How do I complete the field experience requirement for UW’s Undergraduate Certificate in Global Health?

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Introduction

This document only explains ways to complete the field experience. It does not discuss the costs of completing the experience, how to find the money, or when in your college career you should try to do a field experience. For some advice on those topics, please see the “Global Health Field Experiences” page of the Certificate in Global Health web site. We should emphasize here that completing this requirement can be expensive and that preparing in advance to cover the costs of a field experience is important. While we anticipate that many students will meet this requirement abroad, there are also many approved and potentially approvable field experiences to be found within the US.

Whatever you do to meet our field experience requirement must:

A. **Be for credit** – You have to earn at least one credit that appears on your UW-Madison transcript
B. **Involve supervision by UW faculty or people/programs formally affiliated with UW** – Your primary supervisor(s) may be from an organization outside UW, but you must have some supervision from inside UW.
C. **Be approved by the Executive Committee of the Certificate in Global Health** – Other than a set of preapproved field experiences described later in this document, most of the experiences you might find or create to meet the field requirement will need to be submitted for approval using a form available under “Applying for consideration of a nonstandard field experience” on the Certificate’s “Field experience overview” page.
D. **Have a global dimension** – The experience should take place outside the US OR involve work with diverse, underserved, and/or marginalized populations inside the US.
E. **Have a substantial global or public health focus** – Emphasis should be on prevention or monitoring of health problems for groups or populations rather than medical care for individuals, and you should not be doing anything that you are not qualified to do in the US.
F. **Have a field component** – You must spend time outside the classroom in some combination of internship, site visits, service learning, and/or interviews/meetings/discussions with global/public health researchers, government officials, staff of nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations, and representatives of community groups.
G. **Have an academic component** – In the process of earning credit, you should do some combination of academic work (writing of a paper or other document, organizing of a conference, preparation and delivery of a health education session, etc.) and reflective work (keeping of a journal, sessions with a mentor, etc.).

The simplest way to combine all of these elements is to enroll in one of a set of preapproved courses offered by the Certificate. About 90% of students completing the Certificate do this. The other 10% participate in a wide variety of credit-bearing experiences for which they must seek and receive approval. Students who are good candidates for one of these other routes fit into one or more of the following groups:

- Have a topical interest not represented in the preapproved courses
- Want a longer experience than the preapproved courses
- Are planning to be abroad for a whole semester or summer for reasons other than their field experience
- Want to combine study or practice of a foreign language with their field experience
- Are self-motivated and confident enough to deal with the difficulties involved in finding or creating a field experience and completing it (potentially without the presence of other students).
Routes to complete the field experience

The various routes we know of to get both credit and oversight of a field experience are as follows (see also the comparison table at the end of this document). The routes fall into two importantly different categories:

Preapproved routes (if you apply, get in, and complete the experience, you’ve met our requirement)

1) The Undergraduate Certificate’s own preapproved global health field courses
2) The Graduate Certificate’s preapproved global health field courses
3) Wisconsin Express and the Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)
4) Nursing 419 (The Community Health Nursing Practicum)

Routes for which you need to seek approval from the certificate

5) “Traditional” study abroad with a global health component
6) Global health-focused semester or summer-long study abroad
7) Worldwide Internship
8) Inter-L&S Internship
9) Miscellaneous other credit-bearing experiences (theses, capstones, independent studies, other major/college-specific internships, etc.)

More details on each of these options are provided below.

1) Preapproved undergraduate global health field experiences

Courses run by the Certificate share the following characteristics:

