

SOUTHWESTERN ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY  
PREPARATION PROGRAM

OBSERVATION, PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

SERP 575, 594 AND 593

Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and School Psychology

College of Education

University of Arizona

(Revised 1/10/09)

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## University of Arizona Orientation and Mobility Program

### Introduction

The University of Arizona Orientation and Mobility Program is dedicated to providing the most appropriate preparation possible for professionals teaching individuals who are blind and visually impaired. Practical experiences under the direction of experienced direct service providers are a critical component of the learning process for students of orientation and mobility. Practical experiences are a part of all portions of the preparation process from the observations and “blindfold” experiences to the internship in the final part of the program. In support of these premises, field based experiences are extensions of and complementary to the University and the settings which support practicum experiences are also extensions of the University.

It is essential, therefore, that there be shared understandings between all agencies and individuals entering into the practicum experience to ensure the quality of the experience, and to minimize misunderstandings by the practicum student. This handbook is intended to fill an initial step in an ongoing process of developing and maintaining close working relationships with direct service providers at agencies acting as practicum sites. The information included in this handbook comprises policies and procedures believed by the faculty of the University of Arizona's orientation and mobility program to best fulfill the objectives of a unified practicum experience. The handbook contents are intended as flexible guidelines that can be modified to fit individual practicum settings as warranted and agreed upon by all involved parties.

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

### First Semester

#### SER 527 - Advanced Methods in O&M

Occluded and low vision simulated instruction and practice of protective and long cane techniques

#### SER 526 - Curriculum and Assessment

Classroom instruction and group discussion of the underlying principles which support development of O&M instruction. In depth discussion and practice of procedures for assessing O&M skills and functional distance vision use

#### SER 575 - Observation and Participation

Assessment and instructional methods and responsibilities of local COMS; understanding of O&M instruction from the perspective of the student with a visual impairment

### Second Semester

#### SER 594 - Practicum

Sequenced involvement in assessment and instruction of a limited number of students under the close direction and supervision of the Cooperating COMS

#### SER 595 - Colloquium in O&M

Classroom instruction and group discussion of teaching strategies, methods and materials in O&M; discussion of professional trends and issues

2-3 credits in other SER or related classes as appropriate to meet the student's needs

### Third Semester

#### SER 593 - Internship in O&M

Assessment and instructional responsibilities for a full caseload under supervision by the Cooperating COMS in conjunction with university personnel

## S E R P 5 7 5 OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION

Student's Responsibilities

- Obtain a large, three-ring binder for use as a Practicum Portfolio
- Schedule one observation of an O&M lesson conducted by Certified Specialist.
- Arrive for the observation on or ahead of time and stay through the completion of the lesson unless other arrangements have been made with the COMS ahead of time.
- Observe the lesson. Do not interact with the student or COMS during the lesson unless invited to do so by the COMS.
- Write a two-page description of the observation, following guidelines provided, and turn it into the course instructor on or before the scheduled date. File a copy of each observation description in the Practicum Portfolio.
- A minimum of 6 observations will be required for completion in the course.

## S E R P 5 7 5 OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION

Cooperating COMS Responsibilities

- Advise student of possible times for observation of lessons.
- Conduct lesson as usual unless you initiate a conversation or involvement of the university student.
- Discuss the lesson with the university student, as you feel necessary.

