

Department of Health and Exercise Science
Undergraduate Exercise Science
Practicum/Internship Handbook
(Revised August 2020)

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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 (ASU). 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 practicum/internship at Appalachian State University.

OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELD EXPERIENCE

- To provide the student with an opportunity to integrate theory and practice into his/her 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 his/her philosophy and understanding of the exercise science profession in which he/she is 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 his/her 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 him/her to develop sound human relations.
- To strengthen relationships between exercise science-related agencies and Appalachian State University.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ES 4050 (3 s.h.) The Pre-Professional practicum course provides an educational experience in which the student acquires observation/shadowing hours in an occupation directly related to her/his 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 s.h.) 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 s.h.) 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. Organizations looking for knowledgeable and competent interns and students will find the experience much more valuable if they have the educational experience to contribute.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- a. Minimum Cumulative GPA of 2.00
- b. Preferably, around eighty (80) hours of course work should be completed before the practicum/internship, including the 2000-level core courses and about half of the 3000-level courses. Exceptions may be made with permission of the academic advisor, faculty internship supervisor, and department Chairperson.

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 practicum/internship 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 intern/volunteer 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 practicum/internship placement, the student should, along with the site supervisor, complete:
 - i) A site information sheet
 - ii) Contract (signed by the site supervisor and the student)

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

- e. The student will submit the site information sheet and the signed contract to the faculty practicum/internship supervisor the semester before needing 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 (practicum, internship) complete a background check. Upon submission of internship or practicum forms, students will receive a link to the website of the organization that will perform the background check. Students are responsible for payment of the associated fee, which is typically less than \$25. The results of the background check will be sent directly to the BCHS Dean's office, who will notify the faculty supervisor 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 faculty supervisor and/or the ES undergraduate program director.

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

SITE CRITERIA

The student can select a site 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 extensive, active, and well-balanced programs and administrative structures.

- c. Site provides opportunities for students to observe and participate in all of the 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 give supervision to interns.

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the primary responsibilities expected of the site:

- a. Regular feedback and instructional meetings must be held between supervisors and interns. One or more telephone or in-person conferences between the supervisor and faculty supervisor should be held.
- b. The site supervisor will submit an evaluation of the student's performance and experience halfway through and at the end of the field experience (the form will be provided 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 intern.

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 one or more contacts (phone, email, etc.) with the site supervisor.
- c. Provide advice and guidance for the student through site visits, other contact (phone, email), and responses to reports. In-state interns may receive an on-site visit from the faculty internship supervisor.
- 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 internship supervisor during contact with the student intern.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The following are the primary responsibilities expected of the student:

- a. Thoroughly examine, discuss and review all aspects of the Practicum/Internship Handbook with the faculty supervisor and site supervisor. Provide the practicum/internship site with a copy of the Practicum/Internship Handbook if requested.
- b. Review the contract and job description with the internship site supervisor, sign the contract, complete a site information sheet and then bring these materials to the faculty internship supervisor.
- c. Prepare to the best of one's ability for the experience with the internship site by acquiring as much information as possible about the site before arrival. The practicum/internship 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 internship supervisor at the completion of the internship. This will include:
 - i. Materials that you generated during the practicum/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

- v. A description of the positive and negative points of the field experience

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.