



PRACTICUM SITE HOST EXPECTATIONS



Student Affairs Administration
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Student Affairs Administration (SAA) program at Arkansas Tech University is a student development based graduate program aimed at preparing professionals for full-time employment in the higher education environment. A key component in this training is an opportunity for students to apply the theories and practices learned in their classes at a higher education site. We do this through the practicum courses (SAA 6083, 6283, or 6093). Each student is required to complete one practicum where they log 100 hours in a supervised higher education environment. Students desiring more experience in the field have the option to take a second practicum in a different area as one of their electives.

| Practicum Provides Students | Practicum Provides Site Host |
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| New perspectives to future practitioners on best practices in the functional area | New perspectives and ideas about operations within the office |
| An experiential learning experience, reinforcing concepts learned in the classroom | Mentoring opportunities for new professionals |
| Assists students with networking in student affairs | Opportunities to keep current on the latest trends/research impacting the Student Affairs field |

Practicum Site Supervisor

As a practicum site supervisor, you have an important role in the education of our Student Affairs Administration graduate students. Students enrolled in a practicum course will have a course instructor, who will assist the student with managing their experience and helping them process what they are learning. As a site host, you will also assist in the educational process for the student. We seek practicum site hosts who have educational credentials (preferably a Master's degree or higher) and/or years of professional experience in the field.

Suggested Site Host Expectations

- ✓ **Preliminary Interview**—Interview prospective practicum students and inform them about the daily operations of their respective office. Help them gain an understanding of what professionals in this particular office do so the student can see if this is an experience they want to gain.
- ✓ **Assist with Contract Development**—The contract outlines the broad goals for the experience along with more specific objectives. The site supervisor, student, and class instructor must sign and all approve the contract prior to the student beginning the experience.
- ✓ **Education Regarding Functional Area**—Orient the student to the purpose, goals, and operating procedures of the practicum site.
- ✓ **NASPA/ACPA Competencies**— Include at least a competency in the student's experience. Demonstrate the significance of the competency guiding the student's work.
- ✓ **Make the Experience Meaningful**—Provide meaningful work/assignments/projects to the student so they can see what a professional working in this particular office may be asked to complete.
- ✓ **Feedback**— Provide feedback on a regular basis to the practicum student highlighting their progress throughout the practicum experience.
- ✓ **Complete an Evaluation Survey**— At the end of the semester, you will provide the instructor with feedback regarding the student's performance. We would like you to perform this evaluation with the student so the student can ask questions or get clarification on areas they may need improvement to be successful in the field.

Site Host Friendly Reminders

Practicum students are usually trying to balance full-time employment, a full load of graduate classes, and other life obligations. We ask our site hosts to offer suggestions to those practicum students struggling with learning how to balance their in-class and out-of-class obligations. Working in student affairs students will need to learn how to juggle many obligations at one time and we know as site hosts you can give these students effective time management tips.

Expose the student to resources (i.e., websites, professional organizations, articles, books, individuals, etc.) specific to the practicum area that will give them more exposure to understanding this particular functional area. For example-referring students completing a practicum in academic advising to the NACADA Journal and website.

Students are asked to seek practicums that will give them exposure to experiences they do not have. Therefore, students will not be allowed to earn practicum credit for work that is considered part of their current job or assistantship responsibilities.

You are not required to pay students for their practicum hours worked or a stipend. However, if you have the resources to do so, students are appreciative.



Thank you for working with our practicum students and giving them this opportunity to put what they are learning in the classroom into practice. Our site hosts are often seen as mentors to our practicum students and can provide a realistic picture of what it means to be a student affairs administrator.

If you have any questions or need further clarification on these expectations/guidelines, please contact the SAA Program Director, Dr. Rene Couture at 479-356-2007 or by e-mail at rcouture@atu.edu