## SERP 594

## PRACTICUM

Student Responsibilities

- Time Requirement for Practicum field experiences is 100 hours of direct observation of Orientation & Mobility lessons lead by a certified specialist, preferably the same specialist for the entire time commitment. If this is not possible, observing as many hours as possible with the same student will allow for a continuum of service delivery observed by the student.
- When possible, initiate contact and visit the Cooperating COMS prior to the reporting date.
- Share Practicum Portfolio with Cooperating COMS on initial visit and periodically thereafter.
- Complete the Pre-Practicum form prior to beginning the practicum experience and file in practicum portfolio.
- Observe and instruct students as directed by the Cooperating COMS. Follow the work calendar, rules and regulations of the agency serving as the practicum site.
- File all assessments, lesson plans, evaluations and other pertinent information in the Practicum Portfolio.
- Provide copies of weekly schedule to the University Supervisor and program supervisor if applicable.
- Complete time log and place in the Practicum Portfolio.
- Submit the Practicum Portfolio to the University Supervisor on weekly basis or as scheduled by University Supervisor.
- Notify University Supervisor in the event that problems arise that cannot be resolved at the practicum site.
- If you will be absent, notify the Cooperating COMS as soon as possible. Also notify the University Supervisor if an observation is scheduled.
- Review student files as directed by Cooperating COMS.
- Observe Cooperating COMS while instructing students and during other related responsibilities.

- Complete the self-evaluation form at the mid term and at the end of the semester, if appropriate. The form should be filled out after 50 hours and at the completion of the 100 hours of practicum experience.
- Observe the Cooperating COMS while they are instructing the students assigned to you. Keep a narrative log including, but not limited to the following:
  - perceived objective(s) of lesson, and brief lesson plan (without prior discussion with Cooperating COMS)
  - teaching strategies used by Cooperating COMS
  - description and evaluation of student behavior
  - materials utilized
  - analysis of lesson area
  - reactions, suggestions, other comments

All material should be included in practicum portfolio and graded by the COMS and university personnel at the end of the 100 hours of experiences.

SERP 594  
PRACTICUM

Cooperating COMS Responsibilities

- Provide student with experiences in as many components of the teacher's role as possible.
- Share with Practicum Student rationales for different experiences required of him/her.
- Vary requirements to meet the particular student's needs and experience level.
- Model behaviors and attitudes desired of the student.
- Encourage student to examine his/her own behavior and development.
- Include Practicum Student in team meetings and other meetings relevant to the students with whom they will be working if appropriate
- Notify the University Supervisor of any relevant problems that arise, particularly those that cannot be resolved locally.
- Notify University Supervisor when it is felt that the practicum experience should be terminated prematurely.
- Supply the Practicum Student with copies of all rules and regulations of the cooperating agency which relate to the Practicum Student & practicum experience.
- Orient the Practicum Student to school or agency and introduce the Practicum Student to all key personnel in the School or agency.
- Depending on the Practicum Student's background, schedule opportunities for the Practicum Student to observe key personnel carrying out their roles.
- Whenever possible provide experiences with student's having a variety of abilities.
- Provide opportunities for the Practicum Student to review student's files and other pertinent background information.
- Model direct teaching skills with all students.

## SERP 594

## PRACTICUM

University Supervisor's Responsibilities

- Assist Practicum Student in locating and securing a practicum site and Cooperating COMS. Supply Practicum Student and Cooperating COMS with proper paperwork to initiate placement.
- Notify Practicum Student and Cooperating COMS of responsibilities and procedures to be followed in the practicum experience. Supply the Practicum Student and Cooperating COMS copies of the Practicum Handbook with responsibilities and evaluation forms.
- Assist student to examine his/her own behavior and development as it relates to professional growth.
- Provide written feedback to the Practicum Student specifying those areas needing remediation, as well as areas of success. Verbally discuss overall feedback immediately following the observation, if appropriate.
- Remain available to the Practicum Student and Cooperating COMS to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the practicum experience. Notify the Practicum Student of office hours for the student to meet with University Supervisor for more detailed feedback or instruction, as requested by Practicum Student.
- Review the Practicum Portfolio weekly to oversee general direction and success of the practicum experience and provide feedback as necessary.
- With the Cooperating COMS discuss overall success and determination of a final grade for the practicum experience. Submit proper paperwork for grading.

