

# Emporia in the Rockies

## Collaborating with Library School Students June 6, 2008 COASL Spring Workshop Practica

- A Practicum is planned as a supervised work experience near the end of the MLS.
- It can be paid or volunteer.
- Approximately 120 hrs. field work at an agency = 3 graduate credit hours  
(8 hrs/week in a 15 week semester or 4hrs/week spread out over two semesters.)

**Practicum design:** To provide the best experience, meet the needs of the student, and the host organization, it is essential that those directly involved work together on the design.

Achieve one of the following student goals:

1. To gain experience in the work of information management by spending approximately 120 hours actually doing whatever professional tasks would be required of a new employee; OR
2. To use his/her specialized knowledge to participate, with the site supervisor's direction, in an appropriate, professional level project (or set of projects) needed at the practicum site; OR
3. To combine on-site work with work on a professional level project to create a "hybrid" practicum experience.

SLIM recognizes that not all practicum opportunities will fit into the exact words in the preceding paragraph. We have found that some students and some organizations need experiences more like day-to-day work experiences while others need to complete a particular project. The goal is to match the needs of the student and the organization.

If it is the opinion of the site supervisor or the student that a preliminary observation period would enhance the student's ability to conduct the practicum work, they are welcome to suggest that the student *volunteer to do this before beginning the practicum.*

### Practicum goals

1. To provide general professional orientation and skill development appropriate for each student through a supervised field experience in a corporate-style organization, whether for-profit or not-for-profit.
2. To broaden the student's perspective and background in order to facilitate greater understanding of general principles and concepts related to information management as practiced at the practicum site.
3. To acquaint the student with the mission, administrative organization, policies and procedures, resources and services, and clientele of a particular information agency.
4. To give the student the opportunity to work with individual information professionals; to facilitate the development of professional attitudes, service ethics, and work habits; and to acquaint the student with different points of view and a variety of strategies for dealing with information and service needs and managerial problems and issues.
5. To provide the student with the experience of professional evaluation, in terms of: general education, professional knowledge and competence, ability to work with others, diligence in the accomplishment of assigned tasks.
6. To provide the student an opportunity for self-reflection and self-evaluation of his or her performance during the field experience.

To be matched with a student please contact Kelly Visnak. [kvisnak@emporia.edu](mailto:kvisnak@emporia.edu)

## Responsibilities

### The student

During the practicum, the student will:

1. Complete each of the required activities listed on the student checklist (page 3).
2. Review any proposed changes to the practicum plan with the IMC Coordinator.
3. Act professionally and with courtesy, taking special care to abide by the policies and rules of the host organization.
4. Complete all agreed upon work.
5. Gather work samples that will become part of the IMC Professional Portfolio, while observing the confidentiality rules and traditions of the host organization.
6. Keep the IMC Coordinator apprised of the practicum experience as it advances. When necessary, the student may arrange an onsite visit for the IMC Coordinator or the cohort advisor.

### The site supervisor

During the practicum, the site supervisor will:

1. Review and edit the Practicum Plan (page 9) with the student.
2. Enable the student to put into practice techniques learned in courses and to observe principles of good practice in a work setting.
3. Provide professional feedback where appropriate.
4. At the end of the practicum, complete the Student Performance Evaluation Form (page 11) to indicate competence and performance in each activity area.
5. Mail the completed evaluation form to the IMC Coordinator, 524 Pelletier Drive, Sioux City, IA 51104.

### The IMC Coordinator

During the practicum, the IMC Coordinator will:

1. Assist the student in developing goals for the practicum and identifying appropriate sites.
2. Review the Practicum Plan created by the student and site supervisor.
3. Be available to discuss any problems or concerns with the student and site supervisor.
4. Collect and circulate the student's completed IMC Portfolio to members of the IMC Steering Committee who will serve as the Endorsement Committee.
5. Arrange for and facilitate the student's endorsement interview.

