Practicum in a Nutshell*

*Please see the practicum overview document for all the official details.

Wanna take a Practicum?
Practicum is...

- A means of gaining relevant, professional work experience
- An opportunity to “try out” a job and type of workplace, gain professional work experience, earn academic credit and gain valuable professional contacts
- Integrates the classroom with the “real world” under the supervision and instruction of an experienced information professional

Course Description (official, from the catalog)

- INSC 599: Practicum (3 hrs.) Opportunity to translate theory into practice under guidance of qualified information professionals. Prerequisite: completion of required and pertinent advanced courses relevant to student’s practicum design. Minimum 3.0 GPA. Written permission of advisor and approval of practicum coordinator. May be repeated with written permission. Maximum 6 hours. S/NC only. Fall, Spring, Summer.
What’s it look like?

- 3 hours of academic credit (150 clock hours) during an academic term
- This translates to an average of 10 hours per week of practicum activity (e.g., instruction, work, consultation, supervision, review, evaluation).
- This is equivalent to a quarter-time job.
- The summer term is only 8 weeks long, but the 150 hour requirement still applies.

Options

- You may engage in:
  1. Two separate three-hour practica in two separate semesters
  2. Two 3-hour practica (six credit-hours) in different areas/sites during a single semester
  3. One 6-hour practicum in one semester—in special circumstances
Guidelines

• All required courses relevant to the practicum must be completed.
• You must have completed at least 18 credit hours from the Information Sciences program.
• You cannot be on Academic Probation during the semester prior to the practicum.
• Availability of a practicum cannot be guaranteed.

Guidelines (con’t)

• You do not normally do a practicum in an information organization where you are employed.
• With consent of the practicum coordinator, however, you may undertake a practicum in a department/unit within the organization other than the one in which you normally work.
Guidelines (con’t)

• But this should be done only when there is real need and if it does not violate federal or state wage and hour guidelines.

• You may not take a practicum for more than three credit hours of INSC 599 if employed more than 20 hours per week.

Benefits of Practicum...

• Provides oversight, context, and feedback from skilled and established practitioners.

• Allows you an extended opportunity to “interview” an employer you are interested in working for.

• Confirms interest in a possible career path and develops familiarity with culture and values of a specific type of organizational climate.

• Strengthens your accomplishments portfolio and resumé through validating skills and knowledge.
Let’s Talk Timing

• Start looking for locations the semester **before** you actually want to begin your practicum experience.

• The process has to be approved, so processing time for all parties is important to consider.

Let’s Talk Location

• Practica can be completed anywhere! You are also able to complete them at international locations.

• Some sites are listed on [SIS Practicum Opportunities](#). You can also speak with your faculty advisor for ideas.
How do I start the Practicum Process?

The Process

1. Work with your Faculty Advisor to identify possible practicum locations the semester prior to the term in which you want to do practicum.

2. Then work with your advisor to develop Practicum learning objectives for your specific practicum experience.
The Process

3. Next, discuss your practicum learning objectives with the Practicum Site Supervisor, and negotiate the terms of the practicum, including the actual duties expected, and a mutually-approved work schedule.

4. Submit the online SIS Student Practicum Application Form for approval by the Site Supervisor, your Faculty Advisor, and the Practicum Coordinator.

Status of Application Form

• **If modifications are needed:** The Advisor and/or Supervisor indicate a change is necessary and the Coordinator will contact you to ensure that the specified changes are made.

• **If the form is rejected:** The Coordinator will email you to ensure you contact your Advisor. You would then need to resubmit the application with the revised objectives.

• **If the form is approved:** After the Practicum Coordinator has received approvals from the Advisor and Supervisor, the Student Services Specialist will email you of the practicum’s approval and activation. At this time, you will be able to register for 3 or 6 units of INSC 599.
The “Easy” Part

- Complete 150 hours of work and keep a log of your work hours and activities.
- Complete other requirements as specified in the course syllabus.
- Complete evaluation forms at the end of your practicum experience.

Questions?

The Practicum Team can be reached at:

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