"The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people."
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Overview

The Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation incorporates work integrated learning (WIL) throughout the courses in the degree programs offered. The Professional Practicum course is a requirement for senior level students to complete to meet their graduation requirements. Typically students will have completed a minimum of 90 credits of coursework prior to beginning a practicum placement.

Our practicums are 13 weeks long placements where students will have the opportunity to apply their degree knowledge to practical settings. As such, the practicum program goes beyond just work experience at an entry-level. Our practicum is meant to be an educational, professional skills developing program. The overall purpose of the practicum is to allow the student to experience new program-related work situations and to process these situations in relation to their course learning. Thus, the contributions of agency personnel extend beyond mere supervision, as the agency personnel will act as educators and mentors toward the student and expose them to experiences and skills beyond what an entry level paid worker would experience.

Along with the practical work students will complete at their placements, they will also take part in professional seminars and complete assignments as part of the practicum course. These seminars and assignments are designed to engage the student in reflecting on the transferable career related skills that they are developing in their placement and connect it to the knowledge and theory they’ve learned throughout their degree. The seminars will also allow students to network and receive mentorship from professionals in related industries and gain a better understanding of the career paths available to them.
Definitions

Practicum Placement: An approved work integrated learning experience (WIL) created by an agency for a practicum student

Practicum Student: A student enrolled in the Bachelor of Kinesiology, Bachelor of Science Kinesiology or Bachelor of Arts Recreation, Sport, Tourism Professional Practicum Course (KIN493, KIN492, or RLS447)

Practicum Advisor: Staff member of the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation who is responsible for the administration of the professional practicum program, including creating and maintaining relationships with agencies who will host practicum placements, and placing and confirming students into practicum placements

Agency: Organization that is offering a practicum placement to students of the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation

Agency Supervisor: The staff member in the agency that is responsible for supervising and facilitating the learning environment for the practicum student. A student may be supervised by more than one supervisor in a placement, but one of those supervisors should be designated as the agency supervisor and will be responsible for submitting feedback on the student

Full Time Practicum: A full time practicum is a practicum placement that averages between 30-40 hours per week for the duration of the 13 program. This includes providing time for assignments and seminars

Part Time Practicum: Only available to some Bachelor of Kinesiology and Bachelor of Science Kinesiology students, a part time practicum is a practicum placement that averages between 15-20 hours per week for the duration of the 13 week program. This includes providing time for assignments and to attend practicum seminars
The Practicum Program is a great opportunity for students to explore the different kinds of organizations and career paths that may be available to them post graduation. We encourage all organizations that feel they could offer a valuable work and learning experience to a student in our three degree programs to participate in our practicum program.

Because the career paths and interests available to graduates of our programs are so diverse there is not one specific set of criteria to describe a suitable work placement. The aim of the practicum program is to develop career related skills and in deciding if a placement should be offered to students we look at the ability of the agency to offer growth and development in professional, career transferable skills, valuable mentoring, and networking possibilities. While a practicum does involve gaining valuable work experience - it is also built upon:

1) the student gathering relevant information about the agency
2) the student experiencing several aspects of the agency
3) the student relating their experience to previous course work through assignments and prompted reflection, and
4) the student enhancing the work of the agency (i.e. the student’s tasks are related to education and mentoring as opposed to working in an existing position as an unpaid worker)

The practicum program offers a benefit to agencies by

1) Keeping the agency in contact and engaging with the educational programs related to the services the agency offers,
2) Allowing the agency the opportunity to stay informed on current theory and how that relates to their services offered,
3) Allowing current agency employees professional development opportunities through leadership and mentorship of practicum students,
4) Allowing the agency the opportunity to have a say and a commitment to future employees/leaders in the field.
Requirements for Practicum Placement Approval

For a practicum placement to be approved to be offered to students it should have an outline of clearly defined responsibilities the student can expect from the placement. It should also include an overview of any projects and/or deliverable items that would be expected from the student.

The placement must also have an acceptable supervisor to oversee the student. In some cases it may be beneficial for the student to work under one or more supervisors, especially when an agency has multiple departments, services, or professionals that the student would benefit learning from. One person should be designated as the agency supervisor who will be responsible for submitting all feedback on the student, communicating between the practicum advisor and student on any issues that arise, and ensuring the work environment is a safe and positive one for the student.

