RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience

Student Placement Handout

Before your placement, the coordinator needs the following materials:

✓ Your resume
✓ Your typed goals (minimum of 5)
✓ Your start date
✓ Number of credits
✓ Completed agency application

Recreation Management Department

College of Education and Human Services
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
Lock Haven, Pa. 17745

FA 2013/SP 2014
# Student Placement Handout
## Professional Field Experience
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Dates</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Credits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Area</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding the Professional Field Experience</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Payment for Internship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Transportation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Liability and Health Insurance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Professional Field Experience Placement Process</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Field Experience Plan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Career Goal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Experience Goals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Letter/s</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Placement Guidelines</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Supervisor’s Role</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Field Experience Coordinator</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Contract Process</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Application Form</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Agreement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important Phone Numbers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
Congratulations, you are about to enter the RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience. This senior level field experience is often referred to as the internship. It is the culminating activity of your education at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. It is a wonderful opportunity to work in the professional setting with support from the university. This manual will guide you in the process of finding and applying for a RECR425 Professional Field Experience that will best serve your professional aspirations. An additional manual will provide you with the information you will need regarding the policies and assignments once you are actually on site at the internship.

The RECR425 experience is a vital link to obtaining an engaging and meaningful position in the field of Recreation Management. It is imperative that you select your Professional Field Experience with great care in order to match the goals you intend to achieve during your field experience with the best possible agency.

Eligibility
Students must apply for RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience during the Professional Semester. The student must have an overall minimum grade point average of a 2.0 and a minimum grade point average of 2.0 in core and prescribed courses. Applications by track are available in Himes 107.

Placement Dates
If you are completing a spring Professional Field Experience, the agency application must be completed by November 1st and turned into the Field Experience Coordinator. If you are completing a summer or fall Professional Field Experience, the agency application is to be completed by April 1st and turned into the Field Experience Coordinator.

Number of Credits
Most students have the choice of enrolling in either a 10 or 12 credit semester internship. Students enrolled in the Therapeutic Recreation Track must complete a 14-credit field experience in order to meet the criteria to attain eligibility to sit for the certification exam offered by the National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification. For students enrolled in the other tracks, the choice of 10 or 12 semester hours is generally dictated by your health insurance and/or financial aid package. The Professional Field Experience may be completed in the fall or spring semesters or during the summer session.

Length of Experience
A student enrolled in the Professional Field Experience has the choice of completing a 10 or 12 credit experience. The 10 credit internship requires a minimum of 10 weeks with 400 hours of full-time supervised work experience (10 credits) and the 12 credit internship requires a minimum of 12 weeks with 480 hours of full-time supervised work experience (12 credits) in an approved professional setting. The 14 credit internship for TR students only requires a minimum of 14 weeks with 560 hours of full-time supervised work experience.

The Recreation Management Department has determined that a full-time work week consists of thirty-five (35) hours. At the end of ten or twelve weeks, a student who has worked the minimum of
thirty five hours per week, will have to make up additional days in order to meet the hourly requirements of 400 hours (for a 10 credit internship) or 480 hours (for a 12 credit internship).

Students enrolled in the Therapeutic Recreation Track must complete an internship which is a minimum of 14 weeks (14 credits) with 560 hours of full-time experience supervised by a currently Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. Students must complete a total of 560 hours. 40 hours is the most that will count toward a week of work for TR students. This means that if you work fewer than 40 hours in a week, you will need to work additional days/weeks to meet the 560 hour requirement.

NCTRC requirements for Therapeutic Recreation Students Only
Students enrolled in the Therapeutic Recreation track must meet the requirements for NCTRC as well as those of Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. The following standards from NCTRC apply only to the Therapeutic Recreation students.

- The agency supervisor must maintain current certification with NCTRC
- The student must complete the entire internship at one site with one agency supervisor
- If the student leaves, the student must begin the internship again with a new agency supervisor
- The student must complete 560 hours and a minimum of 14 weeks consecutively
- The student has to complete a minimum of 20 hours per week for the week to count toward the minimum hour requirement
- Any hours over 40 hours per week do not count toward the 560 hours
- A student may work over 14 weeks in order to complete the hour requirement

Minimum Grade
There is no minimum grade requirement for RECR other than passing; however, you must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 to graduate from Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. In addition, you must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA in the major at the end of the Professional Semester before completing the RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience.

Visiting Area
When possible, a university supervisor will visit the student during the field experience. The visiting area is approximately 200 miles.

Locating an Agency for the Professional Field Experience
The primary responsibility for obtaining a Professional Field Experience is the duty of the student. Career Services, the agency description files found in the Internship Coordinator’s office as well as the Internet are good places to begin the search.

Once a potential site has been identified, the student will be required to complete an application specific to that agency. This will be in addition to the student application process of Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania.
Receiving Payment for the Internship
The University’s position is that you should obtain the best educational opportunity possible. While some agencies may offer a paid internship, many do not. Being paid should not be the number one priority in making your selection. If it is a priority, then start early so that you might find an agency that pays and will also offer you a good experience.

