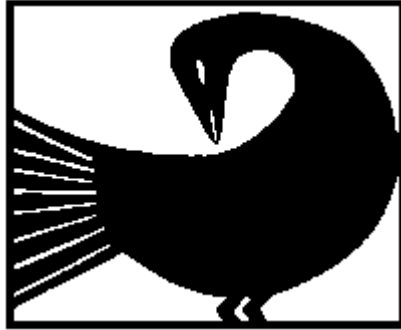


STUDENT HANDBOOK: PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP



**Guidelines
for
3006:495 (3 credits) Undergraduate
3006:695 (3 credits) Graduate**

Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

**Arts & Sciences Building
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STUDENT HANDBOOK: PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

Guidelines for Practicum/Internship

3006:495 (3 credits) Undergraduate

3006:695 (3 credits) Graduate

Welcome to your Practicum/Internship experience!

This is your opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply the knowledge gained in your studies in the field of gerontology. To help ensure a successful practicum experience, this Handbook has been provided for your reference. Because multiple copies of some of the attached forms may be required as you pursue your practicum, it is recommended that you photocopy the forms, as needed.

Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable practicum experience!

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1. General Information

The Gerontology Practicum/Internship is a field experience designed to give the student a practical view of a specific population: middle-aged and/or older adults. It should also acquaint the student with community services and resources uniquely serving this population. **The Practicum/Internship experience is individually designed to meet the student's needs and interests.** An effort is made to match the Practicum site and activities to the career goals and major study area of the student. In most instances it involves the student in the experience of working with middle-aged and/or older adults using concepts gained through studies in adulthood and aging. However, the Practicum may be directed toward applied research, under some circumstances (see Option C).

Students in either the undergraduate or graduate certificate program of the Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology may begin the Practicum requirement after completing at least 50% of coursework for theoretical background. (Usually it is the last requirement undertaken by the student). **Approval to begin the practicum must be obtained from the Practicum Coordinator prior to registration.** Closed class permission slips for this course are available from the Institute Office.

2. Site Selection: Factors & Procedures

The Institute provides recommendations for the community site-based option (Option A) for Life-Span Development and Gerontology. The following are examples: housing authority, community mental health center, nursing center or extended care facility, social service agency. The Practicum Coordinator maintains an informational file of approved agencies and programs (see Form A, attached). Students may seek approval of additional sites.

Site selection factors:

- a. **Student/site match** - This match is of critical importance to the success of the practicum experience. Therefore, it is the intent of the Institute that the student's interests, skills, background, major course of study, goals, and previous work in gerontology coincide with the characteristics of the site and the nature of the projected practicum experience.
- b. **Nature of population** - Students identify the population of personal/professional interest; including--frail elderly, pre-retirees, chronically ill, non-traditional students, older workers, etc.
- c. **Knowledge of preferred site** - The goal of the practicum/internship is to gain new experience and knowledge, as well as applying previously learned information. Therefore, it is appropriate for students to identify and select an unfamiliar site for their experience.
- d. **Student's schedule** - The student's available hours for on-site work should coincide with the site supervisor's schedule. Exceptions can be made, but it is recommended that the student work only under the direction of an experienced professional approved by the Institute Practicum Coordinator. The site needs to be accessible to the student via personal or public transportation.

Site selection procedures:

- a. **Review optional sites and make preliminary selection** - The student will identify several alternatives in accordance with the above factors. The student may visit sites in advance.
- b. **Confer with Practicum Coordinator** - The student will review alternative sites and/or project ideas with the Institute's Practicum Coordinator and discuss their relative merits. Site selection will be agreed upon mutually. The student may decide to interview at more than one site before making a final selection.
- c. **Preparation for on-site interview(s)** - The student will prepare a personal resume and contact the on-site supervisor to request an interview. The Practicum Coordinator will contact the approved supervisor of the selected site to inform him/her that the student intends to request an interview (see Tool #1, regarding resumes). The student will regard this interview with the seriousness of an interview with a prospective employer. Appearance, promptness, and some knowledge of the agency are important preparation considerations.
- d. **On-site interview** - The student will interview the site supervisor to explore project ideas and goals, work schedule, expectations, etc. A tour of the site is desirable and should be requested.
- e. **Site selection** - Based upon available information and interview(s), the student makes his/her final selection and obtains formal approval from the site supervisor and the Practicum Coordinator. The student then completes the Site Description Form (A) and the Practicum Plan/Information Form (B) and obtains the required signatures. This is due within the first 4 weeks of the Practicum/Internship.
- f. **On-site schedule arranged** - The student establishes a work schedule (contact hours) in consultation with the site supervisor and develops a timeline for implementation/completion of the project (see Tool #2, regarding timelines). The completed Practicum Plan/Information (Form B, with attachments) must be submitted to the Practicum Coordinator within the first 4 weeks on site (unless other arrangements have been made with the Practicum Coordinator).

