

Policies for Practicum and Internship Courses

Approved by Faculty on April 25, 2003

Definition of field experiences

#1 Practica are limited and introductory experiences and may be open to students at all levels. As stated in the current *Catalog* (p. 14), a practicum “permits students to observe a profession or provides application of previously studied theory. It allows students to participate in activities typical of a professional but does not demand a high level of responsibility or professional judgment.”

An internship is “work performed in actual service for a public/private organization. This experience links classroom instruction to a career.” (*Catalog*, p. 14) Internships require a higher level of involvement and professionalism than do practica and thus require junior or senior standing. Internships may also be identified by nomenclature appropriate to specific disciplines, such as “Field Placement,” “Field Instruction,” or “Student Teaching.”

#2 Practica may be offered for 1 to 4 semester hours. If a department permits, practica may be repeated by a student in a different professional setting.

Internships may be offered for 1 to 12 semester hours and may be repeated up to a maximum of 12 hours, if a department so chooses. Internships receiving 9 or more credit hours must include experiences that require the student to master knowledge or skills new to the student, relevant to their discipline.

Rationale must be provided to the Academic Policies Committee (APC) by any department wishing to allow more than 3 semester hours credit for field experiences to apply toward a major or minor.

#3 Enrollment in a Special Problems course concurrent with a field experience is permitted only when its content is substantially different and in addition to the learning and written product resulting from the field experience. Special Problems courses must be pursued under the direct supervision of the faculty instructor.

Hours of work per hour of academic credit

#4 Departments and programs must require a minimum of 40 work hours per academic credit hour. These hours may include work supervised by the instructor, either in preparation for the field experience or in completion of related assignments.

Arrangement and supervision

#5 The faculty member responsible for the course must present to the site supervisor a letter of understanding summarizing the terms and requirements of the field experience. This must be signed and returned by the site supervisor before the course begins. This agreement must specify expected duties and responsibilities of the intern, and the frequency and nature of contacts that the site supervisor will have with the student. It must also specify the evaluation criteria and the feedback required from the site supervisor.

#6 The supervising faculty member must outline the requirements, learning objectives and evaluation criteria for the field experience in a syllabus to be given to the student before the experience begins. The syllabus must also be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs before the experience begins. Syllabi may either be generally written to cover a category of departmental field experience or be customized to each student's individual experience.

#7 In addition to the initial contact, during the time the student is on site the faculty member must have at least one contact, in person or by phone or e-mail, with the site supervisor for every three credit hours the field experience represents. The faculty member must also have at least this many contacts with the student during the experience. Upon conclusion of the experience the faculty member must again contact both the supervisor and the student to discuss the experience. Specifically, the minimum number of contacts during a field experience must be:

<u>Credit Hours of Field Experience</u>	<u>Contacts Required During the Experience</u>	<u>Number of Total Contacts</u>
1 to 4	1	3
5 to 7	2	4
8 to 10	3	5
11 or 12	4	6

Evaluation of students:

#8 Every student must be given documentation specifying the criteria to be used to establish the course grade. (This information must be included in the syllabus discussed in Item #6.) To ensure consistent and rigorous grading, the faculty member must solicit the site supervisor's feedback on each of the established evaluation criteria, rather than simply relying on a grade proposed by the supervisor.

A student's performance must be assessed at minimum through: a written evaluation from the site supervisor, a written evaluation from the faculty supervisor based

on the ongoing contacts made with the student and site, and some kind of written work done by the student in which he/she assesses or applies what was learned through the experience.

Site selection

Determination of a site that will provide the student an appropriate experience is a matter best left to individual programs and departments. Once a site is chosen, Item #5 requires that a site supervisor is identified and clear criteria for the field experience are established before a student can be placed.

Rigor of the field experience

Through more formal communication of expectations, evaluation criteria and performance feedback, Items #4–8 address the rigor of both the field experience and the evaluation of the student.

Administrative procedures

#9 Departments must submit plans for the administration of any new or existing field experiences to APC for review. These plans will include the process for approving and placing interns, sample letters of understanding and syllabi, evaluation criteria, and the evaluation form to be completed by the site supervisor. After the initial review by APC, only substantive changes in departmental practices need to be submitted for review. The Office of Academic Affairs will maintain a file of departmental plans. These examples will be made available to other departments as they develop their own practices.

Note: Departments planning to offer new or existing field experiences during the 2004-2005 academic year will need to submit their plans to APC by February 15, 2004.