

**HDFS 4980**

**STUDENT VERSION**

**UNDERGRADUATE PRACTICUM HANDBOOK**

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January 2024  
13<sup>th</sup> Edition

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to facilitate and coordinate the practicum experience in Human Development and Family Studies. The handbook is to be used as a reference for understanding the perspective and scope of the HDFS 4980 Practicum. This handbook is also valid for HDFS 4970, which follows all practicum procedures but is with a gerontology focus. It is the responsibility of the practicum student to read this manual, to become familiar with his or her responsibilities, and to seek out clarification from the Practicum Coordinator, as needed. All practicum students are bound by the conditions outlined in this manual.

### Definitions of Titles

The Practicum Student is a Human Development and Family Studies undergraduate student who temporarily assumes a professional role within an agency or a placement setting.

The Practicum Site is an agency that provides services to families or individuals throughout the life span.

The Site Supervisor is the professional agency representative who supervises, mentors, and evaluates the Practicum Student during the duration of the Practicum experience.

The HDFS Practicum Coordinator coordinates the Practicum experience between the student, the participating agency, and the University.

## PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

### Philosophy

A holistic educational experience combines both theory and practice. Practice is the direct application of theory within a distinct setting for the purpose of additional knowledge and skill acquisition. The holistic education process is a method whereby students acquire:

1. The capacity to identify different theoretical perspectives and the conditions in which they are applicable.
2. The skills necessary to apply theory and function professionally within the area of expertise.

The Human Development and Family Studies Practicum provide students with opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in the delivery of services to clients and to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities through experience. Thus, the Human Development and Family Studies Practicum offer each student a chance to demonstrate and apply

knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal qualities while being supervised by professionals. This valuable experience can serve as a practical method for determining a student's readiness for a career in Human Development and Family Studies and/or graduate school and can help the student determine interest and ability in specific settings and roles.

### **Objectives**

By the completion of their Practicum experience, students are expected to develop the following:

1. The ability to identify, understand, and utilize basic values and attitudes consistent with Human Development and Family Studies professions.
2. An understanding of the scope of Human Development and Family Studies professions and the professional opportunities for Human Development and Family Studies majors.
3. An awareness of the impact of social problems such as poverty, mental illness, crime, family breakdown, etc., upon individuals, families, and society.
4. An understanding of the various programs and services available within the community to help clients find the agencies best suited for their needs.
5. An understanding of the "team" approach, including a familiarity with professionals and other individuals important to the client or family who would be part of the team.
6. An ability to apply theoretical knowledge and to function professionally within their areas of expertise.
7. Interpersonal skills that are engaging, helpful, collaborative, and/or directive, when appropriate, depending upon the situation. Effective interpersonal skills require the ability to observe, listen, and communicate both verbally and in writing with individuals and groups.
8. The ability to work with clients using a strengths-based approach in assessing needs, planning, implementing prevention and intervention programs, and successfully terminating services when client is ready.

## **PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The following guidelines have been prepared to outline the responsibilities of the USU Human Development and Family Studies Department, the participating agency, and the student.

### **HDFS Practicum Coordinator Responsibilities**

1. Examines student transcripts, application, and other materials prior to practicum enrollment in order to determine whether or not the student has completed the necessary requirements for practicum.
2. Ensures that the student has the necessary knowledge, skills, ability, and professionalism needed for a successful practicum experience. Where deficits exist, the student will be advised accordingly.
3. Notifies the student about the status of their practicum application upon review.
4. Creates a list of local practicum sites in which practicum experiences are available and make the list available to students (lists of sites used in other regions of Utah will also be maintained).
5. Develops policies and guidelines for practicum experiences in cooperation with faculty, practicum sites, and students.
6. Ensures that the Practicum Agreement is completed accurately and in full.
7. Conducts an on-site or videoconference visit with the student and the Practicum Site Supervisor.
8. Assists practicum students and Practicum Site Supervisors with any concerns or problems.
9. Provides access to an online syllabus for each student approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which they are scheduled to do their practicum.
10. Grades student assignments, assign points for required paperwork, and assign a final grade at the end of the practicum.

