

# MANUAL FOR STUDENTS AND FIELD PLACEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (GTY 440.G)



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## INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Gerontology Fieldwork program is to provide students with an off-campus, professional learning experience in the field of aging. This practical experience, combined with the gerontology curriculum, provides a well-rounded educational foundation for individuals interested in knowing more about or working in the field of aging.

This manual is designed to help students and field supervisors understand the fieldwork program. Included are definitions of common terms, procedures for arranging a placement, and responsibilities of the student, field supervisor, and instructor in a gerontology field placement.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Definition of Terms

The terms used in this handbook to describe field placement policies and procedures will be defined as follows.

**Clock Hours** The actual hours a student must spend at the field placement organization to meet the requirements for GERONTOLOGY (GTY) 440.G . The number of credit hours determines the number of clock hours required in the placement.

**Credit Hours** The academic credits a student will earn by successfully completing Gerontology Fieldwork. Majors are required to earn at least 6 credit hours. Minors are required to earn at least 4 credit hours. These are the maximum number of credit hours applied to the major or minor; additional hours are applied toward graduation. Students who are not GTY majors or minors are also welcome to register for GTY 440.G.

**Field Placement Organization** The off-campus agency or organization providing the field placement experience.

**Field Reports** The reports (sometimes called journals) written by the student following each visit made to the Field Placement Organization. These notes will provide a record of the date, hours worked, activities engaged in, and reflections about the experiences of the day. These reports are periodically reviewed by the Instructor.

*(Definitions, cont.)*

**Field Supervisor** The individual at the Field Placement Organization who supervises the overall experience of the fieldwork student.

**Fieldwork Seminar** The weekly group meeting of fieldwork students and the GTY440.G instructor.

**Gerontology (GTY) 440.G** The course designation for Fieldwork in Gerontology.

**GTY 440.G Instructor** The faculty member who arranges gerontology field placements and conducts the weekly Fieldwork Seminar; also called the **Fieldwork Instructor**

### **Who May take GTY 440.G?**

Fieldwork in Gerontology is open to any student who is interested in the field of aging and who has completed GTY 154 (Aging in American Society) **and minimally** three additional hours in gerontology. Students must have earned a grade of "C" or above in these gerontology courses. Most students register for field placement during their senior year or in the summer prior to their senior year.

### **Role of the Fieldwork Instructor**

The Fieldwork Instructor serves as a liaison between the University and the field placement organization, and is responsible for:

- providing an up-to-date listing of field placement organizations;
- assisting students in finding suitable placements;
- making the initial contact with the fieldwork organization when a student is interested in pursuing a placement;
- maintaining contact with both student and Field Supervisor during the placement;

- teaching the Fieldwork Seminar

*(Role of the Fieldwork Instructor, cont.)*

- evaluating and responding to students' Field Reports, objectives, oral presentations, and other class assignments;
- assigning a grade for the course after reviewing class assignments and receiving the field supervisor's evaluation. The course is offered on a credit/no credit basis and requires a grade of C or better for successful completion.

The actual day-to-day supervision of the student is handled by the agency representative acting as Field Supervisor.

## **FOR STUDENTS**

### **Procedures for Arranging a Field Placement**

Students who wish to enroll in GTY 440.G must follow these steps to arrange a Field Placement:

- Students should contact the Fieldwork Instructor early in the semester prior to the semester or summer that they plan to do field work.
- Students will complete an application (see Appendix A) and discuss with the instructor their major, past work or volunteer experience, and interests in aging. Together, student and instructor will choose one or more organizations to explore as possible placement sites that best meet the student's objectives. Though not an exhaustive listing, the Fieldwork Agency Listing is provided as a resource to assist students in the planning process.
- The Fieldwork Instructor will contact the organization(s) to convey student interest in a field placement and to find out whether the organization would consider having a gerontology student during the following semester or summer.

- If the Fieldwork Instructor gets a positive response from the organization, the *(Procedures for arranging a field placement, cont.)*

student will then be advised to contact the organization to schedule an interview(s). The purpose of the interview is to discuss the student's background, interests, and objectives, and to explore the possibilities for fieldwork activities. This is an opportunity for the student and agency to determine the student's fit with the agency and potential supervisor.

