

**Department of  
Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality  
Management**

**Manual for  
Practicum in  
Recreation and Parks  
Management**

**RPM 315**

Manual updated March 08

To our colleagues and students:

This practicum manual has been prepared to assist students and agency supervisors in understanding the requirements for Practicum in Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The Practicum serves as an integral part of each student's total educational preparation for professional practice, augmenting the content and objectives of the classroom.

The distinctive contribution of the Practicum is in the opportunity afforded students to gain hands-on experience and to develop skills that will be used in their future career in Recreation and Parks Management. The Practicum is that phase of professional preparation which enables students to explore opportunities in a variety of settings and programs, to develop practical skills, and to gain "hands on" professional experience under the supervision of experienced agency and university supervisors.

We view the Practicum as a commitment to the future -- an opportunity for aspiring young Recreation and Parks Management professionals to gain valuable experience under the supervision of seasoned professionals. Many thanks are due to those colleagues in the field who have contributed to the fieldwork program through their ongoing input and critical evaluation.

Yours truly,

*Recreation and Parks Management Faculty*

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## Introduction

A key element in the professional development of students in Recreation and Parks Management is the opportunity to participate in exciting and challenging fieldwork experiences. The materials and competencies learned in the classroom may be tested through actual on-the-job training under the direction of a competent professional. To this end, the faculty of the Recreation and Parks Management program is committed to providing each student with a Practicum experience that is consistent with his/her professional goals.

## Intent of the Practicum

The Practicum should be considered an entry-level experience. It is an opportunity for the student to gain hands-on experience in a recreation, parks, or tourism agency, which may help to expose the student to the depth and breadth of career opportunities in the industry and to focus academic studies to meet personal goals.

## Definitions

Practicum: Directed field experience in a recreation, parks, or tourism agency under supervision of a University Supervisor and an Agency Supervisor. Practicum opportunities allow students to develop knowledge, values, and beginning practice skills appropriate for an entry-level position in a recreation, parks, or tourism agency.

Agency Supervisor: The individual who has primary responsibility for directing the student's on-the-job experience within a particular recreation, park, or tourism agency.

University Supervisor: The individual who is employed by The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) through the Department of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management to assist students with their Practicum experience and who has final responsibility and authority for assigning grades.

## Objectives of the Practicum

1. To provide the student with an opportunity to gain practical experience in a recreation, parks, or tourism setting under professional supervision.
2. To provide the student with an on-site orientation experience for the purpose of broadening his/her knowledge of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management as a profession.
3. To supplement the student's classroom experience and allow for adjustment or redirection of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
4. To assist the student in understanding his/her own capabilities and select areas of specialization for future course work and employment.

## **Policies Governing Practicum**

1. All students majoring in Recreation and Parks Management at UNCG are required to take a minimum of three (3) credit hours of RPM 315. A minimum of one hundred and twenty (120) clock hours over a minimum of a 6-week period of supervised experience at an agency are required to earn the 3 hours of academic credit. *Students may complete three (3) additional credit hours as a free elective or LSM cognate for a maximum of six (6) total credit hours for RPM 315.*
2. Practicum is designed to be completed **during summer sessions**. Students should plan their coursework so as to be able to schedule Practicum for the summer between the sophomore and junior years. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the faculty advisor and Fieldwork Coordinator.
3. Students will receive a grade of Pass/Not Pass upon completion of the Practicum experience and submission of appropriate and acceptable written reports.
4. Students will have the initial responsibility of selecting their own agency for the Practicum. Students will be permitted to work only in agencies that have been approved by the Department of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management. Final agency and assignment approval is a joint responsibility of the Fieldwork Coordinator and the student's faculty advisor.
5. Students may accept a stipend (pay) for the Practicum. Additionally, the agency is encouraged to provide room and board or other benefits to the student.
6. All students are required to carry professional liability insurance during their Practicum experience. Insurance application forms are available through the departmental office if the agency does not provide this coverage for the student. Students will be charged \$18 for the professional liability insurance coverage.
7. Students are ultimately responsible for securing travel to and from the agency, housing, and other items as required by the agency.
8. Students and the Agency Supervisor must complete the Practicum Agreement prior to the student beginning the on-site experience.
9. Students must have a 2.0 or better cumulative grade point average (GPA), and a 2.0 or better GPA in Recreation and Parks Management major courses to be eligible to do their practicum.
10. Practicum experiences cannot be completed at agencies where students are presently employed, or have previously worked without special clearance from the Fieldwork Coordinator and the student's faculty advisor (both must agree).
11. Prerequisites for RPM 315 are RPM 111, 212, 213, and either 324, 231, 241, or HTM 261.