- Typically announced each year in November for the following calendar year. Details on the courses and instructions on how to apply are posted on the certificate’s web site (http://ghi.wisc.edu/undergraduate-certificate/). When we are not taking applications, the “Global Health Field Experiences” page of the web site has a summary of courses offered in the most recent year for your reference.
- Mostly short, just 1-2 weeks in length; a few that are as long as 6 or 8 weeks involve a mandatory short group session at the beginning followed by individual or small-group internships at the end that are either mandatory or optional.
- Mostly international, taking place in countries all over the world, but with some domestic offerings. If we add courses in 2013 and beyond, we hope to add more courses inside the US both to keep costs down for you and to highlight the global health issues and solutions being explored here.
- Mostly run during the summer, though a few take place in part or in full during winter break or spring break. Some have an on-campus preparation or reflection part that meets during the semester before or the semester after the time when you go abroad.
- Cover a wide variety of topics in global health. 2012 topics range from the importance of small business development to the agricultural practices of subsistence farmers. Because undergraduate students are not trained medical professionals, our courses typically do not involve work with patients in hospitals and clinics (though you may visit those facilities and talk with staff there during some courses).
- Will largely be the same from year to year, but will vary somewhat based on availability of the course leaders, financial support from the Certificate, and other factors. In any given year, courses will be announced in approximately early November for the following year. If you are not already on our listserv and want to be sure to receive announcements about field courses, please go here (http://ghi.wisc.edu/undergraduate-certificate/drop-in-advising/) for instructions on how to subscribe.
- Vary widely in cost, from a few hundred to thousands of dollars. All of our courses are subsidized at least in part by the Certificate in Global Health, but all of them involve at least some costs you or your parents must pay. In some cases, courses where the travel, accommodations, and other logistics are inexpensive end up costing more than we would like because you also have to pay tuition (this is especially true for courses that take place during the summer and in the US).
- Carry anywhere from 1-4 credits. You only need one credit of field experience to meet our requirement, but if you get more, it can replace credit that you would otherwise earn by taking elective classes.
- **Have limited spaces.** You may have your heart set on getting into a particular course, but that just may not work out -- some of our courses have four times as many applicants as there are spaces. Being prepared to participate in widely varying courses is important.

- **Sometimes have admission requirements.** In some cases, your GPA must be over 2.5 or 2.75 to enter a particular course. Other courses have a language requirement (e.g., conversational Spanish) or other course prerequisite. Any such requirements are noted when course descriptions are posted each November.

2) **Preapproved graduate global health field experiences**

There is also a graduate Certificate in Global Health which has its own field courses, and it’s possible that you will see information about these posted around campus or on the web site of UW’s International Academic Programs (IAP). While these courses do sometimes admit juniors and seniors, they are in general not intended for students in the undergraduate certificate. If you apply and get into one of the graduate courses, they do meet the field course requirement for the undergraduate certificate. The 4-6 graduate courses offered each summer cover topics similar to those addressed by the undergraduate courses, but students who do them spend considerably more time abroad (4-6 weeks or more) and must also complete a one-credit preparation course in the spring semester before their time abroad.

3) **Wisconsin Express and the Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)**

There is a nationwide network of Area Health Education Centers (AHECs). Wisconsin’s AHEC is based in UW’s School of Medicine and Public Health and (in a quote from their web site) “improves access to quality health care by developing community-based health professions training programs and enhancing health education resources across the state.” They run two related but different initiatives that you may want to consider as field experiences: Wisconsin Express and the Community Health Internship Program, or CHIP.

**Wisconsin Express** – Wisconsin Express is a set of weeklong experiences that are much like the Certificate’s own field courses. Each Wisconsin Express program involves a group of students going to a medically underserved community somewhere in Wisconsin where they work with health professionals and partner organizations within the community to explore the health needs of a particular population (recent immigrants, for example, or a particular racial or ethnic group). Wisconsin Express is competitive (approximately one third to one half of applicants are offered spaces) and involves an application process that runs from December through February of each academic year. All current undergrads as well as recent grads are eligible to apply. The program takes place very early each summer and is essentially free, though there is a nonrefundable $100 fee to hold a spot if you are offered one, and you must cover the costs of getting to the program site. Wisconsin Express courses do NOT come with credit, but students who are accepted to the program can talk with a certificate advisor about completing a credit-bearing independent study to “officialize” the experience. See the program’s web site for details: [http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/wisconsin-express)

**Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)** – CHIP is an eight week paid summer internship that takes place in a community similar to (or the same as) the ones where students go with Wisconsin Express. The internships are very rigorous and are more like short-term jobs than field courses. The application process and credit situation are about the same for CHIP as for Wisconsin Express. See the program’s web site for details: [http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/chip](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/chip)

4) **Nursing 419 (Community Health Nursing Practicum)**

*This is an option only for students (and usually students near graduation) who have been accepted to UW’s School of Nursing.* This course is much more clinical in nature than any other field experience you could use for the Certificate’s requirement. According to a recent syllabus for an offering of 419, “The intent of this clinical course is to provide nursing care to diverse populations in international settings by incorporating principles of individual, family, and population-centered nursing, epidemiology, environmental health, health promotion, disease prevention, and disease management.” This course is sometimes offered domestically and sometimes internationally. Like the courses for the graduate certificate (option 2, above), each international offering of 419 involves a preparatory course in the semester before you abroad that provides an introduction to global health topics and an overview of community health in the destination country. Talk with a Nursing advisor to learn about if, when, and how you might participate in 419.
5) “Traditional” study abroad with a global health component

Some departments at UW run study-abroad programs that range in length from a few weeks summer or semester. In some cases these are organized and managed by the departments themselves, but in many more cases they are managed either by International Academic Programs (IAP, also called simply “Study Abroad,” with offices in the Red Gym) or CALS International Programs (with offices in Ag. Hall). IAP also connects students with hundreds of programs run by institutions outside UW. Some of these institutions are also colleges or universities, while others are non-profit or for-profit companies.

Whether you connect with these programs through IAP or CALS, they often involve sending you to university X in country Y to do something that looks a lot like pursuing a particular major at UW-Madison -- you live in a dorm (either with other Americans, with students from all over the world, or with students from the host country), attend lectures and discussions, and do your homework. Some also build in an internship and/or a home stay outside a dorm.

Programs like this are generally very structured and safe. In many cases you can also take courses for your major, for general education requirements, for pre-med prep, or for some other purpose, and transfer them back UW-Madison. The downside to programs like this is that, with some exceptions, we wouldn’t accept them as field experiences because they don’t involve global health and/or don’t involve field work (meeting, observing, and working with public health professionals, nonprofits and community groups).

You can still make a program like this work for our field experience if you can find something to add on that carries credit and gives you both global health content and time in the field.

A couple of examples:

- Spanish major goes to Spain to study for a semester in Seville on a program she learns about through IAP. Most of her coursework is Spanish grammar and conversation, but she finds a course titled “Introduction to European Public Health” that involves visits to hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, school lunch centers, and many other health care delivery settings in both Spain and France. The student gets a syllabus, and it seems that at each site visited, she will meet and talk with staff (and, in some cases, patients or clients) about what they do. The student will also spend time discussing the visits with classmates and a faculty mentor and will write up her experiences in a paper. She submits the syllabus and an explanation of her plans to the Certificate in Global Health executive committee and has the course approved for three credits of field experience.

- Biology major goes to the Dominican Republic on a program she learns about through IAP. She takes a mix of courses in biology and Spanish, but the school she attends also has a public health program and she enrolls in two introductory public health courses with classmates who are mostly Dominican nursing students. Both courses involve substantial time spent in well-supervised visits to hospitals and clinics as well as in internship with a community group that is working to address a local public health issue. She submits syllabi for the two courses and a description of the overall experience to the Certificate in Global Health executive committee and has both courses together approved as six credits of field experience.

6) Global health-focused semester or summer-long study abroad

In contrast to option two, above, where you are primarily taking coursework for your major or general education requirements, there are programs out there that involve spending an entire summer or semester doing work in public or global health. Some of these programs are run by colleges and universities, while others are run by non-profit or for-profit groups. Programs like this usually have a more-or-less narrow focus (for example, traditional herbal medicine, urban environmental health, or community empowerment) that you explore through a combination of site visits, internships and service learning with community groups, lectures and discussions with host-country experts, home stays with local people, and perhaps some language study.

If you find a course like this that you can get approved by the Certificate in Global Health executive committee and are able to get credit for it at UW-Madison through the Study Abroad Office, then this could count as your field experience for at least one credit (and probably more). Be aware that some providers of experiences like this either a) let you do
things you should not (in terms of working with patients in health care settings, in particular) and/or b) are not recognized academic entities such that you can’t get credit for working with them.

An example:

-The School for International Training (SIT; http://www.sit.edu/) offers study abroad programs in global health that would, in most cases, meet our field experience requirement if you transferred the credit to UW through the Study Abroad Office. SIT’s programs involve either extensive work on one issue in one country or travel to four or five countries across which you compare the state of a particular global health issue. These programs are excellent but very expensive because you are paying someone to manage a lot of complex travel, housing, food, and other logistics for you.

7) Worldwide Internship

The International Internship Program (IIP; http://internships.international.wisc.edu/) coordinates an experience called the Worldwide Internship (http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/programs/program.asp?program_id=343) that is offered in partnership with the International Academic Programs office and is especially well-suited to those who want to do something for a whole semester or summer and have a strong interest in a global health topic that is not covered in any other available field course. If you can identify a country or region where you’d like to be (anywhere at all outside the US), a global health topic you want to work on in that country, and one or more organizations you’d like to work with in that place on that topic (could be a governmental or inter-governmental agency, a nonprofit group, or a corporation), then you start working with those organizations to see if one of them will take you on as an intern. If you have no idea where to start looking for an organization, both IIP and Certificate staff can provide you with some pointers, but you will need to do much of the exploration yourself.

Once you have a possible internship placement identified, IIP will work with you to “vet” both the organization and the potential internship. Among other things, they will find out if the organization has a real staff and a real office and really does (or genuinely tries to do) what it says it does. They will also work with the organization and with you to figure out various aspects of what you would do there -- would you work for at least 96 hours? Would you have a mentor who would guide your learning and work? Would you have some kind of project that you were responsible for completing?

If you and IIP identify what seems like a solid internship, they will have you enroll in International Studies 320 for the term when you are planning to do the internship. IS 320 is 3-credit online course that is offered during the fall, spring, and summer terms, and it is a real course with a real instructor (based in Madison) and fellow students who are doing internships all over the world. As you do your internship, you go to an internet cafe or somehow get online each week, join discussions, and complete other assignments to help you evaluate and make sense of the organization, the internship, and your cultural experiences.

IS 320 is a highly unusual course because you can take it (and only it) for an entire semester and still maintain full-time student status. This can let you take a semester “off” in the middle of your college years to do a really substantial internship abroad, something that is otherwise hard to do until after you graduate. The benefits of doing it while in college are several: the online course can help you get much more out of an internship than just doing it on your own; you can finish your internship and potentially follow up on newly developed interests during your remaining time in school; and finally, many internships are only open to people who are still formally college students. Doing the Worldwide Internship can also be a way to spend a long time abroad at a lower cost than you would pay to have someone else manage the term for you.

Because of the substantial amount of work involved in setting up an internship and related logistics, the cutoff for lining up an internship is 2-3 months before the term you want to do it. See the IIP web site (above) for precise deadlines.

Although they know about the Certificate in Global Health, the staff who run the Worldwide Internship are not affiliated with the Certificate and are only responsible for helping you figure out a solid internship with a reputable organization -- they cannot certify that your internship will meet our field experience requirement. For that, you need to involve certificate staff and get formal approval from the Certificate’s executive committee. Ideally you would pursue that approval at the same time you were formalizing your internship with the help of International Internship Program staff.
Examples:

-(Simple example) Student in S. Africa -- A biology major approaches the Child and Family Health International (CFHI), a long-established and reputable international nonprofit with which IIP already has a working relationship, about being an intern with them in Johannesburg, South Africa. The student works simultaneously with IIP and the Certificate to figure out what she will do and for how long. The student enrolls in IS 320, goes to South Africa, and participates in 320 online during the whole of the spring semester while doing HIV-related education and outreach to high-risk populations under close supervision by CFHI staff.

-(Complicated example) Student in China -- A pre-med molecular biology major with previous travel experience in China and a strong interest in neural tube disorders (NTDs, a group of related and usually severe birth defects) proposes an independent project involving interviewing Chinese subjects about their knowledge of and attitudes toward NTDs. He proposes being overseen in China by the small non-profit group that managed his previous travel. Given the sensitive nature of his proposed work, both IIP and the Certificate ask him to find an interpreter, a Chinese physician or medical researcher who will supervise him in China, and a UW physician or medical researcher who will help him with his research design and make sure he meets US safety and ethics standards. The Certificate also asks him to find out if he needs approval from the Institutional Review Board, or IRB, which evaluates research involving human subjects. The student is told by IRB that, because he will not be publishing the research, he does not need IRB approval, but he is encouraged to find a US-based supervisor. With considerable effort on his own part and some help from IIP, the Certificate, and the China-based nonprofit, the student eventually secures all of required assistance (a process that takes much of a semester), enrolls in IS 320 for the summer term, and goes to China to conduct his research.

8) Inter-L&S Internship – This course is very much like the Worldwide Internship (#4 above) in that you identify a topic and organization of interest to you, set up an internship with them during the summer, fall, or spring, and enroll in an online course that helps you think critically about the internship experience. Unlike the Worldwide Internship, the Inter-L&S Internship must take place somewhere inside the US, and the associated online course (Inter-L&S 260) is just one credit. Despite the name, you do not have to be an L&S student to enroll -- students from any school or college can take the course.

As with the Worldwide Internship, the staff who run the Inter-L&S Internship can approve an internship for you and get you into the associated course but cannot approve it as a global health field experience. For that, you need to talk to certificate staff. Because there are no international travel details involved, it is possible to set up an Inter-L&S internship on relatively short notice compared to the Worldwide Internship.
To learn more about this option, see ttp://www.lassa.wisc.edu/careers/students/internship_prep.html

As of May 2012, we have had three students complete their field experience requirement in or near Madison using ILS 260. We don’t mention the names of the organizations they worked with here to avoid having them be flooded with inquiries, but a certificate advisor can help you make up a list of groups to contact based on your area(s) of interest within global health. Students wanting to use ILS 260 for the field experience need to pay particular attention to the criteria on the first page of this document (especially the need to have a global aspect).

9) Miscellaneous other credit-bearing experiences (theses, capstones, independent studies, other major/college-specific internships, etc.) – Some majors on campus (for example, the CALS biology major) either allow or require their students to complete a thesis or capstone project involving research guided by one or more faculty. Most majors allow students to complete an independent study, also guided by a faculty member, that may or may not involve research. If you can set up or modify a thesis, capstone, or independent study to include both content in global health AND a field component that involves meeting with, observing, and potentially working alongside global health professionals, then that experience could be your field experience for the certificate. This can be a difficult route for several reasons. First and foremost, you have to find a faculty member whose research and teaching relate to what you want to do and who is willing to supervise your experience. Then, you have to set up an experience that includes field work and get it approved by both the faculty member and the Certificate in Global Health. It can be done, but it’s not easy.

There are also many internship options on campus besides the Worldwide Internship and the Inter-L&S Internship. For a list of many of them, see: http://www.lassa.wisc.edu/careers/documents/InternshipResourcesatUniversityofWisconsin.pdf
If you can somehow get credit for your internship and can get it approved by the certificate’s executive committee, it could be your field experience. To get our approval, the internship would of course have to be related to global health and probably need to have some sort of supervisory structure (that is, an associated course led by a UW instructor) like the Worldwide Internship and the Inter-L&S Internship.

Examples:

-Student in CALS biology capstone -- A student went to Ghana for an entire spring semester and worked in an orphanage for HIV-positive children. In addition to talking extensively with orphanage staff about their work and helping to care for the children, she created a guide to help the staff assign children with little or no formal schooling to grade levels. She also visited local health clinics and took a trip to a very remote village with a small clinic of its own. She wrote up her experiences in the form of both an academic paper about HIV orphans and a reflective paper based on a journal she kept, and submitted both papers and the guide mentioned above to Certificate staff for approval. We don’t know the details of how she got this approved as her biology capstone experience, but it shows up on her transcript as 3 credits of Biology 399.

-Student in Anthropology independent study -- Supervised by a UW anthropology faculty member, a student makes two trips (one over winter break, one for a whole summer) to Belize to conduct research for a 699-level Anthropology independent study exploring the concept of medical pluralism (the use, often by the same person, of different kinds/models of medical care). Belize has complex pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history, and the student’s interviews with residents, medical practitioners, and government officials of a small town (summarized in a lengthy paper) explore in very nuanced way the reasons why different people rely on traditional medical providers, “modern” or “Western” ones, or some combination of those (and others, like witchcraft). The student gets three credits in Anthropology for his work but also submits his paper to the Certificate and gets approval.
| 1. Preapproved undergraduate field courses | NO | Apply between Nov. and Jan. of any given academic year. | Limited to what the undergraduate certificate offers (approx. 20 courses/year, topics quite varied, most outside the US and a few inside it) | Mostly 1-2 weeks, some longer; most during the summer, a few during other break periods. May need to plan up to a year ahead given timing of application process. You will probably be doing only global health work for the duration of the course. | Variable, from a few hundred to thousands of dollars |
| 2. Preapproved graduate field courses | NO, but you must be a junior or senior to apply, and some courses rarely accept undergrads at all. | Application deadlines vary, but are usually in late fall | Limited to what the graduate certificate offers (approx. 4-6 courses/year, topics quite varied, all typically outside the US) | Mostly 4-6 weeks, some longer; all typically during the summer. May need to plan up to a year ahead given timing of application process. You will probably be doing only global health work for the duration of the field course. A one-credit preparation course is required during the spring semester before the summer you go abroad. | Approx. $4,000-6,000. |
| 3. Wisconsin Express and CHIP | NO, but you do not need to talk with a certificate advisor about arranging credit | Apply before mid or late Feb. in any given academic year. | Limited to sites and organizations AHEC is working with in any given year (all within Wisconsin). | Wisconsin Express is one week long and happens early each summer. CHIP is a minimum of 8 weeks during the summer and some students negotiate a longer experience. | $100 fee for WI Express. CHIP is paid. |
| 4. Nursing 419 (Community Health Nursing Practicum) | NO, but is for NURSING STUDENTS ONLY. | Required for Nursing students, will take place late in your time in your time as an undergrad. | Limited to what Nursing offers (a few offerings a year, topics quite varied, some locations in the US and some outside) | Summer, sometimes fall and/or spring. | Cheap (in WI) to thousands of dollars abroad. |
| 5. Traditional study abroad with a global health component | YES, ideally in advance (you can ask afterward but we might say no). | You identify and apply to both the larger program and the global health component and get approval from the Certificate. | Very broad, though finding a program with a suitable global health component can be hard. | Most are during fall and spring semesters, but some happen during the summer; most are an entire semester or summer long. Typically need to enroll months in advance, need to allow at least 10 weeks for Certificate approval. Global health will be a small part of what you are doing. | Typically many thousands of dollars |
| 6. Global health-focused study abroad | YES, ideally in advance (you can ask afterward but we might say no). | You identify and apply to the program and get approval from the Certificate. | Very broad, though finding a reputable provider from whom you can get credit can be hard | Most are during fall and spring semesters, but some happen during the summer; most are an entire semester or summer long. Typically need to enroll months in advance, need to allow at least 10 weeks for Certificate approval. You will probably be doing only global health work for the duration of the course. | Very expensive can be $80k for a semester |
| 7. Worldwide Internship | YES, ideally in advance (you can ask afterward but we might say no). | You identify the country, topic, organization of interest, do legwork to line up internship and get approval from International Internship Program and Certificate. | Extremely broad, though finding an organization that is both reputable and willing to take you as an intern can be hard. | The associated course is offered every fall, spring, and summer, but you would need to set up your internship at least two months before you planned to do it and allow at least 10 weeks for Certificate approval. The amount of your time spent doing global health work depends on specifics of your internship. | Less than most long study abroad programs, but in the thousands of dollars |
| 8. Inter-L&S Internship | YES, ideally in advance (you can ask afterward but we might say no). | You identify the topic and organization of interest, do legwork to line up internship and get approval from Inter-L&S Internship staff and Certificate. | Extremely broad, though finding an organization that is both reputable and willing to take you as an intern can be hard. | The associated course is offered every fall, spring, and summer. Lead time between finding an internship and participating in the course can be short but you need to allow at least 10 weeks for Certificate approval. The amount of your time spent doing global health work depends on specifics of your internship. | Very low cost if done in Madison. |
| 9. Theses, capstones, independent studies, misc. others | YES, ideally in advance (you can ask afterward but we might say no). | You identify faculty member(s) as potential supervisor(s), agree with them on work to be done, and get approval from the Certificate. | Extremely broad, though identifying appropriate faculty members and finding one willing to supervise you can both be hard | Could be done any fall, spring, or summer when faculty agreed to it. Experiences like this are often (though not always) set up at least a few months in advance. Global health will be a small part of what you are doing. | Potentially very cheap. |