

# James Madison University Hart School Sport and Recreation Management Practicum and Internship Manual

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Hart School Mission

We engage in transformational education through innovative teaching, scholarship and service.

### Hart School Vision

We strive to be a leader in impacting the future of global hospitality, sport and recreation.

### Hart School Values

- Excellence
- Knowledge
- Student Focus
- Relationships
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Ethical Decision-Making
- Optimism

### Key Terms

- **Practicum Student** - Refers to the student gaining professional work experience as part of a 90-hour Practicum.
- **Practicum** - Refers to the name of the 90-hour professional work experience and academic course the student is completing.
- **Intern** - Refers to the student who is gaining professional work experience as part of a 400-hour Internship.
- **Internship** - Refers to the name of the 400-hour professional work experience and academic course the student is completing.
- **Student** - Refers to a Sport and Recreation Management student in the Hart School at James Madison University.
- **Practicum and Internship Coordinator** - Refers to a faculty member who assists with the communication and coordination of the Practicum and Internship experiences in the Sport and Recreation Management program at James Madison University.
- **Instructor of Record** – Refers to the faculty member who is responsible for grading Student assignments.
- **Agency** - Refers to the organization or employer through which Practicum Students or Interns complete their Practicum or Internship work experience.
- **Site Supervisor** - Refers to the Agency's primary contact who oversees the student's work experience and supervises and mentors the Practicum Student or Intern. This person should have at least three (3) years of related professional work experience.

- **Academic Advisor** - Refers to a staff member in the Hart School at James Madison University who advises students on their academic plans.
- **Professional Development & Engagement Coordinator** – Refers to a staff member in the Hart School at James Madison University who advises students on their career goals and pathways.
- **Academic Term** – Refers to the period in which the Student is enrolled in the Practicum or Internship class for academic credit. The academic term is 12 weeks in the summer, and 15 weeks in the fall and spring. Exact dates for the academic term can be found on the JMU academic calendar <https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.shtml>.

## Purpose of the Practicum and Internship

Employers increasingly prefer to hire individuals with prior work experience in a relevant field. In addition to providing students with the opportunity to add depth and relevance to more traditional classroom work, Practicums and Internships enhance classroom learning by enabling students to gain a sense of different career fields and of specific jobs within those fields. Practicums and Internships have proven invaluable to students in allowing them to apply skills and knowledge gained at James Madison University in a practical context and in preparing them for a career in sport or recreation management. Students also learn to make the transition from student to professional while honing their skills and building their network and reflecting on their desired career path in the industry. Recognizing that Practicums and Internships are a key initial step in starting an industry career, all sport and recreation management majors must participate in both a Practicum and an Internship experience.

Your required Practicum and Internship will both allow you to complete a short-term work experience in a professional sport or recreation industry-related setting. Both Internships and Practicums offer great opportunities to explore your chosen profession and help you make good career choices. If you manage your time well, you will be able to select a mix of Internships and Practicums to give you diverse experiences.

While either will help you gain valuable insight into your chosen career field, there are some clear differences between the two, as the chart below indicates.

	<b>Practicum</b>	<b>Internship</b>
<b>Experience</b>	Real-life preview of a career; training under the supervision of a qualified professional; enhance understanding of sport and recreation industry	Meaningful, often long-term projects, with assigned responsibilities and deadlines, further develop knowledge, skills, and abilities in relation to long-term career objectives
<b>Benefits</b>	Some paid, some unpaid	Some paid, some unpaid
<b>Career Benefits</b>	Resume-building experience, contacts, networking, possibility of leading to Internship	Resume-building experience, contacts, networking, possibility of leading into long-term employment

<b>Commitment</b>	Minimum 10 weeks; part-time averaging 9 hours a week	Minimum 10 weeks; full-time averaging 40 hours a week
<b>Academic Load</b>	SRM 282 - 3 credit hour Practicum; no limit to enrollment in additional academic courses	SRM 482 - 6 credit hour Internship; only may enroll in one (1) additional 3-4 credit hour course in same academic term unless receive permission from Internship Coordinator

## Student Benefits of the Practicum and Internship

- applying what the student learned in the classroom to the working world;
- providing valuable work experience that employers seek when hiring full-time employees;
- allowing the student to explore selected career fields/jobs through first-hand experience;
- adding to the student's resume, making him/her more marketable in the job hunt;
- developing job search skills;
- securing references for future jobs;
- building transferable skills (skills that every organization will want you to have such as: professional attitude, communication, human relations, group work, etc.);
- sparking a new career interest or direction;
- building a network of people in a given field;
- increasing the development of decision-making and analytical skills through experience in actual work environments;
- creating a better understanding of theory by its actual application in practice;
- being a source of fresh perspectives, insights, and ideas for an organization;
- being given an opportunity to preview and evaluate potential employers;
- increasing the potential for a higher salary and greater advancement upon graduation because of previous experience;
- learning more about their own strengths and weaknesses;
- learning what it means to be a professional;
- awarding academic credit toward fulfillment of the student's degree requirements;
- assessing the Internal dynamics of a sport or recreation enterprise/industry;
- formulating professional behaviors appropriate to the profession;
- formulating interpersonal and professional communication skills; and
- evaluating sport or recreation management as a career choice.

