

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

TOUR 241—Practicum (3 Hours) Fall 2010

INSTRUCTOR: Leslie Morton
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DAY/TIME: As Assigned
CLASS LOCATION: As Assigned

OFFICE LOCATION: PW Occoquan Building, Room # 228
OFFICE HOURS: T/H PW 9am-3pm and W FX RAC 9:30-11:30
PREREQUISITES: TOUR 200, TOUR 220, sophomore standing, and TOUR major status

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Provides practical experience in the travel and tourism environment through selective fieldwork, job placement, and seminar or conference attendance.

COURSE DETAILS: Provides a paid or voluntary supervised professional experience in an approved tourism or event management industry setting under the supervision of a practicum University Supervisor and Agency Supervisor. The student is assigned tasks and responsibilities and is held responsible for their completion. Students are expected to complete a minimum 120 hours over a period of 10 to 14 weeks. The number of weeks may be abbreviated for summer experiences.

Blackboard: Blackboard is available at <http://courses.gmu.edu> to obtain postings and to check grades.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe and analyze the managerial and operational structure of their practicum site;
2. Demonstrate skills and competencies in routine business administration (e.g., accounting and record keeping, planning, public relations, assessments, staff relation);
3. Evaluate their personal strengths and weaknesses in light of demands and expectations of employment in the various positions in the field; and
4. Set career objectives in the tourism and event management industry.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Student responsibilities during the practicum:

During the practicum, which involves a minimum of 120 hours, the student must meet certain responsibilities and obligations to the Agency and/or Agency Supervisor, as well as to the University to fulfill their requirements. These include:

1. Reporting directly to the Agency Supervisor for instructions. The practicum student is responsible for fulfilling their duties as stipulated by their supervisor, and for meeting their scheduled training commitments and arrangements;
2. Participating in orientation sessions with their Agency Supervisor;
3. Familiarizing and abiding by all the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Agency applicable to their conduct while in the Agency's employment;
4. Becoming an integral and participating member of the Agency's staff;
5. Acting in a professional manner both as an Agency staff member and when dealing with the Agency's clientele. The student is a representative of GMU and an ambassador for the TEM program. A positive work experience effectively 'paves the way' for the future placement of other interns. It is therefore imperative that a cooperative attitude and good work record and habits be maintained for good rapport between the student, University Supervisor and the Agency;
6. Visiting, observing and participating, as appropriate, in various levels of the Agency's operations, including meeting, programs, projects and training sessions. This enables the student to strive toward higher levels of personal and professional growth and fulfillment;
7. Meeting with the Agency Supervisor and the University Supervisor during a routine on-site visit of the latter to the Agency, if such a meeting is practicable; otherwise, the University Supervisor will contact the Agency Supervisor by phone or e-mail for feedback regarding the student's performance;
8. Notify the Agency Supervisor in advance when it is necessary to be absent from work;
9. Participating in post-activity discussion with their Agency Supervisor, and
10. Each student enrolled in TOUR 241 must meet and share the responsibilities and *Practicum Portfolio Guidelines* requirements with their Agency Supervisor as outlined below to earn a letter grade for the practicum experience. The *Practicum Portfolio* must be well organized (i.e., table of contents, tabbed), typed and otherwise professionally presented. The front cover and title page must include: name, name of practicum site, course information (e.g., TOUR 241) and the semester/year. Practicum contents are normally compiled in a 3-ring notebook. Be certain to include samples of work completed during the practicum experience.

Agency Supervisor responsibilities during the practicum:

The Agency Supervisor plays a pivotal role in the lives of students at the personal and professional career level by offering advice, instruction and supervision that furthers a student's professional competence. By providing a challenging and stimulating work experience, students are allowed to discover their own strengths and weaknesses in their chosen professional career. Thus, the Agency Supervisor is expected to assume responsibilities and obligations to the student and the University Supervisor that foster learning and are in line with the Tourism and Event Management's practicum course. These are summarized below:

1. Providing the student with a structured and supervised learning experience;
2. Preparing the Agency or institution staff for the arrival of the student, and orienting the student to the Agency's history (including organizational chart), philosophy, policies regulations, administration, programs and facilities in order to allow the student to function effectively in the practicum setting;
3. Providing timely and fair evaluative summaries of the student's work, including filling in a written *Final Practicum Performance Assessment Form*, which is sent confidentially to the student's University Supervisor;

4. Immediately notifying the practicum University Supervisor of any emerging condition that significantly affects the student's ability to succeed or complete the agreed upon practicum tasks;
5. Directly reimbursing the student for any costs they are authorized to incur on behalf of the Agency, or for reimbursable expenses identified in advance by the Agency; and
6. Accepting the student as a volunteer or paid member of staff (as applicable) and afford them all the rights and protections pertaining to that status.

University Supervisor responsibilities during the practicum:

1. Assisting the student to develop or acquire resources or skills necessary for the successful completion of assigned tasks;
2. Facilitating resolution of problems that may occur during the practicum between the student and the Agency;
3. Soliciting evaluative commentary and reports from the student and the Agency Supervisor;
4. Receiving, reviewing and evaluating required submissions from the student and Agency Supervisor; and
5. Advising and assisting the Agency on matters pertaining to enrichment of the educational experience in the practicum.