3. Project Selection/Organization

It is important that the student identify with his/her supervisor a project that is goal-, task-, and learning-oriented. Projects may have a direct one-to-one service component (e.g., interviewing agency clientele to obtain information needed by the agency), may produce a tangible product (e.g., development of a needed manual, or survey) or serve an advocacy/organizational function (e.g., development of a staff-inservice training event).

The Institute Practicum Coordinator will assist in identification of an appropriate project for Option A (below). The site supervisor should be a primary source of ideas and may suggest the site-related limitations and possibilities. However, the student's contribution toward identification of a project is particularly significant because of his/her insight into personal skills, interests, and expectations.

NOTE: If the Practicum/Internship is not to be site-based (Option B or C, below), a full explanation and description of the project must be presented in a formal, written proposal which will be discussed with the Institute Practicum Coordinator.

4. Time Limitation

The Practicum/Internship should be completed and the required final report submitted during the fourteenth week of the semester. Time extensions may be requested and are subject to approval of the Practicum Coordinator. Students may wish to continue their on-site work voluntarily and/or broaden their experience by re-registering for the Practicum/Internship. Forms A & B are to be submitted within the first 4 weeks on-site and at that time, the student should meet briefly with the Practicum Coordinator (by appointment) to discuss initial experiences.

5. Practicum/Internship Options

Students may select one of the following options:

Option A, Site-Based: The Practicum/Internship may take place in a setting approved by the Practicum Coordinator. The site must represent a community service or living situation unique to persons in their middle or later years. An on-site supervisor, also approved by the Institute, has primary supervisory responsibility for the ongoing work of the Practicum student. The Practicum Coordinator also shares in this role and will be in contact with the site supervisor during the Practicum.

Option B, Home Department: The Practicum/Internship may originate in the student's "home" department (e.g., psychology, education, social work). This allows the student to complete two requirements with one placement and no additional hours, or, in some cases, registration. A faculty member of that department, who must be a Fellow of the Institute, guides planning and site approvals for this option. The Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology has the following additional requirements:

- a. **Older population** - That the Practicum/Internship involves direct experience with the middle aged or older adult population.
- b. **Submission of Practicum/Internship plan** - That the student completes the Site Description Form (A), and the Practicum Plan/Information Form (B), and files them with the Practicum Coordinator.
- c. **Submission of final project report** - That the student submits to the Practicum Coordinator a copy of his/her final report, and other work required by the department including evaluation by the faculty advisor.

College of Nursing Students: The practicum requirement of service/learning hours may be met through completion of your clinical experience in the College of Nursing with supervision shared by designated College of Nursing faculty and the Institute's Practicum Coordinator. In addition to the above requirements, the student is to present the topic addressed in the final paper at a regular class session in the College of Nursing or the Institute.

Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine Students: The practicum requirement of service/learning hours may be met through completion of a geriatric elective experience, summer fellowship, or other equivalent experience in cooperation with the Office of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology of NEOUCOM and the Institute. Students should contact the Administrative Director of the Office of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology.

Option C, Research: Research projects may be either person or issue-centered. **Person-centered research** would be oriented to a specific group of aging or aged persons, but the research would not be oriented to one site, e.g., conduct an interview series with recently retired workers to determine relative coping skills, activity levels, life satisfaction, etc. **Issue-centered research** would be oriented to a relevant issue in the field of gerontology and would be an option for students who have demonstrated an exceptional amount of experience with middle-aged and/or older adults. Research projects may be proposed by students and are subject to approval by the Institute's Practicum Coordinator and, in some cases, the Institute Director. Person-centered research is subject to review and approval by The University of Akron Human Subjects Review Committee.

