

Graduate Practicum Guidelines

***SCHOOL OF
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT***

**College of Public Programs
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona 85287-4703
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Approved by faculty: November 2004

Course Syllabus

GENERAL INFORMATION

A.	Course number	REC 580
B.	Title	Practicum
C.	Semester hours	6 semester hours
D.	Prerequisites	REC 500, 501, 552, 555
E.	Instructor:	Graduate Faculty Advisor

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Structured practical experience in a professional program, supervised by a practitioner and /or faculty member(s) with whom the student works closely.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Recreation 580, the Practicum, is an off-campus practicum involving a number of specific guided experiences with an agency/company over a 10-16 week period (minimum of 300 hours). It is designed to afford the student the opportunity to: 1) demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired during the formal academic process, 2) learn new competencies and skills identified as part of the practicum experience, and 3) to engage in an agreed upon research project for the partner agency/organization. It is designed to be a mutually beneficial experience: the cooperating organization will benefit from the student's expertise and abilities, and the student will benefit from exposure to a "real world laboratory" for the application of theoretical knowledge and to gain additional practical experience.

RESEARCH PROJECT

As part of the practicum experience, each student is required to complete a research project that identifies and addresses an applied problem or issue relevant to the partner agency/organization. The research project will require a written problem statement, study purpose statement, study goals (i.e. specific goals, hypotheses or study questions), a brief literature review, a sampling plan, data collection, analysis and a final research report. Past practicum research projects have included program evaluations, need assessments, customer surveys/interviews, marketing or strategic plans, secondary data analyses, focus groups, etc. Either primary or secondary data may be used to address the problem or issue. Students should consult their faculty advisor(s) and agency supervisor in designing the research component as well as obtaining their approval. In case primary data is to be collected, students will need to obtain approval from the office of the Research & Human Subjects Committee. An oral report of the research study will be included in the practicum oral defense.

EXAMPLES OF QUALITY PRACTICUM PROJECTS

The following are some examples of good practicum projects completed by students in the School of Community Resources and Development. These are available in the main office and can be consulted by contacting the front office staff in the school.

Utzing, Kirk, *“Improving the Overall Experience and Effectiveness of the Employees at GLACIER PARK INCORPORATED”* Fall 2000

Racki, Amy, *“An Assessment of Dispersed Recreation Management: Prescott National Forest, Upper Verde River Region”* Fall 2003

PRACTICUM EXPECTATIONS

- A. Students are expected to research and identify potential practicum sites. A final practicum site should be identified at least one month prior to the initiation of the experience (December 15 for Spring semester, July 15 for Fall semester, April 15 for Summer Session 1 and May 15 for Summer Session 2).
- B. In conjunction with the site supervisor and the two faculty members, the student will identify specific goals, objectives, and outcomes for the practicum.
- C. These goals, objectives, and outcomes will be approved in a written proposal/letter of understanding signed by the all parties (i.e., student, site supervisor, and two faculty members – a primary and secondary advisor) and a current Affiliation Agreement signed by ASU and the agency.
- D. Once the on-site project is completed, the student will complete a Final Project Report and present the outcomes at a publicly announced department forum (oral defense form is required from the Graduate Division).
- E. Both the site supervisor and faculty members will independently evaluate the quality of the student’s work.
- F. The primary faculty advisor is responsible for determining and submitting the final grade.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of REC 580 Practicum, students should be able to:

- A. Analyze task-related problems/situations accurately.
- B. Solve task-related problems efficiently and effectively.
- C. Make appropriate and logical decisions when given the opportunity.
- D. Develop the operational knowledge of the skills and duties necessary for the successful completion of the assigned responsibilities.
- E. Show initiative in fulfilling responsibilities.
- F. Communicate effectively with others.
- G. Complete written assignments promptly and in a professional manner.
- H. Organize materials and responsibilities effectively.
- I. Establish productive working relationships with other staff members.
- J. Successfully develop a portfolio that reflects the competencies developed and outcomes attained during the experience.