EVALUATION:

During their work experience, students must fulfill specific requirements including completion of specified forms and assignments in order to be evaluated and receive a grade for their practicum. These include:

- completion of the practicum site profile;
 - meeting with their University Supervisor at the beginning of the experience to complete all necessary paperwork and submitting the completed agreement letter (contract) in a timely fashion;
 - working at an approved practicum site for a minimum of 120 hours of professional practice;
 - completing an interim report;
 - completing and submitting all aspects of the full *Practicum Portfolio*; and
 - attending a roundtable discussion session regarding their overall experience with the agency.
- Students will also be evaluated by their agency supervisors

INTERIM REPORT GUIDELINES

The interim report should be written up and e-mailed to your university supervisor when you have completed between 50 and 60 hours. For this report, answer the following questions in detail:

1. How many hours have you completed as of today?
2. How many hours do you have left to complete (note: the total number of hours required is 120).
3. On what date do you anticipate completing your hours?
4. What is your typical, weekly schedule (days/times you work at the practicum site)? This information will be used to coordinate a site visit, if feasible).

5. Name and explain the two most significant, positive experiences you have had during your practicum thus far. How did you personally contribute to these experiences?
6. Name and explain the two most frustrating occurrences you have had during your practicum thus far. What did you do to overcome these frustrations?

PRACTICUM PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

Upon completion of the practicum period, students are required to submit their *Practicum Portfolio*. The portfolio must include the following information:

I. Introduction.

- A. Cover Page / Author Page.**
- B. Table of Contents.**
- C. Practicum Site Profile.**
- D. Agency Overview.**

1. Give the name of the Agency and describe the practicum site including the history, mission statement, type of organization (e.g., corporation, private, government agency, non-profit, etc.), customers, services offered, and other special features.
2. Agency personnel and oversight
 - a. Provide an organizational chart and label the names of the key officers, managers, board, etc. Also show your place in the Agency.
 - b. Give a brief description of the individuals that you interacted with (including your Agency Supervisor) on a regular basis and indicate whether they are full-time, part-time, seasonal, and/or volunteers.
3. Office environment. Describe the location where you worked and how it contributes to the overall mission of the agency. Provide a site layout if available. Describe the office space you were assigned and explain how that influenced your experience.

II. Chronicle of Daily / Weekly Experience.

- A. Daily Activity Log of Hours:** every day you work, you must log the report number, date, time, total number of hours worked for the day (travel to and from, breaks and meals do not count), and an organized list of all activities completed, such as the example below.

Report #:	
Date:	
Number of total hours worked today:	
Time	Task
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Assisted the Director (Jeanenne) with registration for event by managing database and sending out marketing materials via e-mail.
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Attended staff meeting to review program activities and potential venue sites. There was a fair amount of debate but eventually the selection was narrowed down to three options.
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Began making a comparison chart of the three potential sites based on what is available on the websites. Followed a template used in the past.

B. **Weekly Reports:** At the end of each week you work, you will answer the following four questions below. Responses should be at least fifty words in length and typed in paragraph format using professional language. Give examples throughout to clarify. Include other comments at the end, as relevant.

1. Describe your principal assignments and responsibilities during the week.
2. What experiences were particularly rewarding during this report period?
3. What experiences were particularly disappointing or frustrating?
4. What skills were learned or applied this week? What expectations do you have for next week? Explain how your expectations from last week were met or not met.

III. **Evaluation of Practicum Experience.** Answer the six questions below in detail.

- A. What are the three most important skills you used or put into practice during the experience? Name and give examples of how these skills were used.
- B. Briefly evaluate the site and your Agency Supervisor
- C. Should the Practicum TEM University Supervisors seek to place another student with this Agency? Explain why or why not.
- D. What recommendations do you have for the improvement of the practicum experience?
- E. Did you feel educationally prepared for the experience? What other measures can TEM program faculty take to prepare TEM students for the practicum experience?
- F. Was the practicum a worthwhile experience? Explain why or why not.

IV. **Samples of Work Completed:** Illustrate the breadth and depth of your experience by including numerous written and visual examples of work you completed.

- A. Written examples: (e.g., handouts, correspondence prepared, relevant e-mails, agendas, plans, timelines, etc.).
- B. Visual examples: (e.g., photographs, promotional materials, maps, etc.)

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

At the end of the semester, you are required to attend a roundtable discussion our practicum experience that will take place at the Prince William campus. Your University Supervisor will send out a minimum of two dates/times from which you can select one to attend.

AGENCY SUPERVISOR EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Your University Supervisor will send your Agency Supervisor a form where your performance will be evaluated. This form will be sent directly back to the University Supervisor and will be shared with you only with the written permission of the Agency Supervisor.

Evaluation Items

- Pre-experience meeting attendance; Site Profile and Agency Agreement completion
 - Practicum Portfolio
 - Interim Report
 - Agency Supervisor's Evaluation
 - Completion of Hours
 - Roundtable Discussion
 - Communication and Professionalism
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Note: The student will be awarded either a pass or fail based on the completion of the evaluation items.



- ❖ All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>]
- ❖ Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a student's personal experience and academic performance
- ❖ University policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the professor
- ❖ All official, course-related e-mail correspondence must be communicated through GMU e-mail accounts.
- ❖ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See www.gmu.edu/student/drc]
- ❖ For additional School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism information, please visit the website at <http://rht.gmu.edu>