



Curtin University

School of Media, Culture and
Creative Arts

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
STUDIES**

**GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICUM
MENTORS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

THIS MANUAL IS A GENERIC ONE WHICH IS USED FOR ALL PRACTICUM UNITS LISTED. SOME SECTIONS OF THE MANUAL ARE APPLICABLE ONLY TO CERTAIN PRACTICUM UNITS.

Practicums offer students the opportunity to apply information theory and principles in a practical work environment. The Department of Information Studies at Curtin University of Technology is very grateful for the support given by members of the information profession to students to ensure that they have a stimulating and worthwhile experience. Without your support this program would not be possible.

2. LIST OF PRACTICUM UNITS

The Department of Information Studies is very committed to professional experience for students and organises practicum placements for all students enrolled in first-qualifying courses in the fields of librarianship, archives and corporate information/records management. The units which have practicums attached are listed below:

Bachelor of Arts (Librarianship and Corporate Information Management)

Unit	Timing	Hours
NEW UNIT 2016: INFO1012 Information Services Foundation Practicum/OUA INFO1013 LIM150 Information Services Foundation Practicum	First year practicum for all undergraduate students. Please note, that during this period of transition, some students will complete the placement with the previous practicum unit Librarianship Concepts and Practice.	Unit includes professional work experience of 2 weeks full time plus coursework.
NEW UNIT 2016: INFO3008 Information Services Professional Practicum/OUA INFO3009 LIM350 Information Services Professional Practicum	Third year practicum for all undergraduate students. Please note, that during this period of transition, some students will complete the placement with the previous practicum unit Information Theory and Research.	Unit includes professional work experience of 3 weeks full time plus coursework.

Pre-2015 Graduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies Pre-2015 Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives Pre-2015 Master of Information Management (MIM)

Unit	Timing	Hours
INFO5009 Information Theory & Research/OUA INFO5030 INFM130 Information Theory & Research <small>(Formerly Information Theory & Research 502 ITR502/OUA INFM130 Information Theory & Research)</small>	Practicum placement for all Graduate Diploma students and MIM students enrolled in Information Theory and Research. Please note, that during this period of transition, some students may have the placement attached to another unit.	Unit includes professional work experience of 3 weeks full time plus coursework.

Pre-2015 Master of Information Management (dual qualification)

Those students enrolled in the Master of Information Management (MIM) who have already completed a Graduate Diploma in EITHER librarianship OR records management and archives (RM/A) will need to undertake a second placement if they are studying for the dual qualification of librarianship AND records management and archives. This second placement will need to be in the alternative field to the first placement. The MIM placement will be attached to an appropriate unit.

2015+ Graduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies
2015+ Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives
2015+ Master of Information Management (MIM)

Unit	Timing	Hours
INFO5022 Management of Information Services/OUA INFO5023 INFM510 Management of Information Services	Practicum placement for all Graduate Diploma students and first practicum placement for MIM students.	Unit includes professional work experience of 3 weeks full time plus coursework.
INFO5009 Information Theory & Research/OUA INFO5030 INFM130 Information Theory & Research	Second practicum placement for all MIM students.	Unit includes professional work experience of 3 weeks full time plus coursework.

3. COURSE REQUIREMENT

Information Studies is highly committed to professional experience for students and satisfactory completion of the nominated practicum/s is an **ESSENTIAL** requirement for successful completion of the course of study in which a student is enrolled. Assessment requirements for practicums are outlined in this manual, on the practicum website and in the relevant unit outlines.

Undergraduate students are required to undertake a practicum in a library and information service (LIS) environment AND in a records management and archives environment since this course is designed to produce graduates qualified in all areas. Some students will undertake the LIS practicum in first year and the RMA practicum in third year, whilst other students will undertake the RMA practicum in first year and the LIS practicum in third year. The order of the practicums depends on the student's career aspirations, current or previous work experience in the information professions and units of study completed.

Pre-2015 enrolled Postgraduate students (Graduate Diploma and Master of Information Management – single qualification) are required to undertake a practicum in a library and information service (LIS) environment OR in a records management and archives (RMA) environment, depending on their area of specialisation.

