

PUBA 690 MPA Practicum

The practicum requirement places you in a public, private, or nonprofit organization and will give you a hands-on learning experience. Your faculty advisor will work closely with you to make arrangements where you can appraise the organization and its external environment; examine different leadership styles, and see how an organization handles internal and external communication and collaborations. Practicum sites are not restricted to Hawai'i or the U.S. mainland. Many PUBA students complete their practicum in the Asia-Pacific Region. Your practicum focus and arrangements are set up in conjunction with a faculty advisor, based on the your interests and learning objectives and career goals. Each student must complete the minimum number of hours for the practicum requirement and afterward write a reflection paper to receive credit for the course.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Appraise the organizational environment, both internal and external, as well as the culture, politics, and institutional setting;
- Recognize and assess a variety of leadership techniques and styles and value different perspectives;
- Apply/practice inter-organizational and inter-personal collaborative theories and best practices;
- Communicate effectively orally and in written form;
- Demonstrate responsiveness to their publics, and engage in professional behavior.

In addition, you will identify your own individual learning outcomes for the practicum. Learning objectives are the specific educational outcomes that you will work toward in your internship experience. As you write your objectives, think about the work you will be doing and ask yourself: **What new skills, knowledge or insights do I want or need to acquire? In what ways do I want to expand the skills and knowledge I already have?**

The categories below represent broad areas of learning. Following each are some specific examples of learning outcomes, which can be formulated into objectives.

Developing competencies: Learning particular work skills or general skills (such as seeking new information, organizing facts into a persuasive argument or course of action, or relating academic knowledge to the demands of a particular job).

Exploring careers: Gaining insight into the daily work of professionals in an area of interest, knowledge of job opportunities that might be available, or familiarity with occupational literature and organizations.

Broadening horizons: Acquiring some particular knowledge related to your field, e.g., how the legislative process works, the bureaucracy of public agencies, factors that influence the functioning of social programs, or the role of businesses in community welfare.

Practicing interpersonal skills: Learning how to deal with pressure, tension, and stress in work relationships; how to communicate what you know to strangers; recognizing when to speak and when to listen in work relationships; learning how to handle criticism; or how to convince a supervisor to try out an idea of yours.

Taking responsibility: Learning how to organize a complicated job, how to monitor your own time and effort so that a tight schedule can be met, how to get a piece of work done so that it fits in with the work of others, how to take initiative in getting something difficult accomplished.

Evaluation:

Practicum Analysis 100%

Practicum Analysis Guide

Write a 10-15 page paper that analyzes your practicum experience. Address the following questions and framework to guide your analysis. Your grade is influenced by the use of correct grammar and punctuation, and should be well written and professional. Please proofread your paper before submitting as failure to do so will negatively affect your grade.

The practicum analysis is intended to deepen your understanding of this experience. It is not a research paper; that is, you need not supplement your direct experience with other sources. However, to the extent possible, you should illustrate your observations and conclusions with specific examples taken from your experience in the practicum.

1. Is there an explicit statement of mission and goals for the organization? Are they clear? Do you think that what the organization does and what it says it does are the same? Are there contradictory goals?
2. Describe the values and commitments of (a) the people at the "top" of the organization, and (b) the people you worked with closely (if they are different).
3. Describe the styles of leadership in the organization. How do they differ from what you have observed elsewhere?
4. Describe the structure of the organization. What is the relationship between the formal structure (what is written down or presented to the public) and the working structure (the way the agency actually seems to be organized)?
5. Describe the relationships between the Organization and the other agencies it works with. Do they coordinate well? What problems do you see in the relationships and/or how the agencies interact?
6. Describe the relationship between the Organization office and its Board of Directors or other oversight entity—to the extent you can. Do they seem to work well together? What challenges arise? How are those challenges handled?

7. Who are the "clients" or "customers" of Organization? Are there "internal" as well as "external" clients? Does the organization get caught among conflicting demands by various clients? If so, how are such conflicts resolved? (Try to give a specific example.)
8. In what ways is the Organization "successful"? What does "success" mean with respect to this organization? In what areas does the organization struggle?
9. What is the environment like with respect to availability of resources? Is there sufficient funding to do the job?
10. Is there good communication within the organization? Where or when is communication best? Worse? Examples?
11. How does the Organization function differently from your current or previous workplace?
12. Describe the specific work that you did for the Organization. How does that fit into the agency's goals and objectives? If some of the work is on-going, how might it be done better in the future?
13. In your estimation, were the learning goals you identified in your practicum form accomplished? To what extent? Why?
14. Finally, what are the three most important lessons you take away from your experience with the Organization?