PRACTICUM SITE IDENTIFICATION:

The practicum experience is designed and conducted as an intense, rigorous experience that requires substantial commitment and effort to be successfully completed. First, to ensure that all dimensions of the practicum come together in an appropriate and meaningful manner, considerable pre-planning is required the semester before you begin the practicum. It is never

too soon to discuss potential practicum sites with your primary faculty advisor. It is important to give careful thought to the type of practicum experience you would like and the appropriate agency that might provide such opportunities. Working students may complete the practicum in their current agencies but need to identify educational opportunities beyond the current work responsibilities.

Since the goal of the practicum is to develop advanced professional competencies, it is important to identify a practicum site that fits your career goals. Moreover, it is essential to identify a site supervisor who will provide you with opportunities and mentoring that will enhance your educational development. This agency fit is best achieved through site visits and discussions with agency leadership. Potential locations include, but are not limited to:

1. Business, Convention and Visitor Bureaus.
2. State, National Tourism Offices.
3. Hotels, Resorts, Accommodation/Lodging Industries.
4. Airlines, Cruise lines and Other Travel Services.
5. Military Recreation Programs.
6. Non-Profit, Community and Human Service Organizations.
7. City, County, State Park and Recreation Departments.
8. Federal Natural Resource Agencies (i.e., Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management).
9. Chambers of Commerce with Tourism Programs.
10. Tour Operators, Destination Management and Meeting Planning Organizations.
11. Delivery Organizations (e.g., American Automobile Association, Travel Clubs).
12. Research, Consulting Leisure-related Companies.
13. Other Agencies with Approval by your academic advisor.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE PRACTICUM

- A. Once the preliminary steps have been taken to establish a practicum site and supervisor, the student must schedule an initial meeting with the Practicum Committee (i.e., academic advisor, and site supervisor) to discuss the nature and scope of the practicum goals and expectations. Once the Committee meets, a letter of understanding should be developed and filed that explains the goals and expectations for successful completion of the practicum. This letter should include: 1) specific objectives and activities to meet the objectives, 2) estimated time commitments, 3) the nature, purpose and objectives of the research project, and 4) criteria and procedures for evaluating your work. In addition, the student should check if a current Affiliation Agreement between ASU and the Agency must be on file with the Department (if not, the student is responsible for securing that agreement).

The student must schedule one additional meetings over the practicum period for the Committee to meet and discuss progress. It is essential that the student communicate regularly with the faculty advisor, particularly early in the practicum process, to insure that the practicum is meeting expected goals.

- B. A significant component of the practicum is the completion of a comprehensive Final Report. This report must provide: 1) a description of the goals and expectations of the

practicum experience, 2) a brief description of the organization's mission and the "products" that resulted from this practicum, 3) a written final report of the research project (including a problem statement, study purpose statement, study goals [i.e. specific goals, hypotheses or study questions], a brief literature review, the sampling plan, data analysis and recommendations), 4) an evaluation of the quality of the work developed and the practicum experience itself, 5) a discussion of future recommendations and considerations. This document is due one week after completion of the practicum.

- C. Once the report is completed, students must schedule a publicly announced oral presentation of the nature and outcomes of the practicum.
- D. The agency supervisor evaluation of the student will focus primarily on professional performance and work effectiveness during the practicum experience (See attached).

FACULTY MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary faculty advisor is expected to take the lead role in helping to guide the student through the practicum process. The secondary faculty member should act as an additional academic resource and be involved in the entire practicum experience (e.g. proposal through final public oral presentation). The primary faculty advisor should engage the student in regular communication about potential career interests and site locations. Although the student is responsible for the identification of the practicum site, the primary faculty advisor should maintain on-going communication with the student and agency practicum supervisor to ensure that all are clear on the scope and nature of the practicum experience. The primary faculty is ultimately responsible for the evaluation of the practicum, the grade assignment, and the facilitation and public announcement of the final presentation meeting.

AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STUDENT

- A. The student should provide the agency with worthwhile assistance/leadership in the planning, promotion, implementation and supervision of its programs and services. To facilitate this process, the agency should:
 - 1. Provide the student with a period of orientation to the agency and its operation during the early part of the Practicum.
 - 2. Give assignments and responsibilities that will foster development in accordance with individual needs and abilities.
 - 3. Provide supervision and guidance whenever possible. Regularly scheduled evaluation time is suggested for discussing the student's strengths and weaknesses.
 - 4. Provide the student with the opportunity to strengthen his or her management and

supervisory skills by observing and participating in various meetings as well as program activities.