Some students undertake the Master of Information Management (MIM) with a dual qualification; that is, with a major in BOTH librarianship AND records management and archives. These students undertake a practicum in an LIS environment AND in a RMA environment. This means that on completion of the course all students gain a professionally recognised qualification in librarianship, records management and archives.

From-2015 enrolled Postgraduate students: Graduate Diploma students are required to undertake a practicum in a library and information service (LIS) environment OR in a records management and archives (RMA) environment, depending on their area of specialisation.

Master of Information Management (MIM) students will undertake a practicum in an LIS environment AND in a RMA environment. This means that on completion of the MIM course all students gain a professionally recognised qualification in librarianship, records management and archives.

4. TIMING OF THE PLACEMENT

For Curtin enrolled, first year undergrads, studying full time, the practicum placement will generally take place after the semester, either in the July mid-year break or over summer, from mid-January through to late February. This means that students study the practicum unit and then go on placement. If studying part time, it may be possible to go on placement during the semester, once the practicum unit coursework is completed.

For Curtin enrolled, third year undergrads and post graduate students studying full time, the practicum placement normally takes place before semester commences. For first semester enrolments the time period is over the summer semester break from mid-January through to late-February. For second semester enrolments, the practicum usually takes place during the July mid-year break. This means that students go on placement prior to completing the practicum unit. The idea behind this timing is that students complete the placement and remaining units, then graduate. If studying part time, it may be possible to go on placement during the semester, once the practicum unit coursework is completed.

For OUA enrolled, first year undergrads, studying full time, the practicum placement will generally take place after the study period. This means that students study the practicum unit and then go on placement in the subsequent study period. If studying part time, it may be possible to go on placement during the study period, once the practicum unit coursework is completed.

For OUA enrolled, third year undergrads and post graduate OUA enrolled students studying full time the practicum placement normally takes place before the study period commences. For SP1 enrolments the time period is during SP4, from mid-January through to late-February. For SP3 enrolments, the practicum usually takes place in SP2, generally in July. This means that students go on placement prior to completing the practicum unit. If studying part time, it may be possible to go on placement during the study period, once the practicum unit coursework is completed. There will be a number of graduate diploma and MIM students studying the practicum unit in SP2. In this case the timing will need to be considered to fit with other units of study both prior to, during and following SP2.

5. PURPOSE OF THE PRACTICUM

Practicums are designed to:

- develop students' competence and awareness of policies and practices in the information industry
- allow students to interpret and apply theory and practise skills acquired during the course
- cater for differing levels of competencies depending on which unit students are enrolled

Practicums at different levels have different purposes and are designed to provide different experiences and develop different competencies, as indicated below.

5.1 First year undergraduate practicum

The first-year undergraduate practicum offers a basic introduction to the information profession which allows students to judge whether or not they have an aptitude for, and interest in, working within this field. First year students will occupy a clerical position but should begin to think strategically regarding professional issues. Although mainly involved in clerical work, students at this level should be given an introduction to professional duties and responsibilities.

First-year placements are designed to enhance skills, develop competence and knowledge of the profession, and to increase student self-confidence, as indicated below:

Professionalism

test students aptitude for basic information related tasks,
 give students the opportunity to reassure themselves that they do wish to work in an information profession,
 provide students with an opportunity to see how some of the theory of information management learnt in the first semester of the course is put into practice,
 introduce students to some practicing information professionals who may be able to give independent guidance and advice on the choice of profession,
 contribute to the students' ongoing socialisation into their chosen profession.

Competencies

improve proficiency in core competencies required of all those who plan to work in the information industry by:

understanding the contexts in which information sources are created, stored, organised,
 retrieved and disseminated,
 developing an awareness of clients' information needs,
 developing understanding of corporate, social and cultural values in the workplace,
 recognising the need to plan, forecast, implement and evaluate management of information
 services,
 honing generic information management skills,
 working with others and in teams,
 learning time management,
 communicating ideas and information,
 using a variety of technologies,
 planning and organising activities,
 problem-solving,
 giving students the opportunity to become proficient in standard information work practices
 and processes,
 providing students with the opportunity of improving technological skills.

