



Guidelines for Practicum Site Supervisors

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Practicums focus on the practical application of theory and help students gain professional experience in LIS work under the supervision and mentorship of credentialed librarians. Students enroll in the SLIS Practicum class, receive 3 hours of academic credit, and negotiate placement through the SLIS Contact. Students set learning goals, complete 120 hours of work including practicum projects designed to meet those learning goals, and complete reflections, hours reports, and a final evaluation. Students must finalize the [SLIS Practicum Student Site Agreement](#) form at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester.

Practicum students should be supervised by an LIS Librarian whenever possible. If this is not possible, please contact the SLIS Contact to make alternative arrangements. Practicum students should observe and learn about the work of librarians and archivists at your organization. **IMPORTANT:** Practicum students are earning academic credit and are covered under the University Insurance within that role. Students are not workers, volunteers, or interns. They may not be assigned to fill desk shifts, serve as substitutes for organization employees, or complete other work where they would not be directly supervised.

Practicum Site Supervisors are instrumental in guiding and mentoring students during their Practicum as the students complete their Practicum learning goals while experiencing authentic professional work and reflecting on their learning. To help students, site supervisors should:

1. **Discuss the student's goals at your initial meeting.** The student should have exposure to all aspects of your library as well as complete a specific project. Ideally, the student should become familiar with your library's operations and services.
2. **Agree upon the student's schedule.** With the student's class or work schedule in mind (if the student is employed), develop a schedule that will allow the student to observe your site at peak periods. The practicum should be spread over several weeks culminating in 120 hours completed. Please address your expectations regarding punctuality and absences *in detail*. The schedule should include when you expect the student to be on site, when remote work is/ or is not acceptable, and the Practicum project and observations duties for which the student is responsible.
3. **Orientation.** Even though the student is with you for a brief period of time, please orient the student to your workplace by introducing them to other staff, outlining your expectations and the institution's culture, and explaining rules and policies.
4. **Identify a Practicum project.** A "real world" experience helps the student apply theory to practice. Select a project for the student to work on that will provide a learning experience and benefit your organization. The project helps the student independently fulfill learning goals and expectations.
5. **Provide mentoring, a framework for learning, and guidance.** In your role as Practicum Supervisor please meet regularly with the student to provide instruction, guidance, and support. Please share a learning schedule with your student so they understand expectations and learning plans for their time with you. You do not need to provide a week-by-week learning schedule at the beginning, but please make sure you are planning for formal learning, time for questions, and mentoring
6. **Complete a performance evaluation.** Halfway through the practicum, check in with the student about their progress. Near the end of the semester, your SLIS Contact will send a formal evaluation for you to complete, and return. We hope you choose to share the formal evaluation with your student.

Please share any concerns, questions, or comments you have with the practicum instructor at any point during the semester. By hosting a practicum student, you make a major contribution to the student's education and to the library profession. Thank you for your participation in this learning experience.