

AAD409 Practicum

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Course Context:

In the Arts and Administration department, a cornerstone of pedagogy is field education reflecting one of the program's core goals, *student centered learning*. Practicum is a short-term, experiential field education opportunity where the student seeks a guided learning experience with a community partner organization who is looking to cultivate the next generation of arts leaders and participants. A Student can earn credit through the AAD 409 Practicum course and all field work must be completed within one term (or 10 weeks).

Credit: Students earn academic credit for work performed in the field. Credit ranges from 1-6 credits during the term and is approved only through the practicum instructor. 1 credit = 3 hours of work in the field. The number of credits is determined by the student, practicum instructor and the on site supervisor to balance an acceptable amount of work per week with a student's academic responsibilities.

Terms Offered: Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer sessions annually.

Primary Audiences: There are two primary audiences for the AAD409 practicum course:

1. Undergraduates in a variety of creative disciplines and research areas may take the undergraduate practicum course as an elective.
2. Undergraduate AAD minors who are required to complete 3 credits towards graduation.

Essential Questions towards higher levels of thinking and research:

- ~How are the arts management theories and concepts applied in the arts and culture field?
- ~How does the practicum field education experience build an understanding of the theories and concepts in arts management, and arts and culture production?
- ~What are the essential skills needed in managing the arts and culture organization? (ie. Fundraising, grant writing, event management, budgeting, board stewardship, volunteer coordination etc.)
- ~What research skills are needed as an arts manager?

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- ~ Investigate personal learning goals and objectives related to the professional arts and culture setting towards understanding arts management issues that arise from one's academic studies in arts and cultural management.
- ~ Experience the day to day functions and operation of a professional organization.
- ~ Analyze and compare theoretical knowledge gained in the university classroom and evaluate how those ideas manifest in the professional field.
- ~ Build managerial and leadership skills in the arts and culture.
- ~ Foster meaningful professional relationships in the arts and culture field of interest.
- ~ Develop an awareness of the issues arts and culture professionals face.

Core Content, Themes and Topics

Professional Practice – Practicum focuses on comparing theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom with the professional activity in the field so students gain an understanding of professional practice in the arts and culture sector.

Independent study through field education – Students are encouraged to set learning goals and objectives with the advisement of the practicum instructor and community partner. These learning goals/objectives focus the student's understanding of professional practice and enrich their academic research as they continue in the higher education studies.

Learning Agreement – Students use a Learning Agreement contract as a tool for negotiation and communication. It is an invaluable tool that addresses what the learning will be onsite. The community partner who will provide the guided learning experience must be in agreement with the goals and objectives. This contract often leads students to understand the process to creating a unique learning experience and balance it with the needs of an organization. The practicum instructor reviews the document before approving the student's registration into the course and addresses any issues of concern in regards to the student's workload, involvement in projects and events etc...

Key Concepts and Skills

Self-Directed Learning Concepts:

Identify learning goals and objectives – Using the practicum pre-planning worksheet, students refine their aspirations and inquiry into 2-3 learning goals. One learning goal must address a theoretical arts and culture issue they have had to address with in the classroom. For minors and majors in the arts management program, the students second goal must address a management concept they wish to analyze in the field.

Negotiation and Communication Skills – Students learn to communicate their personal learning goals and objectives, and negotiate with the community partner to make sure the learning goals reflect a realistic mentoring opportunity for the organization. The learning goals may be adjusted to reflect a balance between guided learning and professional pursuit.

Academic/Research Skills– Research in practicum is seen on a spectrum of learning. Students may have emerging research skills and may find that on site they are assisting and learning these research skills for the first time. This is important for the student to reflect upon at the end of the term when summarizing the experience. Here are some key research skills that will emerge in most practicums and in research in general:

Reflection: In order to capture the field experience over a 10-week period, all students are required to chronicle their daily activities in a journal. This journal is then turned in along with a written summation of the experience. The summation must address each learning objective outlined initially in the learning agreement. Students need to address a minimum of two basic research skills that they used and learned on site:

Planning & Project Management – learning to plan the action steps, the key roles, and deadlines are a significant part whether a student is conducting an evaluation, coordinating a program or event or evaluating the impact of an arts and culture experience. Learning the steps in planning and expediting projects is a key research skill.

Handling Budgets & Funding- research institutions must learn to budget, as do not for profit professionals. This is a key research skill.

Team leading or managing- facilitating group discussion, leading committees, coordinating others on a team for an event, managing staff and volunteers is an essential research skill that leads you through programming, curricular design, event management and eventually to evaluation. Many students may find themselves assisting in the management or providing support with in the team. They should observe the management styles of those leading. Some may find they are given some leadership with guidance from their supervisor to test out their leadership capabilities.

Organization/Handling data- organizing hard copies and digital formatted data for evaluation, research, requires a student to put a system in place that makes data accessible to oneself and for professional members on staff in an organization. A key research skill is organizing the data in such a way that allows the analyzing to happen efficiently so that you can produce results in a effective and timely manner.

IT Skills – website design, database management, special software specific to the profession, basic computer software programs (like excel, word etc...), even the office copier are all essential to carrying out research and disseminating it. Students need to develop their skills in using IT equipment and software.

Key Activities for learning and assessment

Initial Advisory Meeting with practicum instructor.

Professional correspondence and initial contact with potential practicum sites

Interview with community partner

Learning Agreement negotiation and signing by all parties

Registration approval form signed and turned in.

Assessment tools: Students' are assessed on their practicum experience by turning in the following documentation for a pass/no pass grade. The instructor may ask to meet with the student if there are any questions, clarifications or concerns about the practicum experience.

Journal – Students will be graded on keeping a journal with daily logs and reflections. Depending on the number of days a student works in a week, there should be the same number of logs chronicled in the journal.

Student Self-evaluation- The evaluation is required to ascertain the students overall experience.

Final Demonstration of learning: The final demonstration of learning has several key components. Students are required to do a written summation of their overall experience and reflect on each learning goal that they had originally set up the practicum learning for. Along with the written summation, students need to include:

- a. Visual artifacts – At least to visual artifacts: photo documentation, print materials they produced etc...
- b. Action plan – At the end of the written summation or as a stand alone document, students need to assess the learning, skills, and insights they have gained and then consider where they would like to focus and refine their skills, learning, and research next.

Community partner evaluation- experience, what was challenging, what each learned. The professional should share where he or she sees areas that the student could improve, what the student has mastered if anything at all, and where the student played a crucial role in the organization/project/event etc. This evaluation also corroborates whether the student showed up on time and the the number of days both agreed to on the learning agreement.

Primary Resources

- ~ Practicum Website <http://blogs.uoregon.edu/aadpracticum/>
- ~ Pre Planning worksheet (provided at initial advisory meeting with instructor)
- ~ Identifying your means - Effectual Learning
- ~ Action planning – S.M.A.R.T. (strategic, measurable, actionable, realistic, time-oriented)