

Practicum in Geography - Geomatics - Environmental Studies
GEOG4406/4408 - GEOM4406/4408 - ENST 4001/4002
Carleton University – Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
2016-2017, Fall/Winter Session

Frequently Asked Questions

Please peruse these typical questions and answers, as they provide additional information that supplements the Practicum InfoPack information package.

1. Where can I find detailed information about the Practicum program for Geography, Geomatics or Environmental Studies?

You can find all the details, documents, deadlines, requirements, and setup information for the GEOG, GEOM or ENST Practicum in the Practicum Infopack, at the link located within the Practicum webpage here: <http://www1.carleton.ca/geography/practicum/>

2. How do I register for the Practicum?

You are required to fill out your Practicum documentation (cover letter, resume, student registration form) and submit these documents to the Practicum coordinator, so we can be informed of your intentions to take the Practicum. You are then required to secure a Practicum placement, details of which are to be approved by the Practicum coordinator, before you are permitted to register in the course. Once you have a Practicum placement setup, submit a CROS request for the course. The coordinator will then inform the Practicum administrator to open a spot for you to register in the course. An automatic confirmation e-mail will be sent to your **Carleton Cmail account** informing you to register in the course. Register as soon as possible so you can be on the class e-mail list, enabling you to receive e-mails about meetings, deliverables etc. To complete the final documentation process, have your practicum sponsor fill out the Sponsor Data Form and you and your sponsor fill out the Insurance documents and submit these to the Practicum coordinator. Once that is done, the Practicum administrator will open a spot for you to register in the course. All documents can be sent by e-mail, snail mail, fax, or submitted in hardcopy directly to the Practicum coordinator, or on the cuLearn Practicum Pre-Registration Information site.

3. What documentation do I need to submit prior to registering in the Practicum?

It would be useful to initially submit your cover letter, updated resume and student registration form to the Practicum coordinator once you are certain you are required or eligible to take the Practicum. The other documents (Sponsor Data Form and Insurance documents can be submitted once a placement is secured by the student and approved by the practicum coordinator. See ‘How do I register for the Practicum’.

4. I am blocked from registering in the Practicum - what do I do?

The Practicum is a blocked course and requires permission of the department. Once you have completed the steps in ‘How do I register for the Practicum’, you will be permitted to register in the course if you meet all the requirements.

5. Are there deadlines for registering in the Practicum?

Yes there are, and they are indicated in the Practicum Infopack. There is some flexibility, but you should secure a Practicum sponsor as soon as possible in the summer, especially for the fall semester, as this is a vacation period, and many people are away on holidays. Certainly by mid August you should have secured a placement and submitted your documents to the Practicum coordinator. By September, you should be ready to start your placement. For the winter semester, it is recommended that you have secured a placement and submitted your documents to the Practicum coordinator by December 15. Note that the university has final deadlines for registering in courses, typically mid September for fall courses, and mid January for winter courses, so these dates are the absolute final deadline for finalizing placements and registering in the Practicum. In the unlikely event that you start your placement late, you may have to make up the lost time by working extra days.

6. Can I take the Practicum in the first and/or second semesters? Can I take two Practica in one semester?

Yes, you can register in the Practicum in either the first or second semester if you are intending to take only one Practicum. You can take two Practica, one in each semester, only if there is room on your audit for two Practica. If your schedule permits, you may be able to take two Practica at two different placements in one semester, but this is not really recommended as a viable alternative to the two semester model!

7. Is there a difference between Practicum I and Practicum II?

There is no difference between Practicum I and Practicum II. Having two Practica allows students to experience two different work placement environments, or to have a longer, more in depth experience at one placement.

8. Does my Practicum experience have to be related to my program of study in GEOG, GEOM, or ENST?

Yes, your Practicum placement must be related to a. Geography if your studies are in GEOG, b. Geomatics or related field if your studies are in GEOM, c. Environmental Studies or related field if your studies are in ENST. There is flexibility with your placement location and job responsibilities, as we would like to ensure that the experience meets your academic goals and career aspirations.

9. Can I take the Practicum over the summer?

New insurance regulations specify that since the Practicum course is not offered over the summer, **you would not be covered by WSIB insurance coverage, and hence liability issues unfortunately forces us to not permit students to take the Practicum of the summer.**

10. Can I use my full/part time job as my Practicum?

No you cannot, as the Practicum is strictly a non paid employment experience, with conflict of interest guidelines as set out in the Practicum Setup and Approval document. However, if you work on a separate project distinct from your full/part time job, that meets the academic requirements of the course and is approved by the Practicum coordinator, then you may be permitted to register in the Practicum.

11. Can someone help me find a Practicum placement?

You should start the process of finding a Practicum placement months in advance before taking the course, as summer vacations, email and phone tag between you and potential sponsors, no

replies and various other communication issues will affect the speed of securing a placement. If you have difficulties finding a Practicum placement, the Practicum coordinator may assist you with finding a placement by searching previous sponsoring agencies and organizations, provided you have exhausted all possibilities and have made an extensive search yourself. Note that a list of agencies and internet links is available in the Practicum Infopack, so check that out first. Also, a list of current Practicum opportunities is posted on the Practicum website, but there is no guarantee that these opportunities are still available. Finding the placement yourself gives you experience in job hunting skills, and who knows more about your career and academic interests than yourself!

12. Can I take the Practicum in my third year?

No, the Practicum is strictly and exclusively reserved for 4th year students, and these students will have had the appropriate amount of academic and practical experience to be most prepared and knowledgeable for their work experience.

13. Is there a Practicum organizational meeting that I need to attend?

Yes, there is an organizational meeting in early September which you are required to attend. Date, time and location is specified in the Practicum Infopack and is subject to change, so check for notices around the department and a possible e-mail from the Practicum coordinator informing you of any changes in the date, time or location.

14. Are there regularly scheduled meetings for the Practicum?

There are no regularly scheduled meetings throughout the semester for the Practicum courses. There is one Practicum organizational meeting early in the first semester for all Practicum students (GEOG/GEOM/ENST). For all Practicum students, there is a scheduled session for oral presentations at the end of the semester, typically the last Friday of classes (subject to change). Notices will be posted and students will be e-mailed with the schedule.

15. What is the Practicum workplace timeframe?

The Practicum is completed in a one semester timeframe, requiring typically 1 day a week for 10 weeks (about a 70 hour experience). However, this timeframe can be altered, if required, by mutual consent between you and your sponsor ie you may choose to be at your placement for two afternoons a week, or perhaps every day during study week, as long as your minimum 70 hour experience is completed (Putting in extra hours may impress your sponsor!). You can also start your practicum as soon as it is approved - no need to wait until after the first organizational meeting! An early start may give you more time near the end to prepare your written report and oral presentation. Logging of hours is not required, as your time at your placement is by the honour system, but you are the beneficiary of putting in all of the hours required.

16. Why do I need a Work/Education Placement Agreement/Post-Secondary Form (Insurance form) filled out?

Since you are working in an off-campus workplace setting, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is responsible for your safety and insurance coverage while on the job. These forms are used and audited by the Ministry to keep statistics for work placements, and for any claims, should they occur.

17. What information do I have to supply when I correspond with the Practicum coordinator or administrator?

When making enquiries about the Practicum, it would be useful to always include your name, student number and your program. Eg. Jane Doe, 100461238, ENST. Also, the University requires that if students correspond with faculty/staff by e-mail, that they use their student Cmail account or at least forward their Cmail e-mails to their personal e-mail account. This is especially important because when the Practicum administrator opens a spot for you to register in the course, an automatic e-mail is sent to your Cmail account informing you to register in the course. Once you are registered in the course, you will be on the class list and receive e-mails from the Practicum coordinator about meetings, deliverables etc through your Cmail account.

18. How is the Practicum evaluated?

Students are required to submit a 10-12 page written report and prepare and deliver a 3 minute oral presentation accompanied by a poster on their workplace experience. The oral presentations session and submission of the reports are scheduled typically during a class meeting on the last Friday of the semester. Also, an evaluation form and comment sheet are e-mailed to your sponsor, for their input in the assessment process, near the end of the semester.

19. Who do I contact for further information concerning the Practicum?

You can contact:

John Milton, Practicum Coordinator

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University
A239 Loeb Building
1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 x2709 - Office
613-520-4301 - Fax
steve.prashker@carleton.ca

Judy Eddy, Practicum Administrator

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University
B349 Loeb Building
1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
613-520-2600 x8127 - Office
613-520-4301 - Fax
judy.eddy@carleton.ca