



FIELD STUDIES IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES (revised August 2018)

The purpose of this document is to provide background information and requirements of the HTM Field Study Program. All information discussed here and the related forms are available on the HTM website (<https://www.htm.pamplin.vt.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students.html>).

Philosophy Behind the Field Study Experience

Experiential learning in supervised field study courses is a critical component of hospitality and tourism management (HTM) education. Due to our emphasis on hospitality operations management, experience in hospitality operations is key to your understanding of our course content and to its industry applications.

As with all of our courses, the goal of the HTM Field Study Course is to develop student hospitality management knowledge and capabilities. This requirement reflects our recognition of the educational value of an approved, supervised professional experience. Such experiences allow students the opportunity to learn from industry professionals, to observe “real world” management practices, and to implement the concepts and methodologies learned through their other coursework.

Moreover, HTM recruiters view successful completion of field study experiences as a necessary requirement for applicant consideration. When you complete your degree and apply for positions, every applicant will have a degree! Many will have good grades and extensive extra-curricular activities. So how do you distinguish yourself and get the job? Your professional experience, predominantly through field study / internships is extremely important!

Thus, you should view the Field Study both as a required class and as an important opportunity to build your career. Picking the right internship is important and should be considered as a key building block to your career goals. Please do not pick a field study site on the basis of convenience!

HTM 4964 is required of all HTM students and is designed to gain supervisory experience, placement in management training positions, significant exposure to full-time management staff, or a combination of the above. This course requires a series of assignments plus 400 hours of supervised work experience. The HTM 4964 positions can be a rotational experience or concentrated within one area. It can be paid or unpaid.

HTM – 4964 Field Study General Information and Guidelines

Course Objectives:

1. To enhance your applied knowledge of hospitality and tourism management,
2. To help you gain industry experience in applying concepts in a managerial environment.
3. Using your special project, to provide you with industry research experience addressing an operational issue.
4. To enhance your understanding of career opportunities and requirements in HTM.
5. To develop your ability to conduct operational research on a selected HTM topics
6. To allow you to apply concepts learned in your coursework to an industry environment.
7. To allow you to create a network and potential permanent placement with the field study company. To help you build your resume.

Field Study Position Requirements:

A wide variety of positions can be used to satisfy the HTM 4964 requirements. However, to be acceptable, it must include the following:

- 1. Management and Administrative Activities:** the field study must provide the student with practical experience employing management and administrative skills, techniques, and practices. Students should gain exposure and some experience in a variety of operational areas, possibly including accounting and finance, event management, facility operation and maintenance, human resource management, marketing, and research. (Examples would include scheduling, staff meeting's, financial critiques, training sessions, processing invoices, regional visits or audits, etc.)
- 2. Organization, Evaluation, and Supervision:** The student should participate in experiences that involve the organization, supervision, and evaluation of programs, events, and, where appropriate, personnel. The supervisor is encouraged to assign the student to take an active leadership role in special projects. (Examples, coordinating training session, customer event, etc. to include budgeting, planning and supervising staff)
- 3. Special Project:** The student must complete a special project for the business. This project must provide both needed information and analysis for the business as well as allow the student to examine her / his specific area of interest in hospitality and tourism management. This project must include a (1) a specific statement of a problem, (2) background research and identification of alternative courses of action, (3) evaluation of those courses of action, including financial evaluation, (4) selection of a course of action and (5) creation of a plan for implementing the course of action. The Special Project is to be approved by your supervisor/manager prior to starting work and reviewed by them at the end of the project.

HTM – 4964 Field Study General Information and Guidelines

These requirements are also reflected in the HTM 4964 Field Studies Agreement (Form I). Form 1 must be submitted and approved by the Field Studies professor prior to beginning the field study experience.

Course Pre-requisites:

1. 300 hours of verified HTM industry professional experience, post high school. (Retail, banking, daycare and lifeguard does not count towards 300 hours hospitality related experience)
2. Completed two of the following classes: HTM 3414, HTM 3444, HTM 3524
3. Minimum Virginia Tech and in-major GPA of 2.0

300 Hour HTM Experience Prerequisite

You should submit the Employment Verification Form (on HTM website) as soon as possible after completing your 300 hours work experience. If your experience is gained over several positions with different companies, please submit one form for each company.

