Overview

The Interior Design Field Study is an excellent opportunity to gain hands on experience within the design profession while earning credit toward your degree in interior design. Credit for this experience is only offered to students who have successfully completed all interior design course work through their third-year design studies. If you are not approved for field study, then use the credit hours for free electives. In addition, this opportunity is given to those students whose Field Study Application has been approved by the interior design faculty. Because of the nature of review, Field Study is an earned opportunity not a given right. Professionalism across the major is a major evaluative benchmark that determines whether or not a student can enroll for Field Study credit.

Application

To enroll in Field Study, interested students must first pick up and complete the **Interior Design Field Study Application Form.** This form must be signed and submitted to Tina Harvey in 201 Cowgill Hall no later than 4 pm the Monday after returning from Thanksgiving break. At this point the faculty will review the Field Study applications and formally invite those accepted to participate in FS for credit by the end of the Fall semester, prior to the last day of classes. Professionalism within all ITDS courses is the top criteria for invitation to Field Study. Students with a strong record

Step 1: Prior to FS

1) Submit your Application for FS as stated above.
2) **Within the first week of the Spring semester classes,** send an email to Brad Whitney with "Field Study" in the subject line. This will get you on the FS email listserv.
3) **Pre-registration.** Register for ITDS 4964 (in variable credit section). If you are approved for FS, 3 credits are required to meet FS requirements for graduation although many students do work more.
4) **One week prior to beginning your FS,** send an email to Brad Whitney confirming your starting date, the name, address, and phone number of the design firm, and the name and contact information for your supervisor.
5) Submit both the **Interior Design Field Study Site Information Form** and the **University Fee Waiver Form** (to waive student fees NOT tuition) to Tina Harvey once you pre-register. Circle the appropriate Summer session.

Step 2: During FS

6) **Complete 60 hours of work per each 1 credit hour enrolled.** For FS credit, you must work at least 180 hours. Turn in your time sheet, signed by your supervisor, to Brad Whitney **within the first week of Fall classes.**
7) At the end of your FS, have your sponsor/supervisor complete the **Evaluation of Student Intern Form.** This form must be mailed or faxed to Brad Whitney prior to first day of Fall classes following your FS.

Step 3: After FS

8) During the Fall semester present your FS experience to the ITDS junior class. Times will be announced during the first week of classes, usually end of October/early November. All FS students are required to attend and participate.
9) Complete the **Student Field Study Experience Form** and submit it to Brad Whitney at the time of your presentation.
Student Field Study Expectations and Responsibilities:

Interior design is a complex business. Success requires teamwork among a diverse group of people with a variety of skills and perhaps most importantly a collective commitment to quality. With that in mind, we are dedicated to 100% success in the one area of interior design where every student can excel - Professionalism.

Individual success is important and at Virginia Tech we enjoy more than our share of individual success, but we are primarily dedicated to program success. In turn, this expectation of professionalism greatly prepares a student for Field Study and therefore as a positive contributor to a design firm.

With the above in mind, grading for Field Study will be based on meeting the following areas:

1) **Step 1** — your effectiveness in preparing for your internship both in time management and in keeping up with, and in communication with, your Field Study coordinator as stated under the section of FS Application and Requirements;
2) **Step 2** — your Field Study experience as based on the coordinator’s discussion with your sponsor and the final results from your sponsor’s Student Intern Evaluation Form;
3) **Step 3** — your presentation of your experience and your involvement, attendance, and participation in the mentoring of future interns during the assigned presentation times.

Please pay careful attention to due dates for forms. Any forms submitted outside of these due dates will disqualify you from credit for Field Study.

Additionally, any Field Study student receiving a “Not Hire” from their sponsor can potentially fail the course.

Lastly, on the sponsor’s Evaluation of Student Intern Form, there are five possible categories for evaluation. Although these categories do not dictate your final FS grade, they can potentially impact it as follows: outstanding (A), above average (B), average (C), below average (D or F).

All Field Study students will receive an ‘X’ grade until all required course components are completed. Final grades will be posted at the end of the Fall term for the year your Field Study took place. Grades are determined by standards described under the Field Study Requirements and Expectations.

