

The Feminist Institute of Social Transformation Practicum/Internship Handbook Carleton University

August 2024 version (All efforts have been made to ensure the information provided is accurate, including links).

NOTE: The courses are referred to as " Practicums" in reference to the two undergraduate classes on offer, 4800A and 4801A. "Internship" refers to the graduate class 5920A. Herein, they will be referred to as "practicum/internship."

INTRODUCTION

Land Acknowledgement and Political Commitment

The Feminist Institute of Social Transformation (FIST) at Carleton University would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather and learn is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. Our Institute brings together women's and gender studies, disability studies, critical race studies, sexuality studies, reflecting the interdisciplinary and intersectional mission of feminist social justice. We encourage students to make a commitment to reconciliation and contemplate how their work in the field will challenge oppressive practices.

The Purpose of a Practicum/Internship Handbook

This handbook is a student's guide to navigating the Women's and Gender Studies practicum/internship housed in the FIST. It provides an overview of the practicum/internship, how it may benefit all stakeholders, a step-by-step guide through the application and registration process, and an overview of the various policies and procedures to be followed during the practicum/internship.

What is the Practicum/Internship in Women's and Gender Studies?

Our practicum/internship (WGST4800A/4801A/5920A) allows students to work alongside professionals in a governmental, non-governmental, community-based, or non-profit organization. Practicum/internship students will have hands-on experience working on social justice issues.

Students enrolled in WGST 4800A/5920A—0.5 credit—will commit to spending eight hours a week for 12 weeks working for the placement host, for a total of 96 hours. They will also attend four two-hour class meetings for eight additional hours of instruction. The course at a half credit is offered at the undergraduate level (WGST 4800A) and the graduate level (5920A).

Students enrolled in WGST 4801A—1.0 credit—will commit to spending 16 hours a week for 12 weeks working for the placement host, for a total of 192 hours. They will also attend four two-hour class meetings for eight additional hours of instruction.

These are courses where students will learn to apply their knowledge of Women's and Gender Studies in a policy—or practice-oriented work environment. Students will be evaluated on their ability to connect theory and practice in various ways, including written diaries documenting gains in experiential knowledge, supervisor evaluations, and class participation.

The practicum/internship is only offered during the winter semester.

What to expect from a Practicum/internship Placement in Women's and Gender Studies

Our students have participated in practicums/internships in a variety of organizations. Practicum/internship opportunities are varied and offer a wide range of settings and diverse work environments. Because of this variety, it is difficult to identify a typical practicum/internship experience. Each placement will provide students with unique working experiences. Our Institute does not require placement hosts to adhere to specific guidelines in the amount of autonomy, supervision, or type of tasks that the student will be asked to perform.

Aligning with Women's and Gender Studies Learning Goals

Women's and Gender Studies is designed to provide students with a critical interdisciplinary educational experience in preparation for a wide range of careers that involve work on social justice issues. Our Institute is also home to Sexuality Studies, Disability Studies, and Critical Race Studies, reflecting our commitment to the intersectional, interdisciplinary analysis of complex social issues. The program structure reflects the belief that understanding the relationship between gender and other social relations of power, as well as the economic, social, and political conditions that influence people's lives, is essential in working toward a more just and equitable world.

Students in Women's and Gender Studies are expected to:

- Be able to analyze gender as it intersects with other relations of power including race, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, class, age and size.
- Recognize and evaluate a range of feminist theories, approaches, and practices within their historical, geographical, and cultural contexts.
- Communicate complex ideas from a range of sources and diverse disciplines in various ways, including oral, written, and digital communication.
- The practicum/internship course provides a learning environment that is different from the classroom.

The practicum/internship is a form of experiential learning that allows students to apply theory and academic content to the real world. Through active involvement in current work in the field, students have the opportunity to extend their learning through self-reflection as well as practical and relevant skills development.

Contact Person

Questions about the practicum/internship can be sent to the Institute Administrator, [Lana Keon](#), who will forward them to the Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor (UGA).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of Students

Students are responsible for:

- representing Carleton University in a professional manner
- submitting all course assignments on time
- fulfilling all the terms of the practicum/internship, including the total number of work hours assigned to them
- engaging in peer-to-peer learning and dialogue in class meetings
- upholding the policies and procedures outlined by Carleton University
- upholding the policies and procedures outlined by the Practicum Host

Responsibilities of the Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor

The UGA is a Carleton University instructor who guides students through the practicum/internship process and provides academic support, linking theory to practice.

The Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor is responsible for:

- supporting students in finding a placement
- facilitating class meetings
- guiding students in peer-to-peer learning and dialogue to connect practical experience to academic theory
- assessing assignments and providing feedback in a timely manner
- assisting in mediation of ethical issues or serious conflict that arises in the field setting, if necessary

Responsibilities of the Placement Host Organization

The Placement Host is the designated organization, institution, or agency where the student will complete their practicum/internship hours.

The Placement Host is responsible for:

- providing an enriching learning environment
- exposing students to real-world experiences
- generating meaningful work for students to contribute to the needs of the organization

Responsibilities of the Placement Supervisor

The Placement Supervisor is the employee at the host organization who directly supervises the student. This employee agrees to provide supervision and guidance to the student while working in the field.

The Placement Supervisor is responsible for:

- assigning work-related tasks to students to support the organization
- supervising the work output of students in the field

- mentoring students to develop professional and practical skills
- completing [midpoint](#) and [final](#) evaluations to assess students' work in the field

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP REGISTRATION

Steps to Registering for the Practicum/internship

In order to be accepted into the practicum/internship course, undergraduate students must have completed WGST3001 and have fourth-year standing with a minimum 6.5 CGPA in Women's and Gender Studies. All arrangements concerning the practicum/internship need to be completed in the Fall. While students can register in the Winter semester for the course, it is very unlikely they will be granted permission to take the course without completing the steps below well before the start of the course. Similarly, graduate students need to register in the Fall. There is no prerequisite for graduate students besides enrolment in the MA Women's and Gender Studies program.

Registration takes place in four steps:

1. Student application via email to the UGA requesting permission to register.
2. Formal registration through Carleton Central once an override request has been granted.
3. Identification of Placement Host by the student, with support from the UGA.
4. Approval of Placement Host, submission of signed forms to UGA (see below for more details).

1. Student Application to the Practicum/internship Course

Students are expected to email the [Institute Administrator](#) to express their interest in registering for the practicum/internship course in the summer/fall. If the student has completed the necessary prerequisites and meets the CGPA requirements, they will be granted an override to enrol in the course.

2. Formal registration through Carleton Central

In the Fall, the UGA will contact each registered student to relay important information needed to prepare for the beginning of the semester. The students will be directed to the Practicum/internship Handbook for all information concerning the course and placement.

3. Identification of Placement Host

Students are required to secure their placement, with the support of UGA, as needed. Students should contact potential placements of interest in the Fall semester and familiarize themselves with their mandate, programs, and services. The student is ultimately responsible for finding a placement. Students who cannot secure a placement in the late Fall should consider dropping the course.

4. Approval of Placement Host, submission of signed forms to UGA

Once a placement host is secured, the UGA will approve the students' choice. Students must then complete the following paperwork:

- 1) [Practicum/internship Student-Placement Contract](#)
- 2) [Letter to Placement Employers Process for Workplace Insurance for Post-Secondary Students on Unpaid Work Placements](#)
- 3) [Student Declaration of Understanding and Agreement Workplace Safety and Insurance Board or Private Insurance Coverage for Students on Program-Related Unpaid Placements](#) (please see pg. 9 for more details).

This paperwork must be completed no later than the beginning of the fourth week of the Winter semester.

Finding the Right Match

In order to identify the best practicum/internship placement for you, it is important to reflect on the type of work and population group you would like to work with. Here is a list of organizations students have worked with in the past. This is not an exhaustive list. Additionally, students should consider contacting smaller local organizations over larger national or international organizations as the former are more likely to need additional support and labour.

- Able2
- Planned Parenthood
- Native Women's Association of Canada
- Bloom Zine Collective
- Oxfam Canada
- Centre d'Etude et de Cooperation Internationale (CECI)
- Elizabeth Fry
- SALUS

If you intend to work with an organization you already have a connection with, please ensure there is no conflict of interest. For example, a friend or family member of the student cannot hold a supervisory role in the organization. Unethical conduct to secure a practicum/internship placement is considered academic dishonesty and may be grounds to terminate the placement and fail the course.