## SERP 593

### INTERNSHIP

#### Student Intern Responsibilities

Time requirement: Follow the work calendar and daily schedule of regular employees of the agency to equal approximately 30 - 40 hours per week for the duration of the internship (8 – 10 weeks). Hours of direct contact with students and other related activities should be no less than 250 hours and no more than 350 hours.

- Initiate contact and visit, when possible, the Cooperating COMS prior to reporting date.
- Complete Self-Evaluation forms at pre, mid, and end of internship.
- Share Practicum Portfolio with the Cooperating COMS on initial visit and periodically thereafter.
- Provide copies of weekly schedule to University Supervisor and program supervisor if applicable.
- Complete Time Log and turn in to University Supervisor every two weeks.
- Notify University Supervisor in the event that problems arise that cannot be resolved at the practicum site.
- If you need to be absent, notify Cooperating COMS at least one hour prior to the start of the work-day. Also notify the University Supervisor if he/she is scheduled to observe you.
- Assess, instruct, and complete all related responsibilities similar to a regular employee, as organized by the Cooperating COMS.
- Complete all paperwork related to O&M responsibilities in a timely manner File copies of all assessment reports, lesson plans, evaluations, and related paperwork in the Practicum Portfolio.
- Receive written permission and videotape at least one lesson. Review with the Cooperating COMS and supply the videotape and written review to the University Supervisor.

- Facilitate observations of lessons by the Cooperating COMS and University Supervisor by notifying the observer of the best times for observations and arranging for a time and location for a feedback session after the observation.
- Facilitate observations by the University Supervisor by making a copy of the lesson plan available during the observation, and by arranging a time and location for a feedback session after the observation.
- Assess one student while being observed by your Cooperating COMS. Meet with the cooperating COMS after completion of the assessment for an evaluation of your performance.
- Write a narrative report of the results of assessment and appropriate student goals for all students who were cooperatively and independently assessed by the Practicum Student. Request assistance from the Cooperating COMS as needed.
- Provide copies of narrative reports to the Cooperating COMS and the University Supervisor.
- Meet with Cooperating COMS regarding evaluation of assessment and report writing skills.
- Compose and disseminate a letter to the parents of all students the Practicum Student will work with notifying them a) of the Practicum student's' student status and duration and level of involvement in direct teaching of their child b) ask for permission to videotape lessons for review by the Practicum Student, and possible later use for instructional purposes by the University Supervisor. Place copies of the letters in the Practicum Portfolio.
- File all assessment reports, lesson plans, time logs and evaluations in the Practicum Portfolio.
- Make the Practicum Portfolio available to the Cooperating COMS, University Supervisor, and agency supervisor as applicable.
- Send copies of all observation feedback forms completed by the Cooperating COMS to the University Supervisor within three days of their completion.
- Send copy of mid-term and final evaluation within three days of the last day of the Internship.
- Meet with the Cooperating COMS regarding agency's requirements for confidentiality. Provide for all reports and other papers related to agency students in a manner requested by the agency,
- Complete evaluation of Cooperating COMS and University Supervisor forms and send to University Supervisor within three days of last day of internship.

- Gradually assume teaching responsibilities for the assigned student caseload one student at a time, while being continuously observed by the cooperating COMS. Incorporate teaching strategies and other suggestions made by the Cooperating COMS during lessons. Continue to observe while the Cooperating COMS is instructing the remainder of students on your caseload.
- Write detailed lessons plans for all students under your responsibility. Provide written plans to Cooperating COMS at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled instruction date. Incorporate suggestions and other assistance made by Cooperating COMS. Update lesson plans daily based on observations of the student's previous day's performance.
- Submit to the University Supervisor five videotape lessons spaced throughout the remainder of the semester. Include with the videotape:
  - a written lesson plan and any data collection or other student assessment information
  - a short self-critique of the lesson including positive components and specific steps you will take to remediate any deficiencies.
- File all assessment reports, lesson plans, and evaluations in the Practicum portfolio.
- At the halfway point of internship, submit to the University Supervisor by Friday a long-term plan of instruction for each student for the remainder of the program. The plan will include a projection of the goals, lesson areas and general strategies for each week.
- Provide instruction to all the students on your caseload while being continuously observed by the Cooperating COMS. Meet briefly with the Cooperating COMS after each lesson or at the end of the teaching period for an evaluation and teaching suggestions.
- At the end of the halfway point in the internship, complete a Self-Evaluation form and file it in the Practicum Portfolio.
- Meet with the Cooperating COMS (and University Supervisor as applicable) at halfway point of internship regarding the Cooperating COMS' response to the Professional Competencies Evaluation.
- Conduct a short final assessment of all students
- Write a narrative report of students' progress, final level of functioning and recommendations for future instruction. Provide copies to Cooperating COMS and University Supervisor (file in Practicum Portfolio).