## Goals of the Practicum and Internship

- applying, evaluating, testing, and integrating academic knowledge and theoretical concepts in a work setting;
- developing and expanding the student's knowledge about themselves and their abilities, goals, and career interests in a work setting;

- expanding the student's awareness of the world beyond the university campus by being exposed to a variety of careers, disciplines, lifestyles, and environments;
- reducing the student's intellectual and geographical parochialism;
- gaining access to knowledge and equipment not available on the university campus;
- getting the student to take a greater responsibility for their education and life; develop self-reliance, personal style, values, and beliefs in a manner consistent with becoming a responsible and productive individual;
- gaining experience in the discipline and discriminatory use of evidence in making decisions and solving problems in a work setting;
- gaining practical experience under qualified professional supervision, including periodic evaluations and feedback;
- providing an opportunity to supplement and/or redirect classroom experiences; and
- interacting with and learning from sport industry professionals.

### Agency Benefits of Having a Practicum or Intern at Their Agency

- permitting the organization/Agency to better serve clientele through the contributions of an Intern. (Practicum Students and Interns provide a low-cost, short-term solution to handle increased workloads and complete needed projects, while providing the Practicum Students or Intern with valuable work experience.)
- stimulating and promoting a learning experience among professional staff;
- providing organization/Agency personnel with the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of their in-house training programs or other services based on feedback from Interns;
- affording an opportunity to screen for prospective employees. (Practicum Students and Interns become familiar with an organization's/Agency's culture and work and establish close working relationships with current employees. This makes them ideal candidates for job vacancies).
- allowing the organization/Agency to contribute to the professional development of future professionals.

### SRM (Sport and Recreation Management) Criteria for the Practicum and Internship

- SRM 282 Practicum = 3 credit hours
  - 90 hours (only hours completed within the Academic Term count)
  - 10 week minimum (only weeks completed within the Academic Term count)
  - Carries tuition costs (summer tuition is billed separately)
  - Equivalent of working a part-time job
  - Prerequisite: SRM 241

- Voluntary or paid experience with an organization that falls within the broad field of sport and recreation management
- Direct supervision by someone with a minimum of three (3) years of full-time experience in the Sport and Recreation Management industry
- SRM 482 Internship = 6 credit hours
  - 400 hours (only hours completed within the academic term count)
  - 10 week minimum (only weeks completed within the academic term count)
  - Equivalent of working a full-time job
  - Carries tuition costs (summer tuition is billed separately)
  - While enrolled in the SRM 482 course, students may enroll in one additional 3-4 credit hour academic course without permission and a second course with permission from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator
  - Prerequisite: SRM 282, SRM 333, 72 credit hours, good academic standing
  - Voluntary or paid experience with an organization that falls within the broad field of sport and recreation management
  - Direct supervision by someone with a minimum of three (3) years of full-time experience in the Sport and Recreation Management industry

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Must I complete both a Practicum and an Internship to receive a degree in Sport and Recreation Management?**

A. Yes. The SRM 282 Practicum and SRM 482 Internship are both required courses in the curriculum just like any other course. These experiential courses are vital to student preparation and success in our industry. Completion of these courses helps our students compete against others with similar degrees and provides them a competitive advantage over students with degrees in other disciplines (e.g., General Business, Communication, Psychology, etc.) who desire to enter the sports industry.

### **Q. Are there prerequisites that I must complete prior to registering for the SRM 282 Practicum or SRM 482 Internship?**

A. Yes. Prior to registering for the SRM 282 Practicum, students must have completed SRM 241. Prior to registering for the SRM 482 Internship, students must have completed SRM 282, SRM 333, 72 credit hours, and be in good academic standing.

### **Q. Is the Practicum and Internship really a class or just some work I must complete?**

A. There is both a practical and academic component to the SRM 282 Practicum and SRM 482 Internship. Although most students' work will be for an Agency, students have academic graded assignments like any other class. For example, students are responsible to track hours, set goals, critically reflect on their experience, and solicit an evaluation from a supervisor in a timely

manner throughout the semester for academic credit. These materials are shared on Canvas and must be completed in a reasonable timeline to receive academic credit.

**Q. How are grades administered for the Practicum and Internship? Can I fail the course?**

A. Students enrolled in SRM 282 Practicum or SRM 482 Internship will receive a grade of Credit (CR), No Credit (NC), or Incomplete (I). Students who satisfactorily complete all requirements for the course prior to the end of the academic term will receive a grade of CR. Students who have completed all of their hours but have only a couple of assignments outstanding at the end of the academic term will receive a grade of I until all assignments are satisfactorily completed by the deadline established by the university or the instructor (whichever is sooner). It is possible to fail the course and receive a grade of NC. Examples of how a student may fail the course may include, but are not limited to, getting fired from the position or not submitting the academic requirements in a timely manner.

