

*Appalachian State University*  
*Department of Health and Exercise Science*  
Undergraduate Exercise Science  
Field Experience Handbook  
(Revised March 2021)

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**INTRODUCTION**

Student involvement in a professional field experience has significant value during an academic career. The practical application of classroom theory gives meaning and fulfillment to formal education experiences through the world of full-time professional involvement. The purpose of this experience is to augment formal classroom instruction, to experiment with theory and concepts, to utilize resources, and to begin the development of professional competency.

This handbook is a guide for the cooperative arrangements between the student, the various sponsoring agencies, and Appalachian State University (“Appalachian”). The handbook has been prepared to assist students, faculty, administrators and site supervisors in understanding the aims, objectives, principles, policies, and the requirements for the field experience at Appalachian.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELD EXPERIENCE**

- To provide the student with an opportunity to integrate theory and practice into their professional education. To accomplish this objective, exchange of contemporary thinking and insights between the student and their site supervisor should be encouraged.
  
- To provide the student with an opportunity to promote and broaden their

philosophy and understanding of the exercise science profession in which they are interested.

- To enable the student to obtain information which can be used as a basis for making choices in relation to future jobs, areas of specialization, and/or further study in exercise science.
- To enable the student to realize their own strengths and weaknesses.
- To provide the student with an opportunity to gain experience in leadership, supervision and administrative functions within the fields of exercise science.
- To help the student gain an understanding and appreciation of the roles, duties, and responsibilities of a full-time professional in the field of exercise science.
- To provide the student with experiences that will enable them to develop sound human relations.
- To strengthen relationships between exercise science-related agencies and Appalachian.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

ES 4050 (3 credit hours) The Pre-Professional practicum course provides an educational experience in which the student acquires observation/shadowing hours in an occupation directly related to their career interest in the health professions. This course provides an opportunity to apply knowledge from the classroom into a more practical atmosphere. A minimum of 40 hours of service at the site chosen plus course assignments during the semester is required.

ES 4060 (3 credit hours) The Strength and Conditioning practicum course provides an educational experience in which the student acquires observation/shadowing and hands-on hours in the broader field of strength and conditioning, including fitness/personal training environments or athletic environments. This course provides an opportunity to apply knowledge from the classroom into a more practical atmosphere. A minimum of 75 hours of service at the site chosen during the semester is required.

ES 3900 (1-12 credit hours) The Internship course requires extensive applied exercise science experience at a cooperating facility (e.g., hospital, medical clinic, public agency, athletics department, wellness center/gym, etc). A minimum of 40 hours of service *per credit hour* of supervised experience is required of the student. The internship course is recommended for students only after a significant portion of course work in the major program is completed.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are the expected and desired minimum criteria for a student to be allowed to register for the practicum or internship credit hours:

- a. Minimum Cumulative GPA of 2.00
- b. It is recommended that the 2000-level core courses and about half of the 3000-level courses have been completed before the practicum or internship courses are attempted.

**PROCEDURES FOR GETTING REGISTERED**

The outline below describes the steps needed to select and secure a practicum or internship site:

- a. The student should attend an informational session regarding the field experience the semester prior to taking the course.
- b. The student should then prepare or update their resume. Review of the final draft of the resume is advised by speaking with a faculty member or contacting the Career Development Center for assistance.
- c. The student should contact potential sites and discuss student roles and responsibilities. If possible, the student should visit potential sites (with resume in hand) and obtain practicum or internship expectations from potential supervisors.
- d. When accepted by a site of the student's choosing for either practicum or internship placement, the student must, along with the site supervisor, complete a:
  - i) site information sheet; and
  - ii) Internship Acknowledgement page (signed by the site supervisor and the student).

Both forms can be found on Appalachian's Exercise Science Website at: <https://hes.appstate.edu/academics/exercise-science/internship-and-practicum>)

- e. The student must submit the site information sheet and the signed acknowledgement to the faculty practicum or internship supervisor the semester before enrolling in the course. The student will then be registered for the course by the Registrar. Students are not able to register for the class themselves.

## **BACKGROUND CHECK**

The Beaver College of Health Sciences (BCHS) requires that every student registering for a field experience complete a background check. Upon submission of internship or practicum forms, the ES undergraduate program director will inform the Dean's office, and students will receive an email with instructions on how to request the background check. Students are responsible for payment of the associated fee, which is typically less than \$20. The results of the background check will be sent directly to the BCHS Dean's office, who will notify the Department Chair if there are any items that may impact the student's ability to complete the internship or practicum. In that case, the student will be notified and a resolution to the problem (e.g., alternate coursework) will be proposed by the ES undergraduate program director.

Click [here](#) for the BCHS Criminal Background Check Policy details.

## **SITE CRITERIA**

The student can select a site nearly anywhere in the United States as long as it meets the criteria listed below:

- a. Site is professionally recognized and competent in the field of exercise science or a specific related area (medical, health).
- b. Site has active and well-balanced programs and administrative structures.
- c. Site provides opportunities for students to observe and participate in a variety of programs, operations, and administrative procedures.
- d. Site has equipment and facilities adequate for comprehensive programming.
- e. Site has staff members who are qualified, through education and experience, to provide supervision.

Some states have more stringent workers' compensation requirements or other insurance requirements which may make it difficult for an internship site to be approved. Check with the faculty supervisor regarding the states that fall under this category. International field experiences are also possible but must meet criteria and be approved by the [Office of International Education and Development](#) (OIED) prior to departmental approval.

## **PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP SITE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following are the primary responsibilities expected of the site:

- a. Regular meetings for feedback/instruction should be held between

supervisors and students.

- b. The site supervisor will submit an evaluation of the student's performance at the halfway point and at the end of the field experience (the form will be given to the student by the faculty supervisor, and will be provided to the site supervisor by the student).
- c. *If the student's performance does not meet professional standards for an intern with similar experience and education, and the student has been given the opportunity to improve their performance and failed to do so, the site has the right to ask for the removal of the student.*

### **FACULTY SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following are the primary responsibilities expected of the Faculty Supervisor:

- a. Assist the student in focusing on professional and career interests and in setting realistic goals and behavioral objectives.
- b. Make direct contact (phone, email, Zoom, etc.) with the site supervisor.
- c. Provide advice and guidance for the student through site visits (in-state only), other contact (phone, email), and responses to reports.
- d. Grades (S for satisfactory or U for unsatisfactory) will be based on feedback from the site supervisor (evaluation forms), any on-site visits, the final report from the student, the student daily log, and notes taken by the faculty supervisor during contact with the student.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

The following are the primary responsibilities expected of the student:

- a. Thoroughly examine, discuss and review all aspects of the Field Experience Handbook with the faculty supervisor and site supervisor. Provide the practicum or internship site with a copy of the Field Experience Handbook if requested.
- b. Review the contract and job description with the site supervisor, sign the contract, complete a site information sheet and then bring these materials to the faculty practicum or internship supervisor.
- c. Prepare to the best of one's ability for the experience with the site by acquiring as much information as possible before arrival. The field experience should be educational. Therefore, seek as much variety as possible, attending meetings, observing different phases of the program,

and volunteering for new and demanding opportunities.

- d. Conduct oneself as a member of the site by performing within the policies and expectations of that site. Be professional with regards to appointments, attendance, meetings, and discussions with supervisors and others. Act and dress professionally.
- e. Submit accurate required records, reports, etc. as requested by the faculty supervisor and/or site supervisor, according to schedule.
- f. Keep a daily log of all hours worked, and provide a one paragraph summary each week of activities accomplished. Submit this along with the final report to the faculty practicum or internship supervisor at the completion of the field experience. This will include:
  - i. Materials that you generated during the practicum or internship;
  - ii. An overview of a typical work day;
  - iii. Summary of goals and objectives that were or were not achieved;
  - iv. A description of skills and competencies developed; and
  - v. A description of the positive and negative points of the practicum or internship.

### **EVALUATION AND GRADING POLICY GUIDELINES**

Evaluation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory must be accomplished in terms of performance demonstrated rather than student potential. Evaluation should be made on the basis of behavioral or performance-based objectives developed by the student in consultation with the faculty supervisor and the site supervisor. As mentioned in the Internship Acknowledgement, the Department and host site can terminate the internship or practicum immediately if it is determined that the student is not performing satisfactorily. Students who are dismissed from their sites for unsatisfactory performance will earn an unsatisfactory (U) in the associated course, and will need to either re-take the course or take another course if the hours are needed for graduation.

#### Student Grievance Procedures

The Exercise Science program's student concern resolution procedures are described below. These procedures are designed to provide the student with a mechanism for communicating concerns directly with those who can assist in addressing them. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for resolving their concerns without additional faculty, staff, and peers becoming involved. Any questions about the procedures outlined below can be discussed with the Department Chair.

- a. First, the student should contact the site supervisor and try to resolve the concern(s).
- b. If the student believes that the concern(s) have not been adequately

addressed, they should make an appointment to seek advice from the faculty supervisor.

- c. If the student believes that the concern(s) have not been adequately addressed, they should then make an appointment to seek advice from the Department Chair.
- d. *It is important to note that if a Field Experience site requests a student be removed, the Health and Exercise Science department will honor that request.*

Students may also contact the university Ombudsperson.

If the student has exhausted the steps outlined above without resolution of their concerns, they may utilize the student grievance and appeal policies and procedures at Appalachian:

[Appalachian Student Grievance and Appeal Policies and Procedures](#)