DSI Emphasis: Practicum Information and Policies

Overview

Practicum (FHS 472) is a P/NP course required of all students admitted to the DSI emphasis and involves students in supervised and planned site placements in the community. DSI emphasis students must choose three different sites to give them a full range of experiences, and will spend one term each at two of the sites and two terms at their final site. However, some sites require a two-term commitment. Students who choose those sites will have only two experiences. Students will work at their placement for a minimum of 60 hours in a given term (30 hours per credit of FHS 472) during the weeks that university classes are in session, excluding finals week.

Students must select their practicum sites from a list of approved placements (available via the FHS blog). Students are responsible for verifying that the sites they are interested in are FHS-approved. Students are also responsible for conducting research (i.e., looking at agency websites; talking with peers who have been an intern at a given site they are interested in); and contacting sites directly to determine if the site’s features support the students’ career goals. Students should generally plan to make contact with their top three preferred sites to secure a placement for a given term. Interview and background check requirements vary across sites, and students should inquire directly with each site they are interested in to determine what is needed in order to be considered for a placement at that site. Students will need to meet with the site contact person to complete the Practicum Placement Confirmation Form before the start of the term in which they wish to work at that site.

Sites approved by the FHS program for practicum placements represent a broad range of clientele, professional approaches, human service philosophies, cultural and demographic settings, as well as other features. The range of features represented is:

- Function of site (i.e., education, counseling);
- Approaches in the field (i.e., family preservation/child advocacy);
- Demographic context (i.e., birth to 5 years, 6-13 years, 14+ years);
- Site settings (i.e., home-based or center-based services); and
- Cultural diversity (i.e., racial/ethnic characteristics, individuals with disabilities).

Sites that collaborate in practicum experiences reflect this varied exposure to human services. These sites provide early intervention and respite care services, parent training and support services, youth residential homes, programs for abandoned or runaway youth, vocational services for individuals with developmental disabilities, probation and juvenile-to-community transition services, and substance abuse treatment. These placements are meant to provide real-world professional exposure and experience for students seeking careers in the human services that focus on direct delivery of behavioral, mental health, or other support services, including:

- Case manager, youth outreach worker, family support worker, rehabilitation case worker, behavioral management aide, community outreach worker, juvenile court liaison, human services liaison, residential care provider, eligibility worker, correctional/probation officer
The actual work performed will vary depending on the specific site placement, but might include tasks such as:

- Providing one-on-one tutoring or instruction to children/youth/adults
- Participating with group discussion sessions
- Participating in planning meetings with youth and families
- Attending staff meetings or training sessions for staff and clients
- Observing children or youth and completing assessment forms
- Developing written materials for the site

**Leave of Absence or Voluntary Relinquishment of Major**

*Any student who has been accepted into the DSI emphasis* who wishes to leave the FHS major program temporarily must request a leave of absence from one of the FHS academic advisors *in writing* (email is acceptable) and complete a **leave of absence form**, available on the FHS Blog. If a leave of absence is granted, the student will be allowed to rejoin the program without having to reapply to the emphasis *unless* the leave extends beyond one academic year (i.e., if a student follows the stated procedures to take a leave of absence beginning in the fall term, that student has until the following fall term to reenroll without reapplication). Students whose leave extends more than one academic year may be required to re-apply to the DSI emphasis, including completion of essays or exercises to assess retention of knowledge and skills related to ethical decision-making.

If a student in the DSI emphasis chooses to leave the FHS program without notifying an academic advisor in writing and filing a leave of absence form as stipulated in these policies, they will relinquish their standing in the emphasis. Students who decide to return to the DSI emphasis after relinquishment will be required to re-apply for admission, regardless of how much time has passed. If re-admitted to the DSI emphasis, the student must comply with all policies and procedures, and complete all requirements and expectations required of students in that emphasis at the time of readmission.

