

# **PRECEPTOR HANDBOOK**

## **For the School of Health Services Management Practicum**

**Created by the School of Health Services Management**

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## 1. The Academic Program

### 1.1. *The Bachelor of Health Administration at Ryerson University*

The School of Health Services Management (SHSM) offers two part-time degree completion programs, Health Services Management (HSM) and Health Information Management (HIM), both leading to a Bachelor of Health Administration (BHA). The HSM and HIM programs are equivalent to years 3 and 4 of a four-year bachelor's degree. Students are required to complete 22 one-semester courses to graduate. Courses in each program are divided into 4 categories:

- Professionally Required Courses (14 courses)
- Open Electives (3 courses)
- Upper Level Liberal Studies Electives (3 courses)
- Practicum and Practicum Seminar (2 courses)

Students accepted into the Health Services Management program must hold a degree or diploma in Health Science or related discipline, plus at least two years of healthcare related work experience. Almost all our students are working in healthcare while completing their Practicum

The curriculum design incorporates the following goals:

- educating health practitioners to assume entry-level or middle management responsibilities
- building a broader understanding of the diverse non-medical factors which shape the health system
- providing individuals with a clear understanding of the role of health information in health and related environments
- preparing individuals to apply data analysis techniques to assess clinical outcomes and assure the cost effectiveness of the health care services
- preparing individuals to apply organizational management techniques to improve the efficiency of departmental functions and services
- preparing individuals to address emerging legislative, regulatory or other external party actions that could potentially impact the collection and use of health data
- assisting individuals in developing ethical and professional ideals which foster success, self-respect and harmonious interpersonal relationships

### 1.2. *The Practicum*

The SHSM Practicum is the culmination of the coursework in the HSM and HIM programs, and provides the opportunity for students to apply management theory and concepts in a working environment. Essentially, it is the basis for the student's final Capstone project.

For their final capstone project, students design, evaluate and analyze on-site management issues within the context of their understanding of organizational systems leading to the production of one of the following: a) a research report (including evaluations), or b) a new product and process report.

Students receive support and on-site supervision from a Preceptor, who is an experienced professional working at the site. An Academic Supervisor and a Faculty Advisor also provide feedback and support regarding the planning and execution of the student's project. Practicum placement, when students are actually on site working on their project, occurs during the school's fall (September – December) term. Preparation for Practicum (e.g., project and site determination, completion of project rationale and contract, etc.) takes place in the months before the student is on site.

## 2. The Assignments

While the Practicum term is technically the Fall or Winter term, work is expected from the student during the preceding term, to define the rationale and the Practicum project plan. Students will thus require support from the preceptor during that time.

The timeline below highlights the key steps in the Practicum project relevant to preceptors:

### 2.1. *Identifying a Practicum project*

During this stage, students reach out to organizations to secure potential preceptors.

- Students usually initiate contact with Preceptors when determining a project. Alternately, Preceptors may contact the School with a project of their own, and the School will assign a suitable student
- Preceptors are encouraged to interview the students to determine that their skill sets are compatible with the organization
- The Preceptor and the student should share their respective goals, expectations and interests, to ensure that the Practicum Project will be beneficial to both parties
- Preceptors may suggest a project to the student that they feel would be beneficial to both the student and the organization. Alternately, students may present a project proposal at the time of initial contact. However, we caution preceptors against accepting a student's project only to help the student. It is essential that the project addresses an actual organizational need, for which the preceptor and the organization are ready to devote the required time and resources.

### 2.2. *Submitting the Rationale*

The rationale is a brief document summarizing what the site, the preceptor and the Practicum project idea are. The purpose is for the student, preceptor and Academic Supervisor to be aligned on a project that is fit for Practicum.

### 2.3. *Submitting the Project Plan,*

The Project Plan is a document detailing the purpose, schedule and practical aspects of conducting the Practicum project. It outlines the project and the proposed project hours on site.

Preceptors must document planned supervisory activities that are listed in the Practicum Contract.

Preceptors and students should agree on a timeline which will support the project, and ensure that the deliverable can be completed in the amount of time allotted

#### ***2.4. Submitting the Proposal***

Students submit and present to the class a proposal explaining the organizational and academic context of the project, the research objectives, as well as the chosen methodology.

The Academic Supervisor will typically contact the preceptor shortly after the Proposal. A site visit may occur at a scheduled time that is agreed upon by all parties. If a site visit is not necessary (or not practical if student not in a GTA location), the instructors for the practicum will meet with the preceptor via telephone.

#### ***2.5. Submitting and presenting the Final Report***

The Final Practicum Report include the updated components of the proposal along with the results, a discussion of the results and recommendations to the organization.

Preceptors are invited to this final Seminar and Presentation schedules are prepared based on the availability of the site Preceptors who expressed their desire to attend

Course instructors may decide to use the final Practicum report to submit a paper for publication. In such cases, the data and the site will be anonymized. Preceptors are welcome to participate in the publication process.