## **Responsibilities for the Practicum**

**The University Supervisor** guides the student through completion of the Practicum experience with the following responsibilities:

1. Review all reports and assignments submitted by the student. Make whatever recommendations or take whatever actions are appropriate for the reports to be considered acceptable;
2. Supervise the student through correspondence and telephone;
3. Remove a student from the agency when it would seem detrimental for the student to remain there;
4. Communicate with the Agency Supervisor throughout the student's learning experience;
5. Place the student's final agency evaluation of the experience and the agency's evaluation of the student in the student's departmental file.
6. Grade the student's final report; and
7. Submit the final grade (Pass/Non-Pass).

**The Student** has the following responsibilities in contributing to the success or failure of the Practicum experience. These responsibilities should be completed according to the recommended timeline. Students are reminded that they represent the Department, the School, and the University to the agency and the public.

1. Students should identify several potential appropriate agencies or organizations for their Practicum experience. Consideration of more than one agency is strongly recommended.
2. Students should consult with their faculty advisor for approval of the agency (or agencies).
3. Students are responsible for following all placement procedures outlined in this Manual.
4. After the Practicum has been confirmed, the student should contact the Agency Supervisor and thank him/her for the opportunity for this learning experience and make final arrangements for this assignment.
5. Students will develop a set of learning outcomes in conjunction with their Agency Supervisor for their Practicum according to their own needs and resources and that of the agency. This must be submitted to the University Supervisor prior to beginning the Practicum.

6. Room, board, and transportation to and from the Practicum site are the responsibility of the student.
7. The student should communicate with the University Supervisor concerning any problems that arise during the Practicum. The student should also communicate with his/her Agency Supervisor if problems should arise during the Practicum. Adjustments cannot be made unless both the University and Agency Supervisors are aware that changes need to be made.
8. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times.
9. Students must carry their own liability insurance during Practicum, unless coverage is provided by the agency. Some agencies cover students under agency policies, some agencies make available insurance for a minimal charge, and some agencies make no provision for insurance coverage. Students must show proof of insurance coverage prior to beginning the Practicum experience. This can be a letter (on agency letterhead) confirming coverage or a copy of application for coverage and proof of payment. The Department assists students in obtaining the liability insurance coverage. Students should enroll with the Department of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality Management Secretaries; write a personal check (payable to UNCG) to cover insurance costs and bring it to the Departmental Secretary for processing. ***Students not showing proof of insurance coverage prior to beginning the Practicum experience will be dropped from the course without notice.***

## **General Procedures for Placement**

Students must adhere to the following procedures as they progress through the placement process:

- 1) Print the necessary fieldwork documents, including two copies of the Manual for Practicum in Recreation and Parks Management and become familiar with its contents. ([www.uncg.edu/rth](http://www.uncg.edu/rth))
- 2) Identify three to five agencies where you would potentially like to conduct your practicum.
- 3) Make an appointment with your faculty advisor for approval of the agency sites as appropriate for your concentration and level of experience. A very important role of the faculty advisor is to approve and assist the student in ranking the three agencies.
- 4) Complete the **Eligibility Form for Practicum or Internship** and submit to the Fieldwork Coordinator.
- 5) Students should obtain insurance forms from the departmental office and complete them. ***Students not showing proof of insurance coverage prior to beginning the Internship experience will be dropped from the course without notice.***

**When you have completed the above procedures, you should:**

- 1) Notify your advisor via e-mail or in person as soon as possible when you have been accepted by an agency.
- 2) Submit your required forms for summer internship to the Fieldwork Coordinator. Be sure the forms are signed by the student and agency where required prior to turning them in to the Fieldwork Coordinator.

