



## Practicum Guidelines

### Prerequisites

- Students may apply for a practicum experience **only** if they will have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours prior to the semester the practicum experience is to be taken. 15 credit hours are to come from the core (LIS 6010, 6080, 6120, 6210, and 7040). The electives should reflect the type of experience you wish to enhance during the practicum and LIS 7996 is not considered a suitable elective to meet this requirement.
- Students may not receive pay for their practicum experience. The practicum must be completed before a student can accept a paying position at the practicum site.
- Students are not placed in an institution where they are currently working or have recently worked.

### Application Acceptance and Placement Process

Students will be informed approximately 3 weeks after submitting this application whether their application has been accepted. Students will NOT be able to register for the practicum until they receive email notification.

While students may suggest a practicum site, they will be informed of their approved placement site which may or may not be a site they have suggested, approximately 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester for which they have enrolled.

### Purpose

The principal purpose of the practicum is to enable the student to work in a library or other information setting under the direction and guidance of a skilled library and information professional. This experience offers an opportunity to test professional skills and to re-examine concepts and theories against the conditions in which libraries and information centers must operate in the twenty-first century.

The School of Library and Information Science believes that sharing the responsibility for the preparation of new library and information professionals with practitioners adds depth and dimension to the student's educational experience.

### Objectives

To achieve this purpose, the School of Library and Information Science sets these objectives for its students:

- To experience the interaction between the practicing library and information professionals and users with their unique information needs.
- To understand the sociological environment in which the information center operates, the community in which it is situated, and the management of human resources within the institution itself.
- To develop a sense of personal identification with the profession and its attendant responsibilities and competencies.
- To test the student's academic and professional preparation for a position in the information field.

### Duration of the Assignment

1. A minimum of 135 hours during one academic semester for three (3) credit hours.
2. The work schedule is to be negotiated by the supervising library and information professional and the student for hours that are mutually convenient. Students should realize that to get a true experience they are to be available at a variety of times including nights and weekends in addition to regular day schedules.
3. Hours may be scheduled over the first fourteen weeks of the semester or clustered into a shorter span of time. NO WORK PERIOD IS TO BE LESS THAN THREE CONSECUTIVE HOURS.

### Course Requirements

In addition to the required hours to be spent at your practicum site, a student must also complete the following items:

1. There are three mandatory seminars. Dates and times will be noted on the appropriate course schedule and in the email sent to you confirming your placement.
2. Students are to keep a journal of their activities, regularly submitting them in 20-25 hour increments throughout the semester.
3. Students in consultation with their site supervisor are to develop a project or several small projects that are to be submitted to the instructor for approval. This may be done by email.
4. At the completion of their practicum hours, they are expected to prepare a brief analysis reflecting on the value of the practicum experience and their site as an appropriate learning site.

### Scope of the Practicum Experience

The School of Library and Information Science recommends no particular pattern for the practicum. Since libraries/information centers vary markedly in their users, resources, and facilities, the experiences that students have will also vary.

It is expected that the participating student's experiences will be of a professional nature as outlined in the American Library Association publication, *Library Education and Personnel Utilization*. (ALA Policy, June 1970) carries this statement.) Tasks that might be routinely assigned to clerical and technical personnel may be included, but only to the extent that they contribute to an understanding of the interdependence of the various library functions.

The Program hopes that the duties required of the student will be beneficial to the library, for only in this way can the student feel that he or she is a useful adjunct to the organization. The library and information science students who are assigned will be nearing the completion of their academic work for the professional degree and should be able to make positive contributions to the organization..

Contact in some capacity with public services, technical services, and administrative functions of the library should be a part of the student's assignment. How and to what extent this is to be done will be left to the judgment of the supervising library and information professional. Some of the experiences which might be considered for inclusion could be any of such characteristic library functions as reference desk work including answering questions, circulation desk work, book selection and acquisition procedures, cataloging material, serial and periodical handling, bibliography assignments, conducting story hours or doing bibliographic training, web page design, attendance at staff meetings, attendance at professional meetings and awareness of related and ancillary collections which help to support the provision of quality library services.

Of great value to the student will be the opportunity to discuss with the supervising library and information professional and other professional staff members the various experiences encountered in the library. Through such discussion, it is hoped that the student will better understand the role of the library and information professional in a complex organization.

As appropriate the practicum supervisor will contact host institutions to see if the placement is going well.

### **Evaluation**

The supervising library and information professional will be asked to evaluate the student's performance no later than the fourteenth week of the contract. The Program will provide a form for the evaluation. Suggestions for more effective structuring of the course or for more adequate preparation of students will be appreciated.

### **Grading**

The faculty supervisor is responsible for assigning a final grade in the course. The grade assigned maybe "S" for Satisfactory, "M" for Marginally Acceptable or "U" for Unsatisfactory. This grade will be based upon the evaluation of performance by the supervising library and information professional, the completion of a journal as stipulated, an analysis of the practicum experience and attendance at the three mandatory seminars.

***These guidelines will be supplied to each practicum supervisor.***