

**Guidelines  
For  
Graduate Professional  
Field Experience**

**LIBM 6390  
Library Media/Information Technologies**

**Introduction**

The entry-level degree for the profession of school library media specialist is considered to be the master's degree. Working within the learning community, the library media specialist should use the skills "...collaboration, leadership, and technology as they perform their learning and teaching, information access and delivery, and program administration duties." (*Information Power*, 1998, p. 49). The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has established guidelines for Library Media Licensure Endorsement which states that candidates must complete an approved performance-based program of study and must pass the required assessment (Praxis II, Library Media Specialist, test #0310). Additionally, ten skills as defined by the ADE are strongly recommended as background/training before candidates take the assessment.

The academic preparation for a school library media specialist at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) consists of a program of studies totaling 36 hours including a three-credit hour course which calls for a directed field experience in a library media program, coordinated by a university faculty member in cooperation with an experienced library media specialist (field supervisor). The 36-hour program emphasizes all ten of the skills as defined by the ADE as necessary background. The directed field experience or practicum, however, stresses three of these ADE recommendations: Professionalism, Promotion, and Program Planning.

The practicum is designed to prepare the students to work in the most effective ways possible before joining their learning communities as fully-licensed library media professionals. Each student's one hundred twenty hours of practical field experience is designed to meet the background, experiences, and logistics of the current educational setting for the student. Supervised hours of the practicum are to be performed under the guidance of a master's degree library media specialist. Additional opportunities for "shadowing" a library media professional along with hours spent at professional meetings, inservices, or preparation of projects related to the three skills of professionalism, promotion, and program planning are approved through the university's practicum coordinator. The culminating activity is a notebook, parts of which may be used as part of the student's portfolio. *The student is to keep the notebook and send assignments as completed to the practicum coordinator for grading.*

Since the practicum is considered a capstone experience, the faculty of the Library Media/Information Technology Department has voted in favor of a policy whereby students must be either at the conclusion of their program of studies or have completed no less than 24 graduate hours toward the program of study before applying for a practicum. This serves to ensure that the student will have the requisite theoretical background to perform satisfactorily. The faculty also strongly recommends that students complete the practicum in both elementary and secondary settings in order to be able to seek a P-12 license. Additional coursework, however, may also be a requirement.

The accompanying guidelines consisting of both policies and procedures are to explain further the purpose the practicum seeks to accomplish.

### **Roles of Practicum Coordinator, Field Supervisor, and Practicum Student**

In accordance with NCATE criteria, the practicum involves a three-member team of practicum coordinator, field supervisor, and practicum student. Each has a well-defined charge to support the successful experience as the education student assumes responsibility in the school setting. The roles and responsibilities of each team member are therefore delineated in negotiated written assignments beginning with the Memorandum of Application (Appendix 2).

#### **The Practicum Coordinator**

The department chairman has the ultimate responsibility for site selection; syllabus requirements and interpretation (See Appendix 1); and coordination in planning a schedule for the student with the assistance of the field supervisor. Faculty members advise students to contact the practicum coordinator at the mid-point of the semester prior to the semester when the students plan to participate in the practical field experience. This is usually done through e-mail communication. After students review the Practical Field Experience Guidelines, submit the Practicum Application via e-mail, the 120-hour schedule is negotiated and is usually in place by the beginning of the semester. The practicum coordinator schedules two on-campus practicum orientation sessions as collaborative activities with new student orientation and portfolio presentations. During the semester the student takes the practicum, the coordinator makes at least one on-site visit; reviews activities, as needed, with the field supervisors; and evaluates the Learning Community Report (Appendix 3), Log of Activities (Appendix 4) and the projects and their corresponding cover reports. Since reflective participation in professional activities

is one of the three areas of concentration for the practicum, the practicum coordinator attends a professional activity each semester the practicum is offered and students are encouraged, though not required, to attend the activity. These are: Fall Semester, Arkansas Library Association Conference; Spring Semester, Arkansas Association for Instructional Media Spring Conference; and Summer I, Hot Springs Technology Institute. If students attend these meetings, this gives them another opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with the practicum coordinator. The practicum coordinator also visits students who might be a part of an on-campus class.

### **The Field Supervisor**

This important member of the team has the final responsibility for confirming the practicum schedule, guiding the student, as needed, through the project preparation, and preparing the Checklist of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions (Appendix 6). This individual should provide the student with an orientation to the characteristics of both uses of the library media center and the community environment. Supervisors are also asked to help students build a file of professional policies and other materials which might be used to complete the Learning Community Report. Finally, the supervisor should hold an evaluation conference with the student to review the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which are strengths and, conversely, which need improvement. Suggestions for improvement may be a part of this conference.

### **The Practicum Students**

When students commit to fulfill the obligations inherent in realizing goals and objectives of the Practicum, they also commit to professional behavior and to all the responsibilities inherent in this behavior. It is the student's obligation to keep the schedule negotiated

with the coordinator and field supervisor as submitted in the Practicum Application; to prepare, after gathering appropriate data, a Learning Community Report (Appendix 3); to track the hours, activities, and projects in a practicum “Log of Activities” (Appendix 4); and to submit three projects with a cover document for each (Appendix 5). Each project will deal with one area of the three areas as described by the ADE document:

professionalism, promotion, and program planning.

Students should continuously seek guidance from the field supervisor and the practicum coordinator regarding opportunities to diagnose and solve problems that involve application of principles and theories from the knowledge bases gained in their coursework. The student will maintain a notebook which will contain the Practicum Application; the Learning Community Report (See Appendix 3) the Log of Activities (See Appendix 4); copies of the three projects, if appropriate, with the corresponding cover reports (See Appendix 5); a copy of the completed Checklist of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions (See Appendix 6) along with documentation of a conference between the primary field supervisor and the student. A completed Practicum Evaluation Form (See Appendix 7) may also be submitted by the student.

### **Evaluation of the Field Experience**

Throughout the practical field experience, there should be constant collaboration among all three members of the practicum team. By using information technologies and communication technologies students have the opportunity for constant feedback. The field supervisor provides leadership in teaching and learning activities, information access and delivery activities, and program administration activities. Additionally, the field supervisor evaluates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the students and

articulates those to the student. The practicum coordinator constantly monitors students utilizing communication technologies; provides feedback during on-site visits; provides leadership in professional development activities; reviews the Log of Activities and the Checklist of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; and evaluates the Memorandum of Application, the Learning Community Report, the three projects and the cover reports for each project. At the conclusion of the 120 hours, the student may complete the Practicum Evaluation (Appendix 7). This document asks the student to review the objectives of the experience and assess how well these objectives were met. This combination of involvement assures that practice will reflect theory and sound application.

In order to provide reflective practice throughout the semester of the practical field experience, students will submit materials for grading before the end of the semester. The Learning Community Report and ONE of the projects (with its cover sheet) will both be due prior to the mid-point of the semester. The final two projects with project cover sheets will be due approximately one week before final exams. The completed checklist and activity log will be due during final exams week.

### **Non-Performance of Field Experience**

In the event of non-performance or non-completion of the field experience the student will receive a WP (withdrawn passing), WF (withdrawn failing), X (incomplete) or a failing grade dependent on the situation.

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**Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>Course Syllabus</b>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>LIBM Practicum Application</b>
<b>Appendix 3.....</b>	<b>Learning Community Report</b>
<b>Appendix 4.....</b>	<b>Log of Activities</b>
<b>Appendix 5.....</b>	<b>Project Descriptions</b>
<b>Appendix 6.....</b>	<b>Checklist of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions</b>
<b>Appendix 7.....</b>	<b>Practicum Evaluation</b>