

Student Affairs Administration

College of Arts, Social Sciences, & Humanities
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

SAA 775 Practicum Substitution

Practica: At UWL, a practicum is a variable credit course, where students complete 70 hours of supervised practice for each individual credit earned. Our master's program requires a single 70 hour practicum, generally completed in the fall or summer of a student's second year in the program. Students must enroll in SAA 775 for the term in which their hours will be completed.

The practicum allows students to deepen their experience, often working at/with different institutional types or professional organizations. Some students may apply for [ACUHO-I](#) (housing) or [NODA](#) (orientation) summer internships to fulfill this requirement.

Students should talk with their faculty advisors about options, particularly if they are already working full-time, as a practicum does not have to be a traditional 5-10 hours/week in a different office set up. The goal is to help students learn about a distinctly different area than the ones with which they are most familiar.

Guidelines: The [Council for the Advancement of Standards](#) provide guidelines for master's level student affairs professional preparation programs. The guidelines indicate that programs should, among many other things, include a minimum of 40-48 semester credit hours or two years of full-time academic study and at least 300 hours of supervised practice with practicums and/or internships in at least two distinct areas. The supervised practice expectation is one way in which student affairs professional preparation programs are different than higher education administration programs.

Credit Hours: At UWL, we reduced our curriculum from a one-time high of 42 credits down to 36 credits by 2018. We accomplished this by reducing the number of credit hours students needed to pay for in order to gain experience and combining some content classes to make the program as lean as possible. We still are the equivalent of two years of full-time academic study.

Because we are already at the bare minimum of credits, we generally do not waive credit hours. Students who believe their past professional experiences should count for our SAA 775 practicum requirement can use this form to have the course, but not the credit, waived. Students seeking to waive the practicum requirement still need to achieve a total of 36 credits, and would substitute a special topics (SAA 720) elective in lieu of the practicum if their request is approved.

Supervised Practice: According to CAS, "Students must gain exposure to both the breadth and depth of student affairs work." Thus, even if one has worked in a specific area of higher education for some time, they may not have exposure to other functional areas, institutional types, offices/units, etc. At UWL, our goal is to help students explore the richness of student affairs practice, so we do require students to work at least half-time for the duration of their program, and to complete a minimum of one practicum.

However, many students come to our program with a great deal of professional experience. And for those who already have breadth and depth of experience, we may allow students to substitute a different elective for the practicum requirement. In general, this would apply to those who have two years of post-undergraduate full-time experience working in two distinctly different areas in the last five years.

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Student Information

Name:	Student ID #:
Email Address:	

Rationale / Plan

Please describe how your past professional experience includes a breadth and depth of experience in higher education, sharing the ways in which you have completed two years of post-undergraduate full-time experience in student or academic affairs in higher education, working in two distinctly different areas, and completed in the last five years. Attach a resume or c.v. and submit the request to your faculty advisor.

Signatures

Student: I understand this practicum “waiver,” if approved, allows me to substitute a special topics elective (SAA 720) for the practicum requirement (SAA 775). <i>Signature:</i> _____ <i>Date:</i> _____
Faculty Advisor: This student meets the expectation of having supervised field experience in at least two distinct areas, and as a result, can substitute another elective for the 775 requirement. <i>Signature:</i> _____ <i>Date:</i> _____
MSED Program Director: I will work with the CASSH Academic Services office to adjust the student’s advisement report such that an additional 720 course will fulfill the 775 requirement. <i>Signature:</i> _____ <i>Date:</i> _____

Upon completion, route signed copies to:

- Student and faculty advisor
- SAA Academic Department Associate / Student File
- CASSH Academic Services Office

Form last revised May 15, 2020