

FSHD Practicum Handbook

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This handbook was designed to help guide you through the necessary preparations for your FSHD practicum experience. Read it thoroughly when you first begin to prepare for your practicum (at least the semester before you plan to enroll in it), and then use it as a reference as questions arise.

1. Definitions & Objectives

WHAT IS A PRACTICUM?

The Council for Standards in Human Service Education defines practicums as “The advanced or culminating agency-based experience which occurs toward the end of a student university experience. This usually requires close supervision from agency personnel and university faculty including regularly scheduled seminars with a faculty member. The experience of [practicum] provides a bridge between the academic experience and later professional employment.”

During practicum, knowledge is not imparted onto the student as much as opportunities and material are presented to the student in a real-life setting. Practicums stimulate critical thinking and knowledge from within.

The student engages in an on-going process of observation, practice and reflection in order to learn from experience. In doing so the student gains new knowledge and skills, applies academic knowledge to practical situations, refines previously acquired skills, and gains a greater understanding of self and the Family Studies and Human Development careers.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for students:

- **LINK RESEARCH TO PRACTICE:** Students will integrate/synthesize theoretical and conceptual academic information with experiences in the field
- **ENGAGE IN CRITICAL REFLECTION:** The student will transition from academic habits to career readiness
- **BUILD PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:** The student will increase personal and professional skills and competencies

Objectives for FSHD Practicum Coordinator

- **PROVIDE:** information, structure, and supervision necessary for student growth

2. PRACTICUM ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for a practicum is based on the following qualifications:

- Practicum units (i.e., FSHD 394/494) will be available to FSHD majors only.
- Students must enroll in a minimum of 3 practicum units per semester.
- Students will be required to see their academic advisor prior to applying for an practicum; the advisor will verify that the student:
 - ✓ Is a FSHD major, minor, or pre-major.
 - ✓ Is in good academic standing with the University of Arizona and has at least a 2.25 grade point average (major and cumulative) at the University of Arizona.
 - ✓ Has sophomore, junior, or senior status with completion of the following courses: FSHD 117 and one additional FSHD course.
- Transfer students should have completed at least one full-time semester—a minimum of 12 University of Arizona credits.
- Students will be required to have a different job description if they apply for a practicum at their current work/volunteer site.
- Practicum will be part of the experiential requirement for FSHD majors. Majors can currently take FSHD 393/493, 394/494, 492, 399/499.
- Students are able to continue their experience as an practicum student, but must apply each additional semester for a practicum/internship at the same site.
- On the practicum application, students must specify how the proposed practicum site is connected to an FSHD concepts, theories, and coursework.
- Practicum credit will not be offered to students who completed experiential hours in previous semesters.
- Students must complete ALL on-site hours before a grade is assigned for the practicum.

3. PRACTICUM COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be enrolled in FSHD394/494 for a minimum of 3 units for Summer Session II. Practicum students will be expected to:

- Work at their Site on a schedule to be arranged with the site supervisor.
- Complete course assignments as outlined in the course syllabus.
- Complete the required hours between the first day of Pre-Session and the last day of classes in Summer Session II.

Site Work Expectations

Practica students are expected to work a total of 45 hours per 1 university unit for their Site. The table below lists the required work hours based on unit enrollment. Students need to make a schedule with their Site supervisor to meet the work requirements. Students are not automatically excused from work during school holidays. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored. Time off for holidays needs to be negotiated with the Site supervisor in advance.

Enrolled Units	Required Semester Hours	Hours per Week (based on 15 weeks)
3	135	9
4	180	12
5	225	15
6	270	18

Students may only count hours spent working at or on behalf of the Site or program. Students may not count hours spent traveling from home to the worksite, or hours spent working on course assignments.

Students are welcome to work more hours than required, but they will not receive points or additional units for any hours beyond the registered number of units.

Students are required to complete 45 hours per unit, if they do not complete the required hours, they will fail or need to take an incomplete in the course.

4. TYPES OF PRACTICUMS, CHOOSING A SITE

Students can choose a site anywhere in the world, but must be able to connect how this site and job duties are related to FSHD concepts, theories, and coursework. There are thousands of sites in the world to complete a practicum and there are many in the Tucson area. You will want to choose a site, program, or organization based on how they serve client populations. To ensure a quality practicum experience, the Practicum Coordinator must approve your placement before you begin work. This approval is included as part of the Practicum Application form.

Step One: Explore your options

Community Partners

- We work with many different agencies in Tucson and around the world. If you are interested in working with one of our community partners, [click here](#). This list is subject to change and may not be complete at any given time. In particular, names of site supervisors change periodically.

The University of Arizona Career Services

- You can use Wildcat Job Link to search for both paid and unpaid opportunities. You will need to create an account in order to access the listings.
<http://www.career.arizona.edu/>

The Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona

- The Volunteer Center lists many different kinds of opportunities. You can call them at 881-3300 or check out their website at <http://www.volunteersoaz.org/>

Online searches of community organizations

- VolunteerMatch.org is an excellent resource for local community agencies looking for volunteers (Practicum students) or for searching for agencies you may be interested in working with.