There is no university requirement regarding the student receiving payment for the Professional Field Experience. Students often receive a stipend toward living expenses and/or opportunities to work additional hours with pay. Payment for services is between the agency and the student.

Housing and Transportation
You are responsible for your own housing and transportation. The agency may be able to provide assistance in finding suitable housing. Public transportation may be available in urban areas, but you may find this form of transportation time consuming. In rural areas you will need your own transportation if you cannot live within walking distance.

Professional Liability and Health Insurance
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania does not carry professional liability insurance for students who are enrolled in RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience. Many agencies require the student to obtain professional liability insurance. If coverage is not provided and is required, the University will recommend that the student purchase the specified coverage. Applications from one insurance company are available in the Field Experience Coordinator’s office. Prior to the internship, you will need to check with the agency to see if you have to obtain any additional insurance coverage. It may take 4-6 weeks to obtain the insurance so it is best to get an early start.

The Professional Field Experience Placement Process
There are a series of steps that occur almost simultaneously in the beginning stages of the Professional Field Experience placement process. Use the following check sheet as a guide to navigate through the process of applying for an internship through the placement phase. The first stop in the process is to complete the Professional Field Experience Plan with your academic advisor.

A good plan helps the Field Experience Coordinator and the student work together to determine the best possible site for the student. It is critical to take this step seriously as it allows the coordinator to get an idea as to when, where, and what the student hopes to accomplish during the internship.
RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience Plan

Name: ______________________________________Track:_____________________

Email Address: ____________________________Phone:_______________________

Semester when I plan to complete my internship:

Fall   Spring   Summer

Internship Goals
1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________
Your Career Goal

This is the time to be answering the question, “What do I want to do after graduation?” Answers to this question should include the type of setting, as well as the geographic location. The Professional Field Experience should be seen as the perfect place to match your career goal with an internship setting. This may require you to move to a new location or work in a different aspect of the field than you may have done previously. Consult the Field Experience Coordinator and your Academic Advisor about your career goals.

Field Experience Goals

The next question to ask yourself is “what do I want to achieve during this field experience?” The answers to this question are actually your internship goals. It is important to write your goals in a clear, measurable manner so you can select an appropriate internship site. It is imperative that you select an agency that can help you achieve your field experience goals.

You will write at least five goals that you wish to accomplish while at your internship agency. The goals might include areas such as leadership opportunities, personnel management, budget preparation, facility and program scheduling. The more specific you are in writing your goals; the easier it will be to communicate them to the agency representative during the interview process. These goals are best discussed with your academic advisor prior to discussion with your University Internship supervisor. You will assess each goal at the end of the internship process to see if you have achieved your goals. The Field Experience Coordinator may be of assistance as you prepare your field experience goals. Prepare your goals prior to your first contact with a potential agency.

Your goals will provide a standard for you to use in matching you with the agency that can best meet your needs. Agency professionals expect you to know what you want to accomplish. Every effort should be made to make the goals as clear as possible. Once again, if the agency you selected is unable to assist you in achieving your goals, you will need to find an agency willing to help you.

Cover Letter

The cover letter is to be written to a specific individual at the agency. Send it to the person who will review your application. It is a good idea to call the agency prior to mailing the cover letter and resume to be sure that you have the right contact person and you have spelled this person’s name correctly.
**Resume**

A professional looking resume is an essential part of your application process. Your resume may be the first contact a prospective agency will have with you. It may be your only opportunity to present yourself to that agency, so you should strive to make this first impression the best possible.

Use the resume you created in Professional Semester class as a starting place to tailor your new resume to the potential field experience site. LHU’s Career Services may provide you with invaluable assistance. Make sure you proofread your resume, goals and cover letter to insure there are no misspelled words and/or grammatical errors.

**Interview**

Once you have scheduled either a telephone or personal interview, make sure you are prepared. You may want to rehearse the interview with someone to help you to feel more comfortable. Many internship sites are very competitive and the interview will be as intense as that for a full time position, so be prepared.

You want to review your career goal and your field experience goals prior to the interview. Consider your strengths and weaknesses as well as relevant course and work experiences as preparation for the interview. Act in a professional manner throughout the interview process. You may be asked if you have any questions. This is a great opportunity to make sure you review job responsibilities, a starting and ending date for the internship, as well as the schedule for a typical workday. It is imperative you have determined the number of credits you will be pursuing so you can share that information with the agency. It is a good idea to make sure you will be gaining responsibilities as the internship progresses. During the search process be sure to ask questions regarding work conditions, responsibilities, payment, and potential employment.

Use the interview process to discuss your goals with the agency supervisor. After you begin your experience, you will be asked to review your goals again with the supervisor and make any necessary revisions. The University Supervisor will monitor your progress and make suggestions to enable you to reach your goals. You need to continue to review your progress with your agency supervisor throughout your field experience.

**Agency Placement Guidelines**

As you work through the process of selecting your agency, you need to identify one that will afford you the greatest opportunity to grow professionally. You should expect more exposure, greater requirements, increased responsibilities, and longer work time than you encountered in RECR 210 – Field Participation in Recreation.

