

**SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE MANUAL
SOCIOLOGY 7800**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

This manual is intended to serve as a general guide for students enrolled in Sociological Practice 7800, their practice supervisor, and the field supervisors in their agencies and organizations in which they conduct their practice experience. It should not be considered as a comprehensive statement on the practice experience. There most certainly will be aspects on which all parties will have to confer. It supplements but does not replace the general policies, requirements, and procedures provided in the Valdosta State University Graduate Bulletin. Students are responsible for become familiar with both documents.

It is the student's responsibility to keep apprised of current practice requirements for his or her degree program. While the provisions of this manual will ordinarily be applied as stated, the Practice Supervisor reserves the right to modify any provisions listed in this manual, without actual notice to the individual students. Every effort will be made, however, to keep students advised of any such changes. Information regarding such modifications will be available in the office of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice and the MS Sociology Graduate Coordinator's Office.

Some concepts contained in this manual were used, with permission, from the MPA internship program at Valdosta State University. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE – AN OVERVIEW

Sociological practice is an umbrella term for both clinical and applied sociology. It is the use of sociological theory and methods to bring about social change or to carry out a sociological intervention for society, social organizations, groups and individuals.

Applied sociology is mainly concerned with the use of theory and research to work on the macro and meso levels of intervention and change. Some examples of applied sociology would be community organization, evaluation research, organizational consulting, and program administration.

Clinical sociology is based on sociological intervention on the micro level. Some examples of clinical sociology would be group therapy facilitation and individual, marriage and family therapy. Both approaches help citizens, groups, organizations or government to identify problems and their deeper causes and to suggest possible strategies for solutions.

A practice experience in the MS Sociology Program with an applied concentration involves a field placement in which the student has opportunities to learn how sociological knowledge can be utilized in the work place. The valuable work-related experience the student receives often provides the student with a competitive advantage when seeking employment. Upon graduation, students have various options in which to put their sociological practice experience to work.

MS SOCIOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

A. A practice experience in the Master of Science degree in Sociology with an applied concentration involves field placement with an appropriate agency or organization, which is designed to provide the student with first-hand work experience in which the student is expected to apply sociological knowledge and methods. The student is also subject to the authority, rules, and regulations of the sponsoring sites.

B. Before a student is approved for a practice experience, the following conditions must be met:

1. The student must be in good standing in the program, including having a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
2. The student must have satisfactorily completed all graduate core classes.
3. The student must have satisfactorily passed the Comprehensive Examination.

C. The student is responsible for meeting with the Practice Supervisor well in advance of the proposed practice experience and must file an application by midterm of the semester prior to practice experience (See **Form 1**).

D. As part of the application process, the student must read the practice experience manual and verify that he or she understands all of the practice experience requirements (See **Form 2**).

E. If the application is approved by the Practice Supervisor, the student must establish contact and be accepted by the site. The statement of acceptance must be completed by a responsible official at the site and returned to the Practice Supervisor two weeks prior to the practice experience (See **Form 3**).

F. In consultation with the Practice Supervisor, a faculty member may be selected to supervise the practice experience. Students are still required to meet with the Practice Supervisor as scheduled.

G. Students in the Applied Concentration must complete 6 credit hours of SOCI 7800. The hours can be completed in two different semesters.

H. While actual work will be negotiated with the Practice Supervisor, a number of integrative assignments will be required.

I. Students must complete a total of 240 hours of documented time, at least 40 hours of which will be for scheduled weekly meetings with the Practice Supervisor. The number of on-site hours will be determined in consultation with the Practice Supervisor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MS SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM (APPLIED SOCIOLOGY)

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Practice Supervisor to:
1. Fully cooperate with agencies and organizations participating in the practice programs.
 2. Screen applicants and recommend only those who possess the necessary skills to function satisfactorily in a particular agency or organization.
 3. Maintain regular contact with field supervisors. A contact report will be completed by the field supervisor and made a part of the student's permanent file (See **Form 5**).
 4. Provide the field supervisor with an evaluation form to rate the performance of the student (See **Form 6**).
 5. Discuss any problems concerning the student's performance with the field supervisor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- A. It shall be the responsibility of agencies and organizations to:
1. Provide the student with meaningful tasks that insure exposure and enhancement of sociological knowledge.
 2. Assign a supervisor to direct and coordinate the practice and to prepare a written evaluation of the student's performance, which should reach the Practice Supervisor at least one week prior to the last day of the semester (See **Form 6**).
 3. Offer constructive criticism when needed.
 4. Provide facilities, supplies, space, etc., which are necessary for the student to adequately perform his or her assigned duties.
 5. Alert the Practice Supervisor about any problems relating to the student's job performance in a timely manner.
 6. Request the Practice Supervisor to withdraw the practice when personal conduct or educational progress is such that additional time and effort on the part of the agency would not be worthwhile.
 7. Terminate the practice only with just cause and prior notice to the Practice Supervisor.
 8. Make suggestions to the Practice Supervisor about how the practice program might be improved.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF THE STUDENTS

- A. Students are encouraged to practice at a site that fits their sociological interests and career goals. Thus students are encouraged, in consultation with the Practice Supervisor to use their initiative in seeking out possible practice opportunities with sites that pique their interest (See Form 1).
- B. Submit a practice experience application in specified time period. Applications are due **NO LATER THAN MIDTERM OF THE SEMESTER PRIOR TO THE PRACTICE EXPERIENCE**.
- C. Become familiar with the practice site's policies, procedures and dress codes.
- D. Maintain a log of the hours at the practice site (See Form 4a) and with the Practice Supervisor as well as a log of work hours off-site (See Form 4b).
- E. Behave in a professional manner, avoiding any involvement in office politics or ideological disputes.
- F. Discuss any grievance with the Field Supervisor and the Practice Supervisor.
- G. Receive appropriate training, supervision, and guidance throughout the practice experience.
- H. Attend all meetings with the Practice Supervisor.
- I. Maintain complete confidentiality of all records and internal information.
- J. Be treated with the respect given to regular staff members of the agency or organization.
- K. Complete and submit on time all course requirements.
- L. Exercise the maximum effort and time required to successfully complete the practice experience.
- M. Strictly adhere to the behavioral standards of the agency.