5.2 Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters practicums

Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters practicums are designed to introduce students to the work environment of information professionals and are a bridge between study and the profession. Students at these levels are expected to work as junior professional members of staff, mainly undertaking professional tasks but also some clerical tasks as required. Clerical work, however, should not comprise the major component of these practicums.

Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters students should be exposed to management issues (as appropriate), meetings and discussions of issues facing the practicum venue at the time of the placement.

Professionalism

application of theoretical aspects of the course in a practical environment,
 understanding the operational environment of an information service and the role played in that
 environment by several of its component parts,
 developing and maintaining a productive working relationship with a professional supervisor,
 contributing to an ongoing socialisation into the profession,
 applying professional ethics and ethos in the workplace.

Competencies

improving proficiency in core competencies required of all those who plan to work in the information industry by:

- understanding the contexts in which information sources are created, stored, organised,
retrieved and disseminated
- building awareness of clients' information needs
- increasing an understanding of corporate, social and cultural values in the workplace
- recognising the need to plan, forecast, implement and evaluate management of information
services
- identifying processes for acquiring, licensing and creating relevant information sources by
organisation, storage, retrieval and preservation of information
- delivering services customised for clients, promoting information access, providing guidance,
education and training in the use of information services and information literacy skills
- marketing of information services
- honing generic information management skills
- working with others and in teams
- learning time management
- communicating ideas and information
- using a variety of technologies
- planning and organising activities
- demonstrating initiative
- providing evidence of independent thought and reflective professional practice
- problem-solving

- giving students the opportunity to become proficient in standard information work practices and processes
- providing students with the opportunity of applying advanced technological skills

6. ORGANISATION OF THE PRACTICUM – PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Placements may be in any library, records management and archives unit/centre or information environment where the student can be given supervision by a qualified professional who is eligible for membership of the Australian Library and Information Association, the Records and Information Management Professionals Australasia or the Australian Society of Archivists. This staff member will be called the **Practicum Mentor**. Placements are not permitted in organisations with unqualified managers except in exceptional circumstances where the staff member has had extensive management experience within the field of study.

Students will not be given a placement in an organisation with which they have a current or prior working relationship. This means students *cannot* do a practicum in their current workplace, even if this occurs outside the hours of paid employment. Previous experience in these situations has shown that students and employers at times find it difficult to distinguish between the practicum and work. Also, it is considered important that students gain a breadth of experience, have an opportunity to work in different types of organisation and be exposed to different corporate cultures.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICUM

The organisation of a practicum is a complex task and it may be useful if some clarification is given on the levels of responsibility for different aspects of the practicums.

7.1 Responsibilities of the Practicum Mentor

The Practicum Mentor shall be a professional employed by the host organisation and shall be responsible for:

1. Approving the placement for the student and organising signing of the Student Placement Agreement.
2. Meeting with the student to discuss the practicum placement. (Pre-practicum meeting)
3. Organising the work schedule for the student and providing the student with a practicum program. This schedule should cover the range of activities suited to the level of the student. For first year students these may be at a base organisational level but for third year, Graduate Diploma and Masters' students this should encompass mainly professional duties. At all levels, depending on the work environment, some non-professional tasks may be undertaken.
4. Providing guidance by giving the student a thorough orientation to the workplace and integrating the student into the work environment and culture.
5. Offering guidance in the selection and management of a suitable practicum project. This project should be of benefit to both the host organisation and the student.
6. Allowing time for the student to discuss with their Mentor, or other staff, ideas for their practicum-related assignment (if applicable). Work on the assignment should not be carried out during the practicum.
7. Alerting the Practicum Coordinator, as soon as possible, should any issues arise that may impact on the success of the practicum, or on the student's performance
8. Ensuring the student has regular feedback on his or her performance during the practicum, including a final debriefing session at the conclusion of the practicum in which an overall evaluation is discussed.
9. Evaluating the student at the end of the practicum using the Practicum Mentor's Evaluation Form to rate the student on a range of personal, professional and technological competencies.
10. Submitting the evaluation form to the Practicum Coordinator within two weeks of the completion of the practicum
11. Inspiring and enthusing the student about the information profession.

