

EXERCISE SCIENCE PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIPS IN KINESIOLOGY

FIELDWORK MANUAL

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<http://www.jmu.edu/kinesiology>

Special Statement on COVID-19 vaccination

Receiving the COVID vaccine is a personal choice. You are enrolled in a program that requires two field-based experiences that may require personnel (both staff and students) to have received the vaccine to provide a measure of protection (both for the population being treated and staff).

The Department of Kinesiology is not mandating that you receive the COVID vaccine, however, if you chose not to receive the vaccine nor document an exemption, you may not be able to progress in the program in a timely manner. Additionally, we expect the trend to continue that more and more sites will be requiring that students be vaccinated and they are not always accepting student waivers. As a Department, we will do our best to assist your with securing an alternative site but this may not be possible depending upon the number of students and the number of sites accepting non-vaccinated students. Ultimately, we will do all that we can to assist, however the inability to secure a site willing to accept you if you are not vaccinated could delay your progression within the program. Exemptions and waivers of the required field-based courses will not be granted under any circumstance.

Exercise Science Program in Kinesiology

Students admitted to the Exercise Science program at James Madison University complete a 120-hour Bachelor of Science degree. The Exercise Science program prepares students for careers in areas such as strength and conditioning, personal training, corporate wellness, and cardiac rehabilitation. Many of our Exercise Science graduates choose to continue their education in order to pursue various health-related professional programs such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant and medicine. The Department of Kinesiology believes that the practical experience gained through a practicum/internship placement is essential to the student's education and professional growth.

Objectives of the Exercise Science Practicum/Internship Program

The exercise science practicum/internship program in Kinesiology at James Madison University offers its students a broad range of experiences in which to complete their practicum and internship assignments. One of the most important factors in ensuring a successful experience is matching the interests of the student with qualified personnel from agencies across the state and region. The specific purposes of the practicum/internship program for the student, agency, and the University are as follows:

1. To provide students with experience upon which to build their professional careers, to assist them in integrating theory and technique with practical applications, and to provide the opportunity for students to develop their skills and knowledge within their areas of professional interest.
2. To broaden the student's concept of their professional field, to provide experiences that will expand the student's understanding of human behavior, and to develop better human relation skills.
3. To operationalize a set of goals and objectives prepared by the student with the assistance of the student's practicum/internship supervisor and the student's advisor.

4. To provide agencies with additional quality personnel in order to supplement their staff, to offer professionals in the field an opportunity to become involved in the preparation of future professionals and to enhanced communication between the University and working professionals.
5. To provide the University with an opportunity to keep in touch with recent developments within the work place, and to continually develop a viable base for evaluating student performance in professional situations.
6. To further enhance faculty development by offering them opportunities to face practical problems in the field through interaction with professionals.

Benefits of the Field Experience

The practicum/internship experience should be a significant experience for all who have worked to make it a reality: the student, the cooperating agency, and the University. It should provide specific benefits to each of the three parties involved, and thus will help to benefit the profession in general. Specific benefits for each are detailed below:

Benefits to the student.

1. Gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of agency programs and the forces that affect them.
2. Understand individual and community needs for which these services are designed and the impact they have on individuals, groups, and the community.
3. Accept the challenge and stimulus to independently learn and investigate.
4. Integrate and apply knowledge, theory and understanding from classroom courses and other life experiences.
5. Establish contacts with professionals.
6. Become aware of and evaluate their own personal values and professional goals.
7. Discover personal strengths, which may be further developed, and weaknesses that may be reduced.

Benefits to the cooperating agency.

1. Stimulate professional staff and strengthen in-service development programs.
2. Enlarge the available staff, permitting strengthening of the agency program.
3. Provide an opportunity to evaluate young professionals in order to enhance the screening procedures of future employees.
4. Offer the agency an opportunity to assist in preparing professional leaders of the future.
5. Assist the agency in relating its services to current theory and practice.
6. Provide contact with professional educators in order to help maintain a vital and current professional curriculum.

Benefits to the University.

1. Improve the educational process and enlarge the scope of the University.
2. Provide a laboratory for application of theoretical knowledge.
3. Provide continuing opportunity for evaluation of the student's needs, abilities, and progress, leading to adjustment in his/her program of study.
4. Encourage faculty contact with professional leaders and cooperating agencies on a regular basis.
5. Lead to continuing evaluation of the entire curriculum as well as its experiential phase.
6. Increase the School's services and scope of influence.