**NOTE: Practicum hours will not be counted until all forms, including the *Eligibility Form for Practicum and Internship*, *Request for Practicum or Internship Site Approval*, and the *Practicum/Internship Report Calendar* have been submitted to the Fieldwork Coordinator. Professional liability insurance must also be purchased before Practicum hours can be counted.**

## **Criteria for Agency Selection**

Practicum placements should result from the combined effort of the student, the academic advisor, and the Agency Supervisor. The selection of the professional agency should be matched with the student's needs in order that the student can best fulfill personal and professional goals in their area of concentration.

1. Students must complete and submit to the University Supervisor a Mid-Term Report upon completion of 60 clock hours, or the mid-point of the Practicum experience, according to the outline criteria on page 7.
2. Agency Supervisors must complete the Midterm Evaluation and review it with the student once the student has completed 60 clock hours, or at the mid-point of the Practicum experience. Students must submit the completed Midterm Evaluation with their 60 hour Mid-Term Report to the assigned University Supervisor.
3. Students must complete a Final Report upon completion of the Practicum experience, according to the outline criteria on page 7. This report must be turned in no later than two weeks following the end of the Practicum, or the last day of classes for the semester if a grade is to be given during that semester.

## **Agency Responsibilities**

**The Agency and the person recognized by the University as the Agency Supervisor** shall be responsible for the content of the student's Practicum experience. He/She will be expected to offer instruction to the student and utilize the agency's operations to further the student's professional competency as follows.

1. Interpretation of the practicum program to other staff members in preparation for the student's arrival.
2. Orientation of the student to the agency and community. Acquaint the student with the agency's basic philosophy, policies, and objectives.
3. Meet with and assist the student in the development of proposed learning outcomes before the start of the Practicum.
4. Serve as advisor and mentor throughout the Practicum experience.
5. Identify those activities, which are available in the agency to meet the student's needs and interests. Develop a work schedule for the student and provide a copy to both the student and to the University Supervisor by the end of the first week.
6. Meet with the student on a weekly basis to answer questions the student might have and to deal with problems or revise the work schedule.
7. Observe the student's job performance as often as possible and provide feedback on a weekly basis.
8. Notify the University Supervisor as soon as possible if the student is experiencing difficulty or not performing up to expectations.
9. Complete and submit to the University Supervisor a final evaluation concerning the student's performance within two weeks (2) of the end of the Practicum experience.

**The Faculty Advisor** will guide the student in selecting an agency to meet the student's needs and goals with the following responsibilities:

1. Meet with the student to discuss Practicum placement; and
2. Approve agency selection (a joint responsibility of the student's faculty advisor and the Fieldwork Coordinator).

## Grading Procedures

RPM 315 is graded on a Pass/Not Pass basis. The student's final grade for the Practicum experience will be based upon the following factors: timeliness and thoroughness of forms and reports and Agency Supervisor's evaluation of student's performance.

**NOTE: Final grades cannot be posted until ALL final paperwork is completed and turned in to your University Supervisor.**

## Reports

Two (2) written reports are required for completion of the Practicum: a mid-term report at the mid-point (after 60 hours), and a final report. All reports become part of your permanent file so they should reflect your best work. Reports should be typewritten and well-edited. Format for the reports are outlined below. It is useful to **keep a personal log** of what you learn each day to help you in the preparation of these reports. Record your thoughts and feelings, people you meet, places you visit, and problems you encounter (and how you handled them) in the course of the Practicum. **Keep samples** of work you produce on the job to include as illustrations of your improved skills to attach as appendices in your final report.

### Mid-Term Report

After you have completed a **minimum of 60 hours, or half-way through your Practicum**, you will write a **2-3 page** report briefly describing what you are doing and the progress you are making toward your learning goals. As this fieldwork is primarily a learning experience, the ***emphasis should be on what you are learning more than the duties you are performing.*** Reports that are sloppy, insufficient in detail, or poorly written/edited will not be considered acceptable and will be returned for revision. The Mid-Term Report is due to the University Supervisor within five (5) calendar days of the completion of the 60 clock hours (or mid-point date). The Practicum Mid-Term Evaluation should be completed by the Agency Supervisor and after having discussed the evaluation with your Agency Supervisor, the student should submit the evaluation along with your 60 hour mid-term report.

