

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
BIOLOGY  
INTERNSHIP  
INFORMATION BOOKLET**

*[everything that you need  
to know about internships but  
never asked!!]*

**ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY INTERNSHIP**

# INFORMATION

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**WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP??** An internship required for the completion of an Environmental Biology Major or a Biology Major, Option: Environmental Biology is defined as 12 weeks, or 480 hours, of on-the-job experience in some aspect of "environmental biology"!! It is important to understand that an "internship" is really only a "temporary job" with an environmental agency. Some environmental agencies have dedicated "internship programs," others do not, and may be confused when you write "applying for an internship." It is very important that you define the "internship" as a temporary position when you contact environmental agencies.

**HOW DO I GO ABOUT GETTING AN INTERNSHIP??** Students get their own internships, the EVB Program Coordinator does not get an internship "for you." However, the EVB Program Coordinator does help students in the process of looking for an internship.

**WHAT IS A TYPICAL INTERNSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY??** It is very difficult to define a "typical" environmental biology internship because the discipline is so diverse. However, recent EVB students have conducted internships with the following agencies:

1. Illinois Department of Conservation
2. Illinois Natural History Survey
3. Wastewater treatment plants/sanitation districts
4. Drinking water treatment plants
5. Environmental consulting firms
6. Environmental engineering firms
7. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
8. U.S. Forest Service
9. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
10. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
11. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
12. County Forest Preserve Districts
13. Outdoor youth/naturalist camps
14. Private mosquito abatement companies
15. Morteum Arboretum
16. Illinois Seed Foundation
17. Prairie Farms Dairy
18. County Soil Conservation Districts
19. Hazardous waste companies
20. World Bird Sanctuary

**WHEN CAN I APPLY FOR AN INTERNSHIP??** Students cannot enroll in an internship (Bio 4275) until they have completed at least 90 semester hours-- in other

words, junior or senior level status. Most students intern the summer before their Senior year. More internships are available in the summer but that is also when the competition is the greatest. There are fewer internship opportunities in the fall and spring semesters but it should be pointed out that many fewer students are applying for these positions.

**IS THERE A MINIMUM G.P.A ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERNSHIP??** Yes, a minimum G.P.A. = 2.25 either cumulative or in the major. There are no exceptions!!

**ARE ALL INTERNSHIPS FOUND IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS??** No! Approximately 70-80% of our students elect to intern in the state of Illinois. However, students have recently interned in California, Florida, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington and even Alaska!!

**DO I GET PAID DURING MY INTERNSHIP??** Some internships are totally volunteer, some pay room-and-board, some pay minimum wage, some pay quite well. What benefits a student receives during their internship is TOTALLY between the intern and the intern agency.

**WHERE DO I FIND OUT ABOUT INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES (addresses, phone #'s, etc.)??** There are several ways to find out about internship opportunities. Dr. Fischer maintains internship information in the Life Sciences Resource Room (LS 2072). The following is a listing of common ways students use to research internship opportunities:

1. Earth Works
  2. Environmental Opportunities -- environmental placement bulletins
  3. The Job Seeker -- can be found in the Placement Center
  4. The World Wide Web and Environmental Biology or Biology Home Pages
  5. Previous EVB internship reports
  7. Data base of addresses and phone #'s of environmental agencies
  8. Student Conservation Agency publication--excellent source for positions across U.S.A. (outstanding "biology/field" positions but only pay room/board, some travel #50/week)
  9. Word-of-mouth (go the Botany and Zoology Clubs!!!)
  10. Notices posted on the EVB Bulletin Board in the Resource Room (LS 2072)
- (Students will have access to the Resource Room from approximately 8:00-4:30 Monday through Friday. If materials are stolen or ripped off, future students will be denied access!!)**

**HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN INTERNSHIP??** Students must find the names and addresses of several agencies to contact. Do not apply for on only a single internship!!!! Some students apply for 7-10 internships!!!! All students need to prepare a resume! If you do not have access to a computer/laser printer (and all students do!!) you should contact the PLACEMENT CENTER!!! For a small fee (\$10???) they will help you prepare a resume and print several copies on quality paper. This is an excellent service and all students should be aware that it exists!! WARNING--before you print copies of your resume, carefully proof read it--have a friend proof read it, etc. NO MISTAKES ON THE RESUME!!

