1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of course work and practice is an integral part of your training as an applied psychologist. To achieve this, students in the I/O program complete an extensive practicum to prepare for professional careers in I/O psychology. Practica allow students to develop hands-on skills and gain real-world experience in applied research and problem solving. The purpose of this handbook is to give you an overview of the practicum requirements, procedures, and opportunities available to you.

Students in the terminal masters program may elect to complete a practicum OR a thesis. The practicum option consists of 300 hours of I/O-related work at an approved practicum site and the completion of a technical report describing the practicum experience and I/O work. Although the I/O program offers assistance in searching for a practicum placement, it is ultimately up to the student to secure his/her position.

2. OVERVIEW OF PRACTICUM PROGRAM & EXPECTATIONS

Practicum placements may be made in local, national, and international organizations or with independent consultants in which the student engages in supervised activities related to one or more areas of I/O Psychology. Students are encouraged to start their practica in their second or third semester in the program, or between the two, during the summer. After a suitable practicum site and supervisor have been identified, an agreement is prepared that outlines the activities and learning goals that will comprise the practicum (see Appendix A). In addition to the Practicum Agreement, all students registered for a practicum are responsible for handing in a final technical report at the completion of their practicum (see Appendix B). Practica may be completed at a place where the student is already employed, but there must be evidence that the project completed represents work beyond the normal job requirements.

Each practicum is unique and will engage and train different knowledge, skills and abilities. Overall, students can expect to work in an area of I/O psychology and develop transferrable skills and broaden their knowledge of the field. Students are also expected to develop and demonstrate personal characteristics such as initiative and working with minimal supervision. While managers typically expect adaptability, initiative and individual contribution, students should ask questions and clarify goals when necessary. While the majority of organizations provide performance feedback, it is not a guarantee; you may need to ask for it. If you do receive performance feedback, it is likely to be provided informally in coaching or mentoring sessions. See appendix C for sample performance evaluation forms.

A SIOP survey of practicum supervisors found that supervisors are looking for students to demonstrate several competencies. Keep these in mind as you are applying for, interviewing for and completing a practicum. While technical skills (particularly statistical knowledge) are considered important, practicum supervisors emphasized interpersonal skills, work ethic (e.g., conscientiousness, results orientation), and ability to demonstrate initiative and be proactive. Communication skills are also critical, especially the ability to translate complex statistical or methodological information into business or lay-terminology. Additionally, practicum supervisors mentioned quality orientation, adaptability, continuous learning (e.g., recognizes weaknesses, seeks information, quick learner, accepts feedback), and problem solving as being key characteristics of effective interns. Finally, respondents indicated that effective interns understand the constraints placed on I/O research techniques in business environments and are willing and able to make appropriate trade-offs between scientific rigor and business realities.
3. TIMELINE

1. Prepare resume/cover letter (section 4.1)
2. Discuss plans with Advisor
   a. Advisors can review resumes and suggest potential practicum sites
3. Obtain Practicum Contact List from the Director of The Center for Organizational Effectiveness
   a. The Director can review resumes and suggest potential practicum sites
4. Obtain a practicum placement (see section 4.3)
5. Complete the Practicum Agreement (see section 4.4)
   a. The Director of The Center will provide an electronic version of the agreement form
6. Register for practicum credits (a total of 6 credits are required)
7. Work at least 300 hours
8. Prepare technical report (see section 4.5)
9. Take Master’s Exam (see section 4.6)

4. THE DETAILS

4.1 Students should prepare their resume and cover letter early in their second semester and contact the Director of the Center for Organizational Effectiveness for local contact information from which to start their search. Some of the local organizations that past students have had practicum experiences at include Harris, Intersil, DEOMI, Brevard County Human Resources, and Dictaphone. Discuss your plans with your advisor and ask your advisor or the Director of The Center to review your resume (if necessary).

4.2 Deliverables: Students completing a practicum will register for six hours of practicum credit (PSY 5496) and participate in at least 300 hours of actual work time. Students will also prepare a final technical report regarding the work they performed and take the Master’s Specialty Exam during their final semester.

4.3 Many practicum projects will overlap semesters and/or interims between semesters. This is acceptable. You may also complete your practicum hours by participating in a practicum in more than one location or on more than one project. If you do not complete your practicum in the semester you are enrolled for the hours, you will not be assigned a final grade until the work is completed. You have one year to finish the work and change the grade before it reverts to a failed grade and potential for dismissal from the program.

Projects are designed after consultation between the on-site supervisor, the supervising faculty member, and the graduate student. It is recognized that the practicum may involve other work-related activities besides the "official" project. The project should
serve as an activity that can be clearly linked to the research base of I/O psychology, and may involve the collection and analysis of data. Students will be expected to do background reading and preparation for the project based on literature from I/O psychology.