7.2 Responsibilities of the student

The student is responsible for:

1. Completing the relevant forms required for the organisation of the placement.
2. Monitoring their Curtin email account prior to, and during, the practicum period.
3. Planning the practicum with the Practicum Coordinator.
4. Liaising with the Practicum Mentor concerning the practicum. Attending a pre-practicum meeting.
5. Where necessary, completing the Fieldwork Preliminary Risk Identification Form with the Practicum Coordinator.
6. Discussing a practicum project with the Practicum Mentor.
7. Contributing to the work of the host organisation.
8. Discussing with the Practicum Mentor, or other staff, ideas for their practicum-related assignment (if applicable). Work on the assignment should not be carried out during the practicum.
9. Reporting any problems, as soon as possible, to the Practicum Mentor and/or the Practicum Coordinator.
10. Writing a letter of thanks at the end of the practicum to the Practicum Mentor.
11. Submitting the assignment relating to the practicum (if applicable).
12. Completing the *Student Evaluation of Practicum Form* and returning this to the Practicum Coordinator within two weeks of completing the placement.

The student is expected to:

1. Be able to communicate in a professional manner with staff and clients.
2. Undertake the practicum without remuneration.
3. Work to the rostered staff times during the practicum, including evenings and weekend work where applicable.
4. Treat all staff with respect and consideration.
5. Present himself or herself in a professional manner.
6. Act ethically and responsibly with the host organisation, staff and clients.
7. Observe the host organisation's dress code.
8. Undertake all duties assigned to them during the practicum.
9. Observe public holidays taken by the host organisation.
10. Notify the Practicum Mentor at the beginning of the working day in cases of ill health. A medical certificate must be produced for any sick leave of more than two days.
11. Report any significant loss of time at the practicum site due to illness or other problems to the Practicum Coordinator so that decisions can be made about whether or not the student should make up this time.

7.3 Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator

The Practicum Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Preparing the practicum material.
2. Organising the mentor/student database.
3. Updating forms and web sites relating to practicum placements.
4. Organising the practicum with the student and the Practicum Mentor.
5. Ensuring Practicum Mentors are aware of insurance coverage and the Student Placement Agreement.
6. Organising the completion of the Fieldwork Preliminary Risk Identification Form with the student.
7. Ensuring Practicum Mentors and students are contacted and supported during the practicum.
8. Managing assessment and evaluation of the student.

8. LIAISON BETWEEN PRACTICUM COORDINATOR, MENTOR & STUDENT

Where possible, Information Studies staff will visit each student in the Perth metropolitan area once during their placement. Extra visits can be arranged at the request of either the student or the Practicum Mentor. The Practicum Coordinator or another member of staff is available by appointment for meetings and discussions either at the University or at the host service.

Information Studies staff will contact other students and their mentors by telephone or email during the practicum period. Mentors are welcome to contact the Practicum Coordinator by telephone or email at any time during the practicum.

Mentors must contact the Practicum Coordinator as soon as possible should any issues arise that may impact on the success of the practicum, or on the student's performance.

9. POSSIBLE DUTIES AND EXPERIENCES FOR PRACTICUM STUDENTS

The following checklists are to be considered only as a guide to the type of duties students may be expected to perform. They are not definitive or prescriptive; students may not experience all of these duties or may be required to undertake other duties not listed.

Practicum Mentors are asked to provide students with an electronic or hard copy practicum program providing a general structure of assigned duties and activities during the practicum period and to hold discussions with the student explaining how these tasks fit within the overall service.

Practicum Mentors are asked to assign the student a **small project** which will be their own area of responsibility during the practicum (see Section 9.3 for details).

9.1 First-year students

First-year undergraduate students will undertake a range of specified tasks but should observe the organisational culture and ethos, and reflect on the management structure and the environment of the placement venue. Although mainly involved in clerical work, students at this level should begin to think strategically regarding professional issues and be given an introduction to professional duties and responsibilities.

9.1.1 Possible tasks for students working in a LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

First-year students in an LIS environment are expected to fulfil duties typical of a junior library assistant/library clerk with the individual host service. This checklist is only a guide to the type of duties students may be expected to perform.

