

Department of Biology
Ball State University
Bio 369/669 Internship, BIO 394/694 Practicum in Biotechnology
Program Description

What is it?

An internship is a paid, supervised field or laboratory educational experience that exposes the students to the professional workplace prior to graduation. A practicum is a similar position, but is unpaid. The university makes this distinction by offering two separate courses. However, both programs use the same forms and procedures. Typically, the student would be engaged in activities associated with his/her professional interest area on a short-term basis. For the Biotechnology Internship or Practicum credit, these opportunities may be in areas such as:

- Biotechnology
- Microbiology
- Biomedical Research
- Cellular and molecular biology
- Ecology
- Plant and animal biology
- Genetics

This program is designed to prepare students for biology related careers in private corporations, private individual or small firms, and public agencies. In addition, these experiences may aid a student in graduate school placement.

Why do it?

The experience of having students work in their chosen profession prior to graduation carries innumerable benefits. These may include the following:

1. Actual professional experience in their chosen field
2. College credit
3. Payment (usually) for their contribution
4. Relating classroom activities to actual profession activities
5. Better preparing students for post graduation workplace
6. Promoting student-employer networking
7. Solidifying (or maybe liquefying) a chosen career path
8. Promoting job placement

Generally, the benefits of obtaining this type of experience build an important bridge transitioning the student from classroom to the workplace. ***No single classroom, book, or learning experience of the student may be as significant to the eventual disposition of the student and his/her career path.***

Requirements for Biotechnology students:

Undergraduate candidates for Biotechnology internships should have completed their sophomore year and the core requirements of the biology curriculum. In addition, students should also have completed Cell Biology (BIO 215/655). Candidates should submit completed application forms to and have personal interviews with the internship coordinator or a Biotechnology faculty member. They should also expect a personal interview with potential employers and complete employer's application forms. Students should have cumulative a GPA of at least 2.75, and a GPA of at least 3.0 in courses offered by the Department of Biology.

The internship application procedures and requirements for graduate candidates are similar to the undergraduate program. However, these students must gain permission and coordinate this activity with their graduate advisor.

Once in the program, students are required to seek internship opportunities. Although a student may participate in an internship at any time during their tenure, most students schedule internships during the second half of the program when they have achieved some practical skills.

Students unable to secure an internship outside the university are required to take part in an unpaid Practicum in Biotechnology within the Biology Department. The Biotechnology Faculty and Internship Coordinator will determine the details of the project involved in the Practicum.

Up to 6 Internship credit hours (BIO 369/669) or 3 Practicum credit hours (BIO 394/694) may be taken. Both undergraduate and graduate credit can be earned for this experience. The number of Internship/Practicum work experience credits will equal 1 credit hr/40 hrs on the job.