The Structure of the Hospitality/Service Industries

Defined by the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management for the field study requirement, employment in any of the industry segments listed below will be considered for field study purposes:

Industry Segments

Airlines	Hotel/Resort (property and corporate)
Casino/Gaming	Managed Services
Conference Centers/Services	Property Management/REITS
Convention Facilities	Restaurant
Cruise Lines/Tours	Spa (depending on position)
E-Commerce in industry	Sports/Entertainment/Leisure
Event Planning	Stadiums/Arenas
Golf/Country Club and City Clubs	Travel/Tourism
	Winery

The following list of Job Functions is not all-inclusive. The Field Study Coordinator will ultimately determine if a position qualifies for field study. Work for a student organization is not considered an industry segment and will not be considered.

HTM – 4964 Field Study General Information and Guidelines

Job Functions

Real Estate

- Asset Management
- Brokerage
- Development
- Finance
- Property Management
- Real Estate
- Sales/Trading

Marketing (Hospitality Companies Only)

- Advertising/Public Relations
- Brand/Product Management
- Market Research
- Sales/Marketing

Operations

- Business/Campus Dining
- Catering
- Event Planning
- Facilities Management
- Finance/Accounting
- Front Office
- Food and Beverage
- Housekeeping
- Human Resources
- Reservations
- Retail
- Rooms
- Sales/Marketing

General Guidelines

1. Students are encouraged to seek/apply for field study experiences as soon as they are academically and professionally qualified.
2. You should seek field study experiences that are closely related to your professional and career objectives. Students are solely responsible for arranging the required field study experience.
3. Work hours will not be counted prior to submission and approval of the enrollment form (see class registration/enrollment). You cannot get credit for Field Study after the fact. In other words to receive credit you must sign up for field study before the work experience not after.
4. As with all of classes, students are required to pay tuition for the HTM Field Study class. If a student is not in Blacksburg for field study and taking no other classes at the same time, he or she can request and receive a waiver of student fees. To receive this waiver, students should fill out a memorandum for waiver of comprehensive fees and turn it into the HTM office.
5. As per University and Pamplin College of Business Guidelines, a student can start the field study experience prior to the beginning of the semester. Specifically, with approval of Field Study Agreement (form I), a student can start the field study starting after the last day of class in the previous semester / summer school term. Students cannot receive credit for work hours prior to the last day of class for the previous semester/summer school term.

HTM – 4964 Field Study General Information and Guidelines

6. Students must register during the semester / summer session when the field study work begins. At least 150 HTM 4964 hours of the field study experience must be completed during the semester when the student registers. A student can be enrolled after the start of the semester but needs to be able to complete the 150 hours in the semester enrolled. A student will not be enrolled after week 6 of the fall or spring semester.
7. Assuming the minimum hours requirement is met, graduating students can apply to walk and participate in graduation ceremonies in the spring without having yet completed all of the required field study hours and assignments. However, he or she will not receive a diploma until everything is completed and the passing grade submitted. Students cannot participate in December graduation unless they have completed all 400 hours and required coursework by the last day of fall classes.
8. All forms, the mid-term report, and the final report must be word processed and submitted on or before the specified deadlines to the online course electronic dropbox. Students are required to keep a copy of all forms and papers. If documents are lost for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to produce another copy.
9. If a student anticipates ANY Field Study problems that may hinder graduation, he or she should make an appointment to see the professor-in-charge personally in the beginning of a semester. Do NOT wait until the middle or end of the semester to discuss your concerns.

Class Registration

1. To enroll in HTM 4964, students must complete the appropriate Field Study Agreement (available on the HTM website). Once approved, the student will be manually registered in the class by the HTM office. Students cannot course request or add field study. They will be registered by the HTM Office once it has been approved.
2. The Field Study Professor will review the submitted Form I and, if approved, register you for the class. If it is not approved, he / she will notify you of non-approval and the reasons. Do not start the field study prior to receiving approval! Class approval can and will probably be after the official drop add date but should be done as early in the semester as possible to start hours. Students will not be permitted to register for the class after the end of the sixth week of the fall or spring semesters.

HTM – 4964 Field Study General Information and Guidelines**Student Responsibilities during the Field Study Experience**

1. Students must maintain a log of all work undertaken and should be working toward meeting the approved objectives, in a satisfactory manner.
2. Any changes in the type of proposed work or in the objectives from the field study agreement submission must have prior approval of the course instructor.
3. The course instructor should be contacted in case of any questions or problems.
4. The course instructor may call or write to the supervisor of the operation in order to assess the satisfactory performance of the student.