- Shelving and shelf checking
- Desk duties for charging and discharging loans
- Processing membership records
- Processing readers' requests
- Checking readers' requests against loans and shelves
- Maintaining loan records
- Sending out recalls or overdues
- Inter-library loans
- Processing new items of stock
- Copy cataloguing
- Circulation of journals
- Filing microfiche
- Cleaning and repairing books
- Preparing flyers and brochures
- Assisting with outreach activities such as homebound services, holiday activities, storytelling and children's activities
- Data inputting to the automated catalogue
- Preparing reports of student's project
- Assisting with promotional activities and in-house newsletters
- Scanning of documents
- Searching online databases, at a basic level
- Assisting clients with Internet access, at a basic level
- Assisting reference staff
- Assisting clients with equipment such as scanners, photocopiers, wifi

Allocating bookings for publicly available technology

9.1.2 Possible tasks for students working in a **CORPORATE INFORMATION/RECORDS SERVICE**

First-year students in a corporate information/records service are expected to fulfil duties typical of a junior records clerk with the individual host organisation. This checklist is only a guide to the type of duties students may be expected to perform.

- Processing paper-based mail, including
 - Sorting incoming mail
 - Recording mail statistics
 - Mail distribution
 - Processing outgoing mail
- Processing electronic mail
 - Registering incoming correspondence into EDRMS
 - Assigning business classification levels
 - Assigning retention schedules to records
 - Routing to action officers
- Creating and maintaining physical and electronic folders
- Attaching records to files
- File tracking and audits
- Scanning of records, including preparation for scanning
- Searching for and retrieving files
- Rehousing archival records
- Processing file requests
- Retrieval, issuing and reshelving of records and archives
- Checking for missing files and records
- Quality assurance of scanned images
- Assisting with promotional activities and in-house newsletters
- Searching databases, at a basic level

Please also see: *Tasks, competencies and salaries for recordkeeping professionals (TCSR)*. (2010) Developed jointly by the Australian Society of Archivists and the then Records Management Association of Australasia Joint Education Steering Committee. Available at: <http://www.rimpa.com.au/professional-development/tcsr/>

9.2 Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters' students

9.2.1 Possible tasks for students working in a **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE**

Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters' students undertaking a practicum in an LIS environment are expected to fulfil duties typical of a junior professional with the individual host service. Depending on the host organisation, students may be required to undertake some clerical duties as indicated in the first-year practicum checklist above but this should not occupy the majority of the practicum. This checklist is only a guide to the type of duties students may be expected to perform.

Professional duties

- Conducting bibliographical searches in printed and electronic formats
- Answering reference enquiries by telephone, in person and by electronic access
- Selecting and ordering new material for library stock in any format including analysing quality of materials available on the Internet and evaluating databases
- Indexing and abstracting items
- Accessioning, classifying and cataloguing new stock
- Preparing current awareness bulletins
- Organisation of promotional activities, such as displays
- Promoting the service to users and non-users
- Preparing in-house newsletters, flyers and brochures
- Designing and maintaining web-pages
- Developing databases and intranets
- Undertaking outreach activities such as homebound services, holiday activities, storytelling and children's activities

Offering or assisting with information literacy skills training to clients, such as the use of databases and the Internet
 Undertaking specific projects which require self-directed work
 Attending meetings, interacting with staff
 Writing reports, preparing presentations
 Researching and assessing potential technologies and equipment for implementation
 Updating the library/information service's social media presence

9.2.2 Possible tasks for students working in a **CORPORATE INFORMATION/RECORDS SERVICE**

Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Master's students undertaking a practicum in a corporate information/records service are expected to fulfil duties typical of a junior professional with the individual host service. Depending on the host organisation, students may be required to undertake some clerical duties as listed in the first-year practicum checklist above but this should not occupy the majority of the practicum. This checklist is only a guide to the type of duties students may be expected to perform.

Professional duties

Data management tasks, such as migration of data and editing
 More complex retrieval requests
 Records surveys and audits and development of disposal schedules
 Appraisal of closed files and more complex items against approved R&D schedule
 Update and create new records in an EDRMS, archives management system or other business system
 Preparation of closed files for disposal
 Creation of destruction authority lists and archival transmittal and consignment lists
 Assisting in the preparation of selected records for archival storage
 Answering enquiries by telephone, in person, in written form, and by electronic access
 Indexing/classification of incoming items using controlled language
 Promoting the service to users and non-users, such as in-house newsletters, flyers and brochures
 Assisting with policy development, such as an organisational information policy
 Preparing user manuals
 Analysing and evaluating the application of software
 Attending meetings, interacting with staff
 Writing reports, preparing presentations

Please also see: *Tasks, competencies and salaries for recordkeeping professionals (TCSR)*. (2010) Developed jointly by the Australian Society of Archivists and the then Records Management Association of Australasia Joint Education Steering Committee. Available at: <http://www.rimpa.com.au/professional-development/tcsr/>

9.3 Project work

Practicum Mentors are asked that in addition to the specified tasks above, students be assigned a **small project** which will be their own area of responsibility during the practicum. This will provide students with an opportunity for self-directed, independent project work that may be undertaken during 'free' times within the practicum program. The nature of the project should be determined by the Practicum Mentor in consultation with the student so as to be of benefit to the host organisation and the future career of the student. The scope of the project should allow for it to be completed within the time-frame of the placement and should take into account the student's level of experience.

The Practicum Coordinator asks students to consider their skill sets and interests and to discuss possible project work with attending the pre-practicum meeting. It may be feasible for students to complete a number of small projects, depending on the nature of the project work and the overarching practicum program.

Third-year, Graduate Diploma and Masters students may be asked by Practicum Mentors to write a report on their project. This report **will not** form part of the assessment for the unit associated with the practicum. However, students at this level may use issues arising from their practicum project as the basis for later assignments in the practicum-related unit. Students at this level should be challenged by the project work.

Students are encouraged to consider small research based projects to develop the notion of practitioner researchers. All students are encouraged to keep a reflective practice journal and should be encouraged to reflect on any project undertaken, as well as other activities and experiences whilst on practicum.

First-year students may complete a project report. However, all students are encouraged to keep a reflective practice journal and should be encouraged to reflect on any project undertaken, as well as other activities and experiences whilst on practicum.

9.4 Reflective professional practice

Irrespective of the tasks and project students undertake, they should use the practicum to observe, record, and reflect on the corporate culture of the host institution, events and activities undertaken, problems encountered and issues raised. This reflection should assist students in understanding the fundamental management of successful information services. The *Practicum Manual for Students* includes an extensive checklist for reflective professional practice.

All students are asked to keep a journal to help reflect on the practicum experience and to provide a backdrop for future assignments and study.

To assist students develop reflective practice skills and to encourage students to absorb professional attitudes and ethics, Practicum Mentors are asked to allow time for students to discuss these issues with members of staff. Because of the limited timeframe of the practicum, it would be very much appreciated if opportunities could be given to the student to get a feel of the various tasks associated with the information service, even if they cannot directly experience all of them. There needs to be an opportunity for the student to discuss how the tasks fit into the overall role of the host service. Opportunities to observe and/or participate in decision making and evaluative processes are also important.

9.5 Student portfolios

Students are encouraged to develop portfolios of projects and other work undertaken during their course. This includes collecting relevant material from their practicum placement. The practicum portfolio may include publicly available information such as brochures, flyers and other promotional material. However, students may expect to be able to retain for their portfolio copies of practicum reports and some internal documents. If confidentiality may be an issue, please discuss this with the student.

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE PRACTICUM

All students must be able to demonstrate to both the Practicum Mentor and Practicum Coordinator that they have related class learning to operational experience in their host service. In addition, students also must be able to demonstrate that they have a sound grasp of both the theory and practice of the relevant area of study and the requisite skills and knowledge to become practitioners.

The student's performance will be evaluated in a number of ways:

- The assignments for the practicum-related unit (if applicable)
- Evaluation by the Practicum Mentor of the student's performance whilst on practicum
- Evaluation by an Information Studies staff member
- Self-evaluation of the practicum placement and student's performance

10.1 Assignments

First and third year students should refer to the unit outlines for the coursework components of the practicum units.

Graduate Diploma and Masters students will have assignments that may be based on their practicum experience. At the commencement of the semester/study period, the Unit Coordinators will, where relevant, guide students in the selection of an appropriate assignment topic drawn from the student's practicum experience. This may be based on:

- a project the student worked on that they would like to investigate further,
- an issue raised by the Practicum Mentor that requires deeper examination, or

- an issue relating to the services and/or operations of the information service that has sparked the student's interest.

Work on the assignments should not be carried out during the practicum.

10.2 Evaluation of the student by the Practicum Mentor

Assessment will include an evaluation of the student's performance by the Practicum Mentor. The *Practicum Mentor's Evaluation Form* will be sent to all Mentors and is available on the Practicum website. All students have a right to access their evaluation form, and many students will use a copy for employment purposes. If students do not receive the completed form at the conclusion of their practicum they will be able to request a copy from the Practicum Coordinator. When completing the evaluation please keep in mind that we are unable to impose conditions of confidentiality.

Please discuss this evaluation form with the student at the conclusion of their practicum and, if possible, provide the student with a copy at this time. However, we appreciate that it may not be possible or convenient to finalise the form by the end of the placement period.

If you consider the student's performance on practicum to be unsatisfactory, please contact the Practicum Coordinator as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the practicum may mean failure of the practicum-related unit and termination from the course.

10.3 Evaluation by Information Studies staff

For all practicum placements, the Practicum Coordinator or another Information Studies staff member will contact Practicum Mentors to check on the progress of students. If possible, students will be contacted at these times as well.

Each student in the Perth metropolitan area will receive one visit during their placement. Extra visits can be arranged at the request of either the student or the Practicum Mentor. For practicums outside of Perth, students and their Practicum Mentors will be contacted by telephone or email once during the practicum. In all cases, Practicum Mentors and students may contact the Practicum Coordinator as often as necessary throughout the placement.

10.4 Student evaluation of the placement

Students must complete a self-evaluation of their placement. This encourages students to reflect on their practicum experience and also helps Information Studies plan future practicums. Perhaps, more importantly, self-reflection is an important part of professional development.

11. STUDENT PLACEMENT AGREEMENTS, FIELDWORK PRELIMINARY RISK IDENTIFICATION AND INSURANCE

The University requires a written legal agreement for all fieldwork education experience. The legal agreement identifies and describes the responsibilities of the University, the host and students in the fieldwork activity. The agreement also outlines information on insurance provisions provided by the University to all parties prior to commencing the fieldwork activity. In consultation with the Practicum Coordinator, the student placement agreement should be initiated and completed prior to the commencement of the placement.

The University requires that a Fieldwork Preliminary Risk Identification Form is completed prior to the practicum to give a preliminary rating of whether fieldwork is low risk or whether further assessment is required to determine the risk. This form will be completed by the Practicum Coordinator in conjunction with the student.

Enrolled students of the University undertaking approved work/field experience are covered under the University Personal Accident Insurance Policy and Public Liability/Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy while involved in authorised activities.

Insurance coverage is in place for each student undertaking a practicum. Please note the University no longer requires students to sign a declaration. Cover under these policies may only be provided where:

- the work/field experience is a formal requirement of the student's course/unit;
- the School/Department/Area has approved the work/field experience;
- the student is an enrolled student of the University at the time of the work/field experience;
- the student does not receive any remuneration for the work experience placement (if the student is being paid, the student would be covered by the host organisation's workers' compensation policy)

The University makes available *Certificates of Currency* for the various insurance policies. These will be made available by the Practicum Coordinator when a request to host is made.

12. FINANCIAL ISSUES

Students are required to meet any expenses involved in the practicum (i.e. travel, parking etc). Students will NOT be paid during the practicum.

13. FEEDBACK

Information Studies staff would appreciate any feedback on the organisation of the practicum, the coverage of these Guidelines, etc. If you have any queries or comments concerning the practicum please do not hesitate to contact the Practicum Coordinator at the address below.

14. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Practicums could not occur without the full cooperation of members of our profession. We are deeply grateful to you and your staff for your commitment to assisting aspiring professionals. We know the placement is valuable to our students and hope that the practicum will be a rewarding experience for the host organisation.

15. PRACTICUM COORDINATOR

The Practicum Coordinator is:

Rebecca (Bec) Shillington
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School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845
Telephone: (08) 9266 2613
Email: prac.infostud@curtin.edu.au

If you are unable to contact me on the above number and the matter is urgent please contact the School office on (08) 9266 7211.