

AAD609 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 graduate seeks a guided learning experience with a community partner organization who is looking to cultivate the next generation of arts leaders and participants. A graduate student can earn credit through the AAD 609 Practicum course and all field work must be completed within one term (or 10 weeks).

Credit: Graduate 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 graduate student, practicum instructor and the on site supervisor to balance an acceptable amount of work per week with a graduate student's academic and research responsibilities.

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

Primary Audiences: There are two primary audiences for the AAD609 practicum course:

1. Graduates in a variety of creative disciplines and research concentrations may take the graduate practicum course as an elective towards research inquiry.
2. AAD Graduates also may use the practicum for research inquiry, professional practice, and as an elective.

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? And how does the knowledge gleaned in the field lead to research inquiry?
- ~What essential skills are needed in managing the arts and culture organization at the local, regional, national and possibly international levels? (policy, ethics, cultural production, social and economic issues etc...)
- ~ Which skill sets need a deeper level of refinement? (ie. Fundraising and donor cultivation, grant writing and cultivating funder relationships, event management and delegation of leadership, budgeting and evaluation, board stewardship and board staff relations, community engagement and policy development).
- ~What relationships are fostered through the experience that lead to professional collaborations and usher emerging professionals into the arts and culture sector?

Learning Outcomes:

Graduates will:

- ~ Investigate personal and research learning goals and objectives related to the professional arts and culture setting towards understanding arts management issues that arise from one's research inquiry.
- ~ Analyze and compare theoretical knowledge gained in through research and academic courses and evaluate how those ideas manifest in the professional field.
- ~ Differentiate arts management issues from administration issues in other industries.

- ~ Analyze and compare best practices in arts management and predict results.
- ~ Experience the day to day functions and operation of a professional organization.
- ~ Build managerial and leadership skills in an arts and culture organization.
- ~ 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

Research Inquiry & Professional Practice – Practicum focuses on comparing theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom with the professional activity in the field so graduates gain an understanding of professional practice in the arts and culture sector and focus research inquiry.

Independent study through field education – Graduates are encouraged to set learning goals and objectives with the advisement of the practicum instructor and community partner. These learning goals/objectives focus the graduate's understanding of professional practice and focus their research inquiry.

Learning Agreement – Graduates 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 graduates 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 graduate's registration into the course and addresses any issues of concern in regards to the graduate'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, graduates refine their aspirations and inquiry into 3-4 learning goals. Two goals must address research inquiry based on the theoretical arts and culture issues they have had to address with in their graduate courses. One last goal must address a management concept or skill they wish to address in the field.

Negotiation and Communication Skills – Graduates learn to synthesize and their personal & research learning goals and objectives, then communicate and negotiate with the community partner to make sure the learning goals reflect a realistic mentoring opportunity for the organization as well as research inquiry for the graduate. 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. Graduates may have emerging research skills and may find that on site they are assisting and learning these research skills for the first time. Others may be refining research skills that allow them to lead or manage part of an onsite project with some autonomy. This is important for the graduate to reflect upon before starting a practicum and at the end of the term when summarizing and evaluating the experience and data gathered for research. 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:

Public Speaking & Community Engagement – graduates refine their speaking and presentation skills towards disseminating research to a community of professionals in the field and learn to nuance the academic or industry vocabulary into relatable terms for community members such as volunteers, donors and participants. Being flexible in engaging all levels of community through dialogue allows all members of community access to cultural understanding and participation.

Planning & Project Management – Managers must plan the action steps, the key roles, and deadlines before and after conducting an evaluation, coordinating a program or event. Making clear action steps in planning leads to expediting projects successfully. This is a key to better research skill.

Handling Budgets, Funding & Resource Management- researchers in any institution must learn to budget, as do not for profit professionals. This is a key research skill that graduates begin to develop and refine. With in this research area is seeing that the process of research often requires more than monetary funding, but other resources including but not limited to: volunteers to gather data, time from you or others, progress updates to funders, outreach and awareness of the importance of this research to professional community, educators, community participants and many more resource management.

Team leading or Managing & Facilitation- 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 graduates 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 practicum supervisor to apply their leadership/management 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. This key research skill of effectively organizing the data, allows oneself or a group to move into the next stage of analyzing and predicting results in a timely manner.

IT Skills – website design, database management, special software specific to the profession (such as donor database software), basic computer software programs (like excel, word etc...), even the office copier are all essential to carrying out research, and presenting 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: Graduates 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 graduate if there are any questions, clarifications or concerns about the practicum experience.

Journal – Graduates will be graded on keeping a journal with daily logs and reflections. Depending on the number of days a graduate 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 graduates overall experience.

Final Demonstration of learning: The final demonstration of learning has several key components. Graduates are required to customize the documentation that best demonstrates research inquiry, best practices in arts management. These documents vary based on each graduate's inquiry topic. The document should also include a written summation of their overall experience and reflection on **each** learning goal they had identified initially, along with relating it to two key scholarly articles that relate to their research inquiry. Appendices should demonstrate the following:

- a. Visual artifacts – At least to visual artifacts: photo documentation, print materials they produced etc...
- b. Action plan – An action plan should be included either as part of the written summation or as a stand alone document in the appendices, where graduates need to assess the learning, skills, and insights they have gained. This action plan should consider where they would like to focus and refine their skills, learning, and research next.

Community partner evaluation- This evaluation allows the professional to share the experience of guiding and mentoring the graduate: what was challenging, what each learned, areas the graduate should deepen inquiry or management/leadership skills, provide possible connections to the broader arts and culture sector. This evaluation also corroborates the student's commitment to the original learning agreement, indicating whether the student showed up on time and for the the number of days agreed upon. This is not a graded assessment, but provides a detailed picture for the practicum supervisor to understand what was occurring on site.

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)