- Meet with Cooperating COMS regarding final evaluation of Professional Competencies and discuss the grade for the practicum experience.
- Complete the course evaluation, Cooperating COMS evaluation, Evaluation of University Supervisor and Self-Evaluation form and file in the Practicum Portfolio.

## SERP 593

## INTERNSHIP

Cooperating COMS Responsibilities

- Identify students that Intern will provide supervised instruction. Assist Intern in locating records and other pertinent information to acquaint self with the agency and students he/she will be working with.
- Supply Intern with all the rules & regulations of the agency and other pertinent information pertaining to the agency and the practicum experience.
- Model behaviors and attitudes desired of the Intern.
- Meet with the Intern on a regular basis (approximately once a week) to discuss instructional strategies and address concerns expressed by the Intern.
- Be available to the Intern (when not instructing students) to discuss issues as necessary. Provide assistance as requested by the Intern.
- Observe the Intern conducting lessons at least once a week and provide verbal and written feedback specific to the observation as soon as possible after the observation.
- Encourage the Intern to examine his/her own behavior and development as it relates to professional growth.
- Complete the Professional Competencies Evaluation at midway through the internship and again by the final week of the placement. Meet to discuss the evaluation with the Intern, and with the University Supervisor if it is deemed necessary. Notify the University Supervisor of any relevant problems that arise, particularly those that cannot be resolved locally.
- Review lesson plans and provide feedback as deemed necessary.
- Provide weekly written feedback regarding specific instances of success and areas of need observed, including description of specific deficiencies to be addressed during following week.
- Notify University Supervisor if areas of serious deficiency are continuously noted and meet as team (Cooperating COMS and University Supervisor) to plan an appropriate course of action to support the Intern

- Review and provide written feedback (as deemed necessary) for narrative results of all initial assessments. Share any pertinent feedback with University Supervisor.
- Reduce amount and duration of observations, while continuing to observe the Intern with each student approximately one time per week.
- Notify the University Supervisor if it is felt that the practicum experience should be terminated prematurely.
- Recommend a final grade for the internship.
- Complete the Program Evaluation form.

## SERP 593

## INTERNSHIP

University Supervisor's Responsibilities

- Assist the Intern in locating and securing an Internship. Supply the Intern and Cooperating COMS with proper paperwork to initiate placement.
- Notify the Intern of responsibilities and procedures to be followed in the Internship. Supply the Intern and Cooperating COMS copies of the Practicum Handbook with written listing of responsibilities and evaluation forms.
- Observe Intern up to three times during the placement, except when not possible due to the distance of the placement from the University,
- Assist student to examine his/her own behavior and development as it relates to professional growth.
- Provide written feedback to the Intern specifying those areas needing remediation, as well as areas of success within one week after each observation. Verbally discuss overall feedback immediately following the observation.
- Remain available by telephone and email to the Intern and Cooperating COMS to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the internship. Notify the Intern of office hours for the student to meet with the university Supervisor for more detailed feedback or instruction, as requested by the Intern.
- Submit final grade for the semester