Other Resources

- Contact FSHD instructors, advisors, and classmates to hear what local options may be within your area of interest.

Step Two: Discuss your ideas with the Practicum Coordinator

Call, email, or set up a meeting to discuss your ideas about practicum. The practicum coordinator can provide help with interviewing, contact people, goodness of fit, and ideas for alternative sites. Even if you are selecting a community partner, it is always best to double check the site with the Practicum Coordinator before you set up an interview.

Step Three: Interviewing

Once you have chosen some possible sites, and have discussed them with the Practicum Coordinator, you should contact the organization itself for more information. When you call, explain that you are a student at the University of Arizona, planning to participate in a practicum experience, and you would like to learn more about their organization. Ask who would be the best person to talk with about practicum—this may be a volunteer coordinator, human resources representative, or a program director. When you talk with that person, ask if you can set up an appointment to meet, or if they have some time to talk by phone.

In Preparation for the Interview:

Do your homework before you go for the interview. Be familiar with the organization—its services, size, location(s), clients, and the work they expect you to perform. Examine your own career goals and skills. Think about what you want to get out of your practicum and what you would like to learn.

Bring:

- The Practicum Application
- The Community Partner Handbook
- Two copies of your résumé
- A typed list of references
- A pencil or pen and a pad of paper to take notes

Questions You May Want to Ask Interviewers:

- What opportunities are available for practicum students?
- What is the structure of the department where I would be working?
- What activities would I be performing?
- What kind of training would I receive?
- Who would be my supervisor?
- What days/hours would I be expected to work?
- What are the most rewarding aspects of working for this Site?
- What are the most challenging aspects?

For more information, go to UA Career Services on the fourth floor of the Student Union Memorial Center, or visit their website at <http://www.career.arizona.edu/>

Step Four: Fill out the Application Form

Remember that you can talk with the Practicum Coordinator at any time during your search to get tips, advice, or help in making a decision. Enjoy your experience; this is great practice for professional job hunting and to learn more about your future career path!

Practicum Checklist

- Open and read the Practicum Application Form
 - You must be familiar with the form and know who needs to sign it.

- Make an appointment to see your academic advisor.
 - Bring with you a current copy of your SAPR.
 - Bring with you the Practicum application form, as your advisor will need to sign a page.
 - Together, you will consider whether you are ready for the experience and get answers to your academic questions before you proceed with application process.

- Explore your options
 - Engage in a site search using our FSHD Practicum list or search sites on your own.

- Discuss your ideas with the Practicum Coordinator
 - The Practicum Coordinator can guide you in the selection process

- Interviewing
 - Interview at the site with your application
 - Create your practicum schedule
 - Have your site supervisor sign the application packet

- Submit the completed Practicum Application Form to the Practicum Coordinator
 - All pages of the application must be signed and dated before you will be enrolled in Practicum.

This process must be completed by the following dates:

Semester to Enroll

Application Due Date

Spring Semester

Last day of classes (not finals week) of the **Fall semester**

The Practicum Coordinator will review your application. If approved, your information will be sent for registration. If changes are needed, the Practicum Coordinator will contact you to discuss the matter further. It is important that you confirm your registration status by checking Student Link.

Next Steps: After you've been accepted at a site

Once you have chosen your site and submitted your application packet to the Practicum Coordinator, there will be tasks that you must complete before beginning work at your site.

Your site supervisor should tell you what you need to do, but you should ask to make sure things go smoothly. The following are some common things you may be expected to do.

- **Site paperwork**
You may need to complete a volunteer or employment application or fill out other human resources forms before you can begin work.
- **Fingerprinting and criminal background check**
If you will be working with children or working closely with clients, you will be expected to go through a criminal background check. This typically involves fingerprinting and signing some legal forms. The background check can take from three weeks to three months. Because many organizations must receive the results of the check before allowing you to begin work, you should complete this step as soon as possible. You may be required to pay a fee for this process.
- **Volunteer training**
Many organizations require a structured volunteer training while others may train you individually or on the job. The training may not be offered at a time that coincides with the semester schedule, meaning that you may have to complete the training during the preceding semester or during winter or summer break. You are responsible for completing all training as required by the placement organization.
- **Setting up your work schedule**
You are responsible for setting your work schedule with your site supervisor. Most agencies are flexible and are willing to work with your school schedule. However, the things you are most interested in doing might occur when you are scheduled to be in class. Check these out with your supervisor. Please be as flexible as you can to accommodate the organization's needs as well.

Beginning of the Semester

Shortly before the semester begins, you will be connected to D2L and contacted by email regarding course meetings and assignments.

Please contact the Practicum Coordinator with any questions. Congratulations! You're on your way to a great semester!