**Supervision**

A vital piece of the participation in the DSI practicum is supervision. Students are assigned to a supervisor at the site in which they are completing their practicum hours. All students are also required to register for FHS 473 with a university supervisor each term they are participating in FHS 472 or FHS 497. Supervision may include written or other assignments in addition to participation in the supervision group, required meetings with site and university supervisors, and completion and submission of required documentation. **Students may be assigned written or other work to compensate for supervision meetings that occur on days when the university is closed during the academic term (e.g., Thanksgiving break).**

**Important Requirements and Deadlines**

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Work Plan

Once the practicum sites are established, students will schedule a meeting with their university supervisor and site supervisor to develop the work plan. The work plan meeting should occur within the first 2 weeks of the term. This initial meeting is the opportunity to lay the groundwork for the entire practicum experience. The work plan defines the roles the student will play within the site, and clarify the specific expectations of both the university supervisor and site supervisor. In some sites, the site placement coordinator also will participate in this planning meeting. Each work plan should include the following components:

- Student name/site supervisor name/university supervisor name
- Field placement name
- Dates/times that practicum student will be on site during the term
- Dates/times that practicum student will be on site during finals week
- List of field activities (tasks to be performed by student)
- List of competencies to be met during practicum and criteria for how meeting these competencies will be measured.

Practicum hours performed beyond the third week of the term without a work plan on file will not count toward the needed total for the term. A copy of the final document should be given to the site supervisor and the university supervisor. Students will turn in the original form to their university supervisor who will file the form with the FHS Academic Program Coordinator. Students are encouraged to keep a copy of the work plan for their portfolio as well as for a guide to ensure they are meeting the required competencies and responsibilities laid out in the agreement.

Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of the practicum placement will be dependent on clear and consistent methods of communication among site supervisors, university supervisors, and the students engaged in the practicum experiences. The onsite supervision of students will be a major vehicle for developing observational and communication opportunities to guarantee the quality of placements, professional learning among students, and student performance in the field. These observational and communication opportunities will be formalized in the practicum evaluation described below.

A formal evaluation in each of the students' practicum placements will be conducted in relation to regular observations and communication among respective site and university supervisors and students. The site supervisor will have daily contact with the students (when they are at the site) and be able to provide immediate feedback and guidance. The university supervisor will provide weekly supervision groups and monitor the students' development for the duration of the students' junior year and senior year. The role of each of these supervisors is to provide support, guidance, and educational training to undergraduate students.

In addition to onsite supervision and communication, students and supervisors must complete formal evaluations (see Important Requirements and Deadlines section above). The purpose of the midterm and final evaluations is three-fold:

1. To assess how the practicum experience is matching the original work plan,
2. To assess the student's performance that includes information on the student's attendance, participation, etc., and
3. To assess if the student exceeds, meets or does not meet the professional competencies outlined in the original work plan.
Students are encouraged to gather information from their sites as well as their work plans and evaluations throughout their practicum experiences for use in graduate applications and professional resumes and cover letters.

**Capstone Project**

**A key component associated with the final two-term site placement** will be the completion of a capstone project designed in conjunction with both agency and university personnel. These projects serve as the final "product" students in the DSI emphasis develop as they move beyond academic preparation and support into their professional careers. With careful planning and advising, students devise senior projects that connect their educational experiences and goals to concrete career opportunities. The requires students to take aim at a professionally-relevant issue and develop a body of work that addresses specific agency needs in the community. Examples of senior projects include, but are not limited to:

- Program evaluation
- Program/curriculum development
- Manual/handbook
- Grant writing/fundraising
- Web page design/media development

Topics for DSI capstone projects must be negotiated and approved by both University instructors and agency personnel during the term prior to enrollment in FHS 497 (Capstone Project). Students will be required to submit a proposal and assurance form, signed by their site supervisor, indicating their support of the project detailed in the proposal.

Once the proposal has been approved, **students must complete a total of 60 hours for the capstone project in conjunction with enrollment in FHS 497**. Students may begin tracking these hours no sooner than the start of the term after their proposal is approved—no hours may be accrued toward the capstone project during university breaks. These project hours are in addition to required hours for practicum. Students will track their hours using the DSI Capstone Project Timesheet. Completed timesheets will be turned in along with the final project. Once projects are completed, students will present their project in a formal presentation to University faculty, agency personnel and their classmates at the end of the term. Students' projects and presentations are graded.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of each of the key players in the practicum experience, including the student, the site supervisor, the practicum coordinator, and the university supervisor.

**Student**

Students are expected to engage as professionals-in-training for community agencies approved by FHS for practicum placement. Students must meet all requirements related to practicum specified in this handbook.
Student Responsibilities

1. Read the FHS student handbook.

2. Identify an approved practicum site; contact site personnel and complete any necessary steps (e.g., interview, background check) to secure the placement; Submit your Practicum Site Confirmation form.

3. Gather paperwork and forms necessary to complete the work plan, midterm evaluation, final evaluation, and timesheets.

4. Provide forms to onsite supervisor prior to meetings.

5. Schedule and participate in the development of the work plan along with the university supervisor and the site supervisor.

6. Implement the work plan activities with children/youth/families or other site staff.

7. Maintain timesheet with site supervisor initials and turn in to university supervisor by the stated deadline.

8. Work with site personnel to meet site requirements, such as volunteer training sessions or other special requirements particular to the site.

9. Maintain portfolio of written practicum records, such as a site supervisor initialed log of hours completed, the work plan form, and midterm and final evaluations. Students are responsible for making copies of evaluations and work plans before submitting the originals to their university supervisor.

10. Work to meet practicum competencies outlined in the work plan.

11. Follow site and program expectations for professional conduct, including:
   a. Maintaining professional relationships;
   b. Adhering to site policies for maintaining student/client confidentiality;
   c. Observing professional dress and grooming appropriate to the site/position;
   d. Being on time for scheduled practicum hours.

12. Complete all practicum assignments in a timely manner.

13. Schedule and participate with the midterm evaluation and final evaluation meetings with site supervisor and university field supervisor.

14. Complete the Student Self-Evaluation Form prior to the final meeting.

15. Contact the site supervisor and university supervisor if unable to participate in scheduled practicum hours. You must give the site enough notice to find someone to fill in for your absence.

16. Work with site supervisor to arrange a make-up of practicum hours missed. If a site is closed on the day a student was scheduled, the student is responsible for making up the hours missed.

17. Contact university supervisor for support if any problems arise at field site.

18. Attend POA meetings as requested.
Site Supervisor

Site supervisors are experienced community site personnel who supervise DSI practicum students on site. These individuals are responsible for providing orientation and training on specific tasks or duties that practicum students will perform. Site supervisors also take on a "mentoring" role with DSI students by providing regular supervision and constructive feedback: If a site supervisor leaves the site when a student is present, the site supervisor must find another staff person to fill in as supervisor during their absence. This ensures that the student has someone to "check in" if needed.

Site Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Assist in developing a work plan/agreement with the student and university supervisor and establish a weekly schedule for the student that meets the student's practicum requirement.
2. Provide an orientation to the site that includes the expectations of the student in the role of an intern, the site's policies and procedures and the layout of the site's physical structure.
3. Regularly assist and guide the practicum student, providing ongoing supervision and feedback on job performance, and meetings with the student after formal observations have been conducted.
4. Communicate with the student's university supervisor on a regular basis, especially if there are concerns.
5. Complete midterm and final written evaluations of student performance prior to meeting.
6. Actively participate in the work plan, midterm evaluation and final evaluation meetings.
7. Verify student's timesheet with a signature.
8. Attend and participate in site supervisor trainings and agency fairs when scheduled.

Site Placement Coordinator

Depending upon the size, some sites will need to identify a placement coordinator in addition to the site supervisor. This site liaison will be the initial contact person for university staff and students, and will identify appropriate practicum placements and site supervisors within the site.