4.4 **Practicum Agreement** Students will prepare a written statement of the tasks to be accomplished and what they will learn from the experience. This information will be included in the final Practicum Agreement. The Practicum Agreement should be completed jointly by the student and his/her practicum supervisor. An electronic version of the practicum agreement can be obtained from The Director of The Center (see the sample Practicum Agreement in Appendix A).

The proposed project will be evaluated based on the extent that it is: (a) related to an area of I/O psychology, (b) of potential service to the organization, and (c) of learning benefit to the student.

Return final Practicum Agreement to the Director of The Center as well as your advisor.

4.5 **Technical Report** Upon completion of the practicum, a technical report will be completed that details the I/O-related work done, projects worked on, relationship to the literature/class learnings, and personal reflections. This report should be turned in to the student’s faculty advisor and Director of The Center upon completion of the practicum. The Director of The Center has sample technical reports that students can review.

The technical report may include the following sections. The structure and content of the technical report may be modified to suit the individual practicum experience.

- Executive Summary
- Company Information
- Work Details
  - Discussion of the project/s, what did you do, with whom did you work, what was your role in the project, how does it apply to IO, how does it coincide with what you learned in class (fit with class work and non fit with class work)
- Introspection (what did you learn, was it a good experience, how could the experience have been improved, journal of work experiences)
- Appendices (timesheets, practicum agreement, documents/materials created)

4.6 **Master’s Specialty Exam** The purpose of the master’s specialty exam is to assess the master’s level graduate student’s competence in the content areas directly associated with I/O psychology and covered in our curriculum and coursework. The exam consists of 3 to 5 questions in memo format. At least one question will involve data analysis. The student is expected to provide evidence-based, practical answers/solutions to the problems identified in the memo questions. It is an open book exam and relevant written material (appropriately cited) may be used to formulate answers. We are looking for applied answers that can be justified by readings from articles and books from your classes, as well as the most current literature from the field.
The Master’s Specialty Exam is taken over a weekend near the end of the final semester. Dates will be agreed upon by all students participating in the exam and the Exam Committee in February of the student’s final semester. An orientation session will be conducted for all students taking the master’s specialty exam; all students are expected to attend. The student will receive the exam from the chair of the Master’s Exam Committee on Friday afternoon. Students may ask questions at that point but once they accept the exam they are on their own. The student will be required to return the exam questions and final report by 5:00 p.m. the following Monday. The test taker may use any available library resources, books, notes etc; however, the test taker will not be allowed to solicit help from other individuals. All resources used must be appropriately cited.

Each question is graded on a 1-5 scale with 1 being unacceptable, 3 being competent and 5 being exceptional. Students with an average score across all questions of 3.0 or better have probably passed.

Students who fail will be allowed to retake the examination twice. Examinations will be re-administered the following academic semester (i.e., if the exam was taken in the spring semester the second exam will be administered during the summer semester). Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to continue to register in the same major, or to attempt again to pass the Final Program Exam in the same major, after the exam has been failed three times.

If a student becomes ill or has a death in the family over the testing weekend and is unable to complete the exam, written documentation is required for a make-up exam. If the exam is not completed over the testing weekend and no written documentation is provided, the exam grade will be ‘fail’.
5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Students

Students will be evaluated and graded based upon how well they fulfill the following requirements:

1. Define areas of interest for the practicum course work within the first year of study. Prepare a resume.

2. Locate an appropriate organization for completion of practicum requirements. This may be an organization referred by a faculty member; however, it is up to the student to make contact with the organization, interview, and market themselves in such a way that facilitates placement. For students who are already working for a proposed practicum organization, the scope of the project and logged hours must demonstrate that the practicum entails more than normal job duties and responsibilities.

3. Register for practicum hours (PSY 5496) through regular Florida Tech School of Psychology procedures.

4. Prepare a written agreement documenting expectations for the practicum experience and get faculty and on-site supervisor approval of its specific behavioral and outcome-oriented objectives. This agreement needs to be completed within the first two weeks of the practicum or prior to logging more than 40 hours toward completion. A student will not be given credit for more than 40 hours toward practicum completion unless an approved agreement is in place. (See Appendix A for sample Practicum Agreement)

The agreement between the student and the organization must specify the following:

   a. The learning objectives of the practicum for the student and the proposed benefit to the organization.

   b. The number of credit hours and actual work hours that are to be fulfilled by the placement.

   c. The processes and products that will be involved in the practicum. The process component should include the activities that will be performed, who the student will work with, and how the work will be accomplished (e.g., library research, interviews, etc.). This portion should resemble a brief job analysis of what will be done with specific task statements. Products include written or other physical documentation or deliverables, such as surveys or manuals that are produced as a result of the practicum.

   d. Payment terms, if applicable.

   e. The names and signatures of the student and the on-site supervisor (and full contact information) indicating consent to the agreement. Be sure the agreement is dated and signed.

