



# VIVA FARMS

## Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture



SEATTLE CENTRAL COLLEGE  
One of the Seattle Colleges



## Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture Program Description

The Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture (Practicum) is a bilingual (English & Spanish), hands-on, applied course in Certified Organic production and small farm business management. Viva Farms' Practicum is fully accredited in partnership with Skagit Valley College (SVC), Seattle Central College (SCC) and the Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) Collaborative. The Practicum takes place over 3 academic quarters—Spring, Summer and Fall—from early April through mid-November. The Spring and Summer quarters focus on production practices and farm operations and the Fall quarter moves into applied business management.

As a cohort, participants will go through an entire farming season and explore the fundamentals of:

- Certified Organic Production
- Sales & Marketing
- Crop & Farm Planning
- Soil Health & Cultivation
- Seed Propagation
- Fertility & Pest Management
- Irrigation
- Harvest & Food Safety

Participants will also examine the basics of farm business management, including:

- Financial Statements
- Profitability Analysis
- Recordkeeping
- Regulatory Issues
- Access to Financing
- Insurance & Taxes
- Basic Bookkeeping

Upon successful completion of the Practicum, participants will be eligible to apply to participate in the Viva Farms incubator program. The incubator program provides farmers with access to land, infrastructure, equipment, marketing and capital in order to grow a successful farm business.

For more information, please visit the [Viva Farms website](#).

## Options for Course Registration

- **Non-credit**—Register directly through Viva Farms. Successful completion will earn a Certificate of Completion from Viva Farms.
- **College-credit**—Complete the Practicum Application and enroll at one of our partner colleges. Each quarter is a stand-alone, 2-credit course, for a total of 6 credits for the entire program. Students who complete all three quarters will also earn a Certificate of Completion from Viva Farms.
  - **Skagit Valley College:** Enroll in ENVAG 298 for the Spring, Summer and Fall quarters. Successful completion of all 3 will earn the micro-certificate: "SUSTAINABLE SMALL FARM AGRICULTURE APPLIED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (LEVEL I)"
  - **Seattle Central College:** Enroll in ENVS 196 for Spring, ENVS 198 for Summer, and ENVS 199 for Fall.

## Application, Review Process and Registration

Complete the application outlined in the following pages, detailing your previous education and experience in sustainable agriculture and your future goals. References must be provided to confirm applicants' skill and experience level.

Applications are due **February 12th, 2021**.

Please submit completed applications to Viva Farms' admissions team directly, using one of the options below:

- **Email** - include your name and "Viva Practicum Application" in the subject line and mail to [practicum@vivafarms.org](mailto:practicum@vivafarms.org)
- **Mail** - please mail completed forms to the following address:  
Viva Farms  
Attn: Practicum Admissions Team  
16470 State Route 20  
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Viva Farms' admissions team will review applications in the order they are received, and provide notification of acceptance on a rolling basis. At the discretion of Viva Farms' admissions team, applicants may be required to complete additional application steps, including an interview and a visit to the Practicum farm parcel in the location where they have applied.

Viva Farms' staff are available (by appointment) to provide assistance in completing the application. To receive assistance, contact: [practicum@vivafarms.org](mailto:practicum@vivafarms.org), or call (360) 969-7191 x 2.

For assistance getting enrolled through Skagit Valley College, please contact SVC [Admissions and Registration](#) or call (360) 416-7600 (Ext.8 for Spanish).

For assistance getting enrolled through Seattle Central College, please contact SCC [Enrollment and Admissions](#) or call (206) 934-6918 for English or (206) 934-5450 for Spanish.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How much does the Practicum program cost?**

The cost of the program is based upon the tuition cost of Washington State community colleges:

- **Non-credit**
  - Taking the Practicum from Viva Farms directly costs \$300.00 per quarter or \$900.00 for the entire program.
  - Payment plans and scholarships are available on a financial need basis.
- **College-credit**
  - **Each college has its own tuition costs and fees for tuition.** For the latest tuition and fees, please visit Skagit Valley College's [Tuition and Fees](#) page or Seattle Central College's [Tuition & Payment](#) page.

## **When does the Practicum begin and end?**

The Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture begins in early April and runs through late November, corresponding to the academic calendars of Skagit Valley College and Seattle Central College. The exact start and end dates will be clarified in subsequent communications with accepted participants. We encourage students to participate in farm activities throughout the course to maximize their exposure to the farm through the changing seasons. Students who participate in the entire program receive preferred status when applying for the incubator program.