## **Site Supervisor Responsibilities**

1. Interview the student to determine whether his or her needs and career objectives correspond with those of the practicum site.
2. Orient the student to the practicum site by explaining its purposes, services, eligibility requirements, area served, administrative structure, methods of recording, etc. A special attempt should be made to help the student understand how the practicum site fits into the network of community services.
3. Identify the parameters of the student's role and responsibility within the placement setting, introduce them to staff members, and arrange for them to attend staff or committee meetings whenever possible.
4. Provide the student with adequate working space and other practical necessities that may be involved in completing work assignments.
5. Assist the student in defining and establishing practicum objectives congruent with the function of the practicum site and the role of the student in the agency.
6. Facilitate meaningful experiences that will provide opportunities for engaging in a variety of tasks and professional experiences.
7. Make the student aware of referral sources within the community and introduce them to professionals outside the immediate practicum site when a referral or a team approach is indicated.
8. Schedule regular supervision time with the student where an on-going evaluation of the student's performance is shared.
9. Inform the student and the HDFS Practicum Coordinator immediately if the student's level of performance is not satisfactory.
10. Complete online evaluations of the student regarding his or her progress at the halfway point and upon completion of the practicum experience.
11. Participate in a practicum site visit interview with the Practicum Coordinator and the student (set up by the student) that takes place at the practicum site or via videoconference or phone.
12. Assists the student in documenting the completion of required practicum hours and sign off the hours on the final evaluation form when they are completed.

## **Appropriate Activities for HDFS Practicum Students**

Human Development and Family Studies students have been prepared educationally to participate in the following types of supervised practicum experiences:

1. Intake interviews.
2. Attend and assist with therapeutic, educational, and support groups.
3. Develop and teach community education classes focused on family-related topics such as child abuse, human growth and development, parenting, marriage, divorce, aging, death and dying, family crises, substance abuse, etc.
4. Observe and interact with individuals and families throughout the various developmental stages of the life span.
5. Learn the day-to-day practicum site management routines.
6. Supervised case management.
7. Assist with family problem-solving in a community setting, including home visits and in-home parent education.
8. Supervised crisis intervention.
9. Day care and preschool curriculum planning and implementation.
10. Participation in engaging with clients, data collection, the assessment of the client's current situation, the development of treatment plans, implementing interventions, monitoring and evaluating efficacy of interventions, evaluating progress, and determining when services should be terminated. Observe and participate in practicum site staff meetings, community planning meetings, and interagency meetings.
11. Participate in special training sessions.
12. Supervised agency documentation.
13. Day-to-day activities, such as answering phones, greeting clients, paperwork processes, etc., necessary for the operation of a professional agency.
14. Complete pertinent readings suggested by his or her Site Supervisor.
15. Work on special projects such as making brochures, posters, or bulletin boards to facilitate the services provided by the practicum site; assist with community education programs; and help organize fund raising programs.

### **Activities Not Appropriate for HDFS Practicum Students**

1. A continuation of a current job without some additional focus. While you may remain in the same employment setting for a practicum, as approved, the responsibilities will need to include some different opportunities.
2. Continued work at a site where the student completed a previous lab or practicum.
3. Excessive “busy” work at the expense of other professional experiences. For example, some filing, shredding documents, and receptionist work may be appropriate, as this is necessary to the functioning of an agency. However, this may be inappropriate if it is all that the Practicum Student is doing at the expense of participation in other professional activities.
4. Serving in a therapist role. A student may be present in an individual, couple, family, or group therapy setting, and may participate, but there should be a licensed therapist present, who directs the discussions and interventions. While the practicum student could be taught about case notes, these should be completed by the licensed therapist.
5. Unstructured childcare with no opportunities for planning, implementing, and evaluating developmentally appropriate activities.
6. Unsupervised practicum settings, such as working as a nanny or a live-in home-care provider for elderly clients not associated with an agency where supervision is available.
7. Fulfilling assignments or volunteering in a religious setting, including teaching seminary or institute.
8. Hours worked while residents in an inpatient or residential setting are asleep. Only hours with awake clients can be counted.



## PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Application Process

1. Students should download and review a copy of the HDFS 4980 Practicum Handbook, located at <http://hdfs.usu.edu/programs/undergraduate/practicum>. They should also note the deadlines for the completion of the application for the specific term they are planning on participating in practicum.
2. Students should complete the online application to participate in the practicum experience, located at the same website. The application will include signing a Confidentiality Agreement and a Criminal Charge Disclosure Agreement.
3. As part of the application process, students must list two persons who can serve as professional references, including their email address and professional role. These should be from employment and academic sectors. Ecclesiastic leaders, family members, and friends are not acceptable references.
4. As part of the application process, **all** students must complete a background check. This process is completed at the website, listed above. Students should be aware that they will be required to pay \$40.00 to complete this process. The results will be sent directly to practicum staff to review.
  - In the event that you have criminal charges on your record, the Practicum Coordinator and Department Head will determine if you are eligible to participate in this practicum.
  - If you already have a current background check at another agency, if you provide us a copy this should suffice. However, be aware that you will need to complete another background check prior to its expiration date. A background check is valid for one year.
5. After all of these steps are completed and reviewed, the student will be emailed a letter confirming that he or she has been approved for practicum.
6. After receiving the letter of approval from the practicum staff, the student should begin efforts to locate a suitable site and to negotiate a practicum experience. While the student is ultimately responsible for completing this task, he or she may schedule an appointment with the Practicum Coordinator to identify and discuss