A supervisor may or may not be required to also have professional certification depending on the nature of the practicum. For example, within an exercise rehabilitation setting, the supervisor should hold an exercise physiologist, physiotherapist, athletic therapist, or similar certification so they can provide appropriate oversight to the activities completed by the student, as well as ensure the student completes tasks that fit within the scope of practice for the student. This is mostly important for students completing practicum placements in clinical settings that align with the Bachelor of Kinesiology, and Bachelor of Science Kinesiology degrees.

In other cases where a professional certification would not be required, the supervisor should have enough tenure within the agency to warrant them overseeing a student. This can be a great way for an agency to offer professional development to their own staff who are looking at developing leadership and mentorship skills.
The Practicum Placement Process

There are two ways that a student can confirm a practicum placement. Students will sometimes approach an agency directly and inquire if they would be interested in hosting a placement. The student and agency would then define a role and submit it to the practicum advisor for approval.

The other way that a student will confirm a practicum placement is by taking part in the placement process and reviewing the posted practicum descriptions, creating applications and applying, interviewing and then deciding between offers after the agencies have ranked their candidates.

Our Professional Practicum Program course is offered three times per year. Students can complete their practicum course in the winter semester (January to April), spring/summer semester (May to August), or the fall semester (September to December). Students will plan and confirm their placement in the semester prior to the their practicum course beginning.

Agencies that are seeking to host a practicum placement will post a practicum description to our online job board called CampusBRIDGE at the beginning of the semester prior to when they would like the student to work for them. For example, an agency wanting a student to begin work in January will post a practicum description at the beginning of September, for work starting in May the description would be posted in January, and for a position beginning in September the description would be posted in April.

The placement process is meant to mimic a real life job search for students. This experience gives them valuable practice in creating professional applications and interviewing skills. The process also helps to ensure a best fit is made between the agency and the student, instead of using a direct placement method.
Placement Process Timeline

1. Agency submits a practicum description (similar to a job description) to CampusBRIDGE
2. Students attend an information session about the placement process and are provided access to CampusBRIDGE
3. Students review practicum placements that are available
4. Students meet with the practicum advisor to discuss their goals, interests, skills and receive guidance on appropriate roles to apply to and how to create an application
5. Students submit their applications to CampusBRIDGE, which are then received by the agency supervisor for review
6. Agency supervisor contacts all student applicants for interview (where possible)
7. Interviews are conducted
8. Agency supervisors will submit rankings of candidates to CampusBRIDGE
9. Offers are sent out using the Rank&Offer system with CampusBRIDGE
10. Students accept or decline offers and confirm their placements
11. Students who do not receive offers will be given the opportunity to interview for placements that went unfilled in the Rank&Offer process
12. Agency supervisors and confirmed practicum students discuss the logistics and start date for the student to begin work in their placement
13. Students begin placement
Reviewing a Practicum Description

The practicum descriptions will give the students details about the organization and the role to help make an informed choice as to whether it will align with their learning and career related goals and understand what will be expected of them during the practicum placement. They should look similar to a job description an organization might post for paid opportunities.

As a student reviews the practicum postings available they should consider what skills they have, what skills they’d like to strengthen, what types of careers they might like to explore, what opportunities will result in the most amount of professional and personal growth. Students are not limited to applying to positions that directly align with their degree focus. Often students will use the practicum to explore the variety of possible career paths that may be open to them post graduation, or use it as an opportunity to strengthen skills that their previous work and volunteer experience has not developed.

Many students are also interested in entering into the workforce post graduation. Often a practicum placement has the potential to lead to an offer for paid employment following the placement. Sometimes a practicum posting will specifically mention this, however students are encouraged to discuss potential employment with their organization even if it is not directly stated in the description.
Submitting Applications and Interviewing

After the information session students will begin scheduling one-on-one meetings with the practicum advisor to discuss their goals and interests and how to create and tailor their application to the positions they will be applying to. Students are given feedback on a draft version of their resume and cover letter to ensure that the applications they are submitting are well crafted and competitive.

After the application deadline passes students will be contacted directly by the agencies that they submitted applications to. Agencies make an effort to interview all candidates where possible but at times may need to shortlist the candidates they select for interview when a large volume of applications are received.