**Q. Can I complete my Practicum and/or Internship whenever I want?**

A. Yes and no. Students have flexibility to complete the Practicum or Internship during any of the academic terms in which the course is offered and must enroll before the add/drop deadline. Students should verify with their Agency supervisor that all hours and weeks required for the course will be fulfilled within the academic term. Only students who have met the course prerequisites are eligible to take the Practicum or Internship class.

**Q. When do most students complete the SRM 282 Practicum?**

A. Most students complete the Practicum during their sophomore year after they completed SRM 241, which is a prerequisite course. Please note that SRM 282 Practicum and SRM 482 Internship carry tuition costs.

**Q. When do most students complete the SRM 482 Internship?**

A. Most students complete the Internship in their senior year. Many students elect to complete their Internship in the summer as it may allow a student more flexibility. To be better positioned to be hired upon completion of the Internship, students are encouraged to take the Internship as one of their final courses at JMU. A student with an anticipated August graduation date is eligible to participate in the May commencement ceremony

**Q. Can I work anywhere to complete my Practicum or Internship?**

A. No. Practicum and Internship work must be completed at an organization within the broad field of sport and recreation management. There are no exceptions.

**Q. Are there certain agencies that I must work with to complete my Practicum and/or Internship?**



A. We do not require that students work with any certain organization to complete the Practicum and/or Internship. However, it is required that students work with an organization that falls within the broad field of sport and recreation management. Students should discuss with the Practicum and Internship Coordinator if there is any question whether an opportunity would meet this criterion.

**Q. Where do most SRM students complete their Practicum?**

A. Most students complete their Practicum at a site in Harrisonburg (e.g., JMU Athletics, UREC) during the Fall or Spring academic term while they are completing other courses within the SRM curriculum. Some students also complete the Practicum during the Summer academic term, often in locations outside of Harrisonburg. Students are responsible for securing their Practicum. It is recommended that you start looking for a position several months prior to the anticipated Academic Term in which they intend to complete their Practicum. Refer to the “Searching for a Practicum or Internship” section of this manual for more information.

**Q. Where do most SRM students complete their Internship?**

A. Faculty encourage SRM students to use the Internship to launch their career, so students work all over. In a typical year, Hart School students secure placements for their Practicums and Internships in locations that span 20 states and 2 countries. The specific location depends on the student’s career goals. Students may pursue opportunities that are in-person, remote, or hybrid (combination of in-person and remote).

**Q. How do I find the organization where I will do my Practicum or Internship?**

A. There is no one single answer to this question. Students should reflect on which area they want to gain experience. Practicums and Internships can be completed almost anywhere. However, most Fall and Spring Practicums are completed at agencies on campus or in the surrounding community to allow students to complete other academic courses on campus.

To find a Practicum or Internship position, start at the Hart School Career Development page on Canvas, where positions are posted regularly. Students are encouraged to be active on Handshake and LinkedIn. Students are recommended to rely on their network of contacts from previous volunteer work, faculty, other students, JMU alumni, Hart School Alumni Network, and guest speakers. Students may be successful in letting others know what they are looking for, as employers may be willing to create a Practicum or Internship position not advertised.

The following resources may help in locating Practicum opportunities.

- Meet employers at the Hart School Career and Internship Fair in the Fall or Spring semester. <https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/career-fair/index.shtml>
- Review position postings on the Hart School Career Development Canvas site

- Review job announcements in the SRM Practicum and Internship binder that is located at the end of the hallway near Godwin 377
- Complete an application with JMU Athletics  
<https://jmusports.com/sports/2020/6/8/athletics-internships-practicum-opportunities.aspx>
- Complete an application with JMU URec  
<https://www.jmu.edu/recreation/about/student-employment/internships-practicums.shtml>
- Research opportunities on Handshake <https://jmu.joinhandshake.com/login>
- Search LinkedIn for JMU alumni working in the sports and recreation industry  
<https://www.linkedin.com/>
- Search Indeed for sport or recreation internships <https://www.indeed.com/>
- Search TeamworkOnline for sport or recreation internships  
<https://www.teamworkonline.com/>
- Reach out to an organization of interest to inquire about creating a Practicum position
- Talk to classmates about how they found a Practicum position
- Inform your network that you are looking for a Practicum position

**Q. How do I enroll in the SRM 282 Practicum and SRM 482 Internship?**

A. After students have secured a Practicum or Internship, they must complete an application to be considered to enroll in the SRM 282 or SRM 482 course. This application can be found online at <https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/Internships-Practicums.shtml>. Provided the application materials are submitted in a timely manner and the Practicum or Internship meets the required criteria, students will receive an email from the Practicum and Internship Coordinator with an override code that allows the student to enroll in the course. The student must enroll in the course by JMU's add/drop deadline to be eligible to receive credit for the class. Add/drop deadlines can be found within JMU's Academic Calendar <https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.shtml>.