options.

7. After locating an appropriate site and having the Practicum Coordinator approve the site, the student initiates an interview with the Site Supervisor to arrange a practicum experience. It is recommended that students take their Practicum Agreement to this meeting and have it signed by the Site Supervisor at the time their practicum is arranged.
8. The student should then sign up for practicum through the university. They should be aware that it is a variable credit course so they should sign up for the number of credits they plan on completing, keeping in mind their minimal requirement.
9. It is important for students to notify the HDFS Practicum Coordinator of name, address, phone, or email changes so that the student may be contacted if needed. The University does not automatically forward changes to the department.

#### **Practicum Requirements and Process:**

1. Take the **Practicum Preparation Quiz**. This has been created to make sure that you understand your responsibilities and some of the details related to the practice experience. You are required to take this quiz until you get 100%. There is no limit to the number of times you can take it or the frequency between attempts.
2. Complete the **Practicum Agreement** form with the representative from your site who will be overseeing you at the agency. Upload this into Canvas.
3. **Begin your practicum**, following the guidance of your site representative and documenting your hours on the Practicum Hours Tracking Sheet that been provided, or using a similar approved tracking method.
4. **Identify Objectives:** Download the Objectives form from the Files section in this class in Canvas. You may then type your goal and four objectives into the document, save it, and then submit it in Canvas. These objectives should be specific, measurable, and time-specific objectives you would like to complete during your practicum. An example is located in this assignment section. This should be completed and uploaded in Canvas within **30 days** of beginning your practicum, measured from the day the Practicum Agreement form is uploaded.
5. **Schedule and participate in site visit:** You should schedule this so that it takes place at **approximately the halfway point** in accruing your hours. If you are in Cache Valley, Utah, the Practicum Coordinator can meet with you and the site

representative at your site. This could also take place via videoconference, based on the preference of the site supervisor. If you are completing your practicum from a distant site, the meeting will take place by videoconference.

6. **Mid-Practicum Evaluation:** When you schedule your site visit, you should also request that your mid-practicum evaluation be sent electronically to your site supervisor. You must submit his or her email address to facilitate this.
7. **Complete Written Assignment #1:** At the midway point in your practicum, you should compose this assignment. In it you should summarize what you have learned at your site so far, how it connects to the coursework you have completed, and what you have learned about careers in this field. This should be a two page, double spaced paper.

**\*It is expected that the Mid-Practicum Evaluation and Written Assignment #1 are completed prior to the site visit so that data from these sources may be discussed.**

8. **Complete Written Assignment #2:** This should be completed once you have completed all of your practicum hours. Provide a summary of your entire experience working at your practicum site(s). In this paper, you need to choose five of the department objectives and explain how you were able to apply them in your work at the practicum site(s). This paper should be 5-7 pages in length and double-spaced (not counting cover or reference pages, if used).
9. **Upload the Practicum Hours Tracking Sheet:** This will be reviewed to ensure that you completed your hours during the approved time frame and to see that the site visit took place at approximately the halfway point.
10. **Final Practicum Evaluation:** Once you have completed your practicum hours, request that your final practicum evaluation be sent electronically to your site supervisor. You must submit his or her email address to facilitate this.
11. **Student Practicum Evaluation:** You will be sent the link to complete an evaluation of the practicum experience, which will automatically be sent to the practicum staff.