6. Requirements

The student must complete the following requirements:

- a. **Submission of Site Description and Practicum Plan** - Submit the completed Site Description Form (A) and Practicum Plan/Information Form (B), including statement of project design and goals. All practicum students must submit these forms within the first 4 weeks on site.
- b. **Completion of related readings** - Complete appropriate readings, chosen with reference to the proposed Practicum—related to site, activities, and/or project focus. Assistance in locating appropriate readings will be given as needed by the Practicum Coordinator and/or site supervisor.
- c. **Documentation/verification of hours** - Service/Learning hours are to include at least 125 hours for on-site or related work, and at least 10 hours for readings, project preparation, and preparation of final report (total of 135 hours, minimum for 3 credits, for both graduate and undergraduate students).
- d. **Submission of final project report** - A Final Report is required and is to be submitted not later than the 14th week of the semester unless an extension is approved; see Item 7 below.
- e. **Periodic consultations** - The student schedules pre-practicum and mid-term conferences with the Institute's Practicum Coordinator and/or faculty advisor. As a substitute for the mid-term conference, the Practicum Coordinator may call a meeting of currently active practicum students.

7. Final Report: Suggested Outline

The student's final report is to be of minimum length (undergraduate, 10 pages; graduate, 15 pages). The paper should focus on a particular aspect of the general mission or service of the agency, or some specific concept(s) of gerontology that have been applied in the practicum. Examples of practicum papers are available for review in the Institute office. The following outline is suggested:

- a. **Introduction** - Statement of Practicum/Internship project goals, objectives, and learning expectations. Include revisions to the original plan (Form B), as needed. Also include: description of site, reference to the supervisory process and co-workers, orientation, etc.
- b. **Literature review** - Review the related readings or incorporate them into the main body of the paper, applying readings to work experience, agency philosophy, project emphasis, etc.

- c. **Project review** - This is the main body of the final report that includes details of ongoing work, progressive phases, and responsibilities or assignments. Include descriptive examples of work. Relate the description of work experience to the original goals and expectations and demonstrate the project's impact. (See Tool #3, regarding project's impact.) Critique the experience in terms of personal satisfaction, specific value as a learning and practicing opportunity and extent to which goals have been realized.
- d. **Conclusion** - This portion of the report should tie your experiences to your educational or career goals. It may include recommendations about this site, the nature of the project, etc. which may be helpful to other students, supervisors, and/or advisors.
- e. **Bibliography/References** - Use a standard format (American Psychological Association, Turabian, etc.), to identify your related readings/resources.
- f. **Evaluation of Practicum Experience, Form D** - This form is to be completed and submitted as part of the Final Project Report. (See Form D, attached.)

8. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used in determining the student's Practicum/Internship grade:

- a. **Site supervisor's evaluation** - See Form C, attached.
- b. **Service/Learning hours** - The student must submit verification of the minimum number of clock hours. This verification may be in the form of the on-site supervisor's signature on a daily log, or other agency-generated record.
- c. **Final report** - The Final Project Report must be typed and will be graded on content and presentation (including spelling, grammar, etc.).
- d. **Basis for grade** - The final grade will be based on the field supervisor's evaluation (75%) and final report (25%).

9. Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to initiate and follow through on the Practicum/Internship in accordance with these guidelines. The experience is to be regarded as a real job in the real world. **If the student experiences any difficulties/or has any negative experiences, the Practicum Coordinator should be consulted as soon as possible.**

10. Tools

Tool #1: Resumes –

Most resumes include the following items: career objective, education, experience, activities and interests. The Career Planning and Placement Office of The University of Akron (Simmons Hall, Room 178) is available to provide related information including sample resumes, cover letters, etc. They will also review your resume with you and offer suggestions.

Tool #2: Service Objectives & Learning Plans

Service objectives typically contain three elements: the purpose, the means, and the criteria for measuring results. For example:

I will assist nursing home residents to be aware of their rights, by conducting interviews with residents and families and by producing a series of newsletter articles on the topic of residents' rights. I will survey the residents and families before and after my project to determine the success of my efforts.

Learning plans also contain three elements: learning objectives, methods to achieve the objectives, and evidence to show you have achieved your objectives. For example:

To understand the Patient's Bill of Rights, I will talk with nursing home personnel and nursing home ombudsmen and will describe my findings in newsletter articles on the subject.

To understand the obstacles to residents and families in exercising the Patient's Bill of Rights, I will interview residents/families and describe my findings in newsletters.