**Q. Is there a deadline to apply for the Practicum or Internship course?**

A. Yes. The deadline for submitting the Practicum or Internship application form is the Friday before classes begin for that semester. For example, if classes begin on Wednesday, the application form is due the previous Friday, regardless of the university's add/drop deadline. This allows time for an application to be reviewed and for the student to enroll in the course.

A student must have secured an appropriate Practicum or Internship with an Agency in the sport or recreation field before applying for the course. Failure to complete the application form for the SRM 282 or SRM 482 course by the deadline for the intended academic term means the student will not be given consent to enroll in the course for that academic term.

## SEARCHING FOR A PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP

### Locating an Internship

It is the student's responsibility to secure a Practicum and an Internship with a sport or recreation employer.

- Start early! Do not wait until the last minute to secure your work. You need to start your search for positions several months before you desire to complete the Practicum or Internship course. Many positions are highly competitive and/or have application deadlines.
- Do not settle for convenience. Have a strategy and look for sites that will help you get to where you want to go in your career.
- Prior to contacting organizations/agencies, give serious thought to the goals and objectives you wish to accomplish during the Internship experience. Some goals and objectives can be better accomplished at one Agency than another. As such, prospective Practicum Students and Interns should have an idea of the purpose of an Internship when selecting a Practicum or an Internship Agency. Specific skills, programs, etc. identified in the goals and objectives may influence the choice of the Internship site.
- Consult with others, including the Practicum and Internship coordinator, the Professional Development and Engagement Coordinator, an Academic Advisor, SRM faculty, SRM alumni, industry professionals, and website resources, such as <http://www.jmu.edu/shsr/srm/ip/index.shtml>
- Attend the Hart School Career & Internship Fair, held each academic semester.
- All Practicum and Internship sites must be approved by the SRM Practicum and Internship coordinator. Most sites will be approved if the organization fits within the sport and recreation industry and meets the Practicum or Internship expectations. If there is doubt, consult the SRM Practicum and Internship coordinator before accepting an Agency's offer for a Practicum or Internship.

### Interviewing

Prospective student Practicums and Interns should treat an interview for a Practicum or Internship like an employment interview. That is, dress professionally. At a minimum, this means wearing attire appropriate to the Agency at which you are interviewing. However, keep in mind that nobody was passed up for a position because they were overdressed. That cannot be said for those who were underdressed. During the interview, be prepared to answer questions about yourself and the sport and recreation management Practicum or Internship program.

A few questions that might be asked of students include:

- Why are you interested in this Internship?
- What do you have to offer this Agency or position?
- How many hours are required for you to get academic credit?
- What do you hope to learn from this Internship?

Questions that students should ask their prospective Site Supervisors might include:

- What would be my specific responsibilities and duties?
- What daily assignments can I expect to receive?
- What type of work assignments have previous Interns performed?
- Who will be my immediate supervisor?
- What special procedures or rules should I be aware of?
- How will my work be evaluated?
- When will I be expected to work (hours, weekdays/weekends, holidays)?
- Do you offer compensation (pay, housing, other benefits, or perks)?

For more “interviewing” help, refer to James Madison University’s Career Center’s website:  
<https://www.jmu.edu/career/students/jobIntern/interview/index.shtml>

## Accepting or Declining a Practicum or Internship Position

**Accepting an Offer:** If you choose to accept an Agency’s offer for a Practicum or Internship, be sure to let them know as soon as possible. Thank the Agency for the opportunity and let them know you are looking forward to working as a Practicum Student or Intern. You will also want to settle on a start date and complete any necessary paperwork required by the Agency. Remember, you still must apply for and get permission to enroll in the Practicum or Internship class to receive academic credit.

<https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/Internships-Practicums.shtml>

**Declining an Offer:** You may find that an Agency offers you a position in which you have decided not to work. Inform the Agency that you are declining their offer with a short letter informing them of your decision and thanking them for their time. You should let them know as soon as possible so that the Agency can offer the position to someone else. This is appropriate and helps maintain a professional image with that Agency.

## Updating Professional Resources

**Resumes:** You should anticipate providing an updated resume to apply for Practicums and Internships and to share with Site Supervisors. See JMU’s Career Center information on

resumes: <https://www.jmu.edu/career/students/career-prep/resumes/index.shtml>. You may also schedule a resume review appointment with the Professional Development & Engagement Coordinator.

