

Practicum in Higher Education
LPO 3952
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Course Description:

As a component of all higher education administration programs (General Higher Education, Institutional Advancement, Service Learning, and Student Personnel Services), the practicum experience provides students the opportunity to apply and integrate knowledge acquired through coursework. In clarifying and broadening career goals, the practicum experience assists students in discovering, developing and refining necessary competencies and skills for their proposed career objectives. Opportunities for placement include several departments at Vanderbilt, as well as off-campus sites that satisfy the course requirements and meet with the approval of the instructor.

Course Requirements:

- 1.) *Contracts* – Students must file both an Individual Practicum Contract (IPC) and an Individual Learning Contract (ILC) with the practicum instructor. The IPC should be developed cooperatively by the student and the site supervisor. Special attention should be devoted to the criteria by which the supervisor will assess student performance and how many hours are to be completed each week. The ILC is filed with the Peabody Registrar's Office. The student assumes responsibility to ensure that the paperwork is filed on time. See Michele Thompson in Payne Hall, Room 202E for an IPC and an ILC.
- 2.) *Field Experience* – The bulk of the course will be spent on-site in a supervised position. The nature of the work may vary, ranging from skill acquisition to research; from programming to professional development. Students may establish their own contacts to develop a practicum, or they may work through the instructor. In selecting sites, students should consider their past experiences and their professional goals. The instructor must approve the placement.
- 3.) *Time Commitment* – The time commitment in the practicum may vary according to the nature of the assignment/project, but must meet a minimum requirement of 45 contact hours per credit hour earned (45 contact hours x 3 hours of credit = 135 contact hour minimum). Students and on-site supervisors should mutually agree upon the hours to be worked per week to accomplish the learning objectives of the placement. A student working on summer orientation might capture all of their required hours in a two month span during the summer, while a student working on leadership development might work throughout an entire semester. Students

may also choose to design a practicum which spans an entire academic year to receive additional credit and to provide more depth or breadth to their experience

- 4.) *Final Presentation* – At the end of each semester, enrollees will gather to present their final papers and describe their practicum experiences. Emphasis in this presentation will be on the application of relevant theories to problems of practice.
- 5.) *Practicum Binder* – Each participant will compile a binder of materials on which they worked over the course of the practicum. This binder should include the following sections: Copies of the IPC and ILC; A written evaluation signed by the site supervisor, a weekly journal to include: goals and objectives for the week, tasks performed, lessons learned, and a description of theories which might be applied to specific situations; all relevant descriptive materials.
- 6.) *Reflective Paper* – The final requirement of students in the practicum involves applying theoretical material from coursework to relevant practice situations from the practicum. This paper will be 15 pages in length.