5. Provide the student with as many of the following experiences as feasible within the agency context:
 - a. An orientation to the purposes and aims of the organization.
 - b. An orientation to the philosophy, procedures and policies of the agency.
 - c. The opportunity to practice and develop professional skills in a variety of situations.
 - d. The opportunity to meet and talk with management/administrators and other supervising personnel of the organization.
 - e. An orientation to the agency's business practices and policies.
 - f. The opportunity to actively participate in various planning aspects of the agency.
 - g. Periodic evaluation sessions to evaluate performance and discuss the individual strengths and weaknesses of the student.
 - h. The opportunity to attend general staff and other important committee meetings.
 - i. The opportunity to observe the management techniques of the agency personnel.
 - j. The responsibility for the planning, development and implementation for a specific project (s).

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

- A. REC 580 is graded on an A-E basis. Students must earn a "B" or better to successfully complete the Practicum requirement for graduation. The grade assigned by the academic advisor is determined by the following criteria:
 1. Ability to locate and secure an appropriate practicum site.
 2. Job performance as evaluated by the agency supervisor.
 3. Performance as evaluated by the academic advisors.
 4. The quality of the practicum project.
 5. The quality of the oral presentation and Final Report.

**EVALUATION FORM
MASTERS' PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE
REC 580**

Please Return to:

Arizona State University
School of Community Resources and Development
PO Box 874703
Tempe, AZ 85287-4703
(480) 965-5664 fax

Agency Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Title: _____

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor's _____
Name:

DIRECTIONS: Please read each statement carefully, then circle the corresponding number that best describes the student's overall performance in the area being evaluated. Please circle only one number for each item.

6 = Strongly Agree (SA)

5 = Agree (A)

4 = Mildly Agree (MA)

3 = Mildly Disagree (MD)

2 = Disagree (D)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

9 = Evaluator has NO BASIS for making this judgment (NB)

PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

SA A MA MD D SD NB

The Student:

1. Demonstrated professional conduct. 6 5 4 3 2 1 9

2. Demonstrated motivation to complete assignments. 6 5 4 3 2 1 9

6 = Strongly Agree (SA)

5 = Agree (A)

4 = Mildly Agree (MA)

3 = Mildly Disagree (MD) 2 = Disagree (D) 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
 9 = Evaluator has NO BASIS for making this judgment (NB)

	SA	A	MA	MD	D	SD	NB
3. Willingly accepted constructive criticism.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. Continually sought new ways to improve himself/herself.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Contributed beyond the minimum requirements and expectations.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Grasped new ideas and concepts.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Demonstrated behavior appropriate to the demands of the job.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Analyzed situations and problems accurately.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
9. Made appropriate and logical decisions when given the opportunity.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
10. Showed professional maturity in handling problem situations.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
11. Originated and acted on ideas independently	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
12. Communicates effectively with others.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
13. Possesses an operational knowledge of the skills and duties necessary for the successful completion of assigned tasks.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
14. Expresses personal ideas effectively in writing.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
15. Organizes materials effectively.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9

WORK EFFECTIVENESS:

SA A MA MD D SD NB

The Student:

1. Established a warm and friendly environment when working with groups.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
2. Worked harmoniously with others.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
3. Participated actively in group planning and execution of plans.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. Gained the confidence and respect of staff and participants.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Was accepting of other viewpoints.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Was poised and confident when leading others.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Sought to develop new interests and skills, by broadening programs and activities.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Was sufficiently flexible to deal with unanticipated problems or changes.	6	5	4	3	2	1	9

GENERAL COMMENTS:

A. What do you feel are the student's major strengths?

B. To what extent did the student demonstrate skills, competencies, and knowledge that supported the project and the goals of the agency?

C. In which areas do you feel the student needs improvement in order to succeed in a professional career?

D. If I were assigning a final grade to represent the student's overall performance during this Practicum, what would it be: (Please circle one)

A B C D F

E. Please provide any additional thoughts or insights regarding the quality of the practicum experience. (Attach additional comments if necessary).

Thank you.

Signature of Site Supervisor completing this form Date

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name of Site Supervisor completing this form