Tool #3: Timelines

Timelines can be an effective tool to monitor accomplishment of short-term objectives. Sequentially number each event and write the number at the point along the timeline when the event will be completed. Following is an example:

NURSING HOME ADVOCACY PROJECT

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

Short-Term Objectives:

1. Meet with Program Coordinator to finalize project
2. Complete related readings
3. Attend volunteer training sessions
4. Submit Practicum Plan/Information (Form B) to Institute
5. Begin nursing home visitation, ongoing
6. Re-examine service objectives and learning goals
7. Mid-term progress report meeting
8. Submit Final Project Report (Form D) to Institute

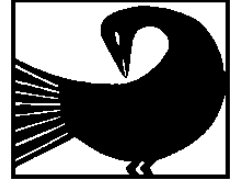
Tool #4: Demonstrating Project's Impact

There are many creative ways to demonstrate the impact of your project. Here are a few ideas:

1. Photographs (especially, before and after pictures)
2. Newspaper reports, agency newsletters, etc.
3. Work products, e.g., research studies, manuals
4. Outcomes of hearings, court cases, government proceedings
5. Documentation of services rendered; clients served
6. New policies that result from project efforts
7. Before and after surveys
8. Video-, audio- tape recordings

Practicum/Internship Forms

Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology
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lifespan@uakron.edu



PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

FORM A: SITE DESCRIPTION

3006:495 Undergraduate - 3006:695 Graduate

Agency: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City/State) (Zip)

Telephone: _____ Director: _____

Practicum/Internship Supervisor: _____

Statement of Agency Purpose: _____

Description of Clientele Served: _____

Number of Agency Staff: _____ Number of Volunteers: _____ Number of Clients: _____

Primary Funding Sources: _____

Possible Practicum Projects/Assignments: _____

Form Completed by: _____ Date: _____

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PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

FORM B: PRACTICUM PLAN/INFORMATION

3006:495 Undergraduate - 3006:695 Graduate

Student: _____

Address: _____

(Street)

(City/State)

(Zip)

Telephone:(Home) _____ (Work): _____

Academic Status: (Year): _____ (Major): _____ (Dept.) _____

Degree Candidate: (Degree) _____ (Anticipated Date of Graduation) _____

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

Practicum Option Selected (check one)

Option A: Site-based Option B: Home Department _____ Option C: Research

The purpose of the project is to (general nature of project) _____

_____ for (type of client) _____

_____ because _____

Required Signatures:

Student: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor (Option B or C): _____ Date: _____

Site Supervisor (Option A): _____ Date: _____

Practicum Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

NOTE TO STUDENT: In addition to the information above, attach a sheet on which you have provided the following:

1. List of prior courses in gerontology, dates and grades;
2. Service objectives and learning plan for the practicum project;
3. List of projected readings;
4. Projected timeline for implementation/completion.

Completion and submission of this form is your first Practicum/Internship assignment. It is due within the first 4 weeks on site.

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PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

FORM C: EVALUATION OF STUDENT

3006:495 Undergraduate - 3006:695 Graduate

Student: _____ Semester: _____

Agency: _____ Telephone: _____

Please rate the student on the following, as applicable:

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Average 4 = Good 5 = Excellent NA = Not Applicable.

Dependability

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Quality of work

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Cooperation

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Relationship(s) with staff

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Organizational abilities

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Enthusiasm for project

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Ability to set goals

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Follow through

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Dress/Appearance

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Relationship(s) with clients

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Professional attitudes

1 2 3 4 5 NA

Overall performance

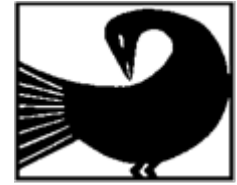
1 2 3 4 5 NA

Evaluate the student's performance relative to the agency's goals as well as the specific practicum/ internship goals and assignments. Include observations on the student's ability to apply knowledge and skills to the assigned tasks.

Recommended grade: _____

Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

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PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

FORM D: EVALUATION OF PRACTICUM

3006:495 Undergraduate - 3006:695 Graduate

Student: _____ Semester: _____

Agency: _____ Telephone: _____

Rate the Practicum/Internship experience below, according to the following:

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Average 4 = Good 5 = Excellent NA = Not Applicable.

Relevance of experience to your career plans	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>
Helpfulness of your site supervisor	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>
Helpfulness of your faculty advisor	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>
Personal acceptance by your co-workers	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>
Value of time spent at practicum site	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>
Overall assessment of practicum	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>NA</u>

With reference to the above categories, identify ways in which your practicum experience could have been improved:

Signature: _____ Date: _____