5. Maintain a log of hours and experiences documenting the practicum participation, including specific times, dates, and activities. See the sample time sheet in Appendix
B. Some practicum sites require students to log their hours worked; if so, this will be sufficient to meet the time tracking requirement.

6. Demonstrate professional behavior and maintain professional ethics in all work performed on site. APA has published ethical standards to which all students should refer. In addition, there are ethical guidelines that have been developed for I/O service providers under the sponsorship of Division 14 of APA, The Society for I/O Psychology (SIOP).

7. Maintain the confidentiality of the organization and respect the business practices that make the organization unique within its industry.

8. Complete a journal throughout the entire practicum. Students should keep their faculty supervisor informed of problems or new developments encountered during the practicum. If unforeseen circumstances arise, the student is responsible for renegotiating the agreement as necessary. The journal should:

   a. Document progress on the project and summarize what has been completed toward fulfilling the negotiated agreement
   b. Include reflections and thoughts on the project work, organizational realities encountered and learning points.

9. Complete a technical report due to the faculty advisor and Director of The Center after the completion of the practicum. It is the student’s responsibility to let their faculty advisor know when the practicum has been completed and agree on a deadline for the technical report. The technical report should include:

   a. Discuss the project or work completed in detail. What was the project? What did you do? What was your role?
   b. Literature review of areas associated with project work.
   c. Identification of any obstacles encountered and measures taken to overcome the obstacles.
   d. Work samples and documents produced for the project, such as a survey or job analysis.
   e. Completed journal.
   f. Completed timesheet.
   g. Practicum Agreement.

10. Provide feedback on whether or not the practicum site should be considered for future placements.

5.2 Faculty/Center Director

1. Maintain a current file of previous/active practicum sites for use by students in identifying practicum possibilities.
2. Assist students in the definition and identification of practicum projects such that the scope and standards are consistent with other projects completed in the I/O program.

3. Review and approve practicum projects. Provide feedback that facilitates the revision of the agreement.

4. Assist student and on-site supervisor with problems and technical expertise as required by the nature of the agreement and the practicum. This may include reviewing drafts of documents (such as surveys or handbooks) or assisting with data analysis.

5. Coordinate with front office IO secretary to maintain individual student practicum files by placing reviewed and approved agreements, behavioral observations, final reports, on-site supervisor correspondence, and other documentation in student files.

6. Maintain the confidentiality of the organization and respect the business practices that make the organization unique within its industry.

7. Review final practicum documentation and technical report for quality and consistency with the initial/renegotiated agreement.

8. Provide specific and constructive feedback to the student.

9. Assign a final practicum grade based upon the student's fulfillment of the responsibilities outlined above.

5.3 Practicum Supervisor

1. Inform I/O program coordinator of the organization's interest in practicum students. This should also include any special skills or requirements involved, time commitment and proposed compensation to the student, if any.

2. Interview potential practicum students and provide feedback to the department about the acceptance or rejection based upon fit with the organization's needs and expectations. Care should be taken to assure that the acceptance or rejection of students is done on the basis of job-related criteria so that the School of Psychology can provide constructive feedback to students. Florida Tech is committed to equal opportunity for all students; placements should be made without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin, age, handicap, or veteran statues in compliance with applicable educational and employment law.

3. Negotiate a specific behavioral agreement with the student for the conduct and conclusion of practicum activities. As far as is possible, the agreement should specify the time schedule for work as well as the due dates for practicum projects and completion and payment terms. Standards of performance and desired outcomes should be included.

4. Supervise the practicum in a manner similar to supervision given employees of the organization. This should include being available for consultation and decisions required for the completion of the agreement, review and feedback of the student's projects, products, and behavior.

5. Contact the faculty advisor for assistance with any problems or unforeseen circumstances that needs attention.
6. Allow students access to the information, products, and people needed to successfully complete practicum assignments.

8. Evaluate students on the performance and products involved in the completion of the practicum in accordance with the original agreement. The on-site coordinator/supervisor will be contacted upon completion of the practicum to provide feedback and a performance evaluation of the student.
Appendix A

Sample Practicum Agreement
Sample Practicum Agreement
STUDENT NAME
DATE

STUDENT NAME will work toward meeting her practicum requirements under the supervision of
PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR working on the PROJECT NAME/CLIENT ORGANIZATION

NOTE: THESE ARE SAMPLES
Expected hours: approx. 15-20 hours per week, October 2002 though January 2003.
Pay Rate: $10/hour, weekly time sheets to be submitted to Project Manager
Course Credit: PSY 5496 – 6 credits
Primary Supervisor:
Phone:
Email:

Major Tasks & Responsibilities (SAMPLE)
- Developing task statements and preparing a script for telephone interviews
- Constructing a needs assessment survey
- Completing a literature review on the elements of good curriculum design
- Designing a performance appraisal tool
- Analyzing data received from the performance appraisal
- Devising detailed curriculum recommendations based on the data collected.