General Description of the Practicum/internship Experience

Exercise science practicum/internship experiences in Kinesiology may vary from 3 to 12 credit hours. Such experiences offer the student the opportunity to apply theory and methodology under qualified supervision from the cooperating agency and the University.

A practicum/internship on the undergraduate level is required of all students in the Exercise Science program, and the courses are listed under the titles of KIN 471: Practicum and KIN 481: Internship. All students work under the supervision of a university and agency supervisor for the semester in which the student is enrolled for practicum/internship credit. In order to receive credit for the practicum experience, students must be engaged in a minimum of 6 hours per week. The internship is meant to be a capstone experience where students are engaged in a minimum of 11 hours each week. Additional hourly assignments may be required depending upon the type of experience undertaken. Assigned supervisors from both the agency and the University will share supervision of the student jointly.

Financial compensation to the student during the practicum/internship experience is not required and is typically limited to living expenses. The agency, university supervisor, and the university coordinator

must approve any additional compensation to the student.

Course credit is to be granted for unique learning experiences in the work place; therefore, students may not receive credit for work being done at an agency where he/she is presently employed. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the university coordinator prior to receiving credit, and must include experiences additional to those for which the student has been compensated.

Academic evaluation of the student during the practicum/internship experience is based upon the following: evaluations by the field supervisor, evaluation by the university supervisor, and various additional academic assignments that are explained via that semester's course syllabus and course Canvas site.

Types of Practicum/internship Experiences

Because each agency is unique and each student has special skills and interests, the practicum/internship experience must be individualized. It is anticipated that each student will have an opportunity to gain experience in all or most of the following areas:

1. *Client Interaction.* The student should have the opportunity to interact with the agency clientele in any way in which the agency feels appropriate. This may include teaching group lessons, working one-on-one with specific individuals, assisting in exercise testing and prescription, etc. The student should realize that the type of client interaction made available to him/her will vary depending on the type of field experience and the agency's needs and regulations.
2. *Administration.* The student should have an opportunity to study and observe in action the policies and practices of the agency. This would include study of the legal status of the agency, organizational structure, board relations, financial and supervisory practices, general staff relations, and the values of and techniques used in dealing with the public in a courteous and effective manner.
3. *Programming.* The student should not only help plan but also help put into action a broad program of activities and services characteristic of the agency. The student should prepare program plans in an effective manner consistent with the agency's procedures and act as a leader in carrying out various types of programs.
4. *Facilities.* The student should have opportunities to gain theoretical and practical experience in facility operation and/or planning. This might include experiences in long range planning, equipment selection, security, equipment maintenance, etc.
5. *General Experiences.* The student should gain a broad experience in dealing with public relations problems, attend administrative meetings where possible, work with committees, visit with individuals in the agency, and get as wide of a range of experiences as possible.
6. *Day-To-Day Activities.* In order to give the student a realistic work experience, he/she should be encouraged to fully participate in the day-to-day activities of the agency. These experiences may occasionally include such "mundane" activities as record keeping and handing out towels, etc. however, keep in mind that the practicum/internship should be a learning experience for the student and not just "free labor". Therefore, the agency is encouraged to offer the student a variety of challenging experiences.

Responsibilities of the Student

The student is responsible for completing the requirements of the practicum/internship experience as provided by the University supervisor and following the general guidelines listed below:

1. Submit a letter of application and resume to the agency or agencies where you are interested in completing your practicum/internship assignment. Practicum/internship experiences may

only be completed at sites which have been approved by the exercise science fieldwork coordinator.

2. Provide the agency with personal background information and academic achievement prior to your arrival at the agency.
3. Make arrangements for your own housing when appropriate. Agency supervisors can probably assist you with this task since they are more familiar with the housing situation in their community.
4. With the assistance of the university and practicum/internship supervisor, develop a set of objectives and assignments to be completed during the experience. A copy of these objectives must be submitted to both the university and agency supervisors prior to the start of the practicum/internship.
5. All students must follow the policies and duties outlined by the agency, and meet all scheduled commitments and arrangements made in connection with the training assignments.
6. Attend periodic conferences with the agency and university supervisors as requested.
7. Maintain a current work log and/or journal summarizing the number of hours worked and the types of activities undertaken. This documentation is to be submitted weekly to the Exercise Science Fieldwork Coordinator.
8. Submit required course assignments as outlined in the syllabus from the semester in which you are enrolled.