**\*Grading: The syllabus, located on Canvas, will distinguish the point values for each of these tasks, the grading criteria, and the procedure by which a grade will be assigned for the practicum experience.**

### Practicum Credits and Hours Policies:

1. The student earns HDFS 4980 credit by working 50 hours of clock time for each semester hour of credit. Use the following table to determine the number of hours that must be worked:

<u>Credit Hours</u>	<u>Clock Hours</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>	<u>Clock Hours</u>
3	150	8	400
4	200	9	450
5	250	10	500
6	300	11	550
7	350	12	600

2. A minimum of 3 credits, or 150 hours of practicum, is required for all HDFS undergraduate students.
3. HDFS majors who are concurrently completing a gerontology certificate must complete 3 credits and 150 hours of practicum, but these students should sign up for HDFS 4970 instead of 4980.
4. HDFS majors with a Family Finance emphasis must also complete a financial counseling practicum on campus in addition to this community-based practicum.
5. When registering for practicum credit, only one credit will show on the student's registration. As a variable credit course, it is the student's responsibility to change the credits to the required number of credits either online or in person at the Registrar's Office. You may request a copy of a document demonstrating how to make this adjustment from the Practicum Coordinator.
6. Students may complete their practicum at either one or two sites. The benefits of having two sites may be to compare and contrast two careers or work fields or to ensure that the required number of hours can be met. When doing this, the student should designate a primary site, for which they will complete objectives, have a site visit, and have evaluations completed.

7. Students may complete their practicum over more than one semester. If they are continuing the current practicum credits into another term, they do not need to sign up for practicum again with the university. At the conclusion of the first semester, a Temporary (T) grade will be placed on the transcript. This will be replaced by a letter grade when all practicum tasks are completed. Under these circumstances, they are able to work at their practicum sites and accrue hours during the break between semesters.
8. While planning is recommended to prevent this, a student may need to alter the number of credits of practicum, based on the number of hours completed during a semester. For example, a student may sign up for 5 credits of practicum and anticipate working 250 hours at the selected site. However, they may later decide that realistically, only 200 hours will be completed. Therefore, they will want to change the 5 credits to 4. Likewise, some students discover that they are getting more hours than expected and may want to add additional credits of practicum during the term. In both cases, they should contact the registrar's office and petition for an Academic Record Adjustment. This process is described at:  
<https://www.usu.edu/registrar/records/update/petition/>.
9. Students may also choose to complete additional hours and credits at their practicum site in a subsequent semester. In these cases, the student completed the 150 hours of practicum during the first semester and is now choosing to extend the practicum further. If the student informs the Practicum Coordinator about this plan in advance, they may negotiate the completion of the practicum tasks. For example, the student may be instructed not to complete written Assignment 2, the student evaluation, or request the final evaluation from the site supervisor until the completion of all hours during the subsequent semester.
10. Students may register for up to 12 credit hours in one practicum site over one or more semesters.

**Second Practicum Experience (to fulfill the required practicum credit for the same degree or certification):**

Once the requirements for a first practicum experience have been completed, students may participate in a second practicum experience at a new site without

going through the entire application process again. Requirements for a second practicum (to fulfill the required practicum credit for the same degree or certification) include the Practicum Agreement, Objectives, and Mid and Final Evaluations. No written assignments or site visits are required for a second practicum.

If a student is doing a second practicum to fill a requirement for a second major or an additional certification or as elective credit, then all of the requirements for a first practicum will apply.

### **Professional Conduct**

Within the agency setting, students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the following ways:

1. Understand the philosophy, vision, mission, and method of operation and comply with the rules of practice within the practicum setting.
2. Maintain a professional appearance and exhibit dependability and promptness in all dealings at the practicum site.
3. Give advance notice to the Practicum Site Supervisor and make up the time on another day if it is necessary to miss time at the agency.
4. Take the initiative to interact with co-workers and to draw from their experience, being aware that much learning is acquired from informal contacts.
5. Be aware of the ethical codes adhered to by the agency and implement the Ethical Decision Making Process when necessary. Two sets of Codes of Ethics from the field are contained on the following pages.
6. Prepare for regularly scheduled supervision sessions with the Site Supervisor.
7. Make yourself available for, and attend, staff and other meetings when possible. Much information about the operation of the agency can be obtained from attending agency meetings.
8. Notify the HDFS Practicum Coordinator immediately should any problem arise which may affect the successful completion of the practicum experience.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS CODE OF ETHICS

Students must adhere to professional values and ethics. This includes an understanding and practice of such general principles from the National Council on Family Relation's Code of Ethics. For the full text, please visit:

<https://www.ncfr.org/board-and-governance/governance/ncfr-ethical-principles-guidelines-family-scientists>

### **Principle I: General Principles for Family Scientists:**

*Family scientists are respectful of all individuals, do not unethically discriminate, do not develop intimate personal relationships in their role as family scientists, are sensitive to the complications of multiple role relationships, protect the confidentiality of their students or clients, and do not engage in sexual harassment.*

