



PBPL-874/URST-874 Public Policy Practicum Program Guide

Course Description:

The Public Policy Practicum (the “Practicum”) provides students with a chance to develop further their professional competencies in a public service environment and to gain actual work experience in the public policy sector.

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- II. Competencies
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I. Purpose

The Practicum is a semester-long opportunity for students to apply and expand their knowledge and technical skills by performing an actual consulting engagement (the “Practicum Project”) for a public-sector client organization (the “Practicum Client”). Practicum students will work in small teams of 3-5 students (the “Project Team”) to analyze and make recommendations with respect to issues of real significance faced by their clients. Each engagement (the “Engagement”) will combine research, project planning, and problem-solving challenges, as well as substantial client contact. Client organizations are selected from across the policy spectrum to better enable students to pursue subject matters of particular relevance to their studies and career interests. Each engagement will culminate in a final report and formal presentation to the client organization. The Practicum instructor(s) will provide ongoing guidance and participants will have opportunities to share ideas, experiences, and best practices.

PBPL 874 requires students to produce a written product that addresses selected competencies of the MAPP program, which is accomplished by integrating the lessons of their classroom instruction into the Practicum Project. Accordingly, students must have completed at least three core MAPP courses prior to taking PBPL 874. If any of those three completed courses is not a core course, students should take the additional core courses concurrently (*see Prerequisites, below*).

Typical Practicum placements focus on the College’s Hartford, Connecticut community, and other cities in New England and elsewhere facing similar challenges. Past placements have included projects on behalf of the City of Hartford’s Department of Development Services and its Sustainability Office, the Southside Institutions

Neighborhood Alliance and Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (local community development corporations), the Partnership for Strong Communities (a Hartford-based think tank and advocacy organization focusing on homelessness and affordable housing policy), the Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, and the Hartford Land Bank. Research projects have involved policy areas including urban economic development, education policy, blight remediation, and affordable housing finance and preservation.

Table 1: Sequence of Events

<p>Step 1: Complete (or be taking concurrently) at least three MAPP core courses (see below).</p> <p>Step 2: Identify the Practicum Project and Project Team in consultation with the Practicum instructor(s). Each year, available Practicum Project placements will be developed by the MAPP faculty and distributed to qualifying students during the Fall Semester. The MAPP faculty will make best efforts to match Practicum Project assignments with students' expressed professional interests.</p> <p>Step 3: Meet with the Practicum Client to discuss its needs and expectations for the Practicum Project.</p> <p>Step 4: Design a research approach and plan, including required data collection, that is responsive to the expectations of the Practicum Client and actionable within the timeframe allotted for the Project. Any research directly involving human participants must be undertaken consistent with the requirements of Trinity College's Institutional Review Board (<i>see</i> https://commons.trincoll.edu/irb/).</p> <p>Step 5: Complete, acquire signatures, and submit to the Practicum Instructor(s) an engagement letter, including a scope of work, with the Practicum Client.</p> <p>Step 6: Participate in bi-weekly meetings with the Practicum Instructor(s) to evaluate the progress of the Practicum Project, obtain advice on the Engagement, and address any barriers to the success of the Project.</p> <p>Step 7: Prepare a draft Practicum Report and PowerPoint Presentation for review and comment by the Practicum Instructors.</p> <p>Step 8: Deliver the Practicum Report to the Practicum Client and a formal presentation to the Client's designated audience.</p> <p>Step 9: Meet with the Practicum Instructor(s) to discuss final feedback on Practicum Report and presentation. The Practicum Report and related student work will be graded on a 100-point scale (see below).</p>

II. Competencies

The Practicum provides each student with an opportunity to hone key competencies developed in the MAPP Program, including the ability to work effectively with a team, while performing valuable work for a public service organization.

The six key competencies to be demonstrated in a successful the Practicum project are:

1. Analyzing organizations and their environments from multiple perspectives and applying that analysis in assessing alternative courses of action.
2. Knowing and applying public service values, legal and ethical principles, and a client-focused approach to problem solving.
3. Creating and using project management and program plans.
4. Effectively defining and executing roles and responsibilities on the Project Team.
5. Reading, listening, and thinking critically.
6. Writing and speaking clearly, concisely, and unambiguously.

III. Prerequisites

The Practicum provides students an opportunity to reflect on how they apply and integrate their learning from their previous MAPP courses. Students must have completed (or be concurrently taking) at least three MAPP core courses to be eligible to participate in the Practicum.

Table 2: Prerequisites

The three prerequisite courses may be chosen from among the following MAPP core offerings:

- PBPL 800 Public Policy: Principles and Practice
- PBPL 806 Methods of Research
- PBPL 840 Budget Management in Public Policy
- PBPL 846 Policy Analysis
- PBPL 859 Economics of Public Policy
- PBPL 860 Public Management
- PBPL 869 Leadership in the Policy Arena

V. The Engagement Letter and Scope of Work

Each Project Team will prepare an Engagement Letter, including a specific scope of work (“SOW”), following initial consultations with the Practicum Client. The Engagement Letter will be signed by each member of the Project Team, the Practicum Client, and the Practicum Instructor(s).

Each Team will be assigned and report to a supervisor within the Practicum Client’s organization. Each Project Team will be assigned a specific research, data collection and

analysis, and/or strategic planning project, reflected in the agreed-upon SOW.

Table 3: The Engagement Letter

<p>The Engagement Letter will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the situational and/or historical context of the Engagement;• Clarify the purpose of the Engagement, its audience and/or stakeholders in the outcome (e.g., the Client Organization’s own “clients”);• Set forth the agreed-upon SOW;• Outline the expected deliverables from the Practicum; including the due date(s) for the Practicum Report and Presentation;• Identify and introduce the Practicum Team;• Specify the informational or other support commitments made by the Client Organization, including the client contact/input expectations for the Project (e.g., preferred timing, scope, and mode of client meetings and other contact); and• Identify and provide contact information for the organization (address and website) and the Project Team’s Client supervisor.

V. The Project Report and Presentation

Each Project Team will complete a final report and provide a formal presentation of the material to the client organization.

Table 4: The Final Report

<p>The Project Report will include the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Summary</i>: Provide an overview or “executive summary” of the report.• <i>Background</i>: Describe the problem and provide a review of previous research.• <i>Data</i>: Describe the data (quantitative and/or qualitative) collected for the report.• <i>Analysis</i>: Analyze the data using appropriate research method(s) and policy-making framework(s).• <i>Recommendations</i>: Provide a set of recommendations responsive to the issues set forth in the Engagement Letter.

VI. Grading

The grading scale for the Practicum Report and related student work will be based on the 100 total points possible; letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A+ = 97.5-100	A = 93.5-97.49	A- = 89.5-93.49
B+ = 87.5-89.49	B = 83.5-87.49	B- = 79.5-83.49
C+ = 77.5-79.49	C = 73.5-77.49	C- = 69.5-73.49
D+ = 67.5-69.49	D = 63.5-67.49	D- = 59.5-63.49
F = 0-59.49		