An interviewing strategy seminar will be held for students to prepare them for the interview process but students may also choose to schedule a meeting with the practicum advisor to discuss interview strategies individually.

Interviews will be conducted on site or virtually depending on the organization. Students should clarify any questions they have about the practicum position during this interview and take notes to help them decide between offers once the rankings are completed and offers sent out.
Rank & Offer

The Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation is using a Rank & Offer model for placing students into their practicum placements. The rank & offer system is utilized as a way to ensure best fit for the agency and the student, as well as to provide a real world experience of job seeking. It is utilized over a direct placement method as it allows the agency to interact with the potential students, ask further questions about skills and expectations, and have a say in who they feel is the strongest candidate. It also benefits the student by allowing them to gain more information about a placement prior to accepting it.

After all interviews have been completed agencies will submit rankings for their candidates based on who they felt would best fill the posted position. A number 1 ranking means a student would be the agencies first choice candidate. On the offer date, offers for all #1 ranked candidates will be sent out and students will have a maximum of 24 hours to respond. Students may receive more than one offer at this time if they are ranked as #1 for multiple positions.

A student is expected to apply to practicum positions and interview in good faith, meaning they are committed to the process and will commit to the agency they accept a placement with. Similarly, an agency that posts a practicum position is expected to accept a student, regardless of whether their first choice candidate accepts their offer. This is why candidates are ranked. If a first choice candidates declines, or accepts a placement with another agency, the offer moves to the second choice, and so on until a candidate accepts or there are no more candidates left to offer the role to.

Once a student has accepted an offer and confirmed their placement they will follow-up directly with the agency supervisor to discuss the official start date, expected schedule, and any onboarding logistics prior to beginning their placement.
Once the Practicum Begins

Seminar Intensive Week
The first week of the semester will be spent doing a “Seminar Intensive” where students will participate in seminars on various professional development topics.

Onboarding
A student should be provided with orientation or onboarding to the agency when the first begin into their practicum placement. The onboarding plan should include introducing the student to their team members and other staff, showing them around the organization’s facility, setting them up with any security/IT requirements, and providing them with any necessary safety or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training.

Assignments
Students will complete several assignments during the semester. These will be reflection based and/or professional portfolio related assignments.

Practicum Agreement
During the first two weeks of a practicum placement the student and agency supervisor will work together to submit a practicum agreement. This agreement is similar to an employment contract in that it will outline the official start and end date, expected schedule, and outline the responsibilities, expectations, projects, and progression of the placement.

Mid-Point Feedback
Approximately half-way through the 13 week practicum placement you will meet with your student for a formal feedback meeting and will submit a feedback form for how they are progressing.

Final Feedback
Near the end of the 13 week practicum placement a final formal feedback meeting will occur and you will submit a feedback form evaluating the overall student performance.
Expectations of Students

- To start the practicum on the agreed date. The student will devote between 35-40 hours a week to practical agency work, of which an appropriate number of hours per week will be spent on academic work (completion of assignments).
- To carry a positive image of the faculty into the community.
- To participate in the practicum, fulfilling all designated duties and responsibilities as scheduled. The agency and student will work together to define duties and responsibilities appropriate to the nature of the placement and will outline those in the practicum agreement.
- To ask questions relevant to the work and to the agency to deepen knowledge and understanding of agency and industry.
- To meet with the Agency Supervisor on a regular basis to discuss performance, assignments, policies and any problems that may arise.
- To consult with the practicum advisor to submit assignments by eClass or through Campus Bridge (as applicable) and to discuss activities, learning experiences and any problems that may arise by phone or email.
- To learn as much as possible about the practices and operations of the agency.
- In case of illness or emergency preventing practicum attendance, students should notify the Agency Supervisor and the practicum advisor as soon as possible.
- To be committed to the practicum until the completion date unless it is mutually agreed that the practicum is not fulfilling the agreement.
- To act in a professional manner at all times and comply with all of the agency’s typical workplace policies, rules, and regulations, as well as any additional policies and rules mutually agreed upon.
Expectations of Agency/Agency Supervisor

