

Selection of the Practicum Agency

Students may be allowed to commence the Practicum only when the agency has an intern supervisor with the educational and experiential qualifications to supervise the student.

Three (3) years of successful professional experience is typically a minimum qualification for agency supervision.

The following factors are considered in selecting practicum agencies:

1. The agency should show evidence of a sound professional philosophy of leisure service.
2. The agency should show evidence of adequate acceptance and support.
3. The agency should be professionally recognized and competent in the area of parks and recreation, or in its specific emphasis.
4. The agency should have an active, balanced, and broad recreation and/or park program.
5. The agency and its staff should be willing to provide opportunity for active participants as well as observation of program procedures.
6. The agency should have adequate equipment and facilities that are available for practicum student use.
7. The staff should be highly qualified through both education and/or experience to give supervision to students.
8. The agency should have sound administrative procedures including an adequate budget, public relations, personnel policies, maintenance procedures and in-service training programs.
9. Therapeutic recreation option majors must be supervised by a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS).
10. A Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) should supervise non-therapeutic recreation Practicum students, however this is not a requirement.

Available to all Seminar (REC 450) students seeking practicum placement, are file folders containing information on agencies which should be helpful in analyzing the agency. Such information may include but not necessarily limited to: program operation, personnel of the agency, organizational structure, legal status, general administrative policies and procedures, budget, clientele of the agency, characteristics of the community, duties and responsibilities

during the practicum experience, job description, facilities of the agency, cooperative agency agreements, and remuneration/living arrangements for the practicum experience.

The prospective Practicum student must realize from the very beginning the importance of the decision in selecting an agency for the professional practicum experience. In most instances, the professional career of the student will be measurably influenced by the agency selected for the practicum experience. It is perhaps the most important decision faced by any student in pursuit of a career. The responsibility for this decision rests largely with the student.

In the beginning of the process in selecting an agency, the student should:

1. Review folders and bulletin boards containing information about agencies.
2. Visit with faculty concerning potential agencies.
3. Discuss potential agencies with professionals in the field.
4. Consider all personal reasons that are very important in selecting a site (living arrangements, economic requirements and geographical area in starting a career).
5. Seek advice from those who have recently completed the Practicum experience.
6. Complete a list of objectives for the practicum experience.

After the student has become as familiar as possible with potential agencies and determined a realistic set of goals, it is necessary to initiate procedures to set up interviews with prospective agencies. This is most commonly done with a letter of inquiry; however, other procedures such as a personal visit or telephone conversation may be acceptable with approval from the REC 450 instructor and/or Practicum Coordinator.

All correspondence is to be typed/word processed with clean, correct, and appropriately styled copies sent to agencies. A summary record of all correspondence, whether initiated by the student or by agency personnel, is to be kept in the student's Seminar folder.

Prior to initiating any contact with prospective agencies, the student must complete a resume and have it approved by the Seminar instructor. Additionally, all written correspondence initiated by the student must be approved by the Seminar instructor and/or Practicum Coordinator before being sent to the agencies.

Each student is expected to engage in a minimum of three interviews. Additional interviews may be needed in order to achieve the best possible agency for the Practicum experience. The student should be prepared for each interview with a clearly stated list of objectives for the Practicum experience, and a list of questions to ascertain if an agency can provide the desired experiences. The student should prepare for the interview by becoming familiar with the important aspects of the interview process in general, and by researching the agency involved for each specific interview. "Prepare dness is the key."