OL & HRD PROGRAMS
PRACTICUM DESCRIPTION & REQUIREMENTS

Course Description:

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.

Course Requirements:

Contracts – Students must file both an Individual Practicum Contract (IPC) and an Individual Learning Contract (ILC – single page in triplicate) with the practicum instructor. The IPC should be developed cooperatively by the student and the site supervisor. Special attention should be devoted to the tasks or projects to be undertaken by the student, the criteria for 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. It is important to make sure that the ‘deliverables’ for the practicum are listed on the ILC form in the ‘criteria for evaluation’ space on the form. These deliverables will include the material listed in the portfolio description in this document and in particular include: supervisor’s evaluation, work products, record of practice and reflective paper. See Michele Thompson in Payne Hall, Room 202E for an IPC and an ILC.

Field Experience – The bulk of the course will be spent on-site in a supervised position. The nature of the work may vary. You should negotiate for experiences that will help you develop the skills and knowledge you hope to apply in your career. Students usually 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. Students may not do their practicum at a site where they already work or where they will be supervised by other students. Students may also not do their practicum at a site where they already work or where they will be supervised by other students. Students may also not do their practicum in campus settings where they are involved e.g. athletes in the athletic department, RAs in student life offices, student journalists in student publications etc. A paid internship is appropriate and desirable and it is often helpful to contact the campus placement office for organizations seeking to recruit interns. Sites which do not offer an opportunity for the student to advance their professional goals will not be approved.

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 an intensive development project might capture all of the required hours in a two month span during the summer, while a student working on leadership development might work throughout an entire semester.

Semester Hours Earned. Student earn 3 hours for a practicum; a second practicum in a different setting may be taken for another 3 hours. In rare circumstances, e.g. students have completed a two hour Owen course and are short one hour for graduation, it is possible to add a 4th hour and additional hours to the practicum. No more than 6 hours total may be earned in practica.

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.
Practicum Portfolio – 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. The portfolio will include the major project conducted by the student, or a collection of work products if that is more appropriate. There should be a narrative discussion of the semester’s work. Students should also include their weekly journal which includes: time spent at the site, tasks performed, lessons learned, and a description of theories which might be applied to specific situations.

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 about 15 pages in length exclusive of references cited.