Site Placement Coordinator Responsibilities

1. Coordinate all scheduling of practicum activities within the site.
2. Serve as the site liaison to university staff.
3. Identify and supervise all site supervisors within the site.
4. Work with the university supervisor to determine appropriate job tasks for practicum students or delegate this responsibility to the site supervisor.
5. Participate in student evaluations as appropriate or requested.
University Supervisor

The University supervisor functions as the liaison between the students, the community sites, and the FHS faculty and administration. University supervisors are responsible for assisting DSI students to determine appropriate practicum placements and providing onsite support and training throughout the students' practicum experience.

University Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Assist student in securing appropriate practicum placements. Check to be sure student has a weekly schedule set up to meet the hour requirement for the term.
2. Supervise, evaluate and support students in practicum settings.
3. Serve as a liaison to site placement coordinator and site supervisor at the community site. Introduce self to these site personnel before working with the student within the site.
4. Make regular contact with site supervisor. Read and discuss written records of practicum activities when necessary.
5. Debrief practicum activities with students in weekly supervision group.
6. Attend and help facilitate work plan, midterm evaluation, and final evaluation meetings.
7. Maintain student files.
8. Act as mentor and advisor to students.
9. Be available to site staff to assist in resolving any concerns with practicum placement or student's lack of meeting competencies. Communicate concerns to the FHS faculty member providing supervision of FHS 472/473.
10. Participate in weekly supervision group for university supervisors led by a member of the FHS faculty.
11. Advise students in completion of their capstone projects.
12. Provide students with weekly office hours.
13. Determine whether students are meeting practicum competencies.
14. At the end of the term, assign a grade of Pass or No Pass for FHS 473 and recommend a grade (based on documentation collected from the student during supervision meetings).
15. Initiate and participate in POA meetings as needed and/or requested.

DSI Practicum Policies and Expectations

Limiting Student Liability

Limits on Independent Work with Clients

As professionals in training, DSI students must receive adequate supervision when working with clients. Therefore, DSI students are not permitted to work independently with clients. This
Includes, but is not limited to, home visits, transport of clients in an agency vehicle, being alone with clients at the field site and not within easy reach of a site supervisor. Exceptions to this policy must be pre-approved by both the university supervisor (in consultation with the FHS personnel supervising practica) and the site supervisor.

**Limits on Driving as part of the Practicum**

Some agencies request students to drive as part of their duties. Students are only permitted to drive under the following circumstances:

- Students must be performing duties in the course of their final practicum placement only. Students in their first two practicum placements are not allowed to drive as part of their field study duties under any circumstances.
- The agency must provide the vehicle the student will drive (i.e., the vehicle is owned or leased by the agency).
- The agency must have a written policy stating that they, not the student or university, have a liability policy covering transportation and related activities.
- Students must follow all agency procedures to obtain/maintain driving rights.
- Students must have obtained written pre-approval from both their university supervisor and their site supervisor. Students are responsible for demonstrating to their university supervisor that the above conditions are met before the university supervisor can grant approval.

*Under NO circumstances are students permitted to transport clients in personal (non-agency) vehicles.*

**Limits on Paid Work at a Field Site**

Due to labor laws and liability, FHS students in practicum may not be paid for practicum activities and hours. If students are employed by the site in which they are completing a practicum, the students must document that the practicum activities and hours are different from their paid activities and hours. Students may be asked to provide a copy of their paid job description at the time of the work plan meeting. Someone other than the staff person who supervises the student as a paid employee must supervise the student for their practicum duties.

**Procuring Student Liability Insurance**

Students are responsible for providing their own insurance coverage while working in the community. The university does not provide students with insurance to cover accident or medical cost. The university also does not offer liability coverage for students placed in non-university sites for practicum, field studies, or student teacher placements. Liability coverage is provided for students in on-campus field placement only if the student is “acting as an agent of the Oregon Department of Higher Education.” Most students do not qualify as university agents and therefore are not protected by university liability coverage. Therefore, students are strongly advised to purchase their own medical/accident and liability insurance. Professional organizations generally offer students low-cost liability policies (e.g., [http://www.hpso.com/individuals/professional-liability/student-malpractice-insurance-coverage-description](http://www.hpso.com/individuals/professional-liability/student-malpractice-insurance-coverage-description)). For more information about general or professional liability insurance, contact the Office of Risk Management ([http://orm.uoregon.edu/](http://orm.uoregon.edu/)).
Mandated Reporting