GRADE DETERMINATION

- A. Students will receive a final grade of either U (Unsatisfactory) or S (Satisfactory).
- B. *Assignments and Research*. Students will be given various tasks as assigned by the Practice Supervisor.
- C. *Student's Personal Evaluation*. The student is responsible for evaluating the practice experience, based upon a number of criteria (See Form 7).
- D. *Supervisor's Evaluation*. The student's field supervisor will be asked to provide feedback concerning the on-going performance of the practice, and to evaluate the overall performance and contribution made by the student during the practice (See Form 6).

Form 1

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE APPLICATION

Name _____ Student ID _____ Date _____

Sex _____ Age _____ Email _____

Semester Applying For _____ Expected Graduation Semester _____

Local Address _____

Permanent Address _____

Local Telephone _____ Permanent Telephone _____

List Courses Completed/Currently Enrolled In:

| Course | Grade Received | Semester Taken | Course | Grade Received | Semester Taken |
|--------|----------------|----------------|--------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Graduate hours completed _____ Cumulative GPA at VSU _____

Comprehensive Exam Date _____ Grade _____

Agency/Organization Preferred _____

Approved: _____
Practice Supervisor Date

ON-SITE REPORT FORM

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Student Name | | Total Hours | |
| Field Name | | | |
| Week Beginning | | Week Ending | |
| Monday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Tuesday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Wednesday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Thursday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Friday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Field Supervisor | | | |

OFF-SITE REPORT FORM

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Student Name | | Total Hours | |
| Field Name | | | |
| Week Beginning | | Week Ending | |
| Monday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Tuesday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Wednesday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Thursday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Friday | | Daily Hours | |
| Duties/Work Performed: | | | |
| | | | |
| Faculty Supervisor | | | |

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I understand that I am participating in a practice experience sponsored by the MS Sociology Program and an agency or organization. I recognize that during the practice experience I am subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of Valdosta State University, as well as those that the field supervisor deems appropriate for the agency or organization.

I understand that I am not covered by the site's fringe benefits and that it is my responsibility to make arrangements for my own insurance, including accident, health, hospitalization, and liability coverage and to show proof prior to the practice experience. I will not hold the practicing agency or organization, or Valdosta State University, nor any of the personnel employed by these sites liable for injury or death as a result of this practice experience.

I understand that during the practice experience I will be representing Valdosta State University, the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice and the MS Sociology Program and I will do nothing that would adversely affect the image of any unit. I agree that if any of my behavior is deemed improper (detrimental to the practicing organization or Valdosta State University), I will withdraw from the practice experience and accept a grade of Unsatisfactory.

I understand that my failure to abide by the policies and procedures of the practice program will result in termination of the practice with a grade of Unsatisfactory.

I further agree that I will:

- a. Become familiar with field site's policies, procedures and dress codes.
- b. Notify my Field Supervisor and/or Practice Supervisor as soon as possible should I be unable to meet my practice responsibilities.
- c. Conduct myself in a professional manner at all times, and avoid becoming involved in office politics and/or ideological disputes.
- d. Maintain the confidentiality of records and internal matters at all times.
- e. Obtain prior approval from my practice and field supervisors before circulating any written work outside of the practicing organization or the MS Sociology Program.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT. THE NATURE, SCOPE AND POLICIES OF THE PRACTICE PROGRAM HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, AND I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM.

Student

Practice Supervisor

Date

Date

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Sociology, Anthropology
& Criminal Justice
MS Sociology Program
Applied Sociology Concentration
Valdosta, Georgia 31698

STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE

Name: _____ Student ID _____

Field Agency
Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Date of Acceptance: _____

Practice Experience Starting Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Schedule

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Number of experience hours per week: _____

The above named student has been accepted to practice.

Contact Person

Title

Date

Form 6

FIELD SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT'S PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Re: _____

On behalf of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice and the MS Sociology Program, I wish to express our thanks for the excellent learning experience you have afforded the above-named student who has just completed a practice experience with you. We urgently need your candid evaluation of the student and of the practice experience. We would be most grateful if you could respond briefly to the following questions:

1. What were the specific responsibilities that the student was asked to perform?
2. What were the student's most helpful skills?
3. How would you describe the student in the following areas of performance?

Attitude:

Judgment:

Initiative:

Writing Skills:

Interpersonal Relations:

Availability/Dependability:

4. What areas do you think the student should try to build or improve?
5. Would you care to comment about the Practice in any general way? We would be grateful for any constructive criticism that you may wish to offer.
6. Were you satisfied with the procedure used to select and assign the student or are there ways in which this process could be improved?

We appreciate your association with the Practice Program and thank you for your help with this evaluation.

Respectfully,

Practice Supervisor

Field Supervisor's Printed Name

Field Supervisor's Signature

Date

Form 7

STUDENT'S EVALUATION OF PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Name: _____ ID No.: _____

ASSIGNMENT:

Site: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Tasks/Projects: _____

Hours Worked (Average/wk): _____

Supervisor: _____

GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE PRACTICE EXPERIENCE:

How did it meet your expectations?

What were the most positive aspects?

What were the most negative aspects (if any)?

Suggestions for improvement:

