Professional Experiences

Department of Family & Consumer Sciences
Western Michigan University
Purpose of Professional Experience

To provide students with “real world” experiences that will allow them to:

- Develop ‘professional competence’.
- Apply skills learned in the classroom.
- Gain insights into personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Build a professional resume and electronic portfolio.
- Discover new opportunities - explore the field.
Experiential learning

Outcomes of experiential learning

- Development of time management skills
- Knowledge of collaborating with other people and agencies
- Self-motivation to learn, participate and achieve.
- Build self-confidence, competence and awareness.
- Increase openness to new experiences.
- Growth in the area of personal responsibility
Field Experience

FCS 2020

- Entry level experience in a family science/human service setting.
  - Similar to a volunteer position
- Oversight is shared by site supervisor and WMU Professional Experiences Coordinator.
- 60 clock hours per credit are required in FST and CD.
- Most students complete FCS 2020 after completion required pre-requisites.
Internship
FCS 4290

- 6 credits required, which may be completed over 2 semesters.
- Students work directly with clients and may work on special projects to support the organization.
- Most students complete FCS 4290 late Junior or Senior year and must have completed required pre-requisites.
Areas to Consider

- What are your career interests?
- What other courses are you taking at the same time?
- Where (geographically) do you want to complete your experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Based on 15 weeks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 credits (120 hours)</td>
<td>8 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 credits (180 hours)</td>
<td>12 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 credits (360 hours)</td>
<td>24 hours per week</td>
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Professional Experience

- Network with:
  - Faculty and advisors
  - Fellow Students
  - Class speakers and alumni
  - Internet
  - Human service directories
  - Previous job shadowing experiences
Site Search-tasks and timing

- 3-6 months prior to the semester:
  (March-June for Fall, July- Nov. for Spring, and Dec.-Feb. for Summer)
  - Decide what type of experience you are looking for.
  - Discuss appropriate sites with Family Studies faculty.
  - Identify potential sites.
  - Check site requirements for training, background checks or other documentation that may be needed.
Site Search-tasks and timing

1-3 months ahead of semester:
(June-Aug for Fall, Sept.-Nov. for Spring, and March-May for Summer)
- Choose desired site and talk with Linda.
- Complete and submit form, get faculty signature.

1 month-2 week ahead:
- Complete and submit registration approval form, if it has not been done.
- Upon approval, finalize details with site such as start date, times and expectations.
Registration for credit

- Complete a Department Approval Registration form found online
- Obtain approval from site supervisor and faculty member Robin Gallagher or Kimberly Doudna.
- Upon site approval, Robin or Kimberly will register you for the online course.
- Assignments and course details will be available to you online at the semester start date.
Complete Course Requirements

Field Experience

- You may be registered by Robin Gallagher or Kimberly Doudna for 2 or 3 credits per semester. Sixty clock hours are required for each credit.
- Complete written assignments.
- Evaluations by supervisor.
- Document hours worked
- Credit/no credit grading system.
Course Requirements
Internship FCS 4290

- Secure a position in an appropriate setting (maximum 6 credits).
- Complete at least 3 credits (180 hours) per semester.
- Complete the following requirements:
  - Document hours worked
  - Supervisor evaluation
  - Portfolio project
  - Written course assignment
- Credit/no credit grading system
Questions?

Prior to being registered contact:
Robin.L.Gallagher@wmich.edu or
Kimberly.Doudna@wmich.edu

After being registered contact: Patricia.Leamer-
Quackenbush@wmich.edu