



Guide to Field-Based Experiences for Academic Credit *That Could Fit in at Camp*

Creating experiences at camp that college students can use for academic credit can be attractive to prospective staff as they weigh options for summer employment. There are three main types of field experiences — internships, practicums, and independent study courses — for which students can typically receive academic credit. Each type of experience has different requirements in terms of required hours of work and assignments, with internships typically being the longest and most extensive. Thus, if your camp cannot provide enough weeks and/or hours for an internship, for instance, you may be able to put together a practicum experience for students. The information presented in this guide is common across many college and university programs, but there are always exceptions. The best source of information for academic requirements is the student and their professor(s).

STUDENT EXPERIENCE DEFINITIONS

1. Internship

- Between 10 and 16 weeks of full-time (40 hours per week) experience (most schools allow camp set-up, training, and take-down to count toward the number of weeks or needed hours of experience)
- Students earn six to 15 academic credits
- Academic requirements — weekly reports, evaluations, major project
- Typically offered year-round; summer is the most common
- Considered pre-professional experience
- Usually completed during the final semester of a student's coursework, although some programs offer internships in the summer between the junior and senior years
- Often requires exposure to a breadth of experiences — leadership, supervision, programming, marketing, budgeting, human resources, maintenance, etc.

2. Practicum

- Between three and 9 weeks of full-time experience
- Students earn three to 9 academic credits
- Academic requirements — weekly reports, evaluations, significant project
- Commonly offered year-round; completed in any semester (including summer); may be taken while students are enrolled in other coursework (either face-to-face or online)
- Experiences may be broad or in-depth in one area

3. Independent study

- Any number of hours of experience; can be one day or three weeks long
- Students earn one to three academic credits
- Academic requirements vary by credit hour; independent study commonly includes some level of research, readings, final paper
- Typically developed/created as a contract between a student and a faculty advisor; most often completed during a semester while enrolled in other coursework but can be accomplished in any term
- Offers special focus on one area of academic interest to the student
- Experiences are focused on a particular area of study

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIELD-BASED ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

- Pay for the academic credit hours in which enrolled
- Complete academic work; student will likely need access to Internet or cell phone service
 - Create learning goals and objectives
 - Complete and submit weekly reports and other homework as assigned
 - Create, implement, and evaluate a special project (beneficial to the camp)
- Meet agency expectations
 - Follow agency (not university) schedule
 - Uphold agency mission, vision, position requirements
- Remain in contact with university instructor throughout the experience. Offers special focus on one area of academic interest to the student

UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIELD-BASED ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

- Facilitate a formal agreement/contract with the camp
- Approve site/opportunity prior to beginning of field experience
- Provide student with practicum/internship manual/independent study contract
- Maintain communication with site supervisor and student for the duration of the experience
- Visit the student (in-person, virtual, conference call) at least once during the experience
- Evaluate university-based assignments
- Assign an academic grade

CAMP RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN WORKING WITH STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FIELD-BASED ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

1. Create position, job description

2. Inform college/university program of offerings

- Create a formal agreement/contract with the university
- Determine which semesters a field-based experience may be offered (students often engage in such experiences in all semesters — fall, spring, and summer)
- Identify a site supervisor (full-time camp employee)
- Supervisors must be qualified (typically two years of experience in a related field, college degree)

3. Supervise the student

- Ask for copy of the student internship or practicum manual or independent study contract
- Mentor the student throughout the summer
- Evaluate the student (typically at mid-term and final)
- Facilitate student goals
- Help to identify a project to be accomplished by the student

4. Pay/remuneration (state laws may dictate this)

- Salary, hourly pay, stipend
- Housing, transportation, meals