**Cover Letters:** The Hart School recommends the Agency may require for you to include a tailored cover letter to apply for Practicums and Internships. See JMU's Career Center information on cover letters:

<https://www.jmu.edu/career/students/jobIntern/correspondence/index.shtml> You may also schedule a cover letter review appointment with the Professional Development & Engagement Coordinator.

**LinkedIn:** The Hart School recommends you establish and maintain a professional LinkedIn account to connect with industry professionals and display your professional skills and experience. The following resources may assist you with using LinkedIn.

- LinkedIn Articles and Tips: <https://blog.linkedin.com/topic/profile>
- Using LinkedIn to get a job in Sport  
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/using-linkedin-get-job-sport-chris-gill/>
- Using LinkedIn to get a job in Recreation  
[https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/yes-linkedin-important-your-career-parks-recreation-on-industry-ames?trk=pulse-article\\_more-articles\\_related-content-card](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/yes-linkedin-important-your-career-parks-recreation-on-industry-ames?trk=pulse-article_more-articles_related-content-card)

## Practicum and Internship Schedule

The Practicum and Internship must be completed within the academic term in which the student is enrolled in the class. Please refer to the JMU academic calendar for exact dates:

<https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.shtml>

You are expected to complete all your required 90 or 400 hours during JMU's academic term but understand that the Agency will have its own requirements for its Practicum and Internship students. Do not assume your Practicum or Internship schedule will follow JMU's closings or that you will be permitted to take time off work for a personal day or a vacation. Students are expected to be available to work the schedule established by their Site Supervisor and the Agency.

The daily and weekly duties of the Practicum Student or Intern will be set by the Site Supervisor or another designated Agency employee. Students should work toward completing goals jointly established by the student and Site Supervisor at the beginning of the Practicum or Internship.

## Student Commitment to the Agency

The points listed below can be used to define the Agency's expectations of the Intern and the Intern's commitment to the Agency. The Intern should:

1. Familiarize oneself with the regulations pertaining to the Agency and conform to them.
2. Perform all work assignments to the best of one's ability.
3. Report to an assignment at least 15 minutes prior to the time due.
4. Plan thoroughly and in advance all assignments.
5. Be free to stay 10-15 minutes after an assignment.
6. Evaluate each meeting or activity that has been planned and conducted.
7. Prepare for regular Site Supervisor- student Intern meetings. Ask questions and present constructive ideas.
8. Be well groomed and appropriately dressed for all assignments.
9. Notify the Site Supervisor well in advance in cases of absence from work.
10. Be tactful, friendly, courteous, and respectful to all, (Remember: the people working here have jobs to do. They will be happy to help if you use good judgment in what you ask of them).
11. Be cheerful and praise good work.
12. Consult the supervisor when confronted with problems you cannot satisfactorily solve oneself.
13. Consider yourself an employee of the Agency, not someone with special privileges.
14. Pay for your own meals and expenses when attending professional meetings, unless otherwise stated.
15. Visit, observe, and participate in phases of the Agency's operations.
16. Attend assigned meetings.
17. Practice excellence in his or her work.
18. Assist others when you have "down time" and ask how you can help.
19. Always maintain a professional attitude.
20. Perform work assignments safely so as not to injure yourself or others.
21. Be willing to offer new ideas and suggestions to the supervisor.
22. Communicate openly, honestly, and professionally.
23. Prepare for weekly Agency supervisor-student conference.

*Adapted from Glen Ellyn Park District (n.d.), Fox Valley Special Recreation Association, (2007), and Skokie Park District (n.d.).*

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Responsibilities of the Practicum Student/Intern

The focus of the Practicum/Internship program is on the student and the success or failure of this Practicum/Internship depends upon the student's realization of their responsibilities.

Students will become a functional part of the Agency and reflect the policies and standards of the Agency and James Madison University. At a minimum, students are expected to:

1. Secure a Practicum or Internship with an Agency from the sport or recreation industry.
2. Apply for the SRM 282 or SRM 482 course.
3. Enroll in the SRM 282 or SRM 482 course.
4. Ensure constructive communication with Agency members and the Practicum/Internship course instructor.
5. Satisfactorily complete all course expectations.

### Responsibilities of the Practicum Student/Intern Site Supervisor

Fostering the transition of a student from an academic focus engaging with peers and professors in a university setting to a professional focus interacting with colleagues and the public at large in an organizational setting requires active communication, training, and supervision from the Site Supervisor. In agreeing to supervise a Practicum Student or Intern, the Agency's Site Supervisor agrees to take on this responsibility. At a minimum, the Site Supervisor is expected to:

1. Develop a progressively and appropriately challenging mutually beneficial learning experience for the Agency and the student. This may include having the student to observe or participate in:
  - a. Orientation, meetings, programs, projects, and trainings.
  - b. Leadership and supervisory opportunities.
  - c. Routine administration and management tasks.
  - d. Areas or activities specific to student's interest, to include work on a special project that facilitates student learning and makes a meaningful contribution to the Agency.
  - e. Job rotations to learn and gain experience in various areas of the Agency such as:
    - i. Administration
    - ii. Program or event planning, implementation, and evaluation
    - iii. Facility operations and maintenance
    - iv. Public relations
    - v. Marketing

vi. Customer service

2. Provide orientation that includes ensuring the student's understanding of the Agency's relevant mission, philosophy, policies, procedures, programs, services, administration, facilities, regulations, etc.
3. Co-create goals with the student.
4. Set clear standards regarding the student's schedule, rights, and responsibilities.
5. Observe and give the student regular constructive feedback regarding on-the-job performance.
6. When appropriate, communicate with the student's instructor, to include completion of a student performance evaluation.

