

# Master of Science in Health Informatics- Practicum Guidelines

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The goal of the 150 hour practicum experience is to explore an area of healthcare informatics. Some options include areas of SQL or Java, EPIC, UML, UP, HIE, use of report writing software such as Tableau or Crystal Reports, clinical Record Template Development and other Health Information Technology projects. Other opportunities/experiences do exist and all have final approval by the faculty member of the practicum course. All preceptors and sites are initially approved by the lead faculty or assistant dean for graduate studies.

## Selecting a Healthcare Informatics Preceptor and Site

Once students have decided upon their area of interest in informatics, they are ready to select their preceptor. Students may already know an expert or specialist in the field with whom they would like to work. Preceptors may include: managers that work in informatics, Chief Medical Informatics officers (CMIO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), clinic administrators, Health Information Management (HIM) department specialists, informatic department specialists, and compliance and revenue integrity and revenue informatics specialists. If they do not know what they want to do, it is recommended to look at the AHIMA and AMIA websites, individual state component associations such as AzHIMA, HIMSS and AzHie to help identify project sites. Projects should add value/benefit to the organization chosen. Students cannot be paid for their practicum time.

## Healthcare Informatics Preceptor Requirements

- Must hold a master's degree in Healthcare Informatics, Bioinformatics, Public Health Informatics, HIM, Information Technology, Nursing Informatics or graduate degree in a related discipline.
- Provide opportunities to work with other informatics and HIM professionals as appropriate to augment the practicum experience.
- Minimum of 2 years current work experience in informatics, IT or HIM. This can be within a hospital or clinic setting.
- Minimum of 3 months at current employer.
- Able to provide an educational experience that will help meet overall practicum objective and personal learning objectives
- Preceptor willingness and time available to mentor students learning by serving as a resource during the practicum time.
- Preceptor is experientially and academically prepared
- Preceptors cannot be relatives, personal friends or a current GCU student

Students must make an appointment to interview their potential preceptor. They must share their objectives for their practicum with him or her. Students must determine what do they want to learn and how do they best see themselves learning it. Students must discuss this with their potential preceptor and see if their preceptors' responses fits with the students' learning needs and learning styles. Students should determine if they are comfortable with this potential preceptor. More importantly, they must determine if they are comfortable making a mistake and taking feedback from this person. Those are critical pieces of a practicum experience and the success of the practicum may be directly related to the preceptor selected and how the student works with that person. So this selection process may be one of the most important steps in the overall practicum experience.

Students should not hesitate to thank a prospective preceptor for their time, but should not select them as their preceptor if they do not feel it is a good fit. It just is not the foundation for a good learning experience. Students must not make a final commitment to their potential preceptor until they have Office of Field Experience approval. All preceptors and sites are approved by the lead faculty or the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Evaluation Documentation for MHI Students

All students completing any field experience will be asked to document their hours. GCU uses an electronic documentation system

- Students in this program are required to complete TIME LOGS ONLY not case logs.
- All hours must be completed and signed off/approved by their preceptor no later than at mid-term and end of term.
- Failure to do so will result in point reductions on mid-term and final evaluations. Students will not receive a passing course grade unless all hours are approved by the preceptor.
- Faculty members will provide final validation of all clinical/practicum hours
- Field Experience Counselors are available for questions and assistance with this program if needed.

## Field Experience Documentation Checklist – MHI

The following documentation may be required and can be scanned and uploaded to one's student file, via the student portal. It is requested that the students organize the required documents after the checklist in the order of the checklist if possible. Note: A

student's practicum site may require additional or different health and safety documents than those in the lists below, as stipulated in an affiliation agreement.

- Field Experience Site Information Form
- Copy of current Healthcare Insurance Card
- HIPAA/FERPA Confidentiality form
- Immunizations or Titers for the following: TB, Influenza, Tetanus, MMRx2, Varicella, HepBx3
- Preceptor Current Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- Acknowledgment of Field Experience Guidelines

The deadline to submit required documentation is generally a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the planned practicum course. Documentation submitted late may result in a later registration of the practicum course. Students should submit their documentation early to avoid a delay in their practicum/clinical start date.

## Evaluations

### Practicum Course Evaluations

A pre-meeting between the student and preceptor will occur prior to starting practicum hours and this will include a review of the course objectives and identified project focused experiences. The preceptor and student will attest to meeting by signing the preceptor approval form and submitting to the classroom in the first week for faculty approval of the proposed experiences.

The Midterm and final evaluations are completed electronically. The practicum faculty will contact the preceptor at midterm by phone, skype, facetime or any other desired virtual modality and the faculty member will complete the midterm evaluation electronically with the input of the preceptor. The final evaluation will be completed electronically by the preceptor and reviewed with the student. The valuable feedback/input given by the preceptors on the students' performance will then receive a final review and evaluation by the practicum faculty.

At the end of practicum, Students will submit an electronic evaluation of the preceptor and site that is reviewed by the faculty. All evaluations that have any "below expectations" will be sent to the program lead for review and further investigation.