



**Oregon State University**  
**College of Agricultural  
Sciences**

**DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ECONOMICS**

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

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**Purpose:**

Both AEC (Applied Economics) majors (AFBM—Agricultural and Food Business Management, and EEP—Environmental Economics and Policy) require that students complete an Experiential Learning (EL) activity. Allowable activities include an internship, faculty-supervised research, a special project, or international study. 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.

**General Description of EL Activities**

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 AFBM or EEP major. Or, alternatively, students may learn *beyond* what they were exposed to in classes. AEC 410, 3-6 credits, Pass/No Pass.

A **Research Project** (AEC 401) provides a systematic opportunity for undergraduates to engage in independent research with a faculty mentor. There are three Research options listed below. AEC 401, 3 credits, Pass/No Pass.

Course-based Research: By design, this student research will build upon current course content from specific departmental upper division courses (consult with the AEC advisor on the available courses). An AEC faculty member will mentor students in their independent research which will result in a prepared research report. Students have flexibility to choose their specific research focus based on consultation with the supervising faculty, and within the bounds of the course.

General Research: this independent research is not specifically affiliated with an AEC upper –division course. Students work with an EL Coordinator who will mentor students in developing an independent research topic and which will result in a prepared research report.

Scholarly Research: Another EL activity is to collaborate with a faculty member on an ongoing faculty research project. The faculty will assign the student areas of responsibility and ultimately the student may be a contributing author of a scholarly publication or report.

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. The end product being a project report. AEC 406, 3 credits, Pass/No Pass

Some students wish to participate in an **International Study Experience (AEC 402 Independent Study,)** 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. 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. AEC 402, 2-6 credits, Pass/No Pass\*

*\*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 two credits under AEC 402, Independent Study. Students who are unable to arrange transferrable credits for their international coursework may, with AEC approval, receive up to 6 credits.*

#### **Arranging an Experiential Learning Activity:**

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 student learning objectives. 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. 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 internships 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 Completion Requirements:**

1. Registration and completion requirements for each of the four EL alternatives are below. Please note that all of these courses require Department approval before registering. Approval can be gained through the AEC Advisor. All EL activities require:
  - a completed EL Agreement, with Student Learning Outcomes, must be approved by an EL Coordinator and be submitted with all required signatures BEFORE the activity begins;
  - a written report. To ensure time for needed corrections and additions to a written report, it is

- strongly recommended that reports be submitted no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled oral date. *Unless there are mitigating circumstances, this policy will be strictly enforced.*
- and oral presentation. Students will not be permitted to complete the oral presentation portion of their EL until their written report has been approved by their faculty advisor or the EL coordinator.
2. Internships require a minimum of 200 hours on the job experience followed by the requirements above.

### **Faculty Advisor Responsibility:**

The department has faculty who serve as EL Coordinators and are listed at the beginning of this document. An EL Coordinator will meet with the student prior to beginning of the EL activity to assist the student in selecting the appropriate type of EL activity, advice on opportunities with employers and faculty; and to be sure the registration, agreement form, paper, and presentation have been completed. If the EL activity is being completed under the guidance of another faculty (such as in the Course-Related Research or Scholarly Research), the EL Coordinator will work with the supervising faculty.

### **Internship or 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 Report:**

All students must submit a concise, well-written report following completion of their EL activity. A Draft should be submitted 2 weeks prior to the presentation and students should expect to be requested to make edits.

Internship/International Report: 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.

- 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?

Research/Project Report: Research reports should follow an outline as requested by the EL Coordinator, faculty mentor, or project supervisor.

Research report will most often follow a research paper outline including:

- A. Introduction
- B. Background

- C. Literature Review
- D. Methods
- E. Results/Discussion
- F. Conclusions/Recommendations
- G. References

Oral Presentation: The presentation will be 30 minutes in length, including about 10 minutes for discussion and questions. Typically, the presentation will follow the basic outline of the paper. Students should 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.

In the case of Research presentations, the student should also add a brief section at the end of their presentations summarizing what they gained from the research experience, what educational areas or courses were particularly useful to them, and if they had to do it all over again, what modifications would they suggest?

OPTIONAL: A Poster presentation may be substituted for an oral presentation with the approval of an EL Coordinator. Poster presentations can be given at public poster events on campus or at academic conferences. Consult with an EL advisor on these opportunities.