

## **Field Guide - Agriculture & NRM 420, Supervised Field Experience (Internship Field Guide)**

### **Purpose**

Supervised field experience is an important aspect of the educational preparation of professionals for agricultural and natural resource management industries. Such experiences reinforce classroom instruction, provide an opportunity for students to observe and engage in the application of recently acquired knowledge, and enable students to gain valuable insights into the organization and operation of businesses and agencies in various sectors of the industry. Field experience which is appropriately supervised and approached with an attitude of enthusiasm and inquiry can be the most meaningful learning exercise in a student's curriculum.

The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences of The University of Tennessee at Martin has developed this guide for students, representatives of cooperating businesses or agencies which participate in the supervised field experience program, and faculty who serve as field work supervisors for the University. This outline is intended only as a guide; changes may be made as circumstances warrant to improve the quality of a student's work/learning experience.

To be properly beneficial for a student, supervised field experience should include: 1) involvement in a broad spectrum of activities representative of the major types of activities engaged in by the business or agency, ranging from relatively simple assignments to situations involving more complex management and 2) routine administrative responsibilities. Initially, students should assist and observe to become familiar with staff and their major responsibilities, general policies and procedures, company or agency rules and regulations, facilities and equipment, major services or products provided by the business or agency, clientele served, and so forth. As a student becomes acquainted with operational procedures, he or she should assume increasing responsibilities and perhaps even primary responsibility for a designated area of operation. Individuals differ, and each student should be led as soon and as far as feasible into increasing responsibility as the work period progresses.

Field work is an important and potentially very beneficial phase of a student's preparation for entry into a professionally-oriented career after completion of his or her degree. Obviously it can do much to illustrate application of learning and expertise for the solution of practical problems. Also, appropriate field experience can contribute to a continuing flow of qualified and competent personnel into agricultural and resource management industries.

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES

For students in any of the curricula leading to a degree in Agriculture or Natural Resources Management, the supervised field experience should be pursued with major objectives to:

- ...increase your preparation for assuming an effective role in a chosen career area after completion of your degree.
- ...use to optimum advantage a unique opportunity to learn by doing.
- ...increase your comprehension of the scope of agricultural and resource management industries.
- ...become more familiar with the varied roles and responsibilities of professional workers in agriculture and natural resource management.
- ...improve understanding of the functions, administrative organization, and managerial practices of the business or agency with which you work.
- ...increase knowledge and appreciation of human behavior in a work environment to improve leadership abilities and ability to work harmoniously with others.
- ...identify your strengths and weaknesses so that you may overcome potential handicaps to effective performance.

More specifically, each student should endeavor to increase his or her level of knowledge by gaining experience in many of the following areas:

**Technical Expertise** - The success of any business or agency is directly dependent upon the ability of its "front line" technical and support personnel to effectively execute their responsibilities.

**Management** - Observe in action, study, and participate in the maintenance and operating procedures of the company with which you work.

**Administration** - Study, observe in action, and insofar as feasible participate in the development of administrative policies and procedures of the company or agency with which one works.

**Other** - Endeavor to participate to the extent feasible in activities and programs such as research projects, professional meetings, conferences or workshops, public relations, community service projects, etc.

## CRITERIA OF ELIGIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE

1. Prior approval of arrangements with cooperating employer and academic supervisors is necessary.
2. Students should have junior status in most cases, and sufficient course work in the major field of study (by the beginning date) to benefit adequately from the field experience. Departures from these requirements may be justified by special or extenuating circumstances.
3. Minimum cumulative GPA must be 2.0 at the end of the semester immediately preceding the supervised field experience.
4. Duration of the field experience must be a minimum of one semester (at least 12 weeks) for 6 hours credit and two semesters for 8 hours to fulfill course requirements.