Attached is a copy of the kind of information usually found on a Junior/Senior EVB resume. Since the majority of students have very limited experience in the field of environmental sciences, it is important to list other jobs/positions you have held because this demonstrates responsibility, etc. Students should also prepare a cover-letter for each position. It is absolutely imperative that there are no typo's, grammatical errors, etc. in this letter (see copy attached).

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I APPLY AND GET SEVERAL OFFERS FOR INTERNSHIP??** Congratulations for being so successful!! The general rule-of-thumb is: "if you tell an agency that you accept their offer--you honor your word"!!!! Students sometimes accept a "volunteer internship" and then are offered a "good paying position." Before you accept any internship, call your other possibilities to check your status.

**DO I GET COLLEGE CREDIT FOR THE INTERNSHIP??**

Undergraduate students enroll in BIO 4275 (Internship) receive 12 hours of college credit. Students are given a grade of credit, incomplete (when your report has not been turned in), or no credit.

**WHEN CAN I ENROLL IN INTERNSHIP?** You need to have accumulated at least 90 hours of college credit and receive permission from the EVB Program Coordinator (currently Dr. Fischer). Students enroll for BIO 4275 by tough-tone registration for a total of 12 credit hours. If the internship is not verified (i.e., Dr. Fischer is convinced that indeed you have an agreement with an environmental agency) before the last day to register in the semester you are interning you will be dropped from the course **YOU MUST TURN IN YOUR INTERNSHIP APPROVAL FORM NO LATER THAN THE "LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES" AS PUBLISHED IN THE SEMESTER SCHEDULE.** Failure to do so may result in your being unable to receive credit for your internship.

**WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO COMPLETE THE INTERNSHIP?** In addition to the 480 hours, all students are required to complete an "internship report" at the conclusion of the internship. The typed report, which describes "what I did on my internship," must be a minimum of 1000 words (2-3 typed pages) and include the following (see also attached):

1. your name, social security number and mailing address
2. term enrolled in internship
3. name, complete mailing address, phone #, FAX #, e-mail address, etc. of the intern agency
4. name of the immediate supervisor (your immediate boss) and other supervisors
5. a description of what you did during your internship (what was a typical day like??).
6. stipend: i.e., did you get paid, if so how much??
7. important courses, if any, for the internship
8. miscellaneous information, for example "lot of outdoor work, lots of walking, scuba certification required, lots of traveling, etc."

You need to return a copy of the report to the EVB Program Coordinator (currently Dr. Fischer). In addition, you should also give a copy to your immediate supervisor and keep a copy for yourself. Students who would like a grade posted during the semester the internship was performed need to have a copy of the report on the EVB Program Coordinator's desk **by no later than August 1 (summer), December 1 (fall) and May 1 (spring)**.

## **HOW MANY EIU STUDENTS INTERN EACH YEAR?**

Enrollment in the EVB program is approximately 150 students (Fall 2000). This means that 35-50 students will be looking for interns each year (most in the summer!!).

## **WILL I HAVE CONTACT WITH THE EVB COORDINATOR DURING MY INTERNSHIP?**

Yes!! If problems of any type develop, do not hesitate to call the EVB Program Coordinator (currently Dr. Thomas Nelson- 217-581-2500 or [tanelson@eiu.edu](mailto:tanelson@eiu.edu)). Students interning in Illinois will be visited or contacted via phone by the EVB Program Coordinator at some mutually agreeable time toward the end of the internship. Out-of-state interns will not be visited but will be contacted via phone and/or mail.

## **ISN'T THE INTERNSHIP A PAIN AND JUST ANOTHER HURDLE TO CLIMB?**

If you consider a requirement a hurdle, then the answer is definitely YES!! Students need to take the internship very **SERIOUSLY**. The internship is designed to be the "capstone" experience for the Environmental Biology Major. The internship requirement is really what makes the EVB Program unique and successful. Many of our former students gain employment at the agency where they interned. Without question, the internship is one of the primary reasons why approximately 85% of our graduates are employed in the field of environmental biology!!!

**ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY INTERNSHIP  
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**

Eastern Illinois University offers B.S. degrees in Biology with an interdisciplinary option in Environmental Biology (EVB). The EVB option requires that students complete a broadly based curriculum in Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, Economics, Geology/Earth Sciences and Mathematics.

One of the unique aspects of the EVB option at Eastern Illinois University is the internship requirement. The Biology Program, EVB OPTION, defines an internship as: **"480 hours, or twelve-40 hour work weeks, of on-the-job experience with some environmental agency"** The course description is as follows:.

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BIO 4275 - Internship in Biology. Required for option in Environmental Biology. Employment experience in one or more phases of environmental work for one semester with an agency or firm approved by the Coordinator of Interns. A formal written report of the internship experience is required. Prerequisites: At least 90 semester hours of work in Biological Sciences Program; completion of at least one ecology course; minimum cumulative GPA or major GPA of 2.25 (on a 4.0 system); approval of environmental biology coordinator.

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All students are required to compose a one-page resume and develop a cover letter to secure their internship. It is the hope of the EVB Program Coordinator that environmental agencies provide students with as much diversity and variety as possible during the internship experience. Cooperating environmental agencies are asked to sign the "internship approval form" and write an "evaluation" letter at the completion of the internship for each student-intern they accept. These documents are sent to the address given below. There is no policy on the stipend students receive during their internship--this is totally between the student and the agency. Some interns volunteer, others receive room/board, others receive minimum wage, while others receive entry level salary during their internship.

If you have further questions concerning the EVB internship program at Eastern Illinois University please contact:

Dr. Thomas Nelson, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biology and EVB Program Coordinator  
Eastern Illinois University  
Charleston, Illinois 61920  
Phone: 217-581-2500  
Fax: 217-581-7141  
e-mail: tanelson@eiu.edu

**INTERNSHIP REPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR BIO 4275**

As approved by the EVB Studies Committee, students who enroll in Internship for completion of a Biology Degree, Option EVB (BIO 4275) are required to present a written summary of their activities upon completion of this training. The internship report should be submitted to the EVB Program Coordinator as a typed manuscript of not less than 1000 words (approximately 3 double-spaced pages) prior to the end of the term of internship. The format should be that of a descriptive narrative covering the following topics:

1. your name and current address.
2. the name and address of the environmental agency or organization including the name of your immediate supervisor.
3. summarize your duties and responsibilities as an intern. Describe a typical day on the job and indicate the variety of tasks this assignment entailed. If you kept a log or diary, please include a copy or excerpts.
4. did your internship involve an independent study or mini-project? If so, please provide details and/or a report.
5. what previous course work or training did you find especially helpful? In what areas did you sense weaknesses in your background relating to this assignment?
6. summarize your overall reaction to this internship. what did you particularly like or dislike about your duties, working conditions, associates?
7. did you receive a salary, stipend or fringe benefits (housing, transportation, meal allowance etc.) during the internship?
8. Did you arrange the internship on your own or did you receive help in securing placement? from whom?
9. What recommendations can you offer to improve the EVB Internship Program at Eastern?

While you receive no letter grade on this assignment, the report becomes part of your permanent student file and could benefit you when seeking future recommendations or employment. Further, your honest, thoughtful responses to the questions above can be very useful to prospective interns who follow so please give this report your best effort. Remember, the internship is worth 12 credits!! To avoid delays in receiving your grade, please mail or deliver your report to me by May 1, August 1 or December 1 of the term you finish your internship. If the report is not on file, a grade of incomplete must be given and this could result in you graduating a semester later than you thought you were!!