### **Principle II: Family Scientists Are Respectful of Students and Clients:**

*Family scientists are respectful of diverse family forms. They are respectful of students and clients' sensitivity in discussing personal family issues. Family scientists do not exploit the hierarchical relationship with persons they serve and are respectful of privacy issues.*

### **Principle III: Family Scientists Abide by High Professional Standards:**

*Family scientists are responsible to uphold high professional standards. They are encouraged to be cooperative with other family scientists in gathering and sharing of scientific information. They strive to keep current with material in their domain. They are ethical in representing their profession at their place of employment, as well as other settings.*

### **Principle IV: Family Scientists Conduct Research Ethically:**

*Family scientists contribute to society and to the profession through research and evaluation activities. When conducting research or evaluation, family scientists recognize that their ultimate responsibility is to the participants. Family scientists honestly report the findings of their study.*

### **Principle V: Family Scientists Are Ethical in Their Interactions With Employing Organizations or Agencies:**

*Family scientists are respectful of the internal policies and procedures of current and past employers.*

**Principle VI: Family Scientists Are Involved in Improving Society:**

*Family scientists are advocates for individuals and families and participate in developing policies and laws that are respectful and empowering to them.*

**Principle VII: Family Scientists Are Ethical When Reviewing Professional Writing:**

*When a reviewer for a professional work, family scientists avoid conflicts of interest, read materials carefully and in their entirety, and evaluate them fairly.*

**Principle VIII: Family Scientists Understand and Abide by Ethical Principles and Assist Others in Doing So:**

*Family scientists understand and abide by ethical principles, encourage and assist other family scientists to know and apply them, and teach ethical principles to students of family science.*



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN - CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Practicum students working with this population should also be aware of this organization's code of ethical conduct.

## **Section I: Ethical Responsibility to Children:**

*Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children's self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being.*

## **Section II: Ethical Responsibility to Families:**

*Families\* are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.*

\*The term *family* may include others, besides parents, who are responsibly involved with the child.)

## **Section III: Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues:**

*In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace.*

## **Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society:**

*Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available. As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to*

*conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged in collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideals and principles that are identified as “collective.”*

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why do some students complete more than the minimum number of practicum credits?**

The choice to complete more than 3 practicum credits is usually related to how many credits a student still needs to graduate and his or her choice regarding whether to fill needed credits with additional classes or more hours of practicum. A student may have completed all desired courses and may still need a few credits in order to graduate. They may consider doing more practicum hours as preferable to a classroom-based course.

### **Can I get paid for my practicum?**

Yes, but the Practicum Coordinator does not arrange paid practicum experiences. If you would like to get paid for your practicum, you will need to find a job that you can use for a practicum. However, in some cases it might be in your best interest to choose a site you would like to get paid for in the future rather than a site you can get paid for in the present, because many of the best sites are volunteer but could lead to a better job in the future.

### **Do I have to stay in Cache Valley to do my practicum?**

No, we now have students both all around the state of Utah and in many other states. Students have completed practicum experiences all over the world. However, we have an extensive list of frequently used sites only in Northern Utah. Those in other regions of the state or nation will need to find their own sites and then have them approved by the HDFS Practicum Coordinator.

### **What should I say if I contact an agency to ask about whether I can complete a practicum with them?**

If it is an agency that has been used recently by students, they will know what you are inquiring about and who to have you speak to. If you are contacting an agency that students have not used in the past, the following script is suggested:

“I am a Human Development and Family Studies student at Utah State University. As part of my requirements I need to work or volunteer with an agency in the field, which is called a practicum. I am interested in the services your agency provides and was wondering if I could talk to you about fulfilling this with you? I also want to let you know that I passed a background check for the university and can provide a copy, if needed.”

### **Does my Site Supervisor need to have any special training?**

There are no specific educational requirements supervisors must have before serving as a supervisor. However, it is expected that they have had some type of professional training, at least some post-secondary education, preferably at least a bachelor's degree. Site supervisors should not be related to the students they are supervising. This is considered a conflict of interest and is not within the ethical guidelines students are expected to adhere to. If you have any questions about your supervisor's qualifications, please contact the HDFS Practicum Coordinator.

### **Do I need to register for Practicum credit?**

Yes. Practicum credits must be registered for and paid for just like a regular class. Students may take up to 12 credits of practicum, across multiple semesters.