I have read, understand and agree with the above mentioned expectations and responsibilities for Field Study.
FIELD STUDY SITE INFORMATION

Fill out all information requested below to receive credit/approval for your field study. Submit this when your employer is known. You can also FAX this information to the ITDS program (540-231-9938, attention Tina Harvey) or e-mail it to Tina Harvey at tharvey@vt.edu.

Student Information

Student Name:__________________________________________

Address (during field study):________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Land Phone:___________________       Cell: __________________________

Email: __________________________

Field Study Site Information

Firm Name:_______________________________________________

Address:___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor:________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Telephone Number of Supervisor/Firm:__________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Request for Waiver of Comprehensive Fees

To: Office of the University Bursar  
150 Student Services Building (0143)

From: ___________________________  
(Department)

______________________________  
(Signature of Department Head)

Date: ____________________________

It is certified that the following student will not be taking any classes on campus, and will be at the stated location during the entire term.

Student Name: __________________________

Student Number: __________________________

Location (City / State): __________________________

Circle Term (only one): FALL SPRING SUMMER I SUMMER II

Academic Year: __________________________

**IMPORTANT RULES**

1. This form is to be used only for the upcoming term.

2. The following conditions make a student ineligible for this waiver:
   - If the student is making frequent visits to the campus for any reason.
   - If the student is enrolled in any courses being taught on campus.
   - Student teachers retaining a Blacksburg address.

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An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institution
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Interior Design Program

Employer’s Evaluation of Student Intern

Student’s Name: ____________________________ Firm/Business: _______________________________________

Supervisor Name: ____________________________ Phone #: ____________________________

Instructions: The Immediate supervisor should evaluate the student objectively, comparing him/her with other students of comparable academic level, with other personnel assigned the same or similarly classified job, or with individual standards. Remarks are particularly helpful. Feel free to use the blank column on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude – Application to work</th>
<th>Ability to learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding in enthusiasm</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very interested and industrious</td>
<td>Learned work readily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average in diligence &amp; interest</td>
<td>Average in understanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat indifferent</td>
<td>Rather slow in Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely no interest</td>
<td>Very slow to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependability</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completely dependable</td>
<td>Proceeds well on his/her own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average in dependability</td>
<td>Goes ahead independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually dependable</td>
<td>Does all assigned work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes neglectful/careless</td>
<td>Hesitates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>Must be pushed frequently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of Field</th>
<th>Ability to organize work &amp; self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good - Very Good</td>
<td>Good - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential As a Professional</th>
<th>Response to Supervisors/Admin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Highly Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Bordering on Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubtful</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Work</th>
<th>Relations with Peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Exceptionally well accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Works well with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Gets along satisfactorily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Has difficulty with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Works very poorly with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment</th>
<th>Leadership Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptionally mature in Judgment</td>
<td>Shows strong leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average in making decisions</td>
<td>Shows moderate leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually makes the right decision</td>
<td>Average in Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often uses poor judgment</td>
<td>Seldom shows leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently uses bad judgment</td>
<td>Shows no leadership qualities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Punctuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Regular</td>
<td>Very regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually regular</td>
<td>Usually regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerable</td>
<td>Tolerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often irregular</td>
<td>Often irregular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always irregular</td>
<td>Always irregular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over – All Performance (check your rating of this student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The student’s outstanding professional qualities are:

The professional qualities which the student should strive most to improve are:

Would you hire this individual at the completion of his/her program if you had a position available? Yes No

Has this report has been discussed with the student? Yes No

SIGNED ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Immediate Supervisor

Please return this form to: Brad Whitney, Interior Design Field Study Coordinator
Or by Fax: 540.231.9938
Phone: 540.231.2666
201 Cowgill Hall (0481)
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
STUDENT FS EXPERIENCE FORM

This form is to be completed after your field study experience and submitted to Brad Whitney at the time of your visual/verbal presentation.

Student Name: ___________________________  Semester of FS: ________

Number of Credits enrolled: ___________________________

No. of weeks Employed: ________ Average No. of Hours Per Week: __________

Name of Firm: ___________________________

Phone Number: ___________________________

Address of Firm: ___________________________

_____________________________________

_____________________________________

Name of Supervisor: ___________________________

ON ADDITIONAL SHEETS, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS - TYPED. SINCE THIS INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS SEEKING A FIELD STUDY, YOUR NAME, AS PRINTED ABOVE, WILL BE MARKED OUT FOR ANONYMITY.