The following information is to be used as a guide in helping you select a site.

**The agency should...**

- Offer a year-round program. Seasonal organizations must maintain a year-round office.
- Maintain a comprehensive and balanced program to provide broad multiple exposures.
- Provide the resources and opportunities necessary for you to meet your goals.
- Have a minimum of two full-time professional staff members.
- Have a completed Agency Application on file at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania.
- Provide an “internship” manual describing the opportunities it offers.
• List all requirements that must be met prior to beginning the field experience, such as securing liability insurance and completing a health screening process.
• Maintain memberships in appropriate state and national professional organizations.

The agency supervisor should…
• Have time to supervise you.
• **Hold a degree in recreation or a related field.**
• Possess any necessary current certifications such as CTRS for Therapeutic Recreation students.
• **Have at least three years of experience in the field and a minimum of one with the current agency.**

**Agency Supervisor’s Role**
Prior to Professional Field Experience, the agency supervisor is expected to:

• Complete the agency application.
• Complete the Letter of Agreement and return it to University Field Experience Coordinator
• Identify a supervisor who is willing to devote time to the development of a young professional

**University Field Experience Coordinator**
Prior to the Professional Field Experience, the University Field Experience Coordinator will:

• Assist the student with goal development (along with the Academic Advisor)
• Review cover letter/s and resume
• Discuss possible field experience sites based upon the student’s goals
• Telephone the agency supervisor
• Generate the Letter of Agreement
• Maintain all records during the application process
• Assign and pass folder onto University Field Experience Supervisor

**The Contract Process**
After the student has located a potential internship site, a meeting with the Field Experience Coordinator is needed to work on the contract phase. This includes the following steps:

• The student will complete an **Agency Application.**
• After that is completed, the Field Experience Coordinator will call the site and discuss the internship with the agency.
• Identify insurance or affiliation agreement needs with the Field Experience Coordinator.
• Know whether or not you are completing a 10 credit or 12 credit Field Experience prior to this phone call.
• Discuss starting and completion dates with both the agency and the university before this phone call is generated.
• It may be determined that you are responsible for obtaining professional liability insurance. One form of professional liability insurance can be obtained through the Field Experience Coordinator’s office.

Upon agreement of both the agency and the Field Experience Coordinator, a **Letter of Agreement** (contract) will be initiated by Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. Sometimes it takes a very long time before this signed contract is returned to Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. It is important to remember your placement at this internship site hinges on the contract being signed by both the agency and Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania and that the student has met all academic requirements. The following forms are included for your information.
Professional Field Experience
Agency Application

(To be completed by the student)

Student Name: _________________________________________________________

Current living address: __________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Proposed Agency _______________________________________________________

Proposed Agency Supervisor_______________________________________________

Agency Supervisor’s Title _________________________________________________

Agency Supervisor’s Address ______________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Agency Supervisor’s Phone Number _________________________________________

Agency Supervisor’s email _________________________________________________

Degree/s _______________________________________________________________

Length of employment with the agency ______________________________________

Length of time within the field _____________________________________________

Number of university credits: □ 10 or □12 or □ 14

Start Date: _______________________________________________________________

End Date: ________________________________________________________________

(Proposed University Supervisor: _________________________________)
A Letter of Agreement is a binding contract between the internship agency and Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. It must be completed prior to the start of your professional field experience.

It is a document initiated by the field experience coordinator and sent under a separate cover. Your agency supervisor will receive this document and must return it prior to your start at the agency. You will also receive a copy of this document for your records. This is a binding document.
## Important Phone Numbers

**Recreation Management Department Faculty (Offices are located in Himes Building)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Leonard Long</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>570-484-2573</td>
<td><a href="mailto:llong@lhup.edu">llong@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community/Commercial Recreation Track Field Experience Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kim Batty</td>
<td>Community/Commercial Track Coordinator</td>
<td>570-484-3092</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kbatty@lhup.edu">kbatty@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Steven Guthrie</td>
<td>Outdoor Recreation Track Challenge Course Coordinator</td>
<td>570-484-2439</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sguthrie@lhup.edu">sguthrie@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Julie Lammel</td>
<td>Therapeutic Recreation Track Coordinator</td>
<td>570-484-2826</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlammel@lhup.edu">jlammel@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jeff Walsh</td>
<td>Outdoor Recreation Track Coordinator Field Experience Supervisor</td>
<td>570-484-2232</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jwalsh@lhup.edu">jwalsh@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Brian Wilt</td>
<td>Fitness Management Track Coordinator</td>
<td>570-484-2292</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bwilt@lhup.edu">bwilt@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Secretary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>570-484-2299</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bvuocolo@lhup.edu">bvuocolo@lhup.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Department Fax Number** 570-484-3025
Conclusion

Congratulations, you are now ready to begin your RECR 425 – Professional Field Experience. If you have any questions regarding the placement process, please contact the University Field Experience Coordinator.

You will be assigned a University Field Experience Supervisor, please contact your supervisor for questions that relate to your actual internship experience. You will now be able to refer to the Professional Field Experience Student Workbook for course policies, procedures and assignments.