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, MORGRIDGE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE

# ***PRACTICUMS, SERVICE LEARNING, & INTERNSHIPS***

**Practicums. 4 cr.** All LIS students are required to do a 100-hour practicum. Students design their own learning for the practicum with the help of a faculty coordinator and a field mentor. The practicum must be unpaid, must be a learning experience, and must be completed after the student has completed most of the course work for their master's degree. [School library students do two (2 cr.) practicums of 80 hours each at elementary and secondary levels.]

**Service learning. 2cr.** There are a number of requirements for SL credit including a reflection and evaluation of the experiential learning. A service-learning project should address the needs of an underserved group, should make a difference, and should be a learning experience for the student. Students must talk with the service learning coordinator or another faculty member before enrolling in service learning

**Internships. (Paid or unpaid)** The focus of an internship is work-place learning and job skill development. The practice of the LIS program is to post internship opportunities on the student discussion list. Students work out their own arrangements with sites. These short-term opportunities can be great learning experiences for students and are encouraged. Students do not get credit for doing the work of an internship but it is possible to apply for independent study credit by reporting the learning aspect, the process, or the results of the internship. A supervising faculty member must approve independent study credit before the internship begins.

*The same project or focused work may be appropriate for  
practicums, service learning, or internships depending on the perspective of the work.*

Clara L. Sitter, Ph.D., coordinator for practicums, service learning, and internships  
csitter@du.edu 303-871-3587

# GUIDELINES FOR FIELD MENTORS

## The Practicum Experience

The Practicum is a planned learning experience with a minimum of 100 hours of fieldwork. It is an experiential learning opportunity for students to apply the theoretical classroom lessons to a supervised work experience in a library or information agency.

### Practicum Definitions

- *Field Mentor*—the specialist in the library or information site working with the student
- *Faculty Supervisor*—classroom instructor who works directly with the student and Field Mentor
- *Faculty Advisor*—counselor to the student throughout program including Practicum ideas
- *Practicum Coordinator*—manager of the Practicum infrastructure including the site database, mentor approvals, permanent files, and handbook updates.

Note: The roles of Practicum Coordinator and Faculty Supervisor are currently filled by the same person.

**Practicum Sites.** Various Practicum sites are available to students depending on their areas of interest and specialization. Opportunities for experience include fields of medical, law, art, music, public, school, and academic libraries. It is the student's responsibility to select the practicum site and a Field Mentor. The Practicum Coordinator and/or the Faculty Supervisor must approve sites and Field Mentors.

**Practicum Goals.** The student determines their own specific goals and objectives with support from the Field Mentor and approval of the Faculty Supervisor. The goals of the Practicum Experience are to:

- Provide students with an opportunity to translate theoretical knowledge into professional practice
- Assist students in the clarification and development of professional goals
- Enable students to identify professional and interpersonal strengths and weaknesses
- Help students in the development of professional areas of interest
- Support students in the expansion of their professional networks and
- Encourage students to contribute in a positive way to the professional agencies, institutions, and organizations of the community.

**Course Learning Objectives.** At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively interpret and apply theory
- Identify their professional strengths and weaknesses and their area of interest
- Develop and clarify professional goals
- Contribute in a positive way to the operations of a library or information agency
- Meet the individual goals and objectives for the Practicum Experience

Practicum Coordinator—Clara L. Sitter, Ph.D., Associate Clinical Professor  
Email: [csitter@du.edu](mailto:csitter@du.edu); phone: 303-871-3587; fax 303-871-2709

# Benefits for the Field Mentor

1. You will be perceived as an expert
2. Your library receives valuable work from the student
3. You give back to the profession
4. Your organization gets help and new ideas
5. You expand your network
6. You contribute to your library
7. You learn by teaching
8. You grow by working with a student
9. You will be connected to the DU Library School
10. You will have fun

*For additional information about being a field mentor contact*

*Clara Sitter at 303-871-3587 or [csitter@du.edu](mailto:csitter@du.edu)*