

Masters Degree in Higher Education Administration
Practicum Guidelines (and Syllabus)
HED 6587 / 6588

Program Requirement

Two practicums are required for the Higher Education Administration program. Each Practicum requires a minimum of sixty (60) clock/contact hours and will individually earn two credit-hours. Each Practicum should be scheduled to last between three to eight weeks in duration. The two practicums may not be conducted simultaneously.

Objectives

The practicum experience is designed to give students an opportunity to gain understanding of functional, administrative areas within a college or university. It is also intended to offer students opportunities to observe and assess problem-solving, management, and leadership skills, as well as opportunities to observe and gain insight into the various interpersonal and working interactions within and between administrative units. Finally, it offers students the opportunity to assess the skills and knowledge administrative professionals need to effectively accomplish their responsibilities and achieve unit goals and objectives.

Procedures in Seeking and Gaining Approval of a Practicum

- A. For each practicum, students will select an administrative department (i.e. admissions, advising, athletics, financial aid, student life, etc.) and college or university that offers opportunities to meet the objectives listed.

Students are encouraged to seek a practicum experience within areas that reflect their professional interests and goals. Students are also encouraged to consider areas outside their direct career interests where additional insight and understanding might assist them in being more effective in their career areas. For example, a student aspiring to an administrative position in college athletics might also feel that he or she might benefit from a practicum experience in the area of financial aid or admissions. Moreover, if career directions are being explored, or broader understandings of campus administrative functions are sought, the two practicums offer an opportunity to gain insight and exposure to more than one area. You are welcome to contact HED program faculty to discuss your ideas and options.

Note: Students should carefully consider not only the general area of a practicum but also the specific site and supervisor. With the Practicum Guidelines and requirements in mind, the student's selection is acknowledgment that he or she believes that the site and supervisor will provide the experiences needed to assist the student in earning a "Credit" evaluation.

- B. Once a potential site (institution and department) is selected, the student will discuss the Practicum Guidelines and The Practicum Experience Agreement Form with the Site Supervisor who works within the administrative site. The selected Site Supervisor must have supervisory responsibilities over other professionals and must have a minimum of three years of professional experience in the area identified.
- C. After discussing and identifying opportunities available, and after securing the willingness of the supervisor to work with the student and oversee the practicum experience, the student will draft an outline of practicum goals with assistance from the supervisor (Note: The first goal of

each Practicum will be “Gain specific knowledge of the Unit’s purpose and current goals.”). See the HED website for this template.

- D. The student and supervisor will also agree upon a general schedule for the practicum and include this schedule with the draft of goals and objectives. Each practicum requires a minimum of sixty clock/contact hours to be completed within a three-to-eight-week timeframe.
- E. The drafted goals & objectives and working schedule must then be discussed with, and initially approved by, the MC HED Practicum Program Coordinator, Dr. Kyle Brantley (brantley@mc.edu).
- F. Once approved, the student will be given access to register for the practicum credit in Banner and may begin his or her hours.

Meetings, Logs, and Journals

During the practicum experience, the student will meet regularly with their Site Supervisor. In addition, the Program Coordinator will reach out at least once during the semester to check on the student’s progression towards stated goals.

Each student will maintain a daily log documenting the date, hours, and individuals whom he or she interacted with during the practicum. You will be required to submit a signed copy of your 60 hours work log to the Program Coordinator by the end of the term. The student should also keep a daily journal of the practicum experiences which corresponds with the hourly work log.

The journal might include the following information/insights: Procedures and decision-making encountered; assessed problem-solving, management, and leadership skills observed; mistakes made and lessons learned; reflections on the various interpersonal and working interactions within and between administrative units; general assessments of skills and knowledge required of observed professional positions; or, observations of how administrators worked within and outside their units to achieve unit goals and objectives.

The student should also use the journal to document specific steps taken to achieve the goals agreed upon in The Practicum Experience Agreement Form. Journaling is important as it will be key in producing a superior end-of-practicum presentation and reflection paper.

Assessments

At the conclusion of the practicum experience the Site Supervisor should be provided with the Site Supervisor Evaluation to assess the student’s engagement and performance (see the HED website for this electronic form). The student will also be asked to complete an evaluation of the practicum site and overall experience (see the HED website for this electronic form). The Practicum Program Coordinator will conduct a discussion with each student after the practicum’s completion to share how the site supervisor evaluated their performance, and also to discuss what the student learned from the practicum experience.

Note: It is the responsibility of the student to be actively engaged in the practicum in a manner that achieves the objectives of the practicum experience. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the student to immediately voice to the Practicum Program Supervisor concerns related to the practicum site and/or issues that hinder the meeting of objectives and achievement of goals. Under dire circumstances, it is

also the responsibility of the student to communicate to the Practicum Program Coordinator a desire to relocate to another administrative site. Failing to do so early in the practicum experience might affect reasonable steps required to salvage the practicum's credit.

Reflection Paper

A reflective paper will be written and submitted by the student that details the experiences and insights gained during the practicum experience. This paper should be between 5 and 6 pages in length, double-spaced. Reflections should take into consideration the outlined goals and objectives of the practicum. Students should also reflect on how this experience has impacted their desire to enter (or not enter) that particular area in higher education.

Presentation

Students will give a presentation after they have completed each practicum. These will take place at the end of the semester and will be scheduled by the Practicum Program Coordinator. Students will present via Zoom to the Program Coordinator and other HED faculty who will be invited to attend.

The presentation should be no less than 15 minutes and no longer than 20 minutes. The final 10 minutes will be reserved for Q&A by the participating faculty. Students should include an overview of their goals and objectives that guided their experience and include concrete examples of what they learned surrounding these goals and objectives. The reflection should also address how the experience has impacted their perceptions of higher education and their desire to enter (or not enter) that particular area.

Evaluation

Based on submitted evaluations, achieving agreed upon goals, and the end-of-term paper and presentation, the Practicum Program Coordinator will determine a "Credit" or "No-Credit" evaluation. Should a student fail to achieve a "Credit" evaluation, the Program Coordinator has the sole authority to specifically designate, in writing, what the student is required to do to gain a "Credit" evaluation - up to and including rescheduling and repeating the entire practicum experience.