## Responsibilities of the Instructor of Record

The Hart School will assign an Instructor of Record to oversee the students' Practicum or Internship experience and academic coursework. At a minimum, the instructor of record is expected to:

1. Communicate academic expectations of the Practicum or Internship course.
2. Evaluate whether the student continually meets the expectations and policies of JMU, the Hart School, and the Sport and Recreation Management program.
3. Appropriately and timely record grades for academic coursework.
4. Serve as a resource for the student and the Site Supervisor.

## Responsibilities of the Sport and Recreation Practicum and Internship Coordinator

The Sport and Recreation Practicum and Internship Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the Practicum and Internship program for the Sport and Recreation Management program at JMU. At a minimum, the Practicum and Internship Coordinator is expected to:

1. Communicate the purpose and expectations of the Practicum and Internship program with students and Agency employers.
2. Help promote Practicum and Internship opportunities to students.
3. Maintain and approve student applications for enrollment into the Practicum and Internship courses.
4. Provide course enrollment instructions to students.



## Student Checklist

For the student Intern to fully meet the goals of the Practicum or Internship and carry out the responsibilities that are involved, it is necessary to perform the following duties:

### Prior to the Practicum/Internship

- Thoroughly review this Sport and Recreation Management Practicum and Internship Manual.
- Discuss with your academic advisor a tentative plan for when you will complete your Practicum and Internship (the Practicum is a prerequisite to the Internship).
- Update your resume. This document may be your first impression to the Agency so it should look professional. Consider making an appointment to have your resume reviewed: <https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/professional-development.shtml>
- Establish a list of skills and experiences you would like to develop.
- Create a list of potential sport and recreation Practicum and Internship agencies and make note of their timelines, expectations, or requirements. Keep in mind that agencies may not be familiar with the term “Practicum” but rather they may refer to all student academic experiential opportunities as Internships. Therefore, a search for Internships may also help you identify a suitable location for your Practicum. It might help to describe to employers that the Practicum is like a mini-Internship that allows a student to explore a field of interest.
- Contact prospective agencies. Not all agencies have a formal job description or application for Internships. You may need to contact an organization directly by phone, email, or in-person and be prepared to share your updated resume. For those agencies that do have a formal process, submit an application, resume, cover letter, and other relevant materials.
- Be prepared for an interview. Many agencies require an interview to select their Practicum Students and Interns. Utilize the resources available to practice and prepare for an interview. <https://www.jmu.edu/career/students/jobIntern/interview/practice.shtml>
- When contemplating an offer to complete your Practicum or Internship, if possible, negotiate what tasks you will be doing as part of your experience. This does not mean you should expect to only do your preferred tasks, but you might be able to negotiate for certain experiences. However, be open and willing to complete the tasks needed and required by your Agency.
  - o This should include the number of hours and weeks you will work (Practicum - average 9 hours/week for at least 10 weeks; Internship - average 40 hours/week for 10 weeks).
  - o All hours must be completed within the academic term <https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.shtml>.
  - o Try to get your tasks and schedule in writing so the Agency supervisor and student have similar expectations.

- o Schedule outside activities appropriate to the time you have committed to the Practicum or Internship. Outside course loads, sports, and work have been known to interfere, which is why students are only permitted to take one additional class while completing their Internship.
- o Your Agency may or may not give compensation for your Practicum or Internship. If there is compensation, arrange for any salary, stipend, compensation, etc. with the Site Supervisor.
- ❑ Apply for permission to enroll in the Practicum or Internship course. Each Practicum and Internship needs to be reviewed and approved by the Sport and Recreation Management Practicum and Internship Coordinator to ensure it meets the requirements for the course. You will not be able to enroll in the class until they receive approval. All applications must be submitted for consideration by the Friday before the academic term's start, but you are encouraged to complete their course applications as early as possible to allow enough time to resolve any issues. The application may be found here: <https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/Internships-Practicums.shtml>.
- ❑ Enroll in the Practicum or Internship course on MyMadison once you have received your permission email with instructions to enroll. This step must be completed before JMU's add/drop deadline, or you will not receive academic credit for the course.
- ❑ Complete any necessary paperwork and documentation with the Agency to confirm your Practicum or Internship. Check with your Site Supervisor for details.