- Following the interview(s), the student will inform the Fieldwork Instructor the outcome of the interview(s) and the student's preference for a fieldwork placement site. If not a suitable match, the Fieldwork Instructor will assist in identifying alternate placement sites.
- If a suitable match, students and the Field Supervisors will agree on a schedule and a starting date and time for the following semester.

### **Selecting a Placement Site**

Several factors should be kept in mind when considering organizations for a Fieldwork Placement. These include:

- the student's interest in aging and the type of placement available in a given organization. For example, some placements offer a great deal of contact with older people, while others offer exposure to planning or coordination of services but little direct contact with elders;
- size of the organization, and preference for working in small or large settings;
- preference for a more or less closely supervised experience; although all placements are supervised, organizations differ in the amount and type of supervision they provide;
- student schedule - students should plan their course schedules to accommodate the field placement. Students should expect to spend no less than four hours at a time at the field site, not including travel time;
- transportation to the placement site; Students must have access to a vehicle to do field placements outside of Oxford. As there are limited placement sites in the Oxford area, the majority of field placements require access to a vehicle.

### Variable Credit for GTY 440.G

GTY 440.G may be taken for 1 to 16 credit hours during fall or spring semester. Summer placements are also available. Variable credit allows students to choose different degrees of involvement in their placement. **During a semester (15 weeks), the student must spend 30 clock hours in placement for every one hour of academic credit.** Examples of placement requirements in a semester for various credit hours follows:

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CREDIT HOURS	TOTAL CLOCK HOURS	CLOCK HOURS/WEEK
4	120	8
6	180	12
8	240	16
10	300	20
12	360	24
14	420	28
16	480	32

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**Please note that students registered for GTY 440.G in the summer (twelve weeks) must spend 40 clock hours in placement for every one hour of academic credit.**

### Fieldwork Seminar

In addition to completing placement hours at the field placement organization, students registered for GTY 440.G during a semester are required to attend a weekly seminar. Seminar requirements are identified in the course syllabus. The seminar will focus on the experiences students are having in their placements and topics related to careers in aging. In addition to discussing the field experiences of all students in the seminar, students will review, incorporate,

and apply into discussion and critique their prior course work in gerontology. Students registered for GTY 440.G in the summer will have alternate arrangements for the weekly seminar, to be discussed with the Fieldwork Instructor.

## **Grading**

GTY 440.G is offered on a credit/no credit basis. Grade criteria are identified in the course syllabus. The student must earn at least a C in the course in order to receive academic credit. Grades are assigned after the Field Instructor receives all assignments from the student and the evaluation from the Field Supervisor.

## **Field Reports**

All GTY 440.G students are required to maintain a diary of experiences, impressions, and reflections on field experiences as they relate to material covered in their gerontology and other related courses. A report is written for each day at the placement site. Reports are turned into the Fieldwork Instructor as outlined in the course syllabus.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Responsibilities of a Fieldwork student include:

- adhering to the fieldwork schedule and completing the required clock hours;
- notifying the Field Supervisor in case of a necessary absence, and making arrangements with the supervisor to make up the time;
- attending and participating in the weekly seminar;
- turning in placement goals and objectives, field reports, and final evaluation of their placement (see Appendix B), and others assignments due in the seminar;
- meeting deadlines, fulfilling responsibilities, and handling obligations in a professional manner.

## **FOR THE FIELD PLACEMENT ORGANIZATION**

The organizations included in the Gerontology Fieldwork Agency Listing (a publication available from the Scripps Gerontology Center) have been approved for gerontology field placements. The listing is updated in the fall of each year, and is used as a resource for students seeking a gerontology placement. Organizations not currently included who wish to be listed should contact the Fieldwork Coordinator at the Scripps Gerontology Center.

*Miami University does not discriminate against students or employees on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation, or age. We expect any organization participating in our gerontology field placement program to have the same policy.*

### **Fieldwork Placements are arranged as follows:**

- The Fieldwork Instructor will contact an organization whenever a student expresses interest in a placement with that organization. This contact is made the semester prior to the proposed placement.
- If the organization is interested in providing a field placement, the Fieldwork Instructor will ask the student to call to arrange an interview. This interview is intended to allow the supervisor and student to learn about each other and to discuss the type of placement that could be expected at that organization.
- If the student and potential field supervisor decide that the match is good, the student will contact the Fieldwork Instructor for final approval.
- Once approved, the student and the fieldwork supervisor will agree on a weekly schedule and a starting date and time.