### **Can I spread my practicum over more than one site?**

Yes, students can use up to two practicum sites. However, students are encouraged to spend more time in one site getting an in-depth experience instead of spending less time in many different practicum sites getting broader experiences. This seems to be the preferences of most agencies as well, since they want to spend time training students and then give the student increasingly greater responsibilities.

### **Can I participate in university research for practicum?**

Yes, but not exclusively. We want you to have a community-based agency experience as part of your practicum. Therefore, if you will be engaging in research, you will be choosing the two-site option. We are limiting your use of research for practicum to 50 hours. Note that you can also enroll in HDFFS 4270 – Research Lab in HDFFS, separate from practicum.

### **What if I can't get all of my hours in at one site because they don't have enough for me to do?**

Most sites have no problem giving students the hours they need since they are grateful for the extra help. However, sometimes there may not seem to be enough to do. Students can volunteer to do special projects, such as making flyers or brochures, conducting an in-service training, or asking for recommendations for special readings. If your supervisor needs help thinking of things for you to do, don't hesitate to give suggestions of things you are willing to do. In a few cases, the hours are just not available for the student at their practicum site. In this case, you should consult with the Practicum Coordinator about other opportunities to complete hours.

### **What if I decide I don't like my site?**

Sometimes students learn that they really don't want to do what they thought they would enjoy doing. This doesn't mean that your practicum is a failure—it means that you learned something very important before you got into a paid position that you would not like. In some cases, it is possible to change sites to one the student would enjoy more. Talk to the Practicum Coordinator if you find yourself in this position. Sometimes just talking to your Site Supervisor about concerns you have can help immensely with how much you like your practicum site.

### **I'm really busy. What if I just don't have the time or energy to go to my practicum site when I agreed to be there?**

The most destructive thing a student can do is quit going to their practicum or not show up for scheduled time without contacting their supervisor. This not only affects whether or not an agency is willing to supervise future practicum students, it affects your professional future as your supervisor sees you as non-committed and not dependable. As a practicum student, you not only represent yourself, but the HDFFS Department and USU as well. Also, you represent the agency while you are working hours there. Most practicum sites expect their practicum

students to conduct themselves just as professionally as if they were a regular employee, including attending staff meetings or special trainings when possible. This might mean a student has to rearrange their schedule so they can be at their practicum site. If you quit going without contacting your Site Supervisor and Practicum Coordinator, you may find yourself in a position where you will not be allowed to finish your practicum at your site or you may not be referred to another site. This can negatively influence your practicum grade.

### **Do I have to complete my practicum during the semester for which I applied?**

No. Once you have been approved, you can change to a more convenient semester without reapplying.

### **How many credits of practicum of practicum must I complete and how many hours is that?**

Most students need to complete 3 credits of practicum, which is 150 hours of work at the site. There is a 50:1 ratio of hours per semester credit. Depending upon your emphasis or other academic plan, you may need more than 3 credits. It is recommended that you consult your Degree Works plan and also meet with or speak with the department's advisor.

### **Can I use an already completed background check for my practicum?**

Yes. If you have a current background check in place and can provide us a copy, you will not have to complete the USU background check. You must keep in mind that if your background check expires prior to the conclusion of your practicum, you need to have updated this. You may not count hours or work at your site during a period of time when there is not a current background check. These checks typically are valid for one year.

### **What if I miss the deadline for applying for the practicum?**

If you do not apply for practicum by the deadline for the term, you will not be allowed to participate in practicum that term. You will need to wait for the next term, ensuring that you apply on time. The university must follow this with exactness.

### **When is the deadline?**

The deadline for applications for the fall semester is noon on **July 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year.  
The deadline for applications for the spring semester is noon on **November 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year.  
The deadline for applications for the summer semester is noon on **March 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year.

### **Can I count hours worked during terms when I am not registered for practicum?**

You may not count any hours worked prior to the first day of the term for which you have been approved and you register for practicum. Then, if you do not complete your practicum by the end of that term, you may continue to work at your site and accrue hours after the conclusion of the term, until you have completed the process, without having to sign up for practicum again.

### **What happens if I don't complete all of my hours or coursework during the term?**

All students who have not completed the practicum by the end of the term in which they

registered for it will have a Temporary (T) submitted as a grade placeholder instead of a letter grade. The student may continue to participate in the practicum for as long as is needed to complete the process, without having to sign up for additional practicum credits. When the student has completed the practicum, a Change of Grade will be submitted, replacing the Temporary with a letter grade.