## **Where does the Practicum take place?**

The Practicum is offered in Skagit County (English and Spanish), and in Woodinville in King County (English only).

Participants will apply their learning and practice techniques of sustainable agriculture on Certified Organic land at the nearest Viva Farms location.

\*Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, portions of the course may be held online via Zoom. Participants must have the technological capacity to participate in remote video learning.

## **What is the time commitment of the program? Can I work a job at the same time?**

Each week, there will be 2 hours of instruction on Tuesday evenings from 5:30pm-7:30pm, so as to accommodate normal working hours. Participants will be required to complete independent work hours for an additional 4 hours per week on average throughout the course. So, the total time commitment is a total of 6 hours/week on average. In the past, participants have enjoyed farming so much they spent more time on the farm than required!

The timing of independent work hours will vary with the farming season. Independent hours ramp up as task demand increases and decrease as the season tapers off, but should average out to 4 hours per week each quarter. As with any farm, students should anticipate working more during peak summer season, from June to September.

It is important to remember that the Practicum parcel is part of a working farm. We will be harvesting to order for customers of Viva Farms and must be able to maintain both high quality and consistency. We ask for high commitment and for participants to reliably arrive on time and be ready to work during their scheduled independent hours.

## **Do I need to complete the entire program in order to farm independently in the Viva Farms incubator?**

To enter into the Incubator program, participants must demonstrate competency in the knowledge and techniques introduced during the Practicum. The Practicum is a valuable way to apply the fundamentals of sustainable production and small-farm business management, as well as to learn the particulars of operating a farm at Viva Farms in a relatively low-risk environment. For that reason, we strongly encourage all prospective incubating farmers to participate in the entire Practicum and complete all of the course requirements, especially independent work hours. We will give preference to prospective incubating farmers based on satisfactory attendance and participation.

There are, however, some cases where participants can "test out" of Practicum requirements. To do so, prospective incubator farmers must demonstrate significant previous experience in organic farm production and business management. Depending on experience, applicants for the incubator may be required to take only a portion of the Practicum to qualify for the incubator.

For more information, visit the [Viva Farms](https://www.vivafarms.org) website. For further questions, contact: [practicum@vivafarms.org](mailto:practicum@vivafarms.org) or call (360) 969-7191 x 2.



# VIVA FARMS

## PRACTICUM IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE APPLICATION

### Applicant Information

Name: .....  
*(First) (Middle) (Last)*

Address: .....  
*(Street)*

.....  
*(City) (State) (Zip)*

Phone number(s): .....

Email address: .....

How did you learn about the Practicum?

At which location would you take the Practicum?  Skagit County  King County

Are you planning on taking the course for credit through a college or directly from Viva Farms?  Viva Farms  College

Which sections are you applying for? (Please check all that apply)

Spring      Summer      Fall

Can you meet the physical requirements of the Practicum?  Yes  No

Farm labor can be difficult physically. Work happens outside, in variable weather conditions and can begin early in the morning or run late into the evening. There are often repeated motions involving bending over, working with hazardous tools, and regular lifting of up to 50 lbs.

Can you meet the time commitments of the Practicum? **Yes** **No**

Viva Farms offers scholarships on a limited basis based on economic need, military service, etc. Are you interested in learning more about scholarship opportunities? **Yes** **No**

Between April and November, Practicum students are expected to attend class one evening each week for two hours. In addition, students are required to spend an additional 4 hours minimum (depending on credit status) participating in independent activities on the farm. Please identify how you intend to meet these requirements, using the calendar below.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

**Previous Experience**

1. Please describe any previous and relevant experience in agriculture. This can be work experience or personal experience.

2. Please describe your educational background including schools, workshops, trainings, and/or internships.

## Goals & Outcomes

1. The Practicum focuses on teaching the foundations of sustainable agriculture. Please describe your interest in, and commitment to, Certified Organic and sustainable farming practices.

2. Please explain how this practical, hands-on training will fit into your future personal and/or professional goals?

Do you intend to participate in the Viva Farms incubator program after completing the Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture?

Yes     No     Unsure

## References

Name	
Organization/Company	
Title/Relation	
Contact Info	

Name	
Organization/Company	
Title/Relation	
Contact Info	

## Declaration

In applying for participation in Viva Farms' Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture, I confirm that the information I have provided in this application is accurate and complete.

Viva Farms is committed to maintaining a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for its diverse community of farmers, staff, students, volunteers, and partners. Viva Farms provides equal opportunity for its educational programs and activities and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, pregnancy, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or any other status or condition protected by applicable federal, state or local laws.

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Signature

Date