

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Fieldwork Practice Manual- AHSC 435

Department of Applied Human Sciences

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Introduction

Course Description

AHSC 435 *Fieldwork Practice* (3 credits)

Prerequisite: AHSC 330. This course must be taken in final year.

This course provides an opportunity for students to integrate theory into practice in the design, facilitation and evaluation of small group process. Students lead one small task or learning group in a community, an organizational or an institutional setting. The fieldwork is combined with class sessions for orientation, supervision, reflection and evaluation.

Purpose

- To provide students with an opportunity to implement their learning in designing and evaluating a program, and in facilitating a small group in a community or organizational setting.
- To help students integrate group development and facilitation theory and its practical application in a group setting.
- To encourage students to use personal and self-assessment as a way of increasing the depth of their knowledge in these areas.

While students come to this course with a varied range of social science disciplinary knowledge, they are assumed to possess basic skills in program planning, process observation and group diagnosis, human relations, leadership, and group development theory.

Objectives

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- integrate theory and practice in group leadership and small group intervention.
- apply and refine specific leadership, group intervention, and program planning skills.
- examine personal qualities in leadership and links between self-as-individual and self-as-leader.
- develop skills in self-assessment for increasing effectiveness of personal learning and attainment of learning goals.
- enhance awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation for diversity in group settings.

Course Requirements

Classroom Component

- The class will meet a minimum of 7 times over the course of the semester. The purpose of the class component will be to disseminate essential information, enable students to

build relevant skills and to develop a community in which students engage in peer learning. It essential that students attend all classes.

- The course instructor will provide students with a schedule of class meetings. These will always be held at the time designated for each section in the academic schedule.
- Target group tutorials or individual tutorials with the instructor may be requested, by either students or the instructor, as the need arises.
- A description of course assignments will be provided by the course instructor in the course outline, which will be provided on the first day of class.

Fieldwork Component

- Students will work with an organization to design and implement a program for a small group. Although the focus of the groups will vary, the programs will be designed to be mainly verbal and interactive.
- Students will work in pairs as co-leading teams.
- A minimum of 16 hours will be spent with the group (often 2-hour sessions every week for 8 weeks). Time must also be allotted for contacting the organization, meeting with the contact person, contracting, orientation, evaluation and feedback.
- For the fall semester, groups are expected to begin during the last week of September or first week of October. Winter semester students must start their programs by the last week of January or first week of February.

Group Requirement

- Groups must be organized from within the organization. Students cannot recruit their own group members.
- The group will be closed; that is, have a stable core membership with 6-12 members.
- Groups for children: Participants must be at least ten years old.
- Groups for teens: Do not agree to run a group in a drop-in centre unless private space is provided and a commitment for attendance can be given.
- Groups for seniors: Participants must be cognitively well and functioning, although they may be physically frail.
- Fieldwork students are responsible for finding, visiting and selecting a placement site. In order to ensure you gain the best learning experience possible, you are strongly encouraged to begin your placement search well in advance of the first class. Doing so will allow you to explore different sites and to discuss a number of ideas with the potential fieldwork site of your choice.
- It takes a great deal of time and effort to find a fieldwork site that meets the criteria of the program and your own learning goals. Feedback from former students is that this time and effort is worth it as the fieldwork experience is often one of the most powerful learning experiences in the Human Relations program.

Getting Started

Fieldwork students are responsible for finding, visiting and selecting a placement. You may want to begin your search prior to the course start.

Registration

Register for AHSC 435 via your Concordia portal. You are able to register for AHSC 435 as long as you have met the prerequisite requirements. Several sections are generally available in the fall and winter sessions. AHSC 435 is not offered during the summer session.

Preparation

Before approaching organizations, you need to read the *Purpose, Objectives* and *Requirements* sections in this manual. This will give you a good understanding of the course and what you need to look for in a fieldwork placement site.

Finding a Placement Site

After you are registered consult the database of internship-fieldwork placement sites. This is in the moodle system which you should be able to access via your Concordia portal. We have arranged that you can have access to the database when you are registered for AHSC 330 and you will also have access once you are registered for AHSC 435.

There is no guarantee that you will find a placement from this list. It is simply a starting point to learn about fieldwork opportunities as you begin your search.

All of the organizations listed have expressed interest in having fieldwork students; many of the listings include examples of programs that have been run or programs/projects for which the organization has a need. You are welcome to contact any of these organizations directly to discuss the possibility of doing your fieldwork with them.

If you would like to select a placement site that is not listed on the website, you are welcome to do so. However, you need to ensure that the site is able to meet the requirements outlined in this manual.

Once you have provisionally agreed on a placement site, you need to complete a Proposal Form with your organizational contact person, an Ethics Proposal Form and a CSST Insurance Form (see *Required Forms on Fieldwork website*). These forms must be submitted to your course instructor.

Your program proposal is subject to approval by your instructor. When all required paperwork has been submitted & approved, you may start your fieldwork.

Sample Programs

These are some programs that have been run successfully by fieldwork students in the past. They are organized by client group.

- Children:
 - Grade 6 girls - Transitions to High School (especially effective winter semester)
 - Grade 5 & 6 boys and girls - Exploring Diversity
- Adolescents:
 - Grade 7, 8 & 9 boys: Critical Thinking and Decision-Making
- High School:
 - Peace Pals
 - Grade 10: Youth Expression through Music - A Review 1950s-present
- Group home for girls: Body Image
- Batshaw group home: Outdoor-based Teambuilding
- Adults:
 - Japanese university students, women: Assertiveness
 - Business setting: Stress & Stress Management; Keeping Fit
 - Newly immigrated adults at an adult education centre: Adjusting to a New Country
- Seniors:
 - Seniors' Residence: Current Events Discussion Group
 - Seniors' Residence: Dating, Then and Now (an exploration of similarities and differences across time)

FAQs

I would like to do my fieldwork program at my workplace. Is that possible?

No. You are expected to complete your fieldwork project at an organization other than the one for which you work. This gives you the opportunity to practice entry and contract negotiation. It also helps to ensure role clarity and permits you to carry out your program free from conflicts of interest.

Can I run a program on my own?

Students are expected to co-lead their groups. The benefits of co-leading are many, including mutual support, increased creativity and higher quality programs, and the opportunity for in-the-moment peer feedback.

Can we begin our program before we get our forms in, if we know they will be coming?

No. All forms must be submitted and approved before beginning your program. If you begin your program before submitting all forms you run the risk of a. time spent with the group prior to

form approval not counting towards your sixteen hours, or, more seriously, your program being cancelled.

Can I run a program at a drop-in centre?

Previous experience has shown us that drop-in centres do not offer the stability required for the fieldwork project. Unless the site can guarantee stable group membership, drop-in centres are not considered appropriate sites for fieldwork students.

I have found a placement, but the group only has 5 people in it. Is this okay?

Given that many groups will lose a member or two over the course of the semester, it is advisable to begin with more than the number required, rather than less.

BEST OF LUCK IN YOUR FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE!