

# **PRACTICUM MANUAL**

**for**

**Students and Site Supervisors**

**Higher Education Program**

**Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**

**Iowa State University**

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## Overview

The practicum is an essential component of a comprehensive preparation program for individuals interested in working in student affairs. A practicum provides students with valuable work opportunities while they explore potential career choices. It also gives students an opportunity to begin to integrate theory and practice.

This manual is provided to assist students and site supervisors in the development and completion of a successful practicum experience. It provides information on what to think about when a student is selecting a site, defines the responsibilities for all those involved in the practicum experience, and includes samples of the required forms for development and completion of the practicum experience.

Most practica are semester-long, part-time work experiences that provide exposure to an area of interest in student affairs. They allow students to apply and test what they are learning in classes. Successful practicum work experiences enable students to organize, synthesize and process new information in a manner that combines cognitive and experiential learning. While on-campus practica are typically volunteer experiences, paid summer internships may also be completed for practicum credit if the primary purpose of the internship is educational and the student receives appropriate supervision and completes reflective assignments that encourage the integration of theory with practice.

In addition to gaining insight regarding the operation of a functional area of student affairs, a student in a practicum should also gain a view of the interrelationship of other departments or functional areas. The student affairs professional must be cognizant of such relationships in order to understand the nature of the institution. Finally, the practicum may serve to generate, develop and refine skills in program development, counseling, administration, research and other aspects of student affairs work.

The selection of a specific practicum site is important. Both practicum students and site supervisors should consider the “fit” between the student and practicum site. The prospective practicum student should be aware of expected duties and responsibilities of the position as well as opportunities for education and growth.

Many offices within the Division of Student Affairs and related areas have traditionally offered practica for students in the Higher Education - Student Affairs program. Other offices may be interested in sponsoring a practicum if a student presents a proposal to the office. Higher Education faculty are open to considering practica at sites that have not previously offered practica experiences. The most important consideration in establishing practicum sites is that they provide good learning experiences for students. Such sites would assist students in exploring and learning about their areas of interest and exploring future career options.

## **PRACTICUM CALENDAR**

### **SEMESTER PRIOR TO THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE**

Identify possible practicum sites	by week 9
Schedule practicum interviews	weeks 10-12
Final decision	week 13

### **DURING PRACTICUM SEMESTER**

Practicum contract due to practicum instructor/ major professor	first week of classes
Student/supervisor mid-term evaluations	week 7-9
Distribute site supervisor evaluation, student self-evaluation, and practicum site evaluation	week 12
Complete student self-evaluation and report on practicum site	week 14
Practicum ends	last day of classes
Final day to turn in site supervisor evaluation and final grade	first day of finals week

## STANDARDS FOR PRACTICA

For maximum learning all practica should include the following components:

1. A minimum of 45 hours of actual work for each credit hour of HgEd 591 Supervised Field Experience in which the student enrolls.
2. An initial orientation for the practicum student is essential so he/she understands what happens in the department or office and what his/her role will be for the semester.
3. A practicum should offer the student multiple chances to observe, participate and become familiar with all major functions of the office.
4. The site supervisor must provide regular communication, individual supervision, and feedback for the practicum student.
5. The practicum student's duties should include completion of at least one project, through which the student makes a concrete contribution to the work of the office. The project should be equivalent to something a new professional in student affairs would be assigned to complete.
6. A practicum should offer the opportunity for development of skills. A sample of those skills would be:
  - administration: completing administrative tasks such as budgeting, planning, long-range planning for the unit, or personnel management
  - assessment and evaluation: determining the needs of particular populations; determining the effectiveness of programs, policies, or personnel
  - advising: working with students in one-to-one or group settings to enable students to overcome current problems, to prevent possible problems in the future, or to facilitate their development in specific areas
  - diversity: working with a variety of students, staff and/or faculty from different backgrounds (for example, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.)
  - instruction: presenting material in a formal or informal teaching role
  - program development: developing or modifying programs to meet the needs of a particular population and to facilitate student growth and development
7. The practicum site should provide the student with professional working conditions and the student should be viewed as a member of the professional staff.

## **Procedures for Completing the Higher Education 591 Contract** **(Emphasis in Student Affairs)**

### **A. Student responsibilities include:**

1. Students should first identify practica sites in which they are interested. They should consider the areas in student affairs about which they would like to learn more or in which they would like to gain some practical experience.
2. Students should complete the student portion of the Higher Education 591 contract outlining their academic and work experiences and identifying their goals for the practicum.
3. Once students have completed this self-exploration process, they should explore several potential practicum sites to determine which ones best meet their goals.
4. Students should make an appointment for an informational interview and meet with each potential practicum supervisor to discuss their goals for the practicum and learn what types of tasks and activities would be available to help meet those goals. Students should bring a resume to the meeting with the prospective site supervisor to allow the supervisor to get to know them better.
5. Once students have identified the site that best meets their goals, they should arrange an appointment with the supervisor of the site to determine if the supervisor is willing to sponsor the practicum. If so, they should jointly develop specific objectives that will provide the experiences to obtain the student's goals. After arranging a practicum, students should follow-up with all the other site supervisors with whom they met to inform them that they have selected a practicum in another office so the sites can consider other candidates who may be interested.
6. It is the student's responsibility to develop the initial draft of the contract for the semester. Final contracts should not be signed until the student and the supervisor both agree to the objectives and details of the contract.
7. Completed contracts should be submitted to the Practicum Class Instructor and the student's major professor by the first full week of class in the semester for which the student is enrolled in the Practicum Class. (Students enrolling in a second or third practicum should submit their contracts to their major professor.)
8. Students are expected to conduct themselves as professional staff members of the office during their practicum experience. They must adhere to confidentiality and other guidelines for behavior and communication that the office indicates are important.
9. At midterm, the student and supervisor should review the contract to affirm that the objectives are obtainable and make any necessary modifications.

10. A final evaluation of the practicum site must be submitted by the student to the Practicum Class instructor (or the major professor for second or third practica). These evaluations should be written clearly and typed. They will become a part of the class files and available for future students to review as they explore practicum sites.
11. A self-evaluation must be completed by the student at the end of the semester and turned into the Practicum Class instructor (or major professor for second or third practica). The specific due date will be included in the class syllabus or arranged with the major professor.

**B. Supervisor responsibilities include:**

1. Supervisors who accept a practicum student must work with the student to develop the specific goals, objectives, and activities on the contract submitted by the student and agree to support the student in completing assigned tasks.
2. The supervisor must be available to meet with the student so he/she can complete the contract for the practicum by the end of the first full week of class in the semester for which the student is enrolled.
3. Supervisors must be clear with students about how they and the opportunities at the site can assist the students in fulfilling their goals and objectives. This includes signing the student's contract form, which indicates the supervisor is in agreement with the proposed practicum.
4. Supervisors must be willing to work with students to clarify and assist the students to further develop their student affairs philosophy and improve their work-related skills. They must be available to support the student in completing the practicum objectives, and they must submit evaluations and grades by the due dates.
5. Supervisors should meet with the student on a regular basis (ideally, at least one hour a week) in order to provide on-going constructive feedback to the student. In addition, approximately halfway through the semester supervisors should meet with students to review their progress and performance.
6. The supervisor should contact the Practicum Class instructor (or major professor for students completing a second or third practicum) if there are problems in the practicum experience that are not resolved between the student and supervisor.
7. A final evaluation (including a recommended grade) must be completed and submitted to the Practicum Class instructor by the required date on the syllabus. The student will be given an incomplete if the supervisor does not meet the deadline. Evaluations of students enrolled in second or third practica should be submitted to the student's major professor no later than the beginning of finals week.

## Advanced Practica

Students have the option of completing more than one practicum during their master's programs. Indeed, additional practical experience is recommended. Such experiences can be completed either on or off-campus. Advanced practica may be used to explore an additional area of student affairs with which the student wishes to gain familiarity or to gain further experience in an area with which the student is already familiar. In the latter case, however, the practica should allow the student to take on different assignments and more responsibility than they have previously been engaged in.

Students take advanced practicum work under the supervision and guidance of their major professor. They enroll in HgEd 591 Supervised Field Experience in the section assigned to their major professor. Typically, students complete a reflective assignment (e.g., a journal, a final reflective paper) which they submit to their major professor as part of the experience. Students who wish to enroll in an advanced practicum should consult their major professor concerning options and requirements.

Students are encouraged to consider summer internships at other institutions to enrich their experience base and knowledge of various types of colleges and universities. A number of student affairs professional organizations, including the American College Personnel Association, the National Orientation Directors Association, and the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International, sponsor paid summer internships at colleges and universities around the country. Students are encouraged to visit the Websites of these organizations for more information about options and application procedures. Often, the Higher Education program coordinator receives information about summer internship options that are passed along to students via the departmental listserv. In addition, students are encouraged to explore possibilities independently by contacting colleges or universities at which they might be interested in working. Possible summer internship options should be discussed with the student's major professor. Credit is obtained by registering for HgEd 591 Supervised Field Experience. As with on-campus advanced practica, major professors may require that students complete a reflective assignment as part of the experience.

**Higher Education 591 Contract  
(Student Affairs Emphasis)**

**To be completed by the student:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Practicum Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Credit hours \_\_\_\_\_

Previous practica or related work experience (position, location, year):

List coursework that can relate to the practicum experience:

List skills you have that can be utilized in the practica:

Practicum goals:

**Higher Education 591 Contract  
(Student Affairs Emphasis)**

**To be completed by the supervisor:**

Supervisor Name and Title	Phone
Office Address	E-mail

Practicum Prerequisites:

Practicum Objectives:

Practicum Assignments:

What skills can the student develop which will help him/her perform duties and functions common in student affairs work?

Practicum evaluation method:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student I.D. Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

**FINAL EVALUATION (to be completed by the site supervisor)**

**HG ED 591 –SUPERVISED FIELD EXPERIENCE (Student Affairs Emphasis)**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Semester of Practicum \_\_\_\_\_ Recommended Grade \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
1. Willingness to learn	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Completion of assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Punctuality	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Individual growth	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Professional promise	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Initiative	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Understanding of ethics	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Professional interaction	_____	_____	_____	_____

10. To what degree was the practicum student involved in the actual practice of the procedures, duties, and routines of your area?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fully involved, was able to perform with little or no supervision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Involved, but worked under the direct supervision of a staff member.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observed staff member at work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Met, talked with staff (singly or in groups) but no observation or actual assignments were undertaken or attempted.

11. In what ways did the student increase his/her awareness of the student affairs philosophy?

Please provide additional comments on the back of this page, if appropriate.

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Possible Practicum Sites/Contacts**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Prefix</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Academic Success Center	1076 Student Services	Ms.	Heather	Phillips	294-2467
Admissions Office	100 Alumni Hall	Mr.	Marc	Harding	294-5842
Affirmative Action	3750 Beardshear Hall	Ms.	Carla	Espinoza	294-6458
Alumni Association	Memorial Union	Mr.	Jeffrey	Johnson	294-6525
College of Human Sciences Career Services	E 105 Lagomarcino	Ms.	Toni	Humpfer	294-3708
Dean of Students	1010 Student Services	Dr.	Sharon	McGuire	294-1022
Disability Resources	1085 Student Services	Mr.	Steven	Moats	294-6624
ETS/Upward Bound	113 Student Services	Dr.	Jane	Agyeman	294-3362
Financial Aid	210 Beardshear Hall	Ms.	Roberta	Johnson	294-2223
Greek Affairs	B6 Memorial Union	Ms.	Jennifer	Plagman-Galvin	204-1023
Human Resources	3750 Beardshear Hall	Ms.	Carla	Espinoza	294-6458
International Education Services	252 Memorial Union	Mr.	Dennis	Peterson	294-0375
ISU Foundation	2505 Elwood Drive	Mr.	Dan	Saftig	294-6511
Judicial Affairs	1010 Student Services	Ms.	Bethany	Schattinga	204-1021
Lectures Program	69 Physics	Ms.	Pat	Miller	294-9934
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Student Services	1034 Student Services	Mr.	John	Faughn	294-1020
Multicultural Student Affairs	2224 Student Services	Mr.	Leonard	Perry	294-6338
New Student Programs	100 Alumni Hall	Ms.	Liz	Kurt	294-0336

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Prefix</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Recreation Services	2220 State Gym	Mr.	Mike	Harvey	294-0994
Registrar	214 Alumni Hall	Ms.	Kathy	Jones	294-1840
Residence Life	1203 Friley Hall	Dr.	Pete	Englin	294-2900
Student Activities Center	B6 Memorial Union	Ms.	Laura	Bestler-Wilcox	294-1023
Student Counseling Services	2223 Student Services	Dr.	Terry	Mason	294-5056
Student Health Center	Sheldon/Union Drive	Mr.	James	Nelson	294-5801
Student Legal Services	B11 Memorial Union	Mr.	Paul	Johnson	294-0978
Student Support Services Program	2010 Student Services	Ms.	Japannah	Kellogg	294-0210
Union Programming	Memorial Union	Ms.	Laura	Bestler-Wilcox	294-1023
Veterinary Medicine Student Services	2270 A Vet Med	Ms.	Lisa	Brinkley	294-8657
Women's Center	Sloss House	Ms.	Penny	Rice	294-4154
Women's Center	Sloss House	Ms.	Penny	Rice	294-4154