### **Student Schedules**

Fieldwork Students follow the Miami University schedule while involved in their

field placements. Placement hours are scheduled during the fifteen weeks of the Miami semester. Students may choose to observe the Miami holidays which include Labor Day, Fall Mid-Term Holiday, Thanksgiving Recess, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, and Spring Break. It may be necessary to reschedule some work hours if all university holidays are observed. Students registered for GTY 440.G during the summer complete their placements over a twelve week period.

### **The Role of the Field Supervisor**

The Field Supervisor is responsible for providing a learning environment for the student, and for coordinating student activities with this goal in mind. Major responsibilities include:

- providing basic orientation of the organization to the student; orienting the student to the background, structure, and functions of the organization, and integrating the student into agency operations whenever appropriate;
- working with the student early in the placement to formulate goals and objectives for the placement; provide regular contact with the student throughout the placement to plan, discuss, and review activities and goals;
- discussing administrative details with the student, including work hours, rules about telephone use, expectations about dress, and arranging for absences; provide student with a nametag and minimal space provisions;
- providing meaningful work assignments which provide a learning experience for the student and assist the organization in meeting its goals (not to fill gaps in staffing or personnel); any questions about appropriateness of assignments or activities should be addressed to the Field Instructor.
- contacting the Fieldwork Instructor in case of problems or concerns;
- submitting an evaluation of the student's performance in the fieldwork placement at the end of the semester (see Appendix C).

**Field Placement Organizations provide an invaluable service to Miami University's Gerontology Program by offering a hands-on learning experience to students interested in aging. We recognize the level of effort involved in supervising a field placement, and those efforts are greatly appreciated by the faculty, staff, and students in the Gerontology Program.**

## Appendix A

### Undergraduate Program in Gerontology Application for Field Placement

Name	
Local address	
Local phone #	
SS#	
email address	
Permanent address	
Class standing	
Major(s)	
Expected graduation date	

List courses taken in the following areas, grade received, where taken (if not Miami).

	Course name (not number)	Grade	Where taken
Gerontology			
Sociology			
Psychology			
Other related courses			

Employment experience (including summer, part-time and volunteer work):

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What days do you expect to be available for placement? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have transportation? \_\_\_\_\_

For how many hours of GTY 440.G do you plan to register? \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly explain your interest in the field of aging and describe the kind of placement you would like. Include in your discussion what you expect to learn from the experience and any special information we should consider in making you fieldwork assignment.

## **Appendix B**

### **Gerontology 440.G**

#### **Student Fieldwork Evaluation**

Each fieldwork student will be expected to write an evaluation of his or her placement experience. This evaluation may be shared with the student's fieldwork organization. Students may choose any format they wish, but the evaluation should include the following information:

- Your name, placement organization, name of supervisor, and number of credit hours.
- How did this placement relate to your gerontology course work?
- How did your placement experience affect your personal career and/or educational objectives as well the goals and objectives you established at the beginning of the semester?
- How were you supervised during your placement? Were there areas where you would have preferred more or less supervision?
- Were there activities in which you wanted to participate but did not? Were there activities you would have preferred not to be a part of? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about yourself during your fieldwork placement? Did the placement make a difference in your view of the world?
- How did this placement contribute to your professional development?
- What do you suggest be considered before making future placements at the organization?

## Appendix C

### Gerontology 440.G

#### Miami University Gerontology Program Undergraduate Fieldwork Evaluation

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Following are suggestions for information we would like to have in your evaluation of this student's performance in his/her placement with your organization. Please feel free to add or delete from this list as appropriate for your situation. We encourage you to share your comments with the student; we find that this type of feedback can be helpful for students' professional growth.

- Describe the nature of the student's assignment with your agency.
- Was there evidence of growth in understanding of the older population you serve, and of the function, purpose, and policies of your organization?
- What type and amount of supervision was given, and how was it received?
- Did the student exhibit any particular strengths or weaknesses during his or her placement (for example, oral or written communication skills, organization and completion of work, self-direction, ability to work with agency staff and/or clients)?
- Do you have comments about this student's potential for success in the field of aging?

If you have comments, suggestions, recommendations, or requests regarding future placements with your organization, please include them in your evaluation as well.