Dr. Thomas Nelson, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biology and EVB Program Coordinator  
Eastern Illinois University  
Charleston, Illinois 61920  
Phone: 217-581-2500  
Fax: 217-581-7141  
e-mail: tanelson@eiu.edu

Date

Name  
Agency  
Street  
City, State Zip

Dear Madame/Sir (or name if known, for example: Ms. Davis, or Mr. Brown or Dr. Grey)

I am a senior Environmental Biology major at Eastern Illinois University planning to graduate in August 1998. A requirement for the major is a 12 credit hour Internship which involves approximately twelve-40 hour weeks (or total experience time = 450 - 480 hours) working in some capacity for an environmental agency. Generally students intern during the summer (mid-May - mid-August) although students may also intern during the academic year. I am seeking an internship (or summer temporary position) with your agency (or the name of that agency!!!!) . If you would like to find out more about the internship, please contact me or:

Dr. Thomas Nelson, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biology and EVB Program Coordinator  
Eastern Illinois University  
Charleston, Illinois 61920  
Phone: 217-581-2500  
Fax: 217-581-7141  
e-mail: tanelson@eiu.edu

I am excited about the possibility of gaining valuable experience with your agency. I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your perusal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Jane Smoo  
Phone # :???? (also on resume)

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This is an example of a letter!! Please customize it for each position. Agencies have already commented that prospective interns all use the same letter!! Use the above as a guide only but **WRITE YOUR OWN LETTER!!**

1. If no name appears address letter to Dear Madame/Sir (this covers all gender issues)
2. Mention GPA, work experience , etc. in letter if appropriate!!
3. Double and triple check spelling, grammar, etc. Have your friend(s) look at it!!
4. Use good quality paper for letters--neatly type envelopes
5. Make sure that you sign each letter.
6. Make copies of all letters so you know the date when you sent them!!



# ZACHARY JONES

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

124 Maple Street  
Marshall, IL 62411  
217/555-5555

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

547 Woodlawn Road  
Charleston, IL 61920  
217/555-0000

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**OBJECTIVE:** To gain a laboratory or field oriented internship with a public or private agency.

**EDUCATION:** Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920  
BS. in Environmental Biology, August 1995 (expected)  
Minor: Botany, Zoology and Chemistry  
Cumulative G.P.A. = 3.41/4.00

**EXPERIENCE:** June 04-Aug 04 Fox Ridge State Park, Charleston, IL 61920  
Biology Technician  
Surveyed forest woodlots for undesirable trees and shrubs  
  
May 05-Aug 05 Springfield Chicken Ranch, Springfield, IL 61777  
Assistant to Supervisor  
Incubation of egg responsibly  
  
June 05-Aug 05 McDonalds, Springfield, IL 61777  
Worker #1 Class  
Cooking, cleaning and general maintenance

**ORGANIZATIONS:**

Apr 05-present Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society  
  
Jan 05-present Zoology Club (Vice President 2005)  
  
Jan 05-present Botany Club (Secretary 2005)

**SKILLS:** Computer skills include various levels of expertise with WordPerfect, Quarto Pro, and several other software packages. American Red Cross First Aid Instructor and also SCUBA certified

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--REFERENCES: Placement credentials are available at the Career Planning and Placement Center, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920 (217/581-2411)  
--- Templates for resumes can be found in both Word and Word Perfect computer programs

# CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE

(FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE EVB INTERNSHIP)

- 1) PREPARE RESUME AND COVER LETTER
  - as soon as possible
- 2) BEGIN HUNT FOR AT LEAST 5-7 INTERNSHIPS
  - as soon as possible
- 3) SEND OUT RESUME AND COVER LETTERS TO PERSPECTIVE INTERNSHIP AGENCIES
  - 3 months in advance of the proposed internship
- 4) FOLLOW UP CONTACT WITH POSSIBLE INTERN AGENCIES
  - every three weeks after the letter has been sent
- 5) ACCEPT AN INTERNSHIP POSITION
  - once you have made a decision
- 6) REGISTER FOR THE INTERNSHIP
  - in semester you plan to intern
- 7) COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP APPROVAL FORM
  - **NO LATER THAN THE "LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES" AS PUBLISHED IN THE SEMESTER SCHEDULE.**
- 8) CONTACT BETWEEN SUPERVISOR AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR
  - at week 5 student will provide coordinator with the best times to contact supervisors
- 9) REMIND SUPERVISOR TO WRITE AN INTERN EVALUATION
  - at end of the internship
- 9) COMPLETE REPORT
  - Students who would like a grade posted during the semester the internship was performed need to have a copy of the report on the EVB Program Coordinator's desk **by no later than August 1 (summer), December 1 (fall) and May 1 (spring).**