## During the Practicum/Internship

- ❑ You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the Practicum or Internship site.
- ❑ Follow your Site Supervisor's instructions and adhere to the Agency's policies, procedures, and practices.
- ❑ Meet all commitments in a timely and professional manner with a positive attitude, excellent communication, and meet or exceed the Agency and Site Supervisor's expectations.
- ❑ Dress appropriately for all assignments and maintain a well-groomed appearance.
- ❑ Follow the chain of command. Know the formal and informal reporting structures within the organization/Agency. (Go to your Site Supervisor first unless instructed otherwise).
- ❑ Respect confidentiality. Talk about issues, projects, the work environment, etc., but refrain from talking about your work associates. (Do not gossip. Do not take sides. Do not be hurt if you are left out of certain discussions).
- ❑ Respect the support staff.
- ❑ Be prompt. Tardiness and absenteeism signal disrespect for others' time and a lack of interest in the work. Promptness signals eagerness, responsibility, and respect for others.
- ❑ Notify your Site Supervisor as soon as possible when unable to report for work due to illness, accident, or an emergency.

- Be professional. Use appropriate language, exhibit good judgment, demonstrate ethical conduct, exercise tact and diplomacy.
- Consult with your Site Supervisor regarding situations you cannot solve on your own.
- Communicate with the Site Supervisor when there is not a clear understanding of what is to be done.
- Accept the Site Supervisor's philosophy, methods, leadership, and program. Give constructive suggestions when asked for an opinion.
- Perform assignment(s) and responsibilities to the best of your ability. If you complete all your assigned work, ask your Site Supervisor what to do next.
- Take opportunities presented to develop professional skills and abilities. Integrate this learning with previous knowledge.
- Work the agreed upon hours, including weekend, holiday, and/or evening hours. Even if JMU is closed, your Site Supervisor still may expect you to work. Any days off or vacations should be arranged around your Practicum or Internship work schedule.
- Keep track of all hours. You will need to report on the hours worked and describe and reflect on the duties performed.
- Complete all academic coursework in a timely manner on Canvas.

### After the Practicum/Internship

- Express written appreciation to the organization/Agency for making the Internship experience possible.
- Ensure that all academic coursework is adequately completed. This includes ensuring your Site Supervisor completes your written performance evaluation and shares it with the Instructor of Record.
- Begin looking for an Internship or a job.

### Top Ten Tips for Practicum Students/Interns

1. Be mindful of first and last impressions.
  - Be impeccable with your word, dress, and time.
2. Take initiative.
  - Ask for things to do; keep an eye out for helpful projects.
3. Embrace the grunt work!
  - It is boring to you, but critical to the organization.
  - Give it your best effort.
4. Learn all that you can about the organization, industry, and career field.
  - Read everything you can get your hands on. Ask questions.
5. Network, network, network!
  - Do not be afraid to talk to people.
  - Ask to attend meetings and events.

- Work to develop and maintain relationships.
  - Do informational interviews/shadows. 80% of job offers are a result of personal and professional networks – add to yours continually.
6. Meet regularly with your supervisor.
    - Ask for feedback.
    - Share progress, and review lessons learned.
    - Observe their style of supervision.
  7. Play nicely with others.
    - Show respect at all times.
    - Be friendly; do all you can to have a good relationship with colleagues.
  8. ALWAYS observe appropriate rules of workplace etiquette.
  9. Listen and learn.
    - Keep an open mind; avoid jumping to conclusions.
    - Be observant. Ask questions.
    - Pick your battles carefully.
  10. Always represent yourself, the Hart School, and James Madison University positively.

## ENROLLING IN THE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP CLASS

### How to Enroll in the Practicum or Internship Class

- Complete an Agency acceptance form that will be submitted to the SRM Practicum and Internship coordinator:  
<https://www.jmu.edu/hartschool/caps/Internships-Practicums.shtml>
- To receive permission to register, your Agency acceptance form must be submitted by the Friday before classes begin.
- Once your site is approved, you will receive an email from the Practicum and Internship coordinator with an override code that allows you to register for the course. You must enroll on MyMadison by JMU's add/drop deadline.

### Course Assignments

Course assignments will be made available on Canvas to enrolled Practicum and Intern students as part of their academic coursework. Students are expected to complete course assignments throughout their Practicum and Internship and failure to do so can result in the student failing the course.

## POST PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

### Thank You Letter to Site Supervisor

At the end of your Practicum and Internship, you should write a hand-written thank you letter to your Site Supervisor and anyone who had a significant impact on your Practicum or Internship experience. You should include specifics of what you appreciated about the experience. This letter is appropriate to recognize the contributions of your Site Supervisor to your learning experience and will be remembered and appreciated.

