Course Learning Agreement: INFSCI 2980

(As of 11/2025, subject to change)

Instructor

Dr. Pengfei Zhou, pez60@pitt.edu

Course Information

Description: For students who desire experience in applying the knowledge and skills acquired in their course work and laboratory sessions. Students are responsible for arranging a practicum with a business or organization.

Course Requirements: Must have successfully completed a minimum of 18 credit hours. Must be in good academic standing. Must have submitted a practicum for credit application via Handshake prior to it beginning and before add/drops ends.

Credits: 3

Grade Component: Satisfactory/No Credit

Course Deliverables

Practicum Check-ins

Students should check-in with their course instructor once a month throughout the experience and on an as-needed basis.

Pre- & Post-Experience Modules

Students have access to modules in the Canvas course that are designed to help them make the most of their experiences. While optional, they're encouraged to participate in them.

Midterm Evaluation

Site Details

The student will need to prepare answers to the following prompts before submitting the evaluation:

- Rate your practicum experience so far (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Terrible)
- What is the work environment like? (In-person, Hybrid, Remote)
- Have you been having regularly occurring meetings with your supervisor?
- Do they have any concerns about your work performance you can address before the practicum ends?
- Any additional comments or concerns you'd like to share with the instructor?

Midterm Reflection (written report, minimum of 3 pages in length)

- Briefly describe the practicum experience (company, title, working environment)
- Why were you initially interested in working with this employer?
- What were you initially tasked with doing?
- Have your responsibilities changed? (Yes, No) If yes, please describe the new responsibilities
- List any accomplishments/challenges thus far

Final Evaluation

Site Details

The student will need to prepare answers to the following prompts before submitting the evaluation:

- Rate your overall experience (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Terrible)
- Where did you learn about the opportunity?
- Would you recommend this employer to other students? (Yes, Maybe, No)
- What was the work environment like? (In-person, Hybrid, Remote)
- What has been your favorite aspect of this experience?
- What has been your biggest achievement? Your biggest challenge?
- What technical skills did you utilize in the experience?
- What skills would you like to build next? What do you see as your greatest strengths?
- How would you rate your preparedness in the following career readiness areas? (sample skills will be provided)

Final Reflection (written report, minimum of 3 pages in length)

- Briefly describe the practicum experience (company, title, working environment)
- Why were you initially interested in working with this employer?
- What were you initially tasked with doing?
- Did your responsibilities change during the experience? (Yes, No) If yes, please describe the new responsibilities
- What technical skills have you gained? How will they help you in your career? Were your practicum goals met?
- Describe a job-related issue or struggle you experienced – how did you overcome it?
- What did you learn at Pitt which helped you in your practicum experience?
- What could you have learned (in the classroom or outside) that would have helped you in your practicum?
- Any additional comments you'd like to share with the course instructor?

How to Complete: Handshake will send an evaluation request to the student's email 7 days before midterms for the midterm evaluation and 14 days before finals week for the final evaluation. If it's not received, please let the Manager of Experiential Learning know in a timely manner. Final papers should be uploaded in the Canvas course, where the Manager of Experiential Learning will compile them with the final evaluations, and send them to the course instructor before grades are due.

Practicum Site: Practicum supervisors will be required to submit a final evaluation, which they have the option of sharing with the student. If they're unable to complete third-party forms, students must obtain a letter of practicum completion, and the student should submit that and an internal/company final evaluation form (if possible) to the Manager of Experiential Learning for review.

Deadlines: For the midterm evaluation, the student evaluation and written report is due before the end of midterms.

For the final evaluations, students and their supervisors must submit an evaluation prior to the end of final exams week (regardless of the experience end date). Students must also submit their final paper before the deadline. Any major discrepancies between the learning goals agreed upon in the application and the final evaluations could impact the final grade.

Course Agreement

Practicum credit is contingent upon the fulfillment of the course deliverables listed on this agreement and the practicum responsibilities submitted in the initial application. If those deliverables are not completed for whatever reason (including, but not limited to, the employer changing your duties), you may no longer be eligible for practicum credit. If this happens, please consult your course instructor immediately to receive guidance.