● Provide a meaningful practicum experience and assist student in developing skills that are in line with their learning objectives
● To act as a mentor and help facilitate development of the student skill set through exposure to different areas of the agency and opportunities for networking when available
● Provide clear expectations to students of what to expect in their duties and work hours. The agency and student will work together to define duties and responsibilities appropriate to the nature of the placement and will outline those in the practicum agreement.
● Provide a detailed orientation/onboarding of the student to the organization
● Provide opportunities for student to understand agency better and answer to the best of ability questions asked by the student pertaining to agency operations/industry practices
● Provide feedback on a consistent and regular basis to the student and the practicum advisor
● Provide student time to work on practicum assignments
● Provide a safe and engaging environment for the experience
● To contact the practicum advisor should any issues arise within the placement or with the student that will impact the practicum requirements from being satisfied
● To provide as much as possible a predictable work schedule to the student and to not exceed 40 hours per week or 8 hours of work per day unless agreed to by the student. A student must be provided straight time off in lieu of any hours that extend beyond 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week.
Policies for Practicum Placements

PERSONAL ILLNESS
For the purpose of the Professional Practicum Program, a student who is absent from work shall adhere as closely as possible to the policy of the agency regarding its procedures for casual illness. A full time practicum student may be absent from work at the agency for a total of three days without being assigned additional assignments or making up the time. A part time practicum student may be absent from work for a total of two days without being assigned additional assignments or making up the time. These days may also be used for personal appointments. Absences over and above the time allotted shall be made up during or at the end of the practicum. This will be negotiated between the Agency Supervisor, the Practicum Supervisor, and the student. Extended absences of more than twenty working days may prolong the length of the practicum. If the extension of the practicum is neither feasible nor desirable by the agency supervisor, then the student may not receive credit for the course.

HOURS OF WORK
Students are expected to work during typical operating hours for the agency they are completing their placement with. This can include evening and weekend work if that would be typically expected of employees of the agency. An expected schedule should be discussed at the start of the placement. As the practicum are unpaid positions students are not to work more than 40 hours per week or 8 hours per day as there is no provision for overtime pay. If due to the nature of the work of the agency (hosting an event for example) a work day does exceed 8 hours, the student should be given equivalent time off in lieu from their regularly scheduled working hours.
DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FROM PLACEMENT

Agency supervisors are expected to follow their agency’s workplace policies on documenting and providing feedback to students not performing well in their placement. They should also immediately inform the practicum advisor if a student is not meeting expectations, is performing poorly, or has improper conduct. If a student does not adhere to the agency’s performance or conduct policies then an agency supervisor may dismiss them from their practicum placement. This is a serious measure as dismissal from a placement will prevent the student from receiving credit for their professional practicum course. If an agency supervisor feels that a dismissal is warranted they are to contact the practicum advisor immediately.

INJURIES IN PLACEMENTS/WCB COVERAGE

Students completing practicum placements are considered to be employees of the University of Alberta and thus are covered under the university’s insurance and WCB coverage. If a student is injured while completing work for their practicum placement they must immediately report it to their agency supervisor, and practicum advisor. All injuries should be documented. Injuries that cause a student to have to leave or miss work should also be assessed by a health care professional. A WCB form must also be filled out within 72 hours of the injury occurring.

COSTS TO HOST A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

There is no fee charged to an organization that offers a practicum placement to a student. The organization is however expected to cover the costs of any travel, accommodation, and meal expenses resulting from required travel for the organization (this does not include travel to the organization’s regular place of employment). The organization is encouraged to provide an allowance if they are located outside of the Edmonton city limits to assist students in the expense of commuting. Organizations are also encouraged to cover the cost of any professional development, conferences or workshops that would benefit the student to attend.
HOLIDAYS
Students will be entitled to time off for the Canadian Statutory Holidays while completing their practicum along with any additional holiday time an agency provides to its regular employees. If a student is completing a placement outside of Canada they will observe the statutory holidays of their placement country.
Students in the winter (January to April) and fall (September to December) semesters are also entitled to the university reading week break that occurs approximately half-way through the semester. This reading week break does not count toward the 13 weeks of practicum placement, and so students completing practicum in winter or fall will set an end date of 14 weeks from their start date if they choose to take their reading week break.

PRACTICUM SEMINARS
Every practicum student is expected to attend the biweekly seminars for their practicum semester. These seminars are conducted online and students may participate from their practicum placement so as not to overly disrupt their working day. Agency supervisors are expected to provide time for students to participate in these seminars.
Questions?

For any questions or to begin offering practicum placements please contact the practicum advisor:

Tracy Whatmore

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