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP COURSE COMPONENTS

Details of when students will be working or what tasks they will do will be negotiated between the student and the Placement Supervisor. These details will be specified in the [Practicum/internship Student-Placement Contract](#), which both the Placement Supervisor and student will sign.

Field Placement Hour Requirement

Students are expected to complete at least 96 hours (for 4800A and 5920A) or 192 hours (for 4801A) over the semester.

Practicum/internship Workshops

According to the schedule posted on Brightspace, students will attend four in-class workshops during the semester. Attendance is mandatory, and practicum/internship students are expected to participate actively in each class.

Evaluation & Grading

Students in this class will receive grades for completing classwork and performing their placement duties. Students must submit assignments by the specified due dates, attend class, and work at the placement as the contract outlines. Their Placement Supervisor will complete an evaluation of their work at the [middle](#) and [end](#) points of the semester.

Depending on the circumstances, a negative evaluation from the Placement Supervisor may be sufficient to fail the course. Additionally, a workplace decision to terminate the practicum/internship placement before completion of hours due to student misconduct or violating workplace policies or procedures is grounds for a failing grade.

If students encounter difficulties with their Placement Supervisor or placement or expect to receive a negative evaluation, they should contact the UGA as soon as they become aware of the potential problem. If an issue arises whereby the placement mistreats or discriminates against a student, the UGA can mediate the conflict or find a more suitable placement if necessary.

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP POLICIES

Carleton University uses risk financing as an integral part of its risk management program. As such, students are protected, acting in good faith, against liability arising out of their role as students. In regard to unpaid placements, the university obtains governmentally funded coverage through the WSIB. For more information, visit the Risk and Insurance page in Carleton University's Financial Services website (<https://carleton.ca/financialservices/risk-management/>).

WGST4800A/4801A/5920A are not course requirements needed to graduate from the Women's and Gender Studies program and are considered a major elective. Therefore, your placement is not automatically covered by this insurance plan. It is important that you fill out the unpaid work placement form to qualify for Carleton's workplace insurance coverage.

- Students are required to fill out the [Student Declaration of Understanding and Agreement Workplace Safety and Insurance Board or Private Insurance Coverage for Students on Program-Related Unpaid Placements](#) to obtain coverage.
- The completed form needs to be submitted to UGA via email by January 30
- Students should obtain health and safety training from their placement employer once the placement has started.
- Health and safety concerns related to unpaid placements need to be reported to the UGA and the Office of Risk Management at risk@carleton.ca.

Questions regarding the form for unpaid work placements that would qualify for this insurance coverage should be directed to the Office of Risk Management at risk@carleton.ca.

Professional Conduct

Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness
- respect and value diversity
- prevent discrimination and harassment
- preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference

According to Carleton University's Human Rights Policies and Procedures (2010): "Every member of the University community has a right to study, work and live in a safe environment free of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment."

During their practicum/internship placement, students will represent Carleton University and the Women's and Gender Studies program in the community. Students are expected to uphold Carleton University's Human Rights Policies and Procedures both

on and off campus. Students' work ethic must reflect the high personal, professional, and academic standards expected by the University. While the practicum/internship is a university course, students are expected to treat practicum/internship positions like professional jobs.

Students are expected to agree to abide by the standards, policies, and regulations of the organization where they will work.

Confidentiality

During their practicum/internship placement, students may be entrusted with confidential information regarding clients, community members, service users, and/or organizational systems. While this information may be an essential basis for reflection and discussion within the classroom, no confidential information must be shared.

To ensure confidentiality is maintained:

- care should be taken to protect confidentiality, such as changing names and other identifying data,
- if the host organization has its own confidentiality policy, it should be strictly followed,
- materials shall not be used in an unethical manner or without the knowledge and consent of the client for purposes other than agreed upon by consent.
- i.e. photos should not be taken and shared without permission,
- when in doubt, students should discuss particular situations with the Placement Supervisor and/or UGA.

Requests for Accessibility in the Workplace

Requests for workplace accommodations should be communicated early on with the placement supervisor. Students should not disclose specific diagnoses or other personal medical information to the placement supervisor. Instead, students should outline, in an email to the placement supervisor, the access needs they require to be successful in the placement. This might include changes to their work schedule or working space. These arrangements should be made well before the start of the placement. Students can also include requests for access needs in their initial communications with the placement host.