Responsibilities of the Agency Supervisor

1. Serve as the principal contact for the agency in reference to the experience.
2. Assist the student in understanding his/her position as it relates to the population being served by the agency.
3. Arrange with the student the specific projects and activities in which he/she will be involved, and arrange a work schedule. This information should be in writing and shared with the university supervisor via the student.
4. Schedule weekly meetings with the student to discuss items of concern to either party.
5. Inform the student of all regulations and practices, which must be observed by the student.
6. Evaluate the work of the student:
 - a. Discuss with the student specific indications of progress, strengths, and weaknesses.
 - b. Set an example by presenting criticism in a constructive, objective, and tactful manner.
 - c. Complete the written evaluation forms provided by the University supervisor and after discussing your comments with the intern send the form to the University supervisor.

Responsibilities of the University Supervisor

1. Supervise arrangements for and give final approval of all student assignments.
2. Represent the University in all official arrangements with the cooperating agencies in the conduct of the practicum program.
3. Supervise the work of the student in the cooperating agency by conferring with both the student and the agency supervisor on a regular basis.
4. Evaluate all practicum reports and discuss their content, if applicable, with both the student and the agency supervisor.
5. Serve as a resource person for both the cooperating agency supervisor and the student.
6. Exchange ideas with both the student and the agency supervisor directed toward the improvement of the practicum/internship experience and the total academic program.
7. Assign all grades for the student in cooperation with the field supervisor.

Removal from placement

All students are expected to follow the policies and procedures established in the syllabus and course material provided for KIN 471 and KIN 481. Violations of the policies and procedures will result in academic penalty as described in the syllabus. Examples of major infractions that will lead to termination of the placement include, but are not limited to:

- Falsifying hours
- Sexual harassment
- Racism or discriminating behaviors
- Having an on-site supervisor request removal from the placement
- Deceitful behaviors or out-right lying to a supervisor
- Abide by any policy set by placement site
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Discontinuing the placement without prior approval

Upon notification of a major infraction that will result in termination, the Exercise Science Fieldwork supervisor will notify the student of the nature of the infraction and request that the student set up a meeting. The notification will be sent to the students' JMU email account in a timely manner and will include a copy of the Termination Policy.

Termination

If the practicum/internship experience is terminated for any reason, the following consequences will be applied: 1) final grade in KIN 471/481 will be No Credit and 2) any hours completed at that site will not be applied toward future internship/practicum placements.

Deadlines and Enrollment Process

1. Be on the lookout for an email from the Kinesiology academic advisor with information about Fieldwork Information Sessions. These meetings are usually scheduled for late September and late February. Attend one of the sessions.
2. Complete the [Fieldwork Application](#). This form is due prior to attending an information session.
3. Download, complete, and have your site supervisor sign the [Agency Acceptance Form](#). This is due the last day of class the semester before you intend to complete the experience. Specific non-negotiable dates are provided at the information session, but are generally:
 - a. For an experience to be completed in the Fall semester, Agency Acceptance Form is due on the last day of classes during the Spring semester.
 - b. For an experience to be completed in the Spring semester, Agency Acceptance Form is due on the last day of classes during the Fall semester.
 - c. For an experience to be completed in the Summer semester, Agency Acceptance Form is due on the last day of classes during the Spring semester.
4. In exchange for your Agency Acceptance Form, the Exercise Science Fieldwork Coordinator will issue your permission number. Enrollment in KIN 471 or KIN 481 may not be completed without this permission number.

Grading scale

CR = Credit. Student met all expectations outlined in the course syllabus. 3, 4, 8, or 12 credit hours awarded, depending on the course in which the student is enrolled.

NC = No Credit. Student did not meet one or more of the course expectations outlined in the course

syllabus. KIN 471/481 must be completed another semester.

A “Credit” grade in KIN 471 and KIN 481 is a Kinesiology degree requirement. Students should be sure to make it a priority to meet all four of the expectations for their practicum/internship. A “No credit” final grade is a costly consequence, both in time and money. Not receiving credit could delay graduation. Treat practicum/internship with as much attention as you would any other academic course.

Summary Statement

Practical work experience is a vital part of the student's professional preparation. Therefore, the Department of Kinesiology welcomes any comments or suggestions, which might improve these experiences. Students and agencies are encouraged to make such suggestions regarding the program curriculum and/or the practicum/internship program. By working together, the student, agency, and university can help to ensure the highest level of quality in the undergraduate programs in the Department of Kinesiology.