Practical Learning Objectives (SAMPLE)
- Developing job analysis and interviewing skills
- Learning how to conduct a needs assessment
- Understanding how to complete curriculum design
- Applying data collection and analysis skills gained from courses taken.

End of Project Technical Report Due to advisor and Dr. Steelman no later than 2 weeks after completion
of project/final deliverables. Student must notify Dr. Steelman when hours are completed.

By signing this form, the student agrees to complete the assigned work to the best of his or her ability at
all times. The student agrees to professionally represent Florida Tech and demonstrate professional
behavior and maintain professional ethics in all work performed. Further, the student acknowledges that
this is not a contract of employment and should the student or employer fail to meet the requirements and
expectations of the practicum agreement, the relationship may be terminated.

Student Date

Practicum Supervisor Date
Sample Practicum Agreement

STUDENT NAME
DATE

STUDENT NAME will work toward meeting her practicum requirements under the supervision of
PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR working on the Executive Assessments for DDI, India

NOTE: THESE ARE SAMPLES

Expected hours: 40 hours per week, August 2007-March 2008
Pay Rate:
Course Credit: PSY 5496 – 6 credits
Primary Supervisor:
Phone:
Email:

Major Tasks & Responsibilities (SAMPLE)
  o Receive and process resourcing requests from Business or Managing Consultants, Clients, other DDI offices
  o Assist in the development of DDI test in the Indian Market
  o Set up data storage for executive assessment data
  o Conduct analysis of executive assessment data for client feedback purposes
  o Prepare client presentations
  o Ensure delivery of all materials prior to assessment centre
  o Be present on assessment day if needed to ensure smooth delivery of assessment

Practical Learning Objectives (SAMPLE)
  o Developing business acumen by dealing with clients and consultants
  o Learning the application of Assessment Centers
  o Learning the application of Testing solutions
  o Applying data collection and analysis skills gained from courses taken to real world data

End of Project Technical Report Due to advisor and Dr. Steelman no later than 2 weeks after completion of project/final deliverables. Student must notify Dr. Steelman when hours are completed.

By signing this form, the student agrees to complete the assigned work to the best of his or her ability at all times. The student agrees to professionally represent Florida Tech and demonstrate professional behavior and maintain professional ethics in all work performed. Further, the student acknowledges that this is not a contract of employment and should the student or employer fail to meet the requirements and expectations of the practicum agreement, the relationship may be terminated.

Student Date

Practicum Supervisor Date
Appendix B

Sample Time Sheet
## Sample Time Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Tasks Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wrote Job Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reviewed job descriptions with supervisor, made revisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

Week 7

Week 8

Week 9

Week 10

Week 11

Week 12

Week 13

Week 14

Week 15
Appendix C

Sample Performance Evaluations
Sample Evaluation of Intern

Date: 01/01/04
Supervisor: Jane Doe
Intern: John Smith
Location: Company X

Instructions: Please rate your intern on his or her performance during the practicum experience with you. Please use the following scale to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Thank you for your time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Intern:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Worked well with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Had basic statistical skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Demonstrated effective written communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Demonstrated effective verbal communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Demonstrated good organizational skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Was reliable (on time to meetings, worked when he or she had committed to working)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Was open to learning and continuous improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Demonstrated flexibility and a customer orientation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Had a quality focus, a commitment to producing high quality work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Was always professional in his or her dealings with others and the organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is someone I would be willing to work with again</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
Sample Evaluation of Practicum Experience

Date: 01/01/04  
Supervisor: Jane Doe  
Intern: John Smith  
Location: Company X

Instructions: Please provide information on your practicum experience by rating the following statements. Please use the following scale to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Thank you for your time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>My practicum experience as a whole was extremely beneficial.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I would recommend my practicum site to other students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel my supervisor utilized me to my fullest potential.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>My supervisor gave me helpful feedback.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I was worked on a challenging project.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I was able to apply what I learn in class to my practicum.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>My supervisor provided assistance as necessary to help me with the projects I was assigned.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>My practicum experience helped improve my overall skills as an I/O psychologist.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>My practicum provided me with useful information.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>If given the chance to go back and choose a different practicum, I would still choose the same one.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments: