

## Internships & Practicum in Online Programs

### Question:

I am interested in whether your institutions have internships or practicum experiences for your online students. If you do, how many on-site hours do you require per credit hour awarded, and what is the length of time for students to complete (i.e. 8 weeks or 16 weeks)? Since many online students are working adults, does this present more challenges to work these experiences into their curriculum?

- Janet R. Clark, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
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### Answers:

Rio Salado College does require field experience hours in our online education courses. It does depend on the credit hours. We do all the placement, we request that students provide us three options for placements in their area and we secure the site. Paperwork is required to be completed by the mentor teacher and we provide the mentor teachers a small stipend for their participation. The time frame depends on the courses time frame. Most of our 14 week courses, require a 20 hour field experience component. The field experience is broken into several parts: 10 hours of observation, 5 hours of tutoring, and 5 hours of instructional practice.

- Christine Burke, Student Success Coach, Rio Salado College
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I can only answer part of your questions. Most of the online programs with internships are for graduate programs. Many of them can do the internship at their work place by completing special projects. The parameters are defined by the program coordinators.

- Linda S. Futch, Ed.D., Department Head, Center for Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida
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As a rule, three semester credits of practicum involve a minimum of 150 hours of a student's time and 12 to 15 hours of a practicum supervisor's time. We then offer practicums that can vary from 6 to 12 hours in our Masters programs. This is for a 16-week course schedule if it is 12 hours and can be 6 if it is for less time.



If we are working with licensure programs, the hours are dictated by the program.

- Michelle Whitman, Director of Instructional Technology and Assessment, Prescott College

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You probably already know this, but another factor to consider with field experiences is that activity is regulated in a number of states. I know you're in Indiana, a SARA state, which reduces the regulatory burden for internships significantly. However, you will want to be aware of the non-SARA state regulations. I'm assuming you're also talking about programs that do not lead to any kind of professional licensure. If they do, though, then you have another set of standards to review because states may have different requirements about the number of hours, the supervision, etc., in order for a program to meet the professional licensure requirements.

On a side note - there are many terms used by institutions for the activity of supervised (or non-supervised) field experiences. In the context of state authorization it doesn't matter what your institution calls the activity; what matters are the details of the activity itself. That is what determines whether or not it is regulated.

- Sharyl J. Thompson, CEO, State Authorization, Consulting Services

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I used to teach such undergraduate courses when I was teaching at the University of Illinois Springfield (in Springfield Illinois). You can contact someone at that school in the Experiential Learning Program and I'm sure they can help you. Their website is: <http://www.uis.edu/ipl/internships/>

- Holly McCracken, M.A., Core Faculty Member, Capella University

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