FHS majors who are enrolled in practica (FHS 472) are mandated reporters of abuse and neglect of minors, elders, people with developmental delays, and in some circumstances, people with legally-defined chronic mental illness (see http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/Pages/index.aspx for additional information). If you believe that a report should be made, or are not sure, you must consult with your site supervisor (or other designated agency employee) as soon as possible. Follow your supervisor’s instructions. If you and your site supervisor (or other designated agency employee) disagree about whether a report should be made, you must consult with your university supervisor as soon as possible. Your university supervisor will help you determine next steps based on the specifics of the situation, which may involve additional consultation to ensure compliance with applicable professional codes of ethics and Oregon state reporting laws.

If you witness or suspect abuse when you are not engaged in activities connected with your practicum or its clients, you are required to make a direct report to the appropriate state agency and do not need to speak with either your site or university supervisor before doing so.

Some DSI students are mandated reporters because of their employment in a different organization, or because of the requirements of their license or certificate. If this applies to you, you must still follow the process described in this section for potential reports associated with your participation in practicum (FHS 472). For any other reporting at your place of employment or in public, follow your normal reporting procedures.

Mandated reporting and definitions of abuse and neglect varies in different states and across protected client categories. It is students’ responsibility to be familiar with Oregon’s requirements and to consult as needed in order to protect client welfare.

Practicum Hours

Each credit of FHS 472 equates to 30 hours of practicum. Students involved in practicum (FHS 472) and/or completing their capstone projects (FHS 497) must participate in group supervision (FHS 473). Students may also be required to participate in group supervision, even if they are not actively involved in practicum or their capstone project, if it is deemed necessary to support students’ ongoing success and progress through the program (see Plan of Assistance and Action Plan sections above).

Students are expected to evenly divide their practicum hours across the entire term; however, as there is variation in the minimum number of hours that sites may require for students to participate in certain learning experiences, the exact distribution of hours across the term should be negotiated by students with their site supervisor and recorded in the work plan. For example, if a student is enrolled in 2 credits of FHS 472 (60 hours), it expected that they will complete an average of 6 hours per week over the 10 weeks of the term; however, if a site requires that the student complete a minimum of 8 hours per week to engage in a specific learning experience negotiated during the work plan, these hours may be completed over 8 weeks. Please refer to the section on weekly practicum hour maximums for additional relevant information.

Hours may only be counted toward completion of FHS 472 requirements during weeks in which students are registered for FHS 473 and actively meet with their university supervisor or complete assigned make-up activities. Students may receive a No Pass in both FHS 472/473 if they exceed two absences in FHS 473, as their FHS 472 hours will be considered unsupervised.
All practicum hours must be completed during the period of active instruction (i.e., not during academic breaks) in order to count toward FHS 472. In the unique and unusual circumstance that a student must discontinue training at a field site before their full commitment to that site has been completed, that student is responsible for meeting their professional and ethical obligations to the agency and its clients, and that student must work with the site to develop a plan that mitigates the potential negative impact of their premature departure.

In addition to hours worked in the practicum site, practicum hours documented on students’ timesheets may include the following:

- Work plan meeting
- Midterm evaluation meeting
- Final evaluation meeting
- Orientations at the site*
- Trainings at the site*
- Research/tasks assigned by site supervisor to be performed offsite

*At the discretion of the site supervisor. Must be articulated as part of the work plan.

Advance orientations and trainings provided by or in connection with FHS personnel (e.g., mandatory reporter training) may **NOT** be included toward practicum hours.

**Site closures**

Students are responsible for making up hours missed if a site was closed for any reason on the day a student was scheduled to work. Examples of site closures include holidays, in-service days, snow closures, etc.

