

**MLIS 7960
SUPERVISED FIELDWORK**

**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAM
Revised June 1, 2009**

Credits: 3.00

Prerequisite: MLIS 7000, consent of advisor, and consent of instructor.

Graded "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory."

Course Description:

A minimum of 120 hours in an approved library or information center. Learning objectives that are specific to the individual student's interests and goals will be identified collaboratively by the student, the on-site supervisor, and the instructor.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Discuss the application of theory to practice as demonstrated by the service activities at the fieldwork site.
2. Identify the relevance of content from other coursework to the service activities at the fieldwork site.
3. Describe the effect of the fieldwork experience on their career interests and plans.
4. Evaluate the value of the fieldwork experience to their professional preparation.

Role of Supervised Fieldwork

Supervised fieldwork is an elective course designed to provide a "real world" learning experience in an area of the individual student's professional interest. Normally taken toward the end of the student's coursework, fieldwork provides an opportunity to see how the theories covered in classes can be applied. In addition, the opportunity to gain practical experience and professional connections can make a significant difference in a student's employability and preparation for a successful transition to the professional role. This experience may be especially valuable to the student who has never worked in a library or information center or to one who wishes to enter a new area of the field.

Requirements of Students

- **120 hours minimum at the fieldwork site¹**
- **Learning goals**
- **Work agreement**
- **Log**
- **Additional assignments such as discussion posts or written reflections *may* be required. Check with your fieldwork coordinator or consult the BlazeView site.**

Three Roles: Student, Fieldwork Coordinator, Site Supervisor

The **student** is responsible for complying with the application procedure, securing the support of his or her academic advisor, completing all requirements of students (listed above), and for cooperating with the fieldwork coordinator and site supervisor.

The **fieldwork coordinator** serves as the instructor for the course and as the “lead negotiator” of the fieldwork agreement. After conferring with the student and clarifying goals, the coordinator will identify an appropriate site and supervisor and will guide the agreements for the student’s experience. The coordinator is responsible for approving the site, based on the qualifications of the supervisor, applicability of the site to the student’s goals, and scheduling compatibility.

Scheduling compatibility between the student and the site supervisor is required in order for the site to be approved. In addition, an approved site must provide an environment and resources that are consistent with the student’s educational goals.

Approval of a site affiliated with the student’s workplace requires that 1) the fieldwork activities are outside the student’s usual duties; 2) the student’s usual supervisor confirms that the fieldwork will not interfere with the student’s regular compensated employment.

Most fieldworks are unpaid. The student may receive both credit and monetary compensation for the fieldwork hours if the site offers compensation. If the student is to be paid, financial arrangements must be documented in advance.

The **site supervisor** has primary responsibility for the student in the workplace. A site supervisor must hold an ALA-accredited Masters degree or equivalent professional preparation and must have held the current post for at least a year. The supervisor must be willing and able to provide learning experiences consistent with graduate course credit and to confer with the student regularly.

The site supervisor will identify and schedule activities that are consistent with the student’s educational goals. The supervisor may place the student under other professionals’ supervision during the fieldwork, if appropriate in regard to the duties assigned.

¹ Fieldwork assignments that include virtual elements may be quantified by methods other than hours. If this applies to you, consult your fieldwork supervisor or site supervisor for details.

The fieldwork coordinator is responsible for reviewing the site supervisor's qualifications and for selecting a supervisor whose background and capabilities are appropriate in relationship to the student's goals. In addition, the coordinator should make an informed judgment as to the ability of the potential supervisor to provide a professional-level educational experience for the student, considering such factors as the supervisor's expressed intentions for the student, the supervisor's workload, and the supervisor's autonomy within the workplace environment.

The fieldwork coordinator will look for evidence that the site supervisor understands that "the student is there to learn as well as work."²

The site supervisor will secure institutional permission for the fieldwork to occur, including consultation with the appropriate administrator. The fieldwork coordinator will assist in this effort if requested.

Application Procedure

Application for Summer and Fall fieldwork will ordinarily be due during the preceding March; for Spring fieldwork, during the preceding October. Calls for applications, with detailed instructions, will be sent to the student body via Valdosta.edu e-mail. Before applying, the student should secure the advisor's support and draft learning goals for the fieldwork.

² Association for Library and Information Science Education, "Guidelines for Practices and Principles in the Design, Operation, and Evaluation of Student Field Experiences," *ALISE Position Papers*, 14 October 1990, http://www.alise.org/nondiscuss/assoc_position_statement_field_experiences.htm (13 November 2001).