### Steps to Complete After Your Practicum/Internship

1. Send a Thank You Letter to your Site Supervisor.
2. Update your resume with your Practicum/Internship experiences.
3. Update your LinkedIn profile with your Practicum/Internship experiences.
4. Hopefully, you left your Practicum/Internship on favorable terms and now have a network of industry professionals who can help guide you towards future employment opportunities and write letters of recommendation on your behalf. Be sure to reach out to your network to inform them of your next steps.
5. Be sure to share your experiences with other students and Hart School faculty.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### Termination of a Student Practicum or Intern

The Hart School has expectations of its students enrolled in its Practicum and Internship courses. The Agency has the right to terminate a Practicum or Intern for any lawful reason, to include, but not limited to:

- lack of student responsibility (e.g., being constantly late for work, failing to report absences in advance, misuse of equipment, failure (within reason) to undertake or complete assigned tasks);
- engagement by the Intern in illegal or unethical behavior;
- violation of employer's policies (e.g., confidentiality, safety, sexual harassment, racial or religious discrimination);
- personal problems or emotional problems that hamper the student's ability to function in a workplace environment;
- reporting to the work site under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs; or
- failure to adhere to the policies and procedures of James Madison University and JMU's Sport and Recreation Management program.

The student and the Agency should immediately notify the Practicum and Internship coordinator upon termination of a student's Practicum or Internship. Termination of a Practicum Student or Intern may be reported to James Madison University and may subject the student to disciplinary action by the university.

### Relocating a Practicum Student or Intern to a New Position

Circumstances may arise where it is necessary, or prudent, for the Practicum Student or Intern to relocate to a different position and/or a different Agency. These circumstances include, but are not restricted to the following:

- intimations or evidence of conflict either between the Site Supervisor and the Practicum Student or Intern or the Practicum Student or Intern and other colleagues;
- unsafe working environment;
- strike action, lockouts, or other labor-related disruptions experienced at the Agency;
- Agency bankruptcy or financial exigency resulting in the inability to retain a Practicum Student or Intern;
- interruption of a Practicum Student or Intern's site placement due to departure of the Site Supervisor; and
- sexual or other harassment of the Intern in a workplace setting.

The student should immediately notify the Practicum and Internship coordinator to discuss circumstances that may require the student to relocate to complete the Practicum or Internship.

## Sexual Harassment

The Hart School and James Madison University are committed to providing students with an environment free from sexual harassment. If you feel that you are being or have been harassed or are not sure what constitutes sexual harassment, we encourage you to visit <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/resources/terms.shtml>.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits sex- and gender-based discrimination including sexual misconduct in educational institutions receiving federal funding. Sexual misconduct includes sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, relational violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and all other forms of misconduct on the basis of or because of a reporter's sex, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity.

Because the Internship is an educational program, you are entitled to experience a working and learning environment at your employment site that is free from sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct. In the event that you need to be removed from the placement site, the Hart School will work in conjunction with the Title IX office to assist you with exiting the site and finding alternative means of completing the Internship. All students, employees, and visitors to campus are entitled to experience a learning, working, and living environment that is free from sex-based discrimination. JMU Policy 1340 Sexual Misconduct sets out the university's commitment to providing a workplace and learning environment free from all forms of illegal sex discrimination.

As the university's Title IX Coordinator, Amy Sirocky-Meck serves as a resource and support for members of the university community disclosing instances of sexual misconduct. She provides an inclusive and supportive space to make a report, learn about resources, and consider options for moving forward. Amy treats all disclosures and reports of sexual misconduct with great care and confidentiality while also balancing her duty to provide for individual and campus safety. Amy Sirocky-Meck's phone number is 540-568-5214 or you may email her at [sirockam@jmu.edu](mailto:sirockam@jmu.edu). The Title IX Office phone number is 540-568-5219.

## Mental Health

As a college student there may be times when personal stress interferes with your academic performance and/or negatively impacts your daily life. If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health challenges at James Madison University, contact the Counseling Center (CC) on the 3rd floor, Suite 3100. You can learn more about available CC services by visiting the website: <https://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/> or calling the Counseling Center (540-568-6552). Their services are free and confidential.

JMU has also partnered with TimelyCare, a virtual health and well-being platform, to provide you with 24/7 access to virtual mental health care from anywhere in the United States at no cost.



Download the TimelyCare App or visit <https://timelycare.com/jmu> to register and get started today. Other available support resources to consider on campus include but are not limited to the: Office of the Dean of Students, Health Center, UREC Health Promotion, Learning Strategies Instruction, & Office of Disability Services.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Content for this manual was derived in part from:

- Otterbein University's Sport Management Internship Manual (2020, August)
- Illinois Recreation and Parks Association (IPRA) Internship Development Manual
- The North American Society for Sport Management's (NASSM) Sport Management Program Standards and Review Protocol (2007)
- Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) (2017)
- Glen Ellyn Park District (n.d.)
- Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (2007)
- Skokie Park District (n.d.).