**24-hour Practicum**

Students may count “awake” time in which they are “actively engaged” in work toward their practicum hours. Any student who may be involved in 24-hour practicum will need to document this option on their work plan. As with all practicum experiences, a site supervisor must be accessible during the entire 24-hour period.

**On-call Practicum Hours**

Students who have the option of practicum activities that require them to be “on-call” may only count the time when “actively engaged” in work. Any student who may have “on-call” hours will need to document this option on their work plan. As with all practicum experiences, the site supervisor must be accessible during the entire on-call period.

**Driving time to/from Practicum**

Driving time is typically **not** included in the students’ practicum hours. The only exceptions are agencies in Cottage Grove, SCAR/Jasper Mountain in Jasper and SAFE Center in Marcola. Students interning at these sites may include driving time as part of their practicum hours documented on their timesheet for **one-way only**.
Week 10 and Finals Week

Students must plan to complete ALL practicum hours for a given term by the time of their final evaluation meeting in Week 10. Students who do not complete their hours by the end of Week 10 may receive a No Pass in FHS 472 for that term. Only under unique and unusual circumstances, and only with the advance written permission of their university supervisor, may students complete practicum hours during finals week. Students who do not receive advance written permission will not be allowed to count any hours completed during finals week toward their FHS 472 hour requirements.

Weekly Practicum Hour Maximums

To support interns in their role as learners at their practica sites, students are not allowed to consistently schedule hours in excess of 15 per week. Students may not enroll in more than 3 credits (90 hours) of FHS 472 per term. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the FHS Program Director. Students must submit a written petition to support their request for an exception to this policy.

Additional FHS Practicum Credits

Students wishing to enroll in FHS 472 credits beyond the minimum required by the major may submit a petition. Students are required to submit a formal written petition if they would like to enroll in additional FHS 472 credits in order to meet the FHS Professional Depth Requirement, but they must meet with an academic advisor prior to enrolling in additional FHS 472 credits to receive authorization.

Completing Practicum at Multiple Sites

Students may work in only one site per term for FHS practicum credit unless otherwise approved by the program director. Any additional hours may be volunteer hours or students may petition for additional credit.

Changing Practicum Sites

Students have the option of changing sites up to the second week of classes. The work plan remains due by the end of the second week.

Practicum as part of a Study Abroad Experience

Students interested in completing an internship as part of a study abroad experience should contact the IE3 program at the University of Oregon. Only internships offered through the IE3 Global Education program will be considered for fulfillment of FHS major requirements (FHS 472/FHS 473).

1. To begin inquiry, go to the IE3 website: https://geo.uoregon.edu/programs/multicountry/ie3-global-internships
2. Review the available information.
3. Schedule an appointment with an IE3 advisor to obtain specific information about the
application, deadlines, and travel dates to determine which term and which site is the best option for which to apply.

4. Complete all application pieces for IE3. The application will have a portion that you will need to be completed by you in collaboration with the FHS program sponsor (typically the FHS program director) for the credit. You should first speak with an academic advisor to determine which credits can be sponsored based on your program plan (typically 1 credit of FHS 473 and up to 3 credits of FHS 472 per term abroad); however, final approval must be granted by the FHS program sponsor.

5. Return all application pieces to IE3 for processing and further notification.
6. Stay in communication with the FHS program sponsor to relay information about the status of your IE3 application as it is relayed to you.

Students participating in IE3 international practicum credits must also participate in supervision remotely using email, course management systems, and/or web-conferencing and comply with the requirements stated in the FHS 473 syllabus provided to them.

**Requesting Approval of a New Practicum Site (including sites outside of Lane County)**

In some cases, students may wish to train at a site that is not currently approved by the FHS program. Students who wish to pursue those sites must petition for approval of that site by providing the following information:

- Name of agency
- Function of agency
- Contact person
- Contact person’s phone number, email, mailing address
- Reason for adding site to FHS site list
- Description of intern’s role

The process of reviewing a site for approval takes at least 10 weeks, so students should submit petitions at least one full term prior to the term in which they hope to intern at that site. The FHS faculty reserves the right to determine if the site is a good match for the program.