### Final Report

**General Guidelines:** The Final Report will be a minimum of **5-7 pages** in length, neatly typed, double-spaced, and well-edited for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage. Reports that are deemed unacceptable will be returned for revision and the student will not receive a grade until revisions are complete.

Make certain to relate Practicum experiences to your learning outcomes established at the beginning of the Practicum. Offer insights into your performance. If you could make any improvements to the Practicum experience, make suggestions as to what might have been done differently, or what could be done differently in the future.

The Final Report must be turned in no later than two (2) weeks following the end of the Practicum, or the last day of classes for the second summer session if a grade is to be given during that summer session.

**Format:** Use the subheadings listed below to format the Final Report. Be sure to discuss your experiences relative to each of the sections.

- A. **Agency Description** - Philosophy, goals and objectives of the overall system and units involved, the organizational structure, programs and services, areas and facilities, and general administrative policies and procedures (attach a copy of the organizational chart showing lines of authority, a policy and procedures manual, etc.)
- B. **Outcome Summary** - Review of learning outcomes. Summarize how each outcome was accomplished (or not), and discuss any problems and difficulties and how these were overcome. Summarize any additional learning.
- C. **Professional Experiences** - Discuss the nature and scope of the Practicum experience; the program areas (e.g., arts and crafts, athletics, dance, drama, music), the settings (e.g., playgrounds, camps, parks, hospitals); and any special facilities (and special functions or populations served). Discuss how these variables related to your learning goals.
- D. **Special Projects Assigned** - Discuss the nature and scope of any special projects assigned by your Agency Supervisor (attach copies). How did these relate to your learning outcomes?
- E. **Professional Development** - Discuss any orientation sessions, workshops, conferences, seminars, symposiums that you attended. Relate them to your learning goals.
- F. **Self-analysis of the Practicum Experience** - Discuss any personal and professional growth or development of skills/competencies you developed over the course of the Practicum. Identify strengths and weaknesses, suggestions for self-improvement, and any emerging career interests as a result of your experience. Be specific, concrete, and critical! Don't hesitate to state that an assignment didn't go as planned, or that you didn't achieve all of your goals. However, *mention what you learned from the situation*, make suggestions for what could have been done better, what went wrong, and how things might be changed. We can often learn more from our mistakes than our successes.

- G. **Recommendations relative to the University, agency, and Agency Supervisor** - Make recommendations and suggestions for improving any facet of the Practicum experience.
- H. **Student Evaluation of the Agency** - This form should be submitted with the final report as an attachment.

## **Professional Resume**

### **Professional Resume:**

Each student will prepare a professional resume as part of the HMT 455 internship process. The resume should be no longer than two pages and should include the following:

- Personal data including name, local address and phone, permanent address and phone, and email address
- Professional objective
- Description of work experience and positions held
- Educational background
- List of skills relevant to the professional objective
- Extracurricular activities
- Awards and honors
- References including names, addresses and telephone numbers

# Required Practicum and Internship Forms

Required forms for Practicum and Internship are located on the RTH Fieldwork web site. Please visit the site and download all forms at:

**[www.uncg.edu/rth/fieldwork.html](http://www.uncg.edu/rth/fieldwork.html)**

## **1. Eligibility Form for Practicum or Internship**

This form is completed by the student and submitted to the RTH Fieldwork Coordinator. THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE A STUDENT CAN BEGIN THE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP.

## **2. Request for Practicum or Internship Site Approval**

This form is completed by the student and submitted to the student's academic advisor for approval of the practicum or internship site. THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE A STUDENT CAN BEGIN THE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP.

## **3. Liability Insurance Form**

This form is completed by the student and is submitted to the university supervisor at the end of the practicum or internship. THIS FORM AND THE PREMIUM PAYMENT DUE MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE A STUDENT CAN BEGIN THE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP.

## **4. Report Calendar for Practicum or Internship**

This form is completed by the student and university supervisor, and is submitted to the RTH Fieldwork Coordinator. THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE A STUDENT CAN BEGIN THE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP.

## **5. Agency Evaluation of RTH Student Intern**

This form is completed by the agency supervisor and is submitted to the university supervisor once at the mid-term of the practicum or internship, and again at the end of the practicum or internship.

## **6. Student Assessment of the Agency**

This form is completed by the student and is submitted to the university supervisor at the end of the practicum or internship.