***Important: although the final report will typically not be widely circulated, it will belong to the public domain and may be shown to other people and lead to an academic publication.***

*Table 1. Practicum Schedule key dates for the Fall and Winter Practicum*

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Fall Practicum</b>	<b>Winter Practicum</b>
Identifying a Practicum	Spring Summer	Fall
Rationale	Late May	Late September
Project Plan	Mid July	Mid November
Proposal	Mid September	Mid January
Final Report	Mid December	Mid April

### 3. Role and responsibilities

#### 3.1. *The Preceptor*

The role of the preceptor is to be both a “client” in need of the Practicum report from the student, and a mentor to a student learning about the organization and about how to deliver a compelling report.

The relationship between the student and the preceptor is critical to the student’s learning experience, and the preceptor essentially acts as a guide and resource to the student.

The Preceptor is expected to:

1. Define the organizational goals of the Practicum project, in concertation with the Academic Supervisor
2. Support the student in designing the practicum project, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data. In particular, preceptors are expected to support students in completing the rationale, the project plan, the proposal and the final report
3. Sign the Project Plan
4. Provide access to the student to the relevant data and stakeholders within the organization
5. Be available to support the student during the time they are on site.
6. Review and approve the practicum report. Notably, they should ensure that the report complies with the confidentiality, proprietary and ethical rules governing the organization
7. Ensure that no confidential data is present in the final report.

#### 3.2. *The Student*

The student will:

1. Initiate the Practicum process in finding a practicum placement, and contacting the Preceptor, then seeking approval from their Academic Supervisor with regards to the site and Preceptor.
2. During the Practicum winter term, students are required to spend one half day per week or one full day every other week at a healthcare site where they gain on-the-job experience. Attend a Practicum Workshop before embarking on the project. These workshops are held in April and August
3. Submit the Practicum Site Sheet to SHSM Department Administrator per the due date.
4. Draft a Practicum Contract in consultation with the Academic Supervisor and the Preceptor, which is to be submitted according to the dates laid out during the Practicum Workshop.
5. Familiarize themselves with the policy and procedure of their site placement, with the help of their Preceptor
6. Prepare personal learning goals and plans related to program outcomes, in consultation with the Preceptor and Academic Supervisor
7. Dress in a professional manner that complies with the workplace “Professional Appearance and Dress Code” of the Practicum site

### ***3.3. The Academic Supervisor and the Second Reader***

Each Practicum involves two Faculty members (instructors) from Ryerson University. They share the responsibility of running the practicum and facilitating and supporting students through the courses linked to the practicum. These instructors are referred to as either “Academic Supervisor” or “Second Reader” with their main responsibilities listed below. Each student will be assigned one of the two course instructors as Academic Supervisor, with the remaining instructor becoming their Faculty Advisor. The main individual that the preceptors will be in contact with during the practicum is the student’s Academic Supervisor. This person is assigned to the student the term before Practicum starts.

The Academic Supervisor is one of the instructors for the Practicum and Seminar courses. The Academic Supervisor provides final approval of all Practicum sites, projects, and Preceptors. It is expected that students and preceptors will work primarily with the Academic Supervisor to develop and refine their plans for their project during their practicum experience.

It is expected that the Academic Supervisor will:

- Provide assistance in planning the scope of the Practicum and make a substantial contribution to the literature search strategy, the conception and design of the project, the acquisition of data, and analysis and/or interpretation of data. This may involve phone calls, emails or face-to-face meetings with the student and/or the Site preceptor.
- Be the first contact with the Preceptor in determining the appropriateness of the project relevant to the course objectives.
- Provide assistance with the preparation of, and grading of all assignments including the, to the Rationale, Contract/Project Plan, and Project Proposal, Seminar # 3 Presentation and Final Report
- Provide assistance with the management and analysis of data.
- Meet with the Preceptor in person on site or on phone if determined necessary by either the preceptor, Academic Supervisor or other instructor (Second Reader)
- Attend all Practicum Seminars and provide feedback on all student presentations.
- Be the first contact for students who may require an extension to Assignment/Deliverable course due dates or may miss practicum seminars. Please see the course Syllabi for details about due dates and seminars
- Grade the student, in concertation with the Faculty Advisor.

The other instructor will take on the role of Second Reader to the student. The Second Reader will provide an external outlook on the Practicum performed by the student under the close supervision of the Academic Supervisor, and to validate its academic quality. The Second Reader’s input will be utilized by the Academic Supervisor in determining the grade for Seminar Presentation # 3 and the Final Report.

### *When to contact the Academic Supervisor?*

The Preceptor should feel comfortable contacting the Academic Supervisor at any time, especially if faced with any of the following issues:

1. The preceptor has significant concerns about the feasibility or relevance of the purpose, the methodology or the data collection of the Practicum project
2. The preceptor perceives significant and persistent differences in their vision of the Practicum project with that of the student or of the Academic Supervisor
3. The student is not completing tasks as required, or consistently does not follow through on suggestions
4. The student exhibits unprofessional behaviour that may reflect badly on or put the preceptor or organization at risk, or is not willing to comply with policies and procedures, despite discussions bringing the situation to their attention

#### ***Course instructors contact information:***

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