5. **Students must officially enroll in Agriculture 420 or NRM 420, Supervised Field Experience, and satisfactorily complete all course requirements in order to receive academic credit.**
6. **Location of the field experience will be decided jointly by the student, his or her field experience supervisor, and an authorized representative of the sponsoring company or agency (company or agency with which the student will work). Approval of all supervised field experience assignments will be contingent upon the anticipated quality of the experience and benefits to be derived from it in relation to the career aspirations and to a potential cooperating company or agency prior to final approval by his or her field experience supervisor.**
7. **Since the financial resources of most students are limited, sponsoring companies or agencies are encouraged to provide some salary or compensation appropriate to the value of services performed by the student. However, the level of remuneration will not be a consideration in approval of field experience assignments.**

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY, COMPANY OR AGENCY, AND STUDENT**

- A. **The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences of The University of Tennessee at Martin shall:**
  1. **Approve cooperating companies or agencies for participation in the supervised field experience program based upon the quality of field experience they can provide for students.**
  2. **Assign a faculty member as field experience supervisor to:**
    - a. **counsel with students in preparation for the field experience.**
    - b. **visit (when possible) the field experience location to confer with the student and his or her company or agency supervisor to determine the student's level of performance and recommend alterations which may be appropriate.**
    - c. **evaluate field experience reports and, if needed, discuss them with the student and his/her company or agency supervisor.**
    - d. **evaluate the student's performance and assist the student in self-evaluation, and suggest approaches for improvement.**
    - e. **assign the student's final grade for academic credit at the end of the field experience.**
  3. **Determine the eligibility of students to take the supervised field experience course.**
  4. **Approve each field experience placement in cooperation with the student and the company or agency.**
  5. **Provide cooperating companies or agencies and participating students with a "Field Guide for Agriculture and Natural Resources Management 420, Supervised Field Experience."**
  6. **Endeavor to maintain free and open communication with cooperating companies and agencies in order to improve the supervised field experience program.**

**B. The cooperating company or agency shall:**

- 1. Assign a qualified staff member to serve as the field experience supervisor.**
- 2. Assist each individual student in developing a program of field experience which is suitable for his or her needs and with the least disruption of the regular work program of the company or agency. This may be done in cooperation with the University field experience supervisor.**
- 3. Introduce and orient each student to his or her new assignment.**
- 4. Evaluate the performance of each student place with the company or agency.**
- 5. Offer suggestions to the University for improvement of the supervised field experience program.**

**C. The student shall:**

- 1. Seek prior approval of arrangements with cooperating employer and academic supervisor to the intended beginning and ending date of the field experience.**
- 2. Fulfill all eligibility criteria for supervised field experience in an acceptable fashion.**
- 3. Consult with the University field experience supervisor to secure placement with an approved cooperating company or agency.**
- 4. Discharge his or her responsibilities with initiative and in a professional manner.**
- 5. Conform to company or agency policies and regulations, including codes of dress and conduct.**
- 6. Participate in training or orientation sessions, attend conferences, and submit reports, etc., as required by the company or agency.**
- 7. Visit, observe, and participate in phases of the company or agency operation other than those to which he or she is assigned in an effort to learn as much as possible about varied aspects of the organization and its operation.**
- 8. Prepare a notebook of detailed information which may include: company or agency policy statements and regulations; organizational charts; personnel forms; informational brochures; examples of procedural worksheets, records, and reports; outlines of job responsibilities or descriptions at various management levels; budget forms; project outlines and reports; etc.**
- 9. Prepare and submit the following required reports to the University field experience supervisor (copies are included in this Field Guide):**
  - a. initial field experience report.**
  - b. weekly field experience reports.**
  - c. notebook as described in no. 8 above.**

## **NOTEBOOK REQUIREMENTS**

Each student who participates in Agriculture or Natural Resources Management 420 will complete a report or notebook on the company or agency for which he or she works. Preparation of this report should enhance the student's comprehension of the organization, management, and operation of the company or agency. This knowledge should contribute to the student's competence in his or her chosen career area. The notebook may contain, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- I. Legal status of the company or agency**
  - A. Brief history of the company or agency**
  - B. Legal basis of the company or agency**
    - 1. Public agency, private or public corporation, individually owned business, etc.?**
    - 2. Legislation (if any) establishing, or enabling the establishment of, the company or agency.**
    - 3. Major federal and state laws governing the organization (if applicable)**
    - 4. Local ordinances which regulate or influence operational patterns.**
    - 5. Other legal constraints**
  - C. Include copies of establishing legislation, enabling legislation, constitution and by-laws, corporate charter, legislation or ordinances which regulate operation, etc.**
- II. General Administration**
  - A. Governance**
    - 1. Individually owned business or partnership**
    - 2. Board of Directors or Board of Governors**
      - a. number**
      - b. background and interests**
      - c. attainment of position--election, appointment, invitation, etc.**
      - d. officers**
      - e. procedures for exercising governance**
    - 3. Include copies of policy statements, publications, charts showing relationship of governing body to the total organization, etc.**
  - B. Internal Organization**

1. Relationship of different components (departments or divisions, such as personnel, accounting or fiscal, marketing and sales, research and development, etc.) to the total organization.
2. Personnel policies--method of selection, job classifications, qualification criteria, evaluation procedures, salary levels, vacation policies, fringe benefits, etc.
3. Office procedures--filing systems, record-keeping systems, etc.
4. Include organization charts showing channels of reporting and supervision; copies of job analysis or job description; copies of position announcements; outline of recruiting and hiring procedures; samples of records and reports; etc.

**C. Fiscal Affairs**

1. Budget--type of budget, major budget categories (e.g., wages and salaries, capital expenditures, etc.), procedures for developing the budget.
2. Sources of income--for example
  - a. if a public or non-profit agency, tax appropriations, gifts and donations, etc.
  - b. if an individually owned business or corporation for profit, sale of goods or merchandise (major categories), contract of services, etc.
3. Major expenditure--categories of goods and/or services which account for most of expenditures of funds.
4. Policies and procedures for handling funds--requisitioning procedures, issuance of purchase orders, authorization of expenditures, bidding procedures, etc.
5. Special financial problems--summary of important or unusual problems caused by legislative or regulatory constraints, trends in the national or local economy, etc.
6. Include copies of sample forms for budgets, requisitions, purchase orders, accounting sheets, etc.

**D. Public relations and/or advertising programs**

1. Objectives of the public relations programs of the company or agency.
2. Development of a public relations campaign
  - a. continuous or sporadic?
  - b. internal (company or agency staff) or contracted?
  - c. department or officer within the organization having primary

- d. **responsibility  
media utilized--mass media, in-house publications, publications developed for broad circulation, etc.**
- 3. **Major concepts, products, and services emphasized in public relations efforts**
- 4. **Techniques which have been particularly effective or ineffective**
- 5. **Procedures used in resolving complaints**
- 6. **Include copies of news stories (paper, radio, TV), press releases, advertisements, brochures or newsletters, annual reports, etc.**

### **III. Management**

- A. **Responsibility for and procedures for initiation of:**
  - 1. **Maintenance of grounds and auxiliary installations**
  - 2. **Maintenance of buildings and equipment**
  - 3. **Job planning and scheduling**
  - 4. **Training and orientation programs for staff**
  - 5. **Compliance with OSHA regulations for safety of workers and visitors**
  - 6. **Protection, security, and law enforcement**
- B. **Include copies of job schedules, maintenance contracts, equipment inventories, work orders, etc.**

### **IV. Special Programs**

- A. **Research and development**
  - 1. **Organizational unit responsible**
  - 2. **Technical and support personnel involved**
  - 3. **Major emphasis and goals**
  - 4. **Unusual approaches or techniques employed**
- B. **New product or service introduction and marketing**
  - 1. **Procedures used (refer to public relations section above)**
  - 2. **Anticipated trends (e.g., mechanization, financing and capital management, consulting services, etc.)**
- C. **Others**