

Guidelines for BIOL 400 - Ocean Internships

The purpose of BIOL 400 is to provide undergraduates majoring in the Marine Biology BA program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa an opportunity to complete their required capstone synthesis experience under the mentorship of professionals working in marine related fields, either on or off campus. This course is one way among several that students can complete this requirement. Other options include courses such as Field Problems in Marine Biology (BIOL 403), Advanced Topics in Marine Biology (BIOL 404), Directed Research (BIOL/BOT/MICR/OCN 499), or Advanced Quantitative Underwater Ecological Surveying Techniques (QUEST) MARE 364 (UH Hilo). BIOL 404 differs from the other courses in that it is broader in possible topics and less tied to lab and field research per se.

In BIOL 400, your mentor (often the “Principal Investigator” [PI] or the lab or supervisor of the organization with whom you are working) must work with you to develop a synthesis project, internship, or other experience that can be completed in the timeframe of 1-2 semesters. BIOL 400 students may be trained and have regular day-to-day contact with other members of the lab or organization (e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral researchers), but the mentor is expected to play a significant role in the development of the project and have regular contact with you over the course of the project.

An important outcome of the internship experience is that, through interactions with an experienced mentor, students will gain exposure to professional areas of work in the marine sciences. Internships can take many forms and students are encouraged to think creatively. Internships are meant to expand a student's professional skill and experience and will be evaluated on this basis. Some examples of potentially appropriate experiences include directed reading and synthesis focused on a particular marine-related topic under the supervision of UHM faculty, lab technician positions that involve technical skills (such as data entry and processing), teaching internships associated with courses offered by UHM faculty, internships outside of UHM at marine-focused agencies and NGOs, scientific illustration or art, as well as public education and outreach efforts.

Students who are interested in completing their capstone requirement by undertaking a mentored research project should instead consider BIOL 499 and other related research courses instead of BIOL 400.

Before enrolling in Ocean Internships, you must identify a mentor. Consider approaching faculty members with whom you have completed coursework, search the web pages of the departments within the College of Natural Sciences (CNS), the

School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST), other suitable faculty members around campus or at other universities, or talk with other experts in your field of interest at UHM or in the community. **We highly recommend you work on finding a mentor 1 to 2 semesters before you intend to start your internship.**

Keep in mind that mentorship is service to the university community that typically requires a significant commitment of time and resources by the mentor. Therefore, you must put your best foot forward when contacting potential mentors by familiarizing yourself with what they do **so that you can make a case for yourself as someone genuinely interested in their area of expertise.** Students are not necessarily expected to devise their own project ideas before meeting with a potential mentor, but should be able to explain what kinds of projects interest them and why a particular mentor or organization might be a good fit.

Ocean internships can be completed for a variable number of credits. One credit is considered the equivalent of 4 hours of work per week (and 64 hours over a 16 week semester). For example, a student who enrolls in two credits of BIOL 400 is expected to work 2 credits x 4 hours/week x 16 weeks = 128 hours over the semester.

Gaining Approval to Register

Once you have identified an appropriate mentor and internship experience, you must receive approval from the School of Life Sciences to ensure that the planned internship meets the program requirements.

To do so, please fill-out the application form (<https://forms.gle/cdfrpECw8R5e9Kbz5>), describing the details of your planned internship. Be sure your mentor approves of what you write in the two key sections:

1. Please describe your planned internship activity (500 words max.)
2. What professional skills will this internship provide and how will it contribute to your professional goals? (500 words max)

The proposal will be evaluated based on the guidelines outlined in the first section of this document. Proposals are due no later than one week before the start of the semester in which you plan to complete the internship.

1. Complete the Application for BIOL 400 Ocean Internships form (<https://forms.gle/cdfrpECw8R5e9Kbz5>).

2. Ask your mentor to send a brief email message to lifesci@hawaii.edu with a short (2-3 sentences) description of the internship and confirming the number of credits and working hours required to complete it (following the credit to working hour conversion outlined above).

At the end of the semester in which you complete the internship, a written report will be due in order to receive a grade. This should not exceed 1250 words in length and should report on the internship experience, including what skills and experience you learned, how these fit into your longer term career goals, and any problems or difficulties you encountered. You should work with your mentor on the specific structure and content of your report before writing.

Submit the Final Report to: lifesci@hawaii.edu