



School of Biomedical Informatics

Practicum

Preceptor's Guide

Introduction

During the practicum, the student will select an area of interest in which to apply the knowledge and skill gained during the didactic courses. The student will become an active participant in the work of developing informatics-based applications and/or applying informatics science and skills to address a health informatics problem. The student will develop a specific set of goals to be accomplished. The student's practicum advisor and you must accept these goals. These goals will reflect the student's area of interest and the needs of the healthcare organization.

Preceptor Qualifications

The School of Biomedical Informatics Health Informatics program maintains the following eligibility criteria for Preceptors:

- Educational and Work Experience requirements:
 - Graduate degree in health informatics/or related HIT field, or
 - Baccalaureate degree plus a minimum of five years of work experience in health informatics or related field
 - As determined by the practicum advisor
- Decision-making authority at the practicum site and in a position or role that facilitates optimal learning opportunities for Applied Health Informatics students
- Ability to commit sufficient time to Applied Health Informatics student supervision and mentoring
 - Adherence to Key Responsibilities for Preceptors

Key Responsibilities of the Practicum Preceptor

1. Responsibilities prior to the Practicum:

- a. Work with the student to get any vaccinations, background checks etc. complete
- b. Review the student's resume and letter of introduction
- c. Prepare a general plan of activities
- d. Prepare an outline of planned projects
- e. Arrange for the following: facility identification, parking instructions, employee orientation (if applicable), information systems access, any additional facility specific requirements, and Human Resources
- f. Assure adequate work space, office supplies, and support services are available to the student upon arrival.

2. Responsibilities at the beginning of the Practicum:

- a. Provide an organizational chart

- b. Provide appropriate policies and procedures
- c. Provide a tour
- d. Introduce students to other staff members
- e. Review expectations—your expectations of the students and their expectations of you
- f. Assign a Preceptor as a backup (in case of primary mentor illness or absence) and provide the student with contact information (phone numbers and e-mail addresses)

3. Responsibilities during the Practicum:

- a. Meet regularly to review the student's projects and documentation and to verify the practicum is meeting the student's expectations
- b. Make yourself available to the student for informal discussions and to answer any questions
- c. Meet with personnel who were scheduled with the student for feedback
- d. Validate the student's attendance
- e. Contact the faculty advisor immediately if any problems or concerns arise during the practicum
- f. Complete the Student Evaluation Form (included in this document) and submit it to the Practicum Coordinator when the student's practicum is ending

4. Responsibilities after the Practicum:

- a. Maintain contact with the Practicum Coordinator regarding future placement and other opportunities of mutual interest.
- b. Inform the Practicum Coordinator of upcoming needs with regard to requests for students to assist with specific needs. This may include requests for students during certain times or for students with specific skills.

Examples of Projects for the Student

Each site may establish projects that are appropriate for a student and of importance to them operationally. The following project suggestions are examples only, and should not in any way limit ideas that may be most relevant to the site. Please contact the Practicum Coordinator if you have questions or wish to discuss potential projects.

1. Work with one of the state representatives of MyPHR, and design and teach a specified group in conjunction with the representative.

2. In an EHR clinic setting, create a multidisciplinary documentation format that can also be used in paper form during downtime.
3. In multi-site healthcare system, identify and graphically present the information architecture across EHR/PHR/HIT systems, with a focus on finding gaps.
4. In a physician practice, influence decision-making for the adoption of information technology by identifying the benefits of moving to an EHR practice to the practice staff and physician. Utilize current literature reviews and local interviews in your research.

Important Points about Being a Practicum Preceptor

1. The student is participating in this experience as an academic course requirement and for university credit. It is vitally important that the experience is engaging and the student feels there is meaningful work to do.
2. Have an alternate contact available in case of illness or off-site requirements that might take you out of the office.
3. Encourage all staff to welcome the student even if they aren't directly working with him or her.
4. Remember to complete the student evaluation on or prior to the last day of the Practicum and return it promptly to the Practicum Coordinator.
5. Consider this to be a prolonged job interview. By accepting the Health Informatics student to complete the Practicum, you give yourself time to see how they interact with existing staff, and what skills they might bring as a future employee. Often students receive their first job in Health Informatics either from the affiliate site directly, or from contacts made on-site during the Practicum.

Student Responsibilities

Appearance

Students should practice professionalism by presenting a professional appearance. They are advised to adhere to the facility's dress code.

Attendance

Students are expected to be present and on time. Please note that students must complete either 135 or 270 clock hours. To confirm the number of hours a student must complete, contact the Practicum Coordinator. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness may adversely affect the student's grade for the practicum course.

If a student is unable to work on a specified day, it is their responsibility to contact their Practicum Preceptor and make arrangements to make up the missed time. If a student will not arrive on time as scheduled, they must contact the Practicum Preceptor and give him or her an estimated arrival time.

Students should not ask to leave early. If the student must depart early, they must ensure the arrangement is agreed to by the Practicum Preceptor.

Conduct

Students are advised to demonstrate professional conduct throughout the practicum. They are advised not to use the internet for non-business related reasons. They also are advised not to text or make personal telephone calls except during assigned breaks. Students are encouraged to demonstrate initiative by completing activities as assigned. They are also advised to ask for additional work rather than waiting for someone to notice if they complete their assignments early.

Technology Requirements

Students must have access to the internet and the ability to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, whatever tools, software etc. are needed for successful completion of the practicum.

Course Objectives

During the course of the assignment, the student should:

1. Present themselves in a professional manner
2. Complete projects and assignments made by the faculty and by site personnel utilizing knowledge and skills learned throughout the Health Informatics curriculum to produce outcomes consistent with an entry level health informatics professional
3. Gain insight into the daily operation of the assigned facility/organization
4. Research resources to complete all assignments when needed
5. Adhere to policies and procedures of the assigned facility / organization
6. Ask questions and/or seek additional information to perform and behave appropriately.

Deliverables

At the conclusion of the practicum, students are required to submit the following items as a summary document in an e-portfolio to the practicum advisor in order to receive a passing grade for the course:

1. Practicum Preceptor evaluation of the student
2. A brief report of the practicum site regarding the student's experience
3. A least one major project or several smaller projects must be completed. Deliverables from the project(s) will be required.
4. Students must submit either a Capstone Report or a State-of-the-Science paper, depending on program

Ethics and Confidentiality

Students are expected to:

Abide by the University of Texas Health Science Center Honor Code

Abide by applicable facility policies and procedures

Abide by HIPAA rules

For more information on the Practicum, please contact Keisha Smoke.

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Student Performance Evaluation SBMI Practicum

Students will become active participants in the work of developing informatics-based applications and/or applying informatics science and skills to address an informatics need.

Goals and objectives for the practicum must be agreed upon by the student, Faculty Practicum Advisor, and Practicum Preceptor.

Skills to be Evaluated	Very Strong Evidence Skill is Present	Strong Evidence Skill is Present	Some Evidence Skill is Present	Strong Evidence Skill is Not Present	Insufficient Evidence For or Against Skill
Work is accurate with attention to detail					
Takes initiative to complete projects independently					
Exhibits teamwork and strong interpersonal/communication skills					
Demonstrates critical thinking with creative solutions for problems					
Displays mastery of general use software (EHRs, word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, etc.)					
Demonstrates proficiency in applied informatics skills (problem identification, needs assessment, workflow mapping, project management, etc.)					
Applies data and evidence to support decisions and/or choices					
Exhibits appropriate data management and analytics skills for the problem					

COMMENTS (To expand on items above or items not addressed above)

Signature of Preceptor _____

Signature of Student _____