**ETE Practicum Experience:**

The main point of the practicum experience requirement is to help you develop professional skills that will serve you well in your future endeavors. Since you are the person who knows your own needs, interests, and goals best, **finding and securing an experience is UP TO YOU**. The ETE Faculty & Staff will support you throughout the search process by including resume & cover letter workshops and other professional skill development exercises in your colloquia, providing you with ample search resources and position announcements, and making themselves available to mentor you throughout the process, but the rest is up to you. Below is a brief overview of the practicum experience process & your options for completion from start to finish.

**Step 1: Pick Your Practicum Experience: You’ve Got Options! – Individual, Experiential Learning-Based (for ETE students only), Group-Based Practicum Activities (open to all Scholars), or Travel Study/Study Abroad**

🡪**Option A: Individual, Experiential-Learning Based**

This can be an internship, a job, a volunteer experience, or research. If you are wondering whether a particular opportunity would be a good fit as your practicum, ask yourself the following questions:

* **Most importantly - does this experience interest me professionally and/or academically? Would it be a good experience for me?**
* **Can I identify at least some small way to connect this experience to an issue in sustainability/sustainable development?** *\*Hint: try doing an online search of the focus of your experience + sustainability (such as “psychology” AND “sustainability” OR “sustainable development). You might be surprised at some of the creative results you find! If you are still unsuccessful, don’t be discouraged – the ETE Faculty & Staff can help you find a way to connect virtually anything to sustainability – make an appointment to meet with them to discuss. If you are having trouble with inspiration, refer to the Sustainability Big Ideas document on the weebly site.* ***Do not give up on an experience just because you can’t see an obvious connection to sustainability.*** *Check with your friendly ETE staff for help first. We have yet to meet an experience that we couldn’t connect in some way.*
* **Will I be able to complete at least 40 hours total of on-site work spanning over at least 3 weeks?** *\*We are going for breadth and depth here. This means you could work 10 hrs/wk over 4 weeks and satisfy the requirement.*

***…if you are able to address all of the aforementioned items, it’s likely your experience will be approved! Even if you aren’t, it is in your interest to double check before you write the experience off.***

🡪**Option B: Class as practicum**

The College Park Scholars community offers a number of courses each year, some of which can replace the experiential practicum experience. Below are a few of the options we consistently accept in lieu of pursuing an individual practicum experience. Note that the list of courses offered changes, as does the content of the courses. **Because of this, you must complete the learning contract and get your class approved prior to starting.** Just because we accepted it for someone last year does not mean it is still appropriate.

* **CPETXXX: ETE PALS Course (**offered by ETE): This is a service-learning course offered in partnership with the PALS (Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability). It is still in development. In 2015 it was a partnership with the city of Frederick and students worked as a team to design a curbside composting program to be used in a municipal anaerobic biodigester. Details will be announced in colloquium.
* **CPSP 349T: Infrastructure and Society** (offered by STS): This service learning course is designed to emphasize the importance of maintaining infrastructure viability for a functioning society. You will work with professional engineers from a variety of disciplines to learn vital technical assessment skills for evaluating the safety and viability of various aspects of our infrastructure. These engineers work through the Maryland Defense Force (http://mddf.maryland.gov/), a volunteer corps that provides vital services for free beyond their professional obligations to help maintain Maryland’s infrastructure.
* **CPSP359S: Advanced Practicum: Discovery Research** (offered by the Scholars Central Staff): students develop and answer a research question of particular interest in a community of research peers. They are taught how to engage in the process of research (including methods, analysis, and reflection) as well as develop communication skills. This course is based on-campus in the Cambridge Community.
* **CPSP359W: Advanced Practicum: Discovery Research at the Library of Congress** (offered by the Scholars Central Staff & University Librarians): this course is very similar in nature to the aforementioned Discovery Research course, but also includes the opportunity to visit & utilize resources at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. throughout the course.

**🡪Option C: Travel Study/Study Abroad**

If you’re interested in going on a travel study/study abroad, schedule an appointment with the ETE Faculty to discuss how this could potentially count as your practicum experience. This unique opportunity means that you must fulfill some slightly different requirements – the ETE faculty can provide you with additional information about what’s involved.

**Step 2: Get Approved by ETE Asst Director (by submitting your supervisor-signed Learning Contract via email ASAP!) The Assistant Director is Tim Knight** [**trknight@umd.edu**](mailto:trknight@umd.edu)

Once you’ve secured an experience that meets the aforementioned criteria, it’s time to make things official. The sooner you can submit your supervisor-signed Learning Contract for review by ETE Faculty, the better (even if the actual experience is a few months down the road!). Bottom line is, you absolutely MUST submit your Learning Contract AND have it approved PRIOR to starting your experience… otherwise you run the risk of not having the experience count as your practicum. Again, see the ETE Program website for all the associated forms (such as the Learning Contract).

On the learning contract, you’ll see that you can earn 1-3 credits based on the total number of hours you intend to spend on-site. Remember, the minimum is at least 40 hours over the span of at least 3 weeks. If you don’t know for certain how many hours you’ll be working yet, try to estimate. The important part is that you meet at least the minimum requirement.

You’ll also need to determine how you’d best categorize your experience – does it most closely resemble an internship/job, service-learning/community service work, or formal research in a laboratory, etc.? Just use your best judgment on this, and contact the ETE Faculty if you have questions.

**Step 3: Complete On-Site Coursework**

Once your experience has been approved by the ETE Faculty, you can get to work on your on-site assignments (see the ETE Program website). All practicum-related assignments will be due on the first day of class in the spring semester of your sophomore year.

**Step 4: Register for Course – Spring Semester Sophomore Year**

You’ll enroll for a different course number based on whether you classified your experience as most closely resembling an internship/job, service-learning/community service, or formal research.

You’ll also register for 1-3 credits based on the total number of hours you ultimately ended up spending on-site (which we’ll verify with your supervisor).

Note that you will need to sign up a course regardless of which practicum option you chose. Check with Tim Knight to determine which course number you should sign up for.

**Step 5: Complete In-Class Practicum Coursework**

When you take the ETE practicum follow-up course, the workload will be reduced (since you are earning the bulk of your academic credit for the work you did on-site). We’ll focus on preparing you for the Academic Showcase and further developing associated professional skills.