1) Give your name as intern only if you do not mind students contacting you. Give the name of firm, address, and phone number, and the dates of your work experience. Give contact or supervisor’s name and phone number.

2) Describe the organization of the firm, number of employees, designer’s, etc. If available, provide an organization hierarchy chart.

3) Describe the type of work in which the firm was primarily engaged.

4) Describe the design services that the firm provided

5) Describe your tasks/responsibilities while working at the firm.

6) Describe what you consider to be the most valuable aspects of your work experience.

7) Describe what you consider to be the least valuable aspects of your work experience.

8) Explain why you would or would not recommend this firm for other field study assignments in the future.
TIPS FOR A GOOD EXPERIENCE

A good field study experience is a valuable part of your education. Some students have better field study experiences than others, resulting in job offers or excellent references to use when landing that important first job. The difference most often between a good experience and one that leaves something to be desired is with research, planning, and by asking questions—the more work that you put into finding the right field study experience, and finding out about it during the interview, the more likely the experience will turn out to be valuable. Here is some advice that may help you:

**Location.** Decide first whether you will be doing your field study in your hometown, or whether you can relocate during the field study time. Most students’ do their field study in their hometown area and, depending on the location, may either limit or expand their FS opportunities.

**Type of Work/Firm.** The main requirement is that you work with an licensed or certified interior designer or architect. Most students do their field study with a firm that specializes in the design of non-residential spaces. Few firms are “jacks-of-all-trades”. Talking to previous FS students, interior designers and architects and your teachers may help you decide which type of experience you should pursue. There are many variations in type of practice and firm. Studying the various sources listed on the “Information Sources…” handout will help you become as knowledgeable as possible about the firm with which you want to pursue a field study.

**Resume/Cover Letters.** Your resume should be precise and informative. Emphasize your skills, educational experience, and work experience. A professional quality font and clear, easy-to-read text are preferable to fancy graphics. Prepare a cover letter for each design firm. To make your letter stand apart, show off your knowledge of the firm and why you want to do your internship with them.

**Follow up calls.** Follow up each letter with a phone call approximately 5 days after you send the cover letter and resume. Another possibility is to deliver the documents, in person, and schedule a time to return for the interview. This strategy usually produces more positive results and allows you to seize opportunities if they should arise. Be courteous and don’t take too much of their time. Set up interviews with plenty of free time afterwards in case the interview runs over the allotted time.

**Interview/Portfolio Presentation.** Never be late and be sure to cancel if any emergency arises. A neat portfolio showing actual work, having a professional appearance, and having a pleasant personality will give you the best chance of getting the job. At the end of the interview, you should have a clear idea of what the internship involves, and whether you would fit in with the firm.

**Money.** Most field study employers pay...but not all. Unless the interviewer brings up the subject of pay, you should. Ask whether the firm has paid their interns in the past and if so, how much.
INFORMATION SOURCES for SPONSORS/EMPLOYERS

1. Information Sources for Field Study.
The ID resource room web site lists some firms where students have
done their field studies in the past.

January issue of Interior Design Magazine lists the largest 100 firms.
July issue lists the second largest 100 firms. These surveys of large de-
sign firms list projects, firm locations, salaries, etc.

Listed by States. [Call number: NA 53P76] in Cowgill library.

4. IDEAS Meetings.
Presentations by designers and manufacturer’s representatives are valu-
able to learn about trends in the field. Also, these people usually know
the design firms in their territory or geographic region, and often which
firms are looking for employees.

6. Phone Book.
Firms may be listed under Interior Design or Architecture. However,
many firms consider themselves design firms but are actually in to the
sales of furniture, paint, wallcover, etc. and only incidentally offer design
services.

7. Field Study Presentations.
Seniors typically present in the fall semester—critically evaluate these
presentations to learn about individual experiences and whether the ex-
perience sounds as though it would be worthwhile.

8. Design Magazines.
If you are interested in working for a nationally recognized firm, take
note of the projects published in various design magazines (Interior De-
sign, Interiors, Contract, Hospitality Design, etc.) to learn about the firm
that did the project published. This research provides you with an idea of
the type of work the firm does and its philosophy, and could be a point
of conversation during an interview.

A directory of architecture firms by state is at:
http://www.buildingtradesdir.com
Most firms also have their own web sites, which should be viewed when
considering applying to the firm.