credit. For Ecampus students who may be interning over several terms, consult with the Internship Coordinator to determine when it is

appropriate to register for credit. Note that internship is a class and does require a certain level of time, skill development and professional growth, just as any other course.

How can I complete my internships when I work, parent and attend OSU?

Flexible internship options that meet both the exploratory and intensive internship requirements are accepted as long as they facilitate appropriate professional development. Internships may be completed in a short, intensive time period or over an extended period with less intensity each week or month. Some students have even developed a relatively independent project that requires only periodic consultation with an off-campus supervisor. The Internship Coordinator helps you evaluate what is effective for your goals.

Can I get paid while Interning?

Internships may be volunteer or paid. Internships designed to accommodate a student's schedule will generally require volunteering. Internships that accommodate an employer's schedule will generally be paid.

What if I can't afford to do a volunteer internship?

FW students can compete for funding to support low-funded or volunteer internships through the FW Department and the College of Ag Sciences [Internship Support Awards Application](#). Most internships receive some funding if they support your professional development in Fisheries and Wildlife.

What if I can't find an internship near me?

It takes experience and skill to locate internships for place-bound students. FW209 and the Internship Coordinator helps with this. Every Ecampus student in our program since it started in 2009 has met the internship requirements. It is best if the student can develop a specific strategy to pursue (e.g., identify the organization, supervisor, skill sets, network, or project that will advance them on a chosen career track). Being strategic about internship is key to future employment success, especially for students who are limited geographically. Most Ecampus students attend a state-level conference attended by local professionals who are working in an area of career interest to the student. Often a student meets a professional at the conference who then offers them the opportunity to gain experience and develop an internship.

Doesn't every professional want an Intern?

No. It takes time to supervise an intern, so you will likely have to convince a supervisor that you are worth the time, even if you are volunteering. You have to determine how you can contribute your skills to benefit a targeted organization and find a person with an appropriate skill set who is willing to mentor you.

Won't younger, traditional students out-compete me for internships and jobs?

No. FW biologists and organizations recognize the experience and maturity that non-traditional students generally bring. For this reason, they are often more willing to accommodate the flexible schedules of non-traditional students. Non-traditional students often use an internship as a way to demonstrate their employability with a local organization they want to work for in the future.

How can I be effective during my Internship when I still have to work, parent and take courses?

Ecampus students often have one significant local potential employer; it's imperative that these students demonstrate high performance during internship. Most students reduce or adjust their course load; some students "stop out" of courses to do their internship. Be sure to establishing a personal safety-net for support while balancing internship with personal and professional responsibilities. Tell your work supervisor that you have additional academic responsibilities, arrange back-up child care, request support from family and friends, involve your academic advisor.

How have other Ecampus students worked internships into their busy lives?

M.M. volunteered with International Crane Foundation, based in Wisconsin, to locate sandhill crane nests in and near her town of Homer, Alaska. "I worked as an independent contractor. I had little contact with this organization other than training and then the submittal of monthly reports. I had only sporadic contact with my supervisor. I think that means he has confidence in my abilities."

S.E. volunteered with Blue Frontier Campaign, a marine conservation activist organization, to develop supporting curriculum for "50 ways to Save the Ocean" by David Helvarg that included compiling a 9th-12th grade Teachers Guide and developing new materials for K-2nd grade. Her children spanned these education ranges. "This is not a project Blue Frontier was working on until I came into the picture. I came up with the concept and have run with it. Being involved in a program that gets children interested in marine science and conservation is very exciting. This project has been an excellent exercise in confidence building, because I see that despite my lack of education, I am able to conceptualize, put into motion and complete a complicated project with large organizations like National Geographic and this gives me hope for a future career that will not depend on my level of education, but rather my expertise, experience and ability to produce."

A.W. volunteered with NOAA on the Penobscott River Restoration Project where she helped conduct marine mammal and sea bird surveys for 10-12 hours/day 1-3 days per week for 8 weeks. "I will be only able to work with NOAA on my days off and on some vacation time. Dr. X was OK with that and was glad for any help since he works solo and has no budget for help. I am doing all of this for free but the experience for me is invaluable."

J.B. volunteered for the Dept. Defense at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), Environmental Conservation Section. J.B. is a civilian employee at VAFB. His internship was to design and implement a sampling plan for Columbian black-tailed deer and prepare a deer management plan for VAFB to include harvest quotas, military operations, human safety and habitat carrying capacity. He worked for this supervisor as a part-time volunteer for seven months and when the supervisor retired, J.B. was asked to replace him but was not technically qualified until degree completion.

JLS volunteered with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County as the wildlife biology assistant intern for 1-3 days/week over several months. She assisted the wildlife staff (wildlife biologists, wildlife specialists, wildlife technician and wildlife aids). This internship included primarily field work as well as some minor record keeping. The skills she gained were radio telemetry (with musky, Blanding's turtles and deer); setting up, baiting and moving turtle cage traps; blood sampling for DNA and micro-chipping Testudines (painted and snapping turtles); setting up mist nets with a decoy owl to try and catch a

breeding pair of osprey to band and test blood for mercury, PCBs and organochlorine; and navigation to eastern bluebird, wren and sparrow nesting boxes to record clutch sizes and band chicks.

S.A. volunteered with the US Army Corps of Engineers Wildlife Biologist, 1 day each week for 4-8 hours over 6 months.

M.M. is currently volunteering with Boise BLM; he started April 1, 2013 but his end date and amount of time to be donated was "to be determined." He just sent a note saying "I will have to finish up the internship in the winter quarter 2014. I would like to spend more time doing surveys and possibly more tagging and banding with the raptors here."

P.W. had a strong interest in GIS; she completed an independent project for Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to develop maps of key wildlife sites in state parks.

R.M. worked as an independent volunteer with Eastern Box Turtle Conservation Trust to radio-track turtles; he located each turtle every two weeks but did it when it worked into his schedule.

Other comments from Ecampus interns.....

"Sorry I took a few extra days to complete the final assignments for internship, too much going on with work, kids, and their birthdays. It was a life changing experience and I am glad you mentioned volunteering to me!"

"In the course of 11 weeks volunteering at the Forest Service, I put in 250 hours! This has currently landed me a paid position with a sister organization relating to the same project. Because I worked with the supervisors during my internship, I didn't even need to interview for it and the position was not released to the public!"

"As a non-typical student I had a tough time finding any sort of internship that would fit into my real work schedule. Over time and talking to many different folks at various levels of local, state and federal governments I was able to devise a three-tiered approach that allowed me to get the skills I needed and balance all the duties."

"There were no set objectives, as I could not guarantee my time due to my actual working hours. But what we worked out was that I would help on all weekend events (when I wasn't working my regular job) and would call him the day before I had a day off to see if they needed any help for my off day. It ended up working out well and I was able to meet and work with many of the fine folks at USF&WS."

"Over all the various internships were very eye opening. I was truly amazed how hard it was to find organizations that wanted help. I really had to work hard and talk to a lot of different folks to find opportunities. I would have thought with the limited funding that the non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations would have been elated with the offer for assistance. But that was not the case."